

City of Brantford Council Priorities, 2021-2022

Final Report

October 2020



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Introduction

The City of Brantford has an exciting future. It is a fast-growing community, estimated to grow from 97,000 (2016) to 163,000 (2041). There is significant new residential development and growing interest from buyers outside the community. It is located on major provincial transportation networks with easy access to US and GTA markets. There is growing interest from industrial employers particularly in manufacturing, food processing, warehouse, and logistics sectors.

The City of Brantford has many existing strengths. It has a rich heritage, vibrant arts and culture, and a longstanding tradition of outstanding recreational opportunities. There are tremendous natural assets, including the Grand River which runs through the City's core. There are strong post-secondary collaborations with Wilfrid Laurier University, Conestoga College and Six Nations Polytechnic. There are established businesses and local industries with a long history of success in the community.

Since elected in 2018, the current City Council has focused on laying the foundation for the community's future success through initiatives that support boundary expansion, creation of new transportation connections, realization of new operational efficiencies and support for those most in need in the community. In 2019, Council established eleven priorities to move this work forward.

Since the initial priorities were established, considerable progress has been made and the City has experienced a major shift in its operating environment due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. With two years remaining in the current term, Council wishes to revisit existing priorities to ensure the City is investing in the right projects and initiatives to continue momentum and create a framework for long-term success.

This report contains the final results of Council's priority-setting process, and the desired outcomes and priorities to guide the City's work over the balance of the 2018-2022 Term of Council.

Methodology

The Priority-Setting Process

The priority-setting process launched on September 4 and is scheduled for completion in mid-October when priorities are presented to Council for approval.

The strategic priority-setting process involves four phases:

Phase 1 – Building the Foundation (September 2020)

- Review of foundational municipal documents:
 - Council Priorities (2019) and all related progress reports
 - Service Review Final Report (KPMG, 2019)
 - Annual report and consolidated financial statements (2019)
 - Current Master Plans
 - Background material for current corporate projects and initiatives
 - Councillors' bios
 - Economic Development Reports
 - 2014-2018 Strategic Plan
- Telephone interviews with Members of Council
- Telephone interviews with the Executive Leadership Team and support staff
- Preparation of a discussion paper

Phase 2 – Workshop Preparation (September 2020)

- Workshop design
- Liaison with Clerk's Office to ensure compliance with open meeting requirements for a virtual, facilitated Council session
- Preparation and distribution of workshop materials

Phase 3 – Workshop Delivery (September 2020)

- Facilitation of a virtual Council priority-setting session on September 19, 2020

Phase 4 – Reporting and Approval (October 2020)

- Follow-up report preparation and submission
- Final Council presentation and amendments

Council's Vision of Success: Desired Outcomes

During discussions with Members of Council regarding their vision for Brantford's future, the following outcomes were cited as desirable and indicators for Brantford's success. The outcomes listed below are ranked according to feedback from Members of Council during breakout discussions at their September 19 Priority-Setting Session:

1. All neighbourhoods in the City are safe, vibrant, attractive, and inclusive.
2. Social services support is provided to Brantford residents in need.
3. A safe, efficient transportation system connects the community across neighbourhoods, with neighbouring communities and provincial transportation networks.
4. There is high trust in the City through demonstrated progress in taxpayer affordability and value for money.
5. Growth is successfully accommodated in expansion lands.
6. A stronger, more diversified tax base and a range of employment opportunities are created.
7. The City is mitigating its environmental footprint and adapting to climate change.
8. The full potential and community benefits of the Grand River are realized.
9. Dedicated, sustainable spaces are provided for heritage, arts, and culture.

Each of the desired outcomes are included on pages 9 to 17, along with priorities that have been approved by Council as they work toward these outcomes between 2020 and 2022.

Decision-Making Criteria

Decision-making criteria were necessary to assist Members of Council as they considered potential priorities for the remainder of their term. Based on conversations with Members of Council, a number of issues arose such as community impact, affordability, project visibility, roles and responsibilities, COVID-19 recovery, and environmental sustainability. These issues formed a starting point for considering potential priorities.

The following discussion questions were presented to Members of Council as a reference for their deliberations on potential priorities:

1. Does the initiative advance one or more of the outcomes that Council has deemed important to the future success of Brantford?
2. Does the initiative minimize the need for municipal resources? If not, is a funding strategy in place to mitigate impacts to taxpayers?
3. Is the project visible to the community, clearly demonstrating value for tax dollars?
4. Is the initiative consistent with appropriate municipal responsibilities for the City of Brantford?
5. Will the initiative leverage lessons learned from COVID-19 and help Brantford emerge stronger from the pandemic?
6. Is the initiative consistent with Council's commitment to leadership in environmental sustainability?

How Priorities Were Assigned

During the September 19 session, Members of Council considered potential priorities and worked collaboratively to categorize each initiative according to the following colour coding system:

Green – This is a critical initiative and the City must demonstrate substantial progress between 2020 and 2022.

Yellow – This initiative is a secondary priority and should be advanced pending availability of resources.

Red / No Colour – This initiative is less urgent than others and may be considered in a future Council term.

Based on this colour coding system, priorities were then categorized