



Alternative formats and communication supports available upon request. Please contact accessibility@brantford.ca or 519-759-4150 for assistance.

**Date** July 6, 2022 **Report No.** 2022-496

**To** Chair and Members  
Social Services Committee

**From** Marlene Miranda, General Manager  
Community Services and Social Development

---

## 1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item [ ]  
Item For Consideration [ X ]

## 2.0 Topic **CSSD Vision Plan [Financial Impact: None ]**

---

## 3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT report 2022-420 CSSD Vision Plan BE RECEIVED;
- B. THAT the CITY Clerk BE DIRECTED to forward a copy of the final resolution and staff report to the County of Brant.

## 4.0 Executive Summary

Staff has prepared a Vision Plan and 10 year strategy for the Community Services and Social Development Commission (CSSD). This visioning project comes at a time when the services provided by the commission are needed more urgently than ever against a backdrop of COVID recovery, economic pressures, and social division. The communities of Brantford and Brant are growing rapidly, and with that growth comes increased demand for amenities, events, and social supports. CSSD is positioned to serve the shifting needs of the community with the recent addition of Community Programs/Recreation and the Bell Homestead. The vision described in this report and the accompanying

---

Vision Plan document will bring staff together around an essential intent of **Making Life Better, Every Day.**

*Making life better every day-A Vision and Plan 2022-2032* (Appendix 1) has been developed using the current *City of Brantford Council Priorities, the County of Brant Strategic Plan 2019-2023* and more than 27 local, federal and provincial plans, all of which included extensive public and stakeholder consultation. Key informants, including commission staff, provided additional input into the document.

The three pillars of the CSSD Vision are:

**Safe and Vibrant Places:** Building communities where people love to live, feel connected, and have their basic needs met

**Healthy People:** Creating conditions where every resident is able to achieve his or her optimal wellbeing

**Inspired Partnerships:** Harnessing the energy and innovation of educational institutions, nonprofits, grassroots community groups to achieve our vision.

Each of these pillars is supported by strategic priorities, which are intended to guide operational plans and investment decisions over the upcoming 10 year horizon.

## 5.0 Purpose and Overview

To seek approval of the *Making life better every day-A Vision and Plan 2022-2032* for the Community Services and Social Development (CSSD) Commission.

## 6.0 Background

CSSD provides equitable access to a broad range of programs and services that give citizens the skills to build resiliency and capacity. In the County of Brant, CSSD offers four provincially mandated programs (Ontario Works, Housing, Homelessness Services, and Child Care/Early Years programming) through the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) arrangement. The commission leverages funds from other orders of government through contractual agreements and collaborative partnerships. Many CSSD offerings in the City of Brantford are universally available to all residents at all stages in life.

---

CMSM programs such as Ontario Works, Homelessness Services, and Child Care subsidy focus on those experiencing vulnerability and requiring accessible programs and services to build resiliency and improve their wellbeing.

To create collective impact, CSSD Programs are offered in partnership with: all orders of government, nonprofit social service providers, local school boards, businesses, City and County services (e.g. Public Transit, Planning, etc.), and Neighbourhood Associations. Age and culturally appropriate programs are necessary to overcome financial, social, geographic, and physical barriers. In addition, social programs help build resiliency through increased protective factors such as positive relationships, employment training, social recreational opportunities, and access to support services.

As our communities emerge from the most acute phase of the pandemic, the wide-ranging effects of COVID-19 are being recognized, including declines in mental health, reduced social cohesion, health impacts of lockdowns/post-COVID syndrome, and economic uncertainty, which has been recently exacerbated by high levels of inflation. There is a strong body of evidence showing that existing health and economic inequities were both exposed and heightened as a result of COVID. In this complex post-COVID social and financial environment, the services provided by CSSD will be more critical than ever before. At the same time, the service delivery pressures are expected to increase due to additional demand and shrinking revenues from sources such as provincial grants.

With the addition of Community Programs, Events, and Aquatics and Fitness in 2021, and the Bell Homestead in 2022, a cohesive vision will set the stage for staff to work together in a coordinated and integrated way toward shared objectives. It is an ideal time to articulate a CSSD essential purpose and key strategies that will provide a compass for staff, customers, and partners as we navigate the uncertain times ahead. By doing so, CSSD can remain focused on the projects and activities that contribute most strongly to prosperous, compassionate, and inclusive communities.

## **7.0 Corporate Policy Context**

2021/22 Council Priorities Desired Outcome #2: Social Service Support is provided to Brantford residents in need.

County of Brant Strategic Priority 5: Healthy, Safe and Engaged Citizens.

## **8.0 Input From Other Sources**

---

This Vision Plan has been developed using the current *City of Brantford Council Priorities*, the *County of Brant Strategic Plan 2019-2023*, and more than 27 local, federal and provincial plans, all of which included extensive public and stakeholder consultation. Key informant consultations, including with CSSD leaders, were completed as part of the development of the Vision Plan.

## 9.0 Analysis

The City of Brantford and the County of Brant are home to a combined population of 144,162 people (2021 Census Data). Our communities are growing fast: by 2031, there are projected to be more than 168,000 residents, a 17% increase in the next decade. As communities grow and change, the needs of our citizens will shift. CSSD requires a well-planned approach that steers us in directions that best serve the people of Brantford and Brant.

There is a strong relationship between physical buildings and gathering spaces, social activities, services and programs offered within those spaces, and the interconnected networks within and across physical and social locations where people come together. These elements are considered the “social infrastructure” of a community. Social Infrastructure plays a critical role in fostering strong social ties and resilience day-to-day and often performs significant duties to support community members amid crises such as COVID or extreme weather events. CSSD relies on internal partners within the City and County along with community partners to maintain this social infrastructure. Bringing together recreation, events, and neighbourhood development under the umbrella of CSSD connects commission staff more strongly into the daily lives of citizens, which creates additional opportunities to build social infrastructure.

In crafting the Vision Plan, attention has been paid to trends and emerging practices, notably:

**Aging Population:** The population aged 65 and older currently accounts for almost 20% of the local population, and this demographic will continue to grow in the coming decade. Additionally, the City and County will see growth in the “super senior” population aged 85+, thanks to increased life expectancies. The older adult population will influence many aspects of CSSD, including the types of housing created, recreation and community program offerings, and where and how services are provided.

**Affordability Concerns:** Escalating costs for basic needs such as housing, food, and fuel may continue in the short term (12 to 18 months), and the concern

is that these costs may flatten at a level that remains unaffordable for low to moderate-income citizens. Low to moderate-income families are in considerable financial distress. Programs and services that CSSD operates or funds, such as food programs, affordable housing, subsidies, and financial benefits, need to be positioned to support our traditional customer base along with people who now need assistance to bridge gaps in their purchasing power.

**Collaboration:** CSSD has a long history of creating results through partnerships. Given the realities of modern civic leadership (funding constraints, increasingly complex social issues), CSSD will need to elevate our approach to collaboration and explore non-traditional partners. Municipal/post-secondary partnering is an area of particular promise which has not been fully exploited. Productive collaborations increase the reach of agencies while maximizing financial and human resources.

Social Infrastructure plays a critical role in fostering strong social ties and resilience day-to-day and often performs significant duties to support community members amid crises.

Staff has prepared a Vision Plan and 10 year strategy for CSSD, resulting in the identification of 3 focus areas (pillars):

### **Safe and Vibrant Places**

The evidence is clear: Places matter for the well-being of those who reside in our communities. Residents want affordable, comfortable housing and safe neighbourhoods where they are connected to each other and can continue to live in familiar places as they age. As the population base of our communities changes over the next decade, CSSD will also evolve to best serve neighbourhoods as they grow through new development and intensification.

### **Healthy People**

Health is about much more than just physical health or treatment in the health care system; it is about the many factors that shape the overall well-being of our citizens. Our health and well-being begin with basic needs – clothing, shelter, food, transportation, and income. We need ways to express ourselves, to be safe and included, supportive services, positive connections, and to learn and grow. Together we are creating and continually improving the conditions that enable all of us to enjoy the highest level of health and well-being possible.

### **Inspired Partnerships**

Community Services and Social Development has a long and proud tradition of bringing people and organizations together to collaborate on solutions to community-wide challenges and find innovative ways to meet identified resident needs. Partnerships allow the City to leverage outside resources and maximize public funds.

Each pillar features strategic priorities and supporting actions that set out a blueprint to achieve the 10 year vision.

Highlights of the plan include:

- **Continue working towards a range of available housing so residents can live in a setting most appropriate to their needs.** The acute crisis in housing affordability affects residents at various life stages and across the continuum of housing from home ownership to deeply affordable units. Individuals with the highest needs require on-site supports to remain sustainably housed. CSSD will work with funding partners, nonprofit organizations, and internal City staff to develop a mix of builds and subsidies towards meeting or exceeding the targets articulated in the Brantford Brant Housing Master Plan.
- **Promote gathering spaces for culture, sports, recreation and entertainment opportunities to support both formal and informal uses.** The City offers the Grand River, trails, and abundant green spaces. CSSD envisions using these spaces to engage residents of all ages in activities that will connect them to the community, nature, and each other.
- **Promote higher levels overall wellness, mental health and responsible substance use in service users and in neighbourhoods of concern working creatively with health sector partners to develop new access pathways.** While the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) is responsible for the funding and delivery of health services, the fragmentation of these systems creates access challenges for residents and their families. CSSD will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate with health partners including, the newly formed Ontario Health Team to bring health and social care together in a more coordinated way.
- **Children and youth will receive a great start in life through a mix of universal and targeted investments.** Building thriving adults means

---

starting prenatally (or preconception, if possible). Research from Harvard University's Centre for the Developing Child, among others, has established that preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) such as physical and emotional abuse, household violence, and caregiver mental illness is one of the best ways to avoid costly and painful negative outcomes in adulthood. All children benefit from high-quality early learning and recreational programs, and those who are at the highest risk for Adverse Childhood Experiences should receive additional, targeted services that wrap around the entire family.

- **Partner with post-secondary to improve knowledge creation and data driven practice.** Building on the success of projects that have already occurred between CSSD and post-secondary partners, staff will be guided by the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Brantford and Wilfrid Laurier University (2022) and the Joint-University/City Working Group to find new opportunities that support the priorities in this plan.
- **Align marketing, staffing models program design and corporate policy to enhance revenue and accessibility.** The City of Brantford delivers high quality recreation and community-based programs which are enjoyed by residents of all ages and abilities. Over the coming years, focused attention, and resources are required to modernize staffing models, marketing strategies and technical tools to enhance the customer experience. A plan is needed to articulate how revenue goals balance with community use of City facilities.

Given the rapidly shifting context in which CSSD operates, while the Vision Plan is intended to provide guidance for future planning and investment, it also needs to be a living document that can be updated in response to current realities.

## 10.0 Financial Implications

None

## 11.0 Climate and Environmental Implications

None identified

## 12.0 Conclusion

The communities of Brantford and Brant County are emerging from the COVID-19 crisis into a turbulent environment created through disruptive global societal and economic changes. The needs of the citizens we serve will continue to shift and evolve, and the Vision Plan presented in this report will provide a solid foundation from which the CSSD Commission can respond to these changing needs over the coming decade.

Reaching this ambitious future will require the commitment and dedication of all the City's and County stakeholders, from senior governments, nonprofits, businesses to neighbourhood groups, and residents. Solutions that deliver childcare, affordable housing, and supports for public health rely on the partnerships and investment of other government agencies and nonprofit providers.

Staff recommend Social Service Committee and Council endorsement of the Vision Plan and will provide regular updates on progress towards the priorities identified in the Plan and changes required over the coming years.



Marlene Miranda, General Manager  
Social Services and Community Development

Prepared By:

Susan Evenden, Director, Family and Income Stability

Attachments (if applicable)

Attachment A: CSSD Vision Plan

Copy to:

N/A

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required ☐ yes ☐ no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk ☐ yes ☐ no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? ☐ yes ☐ no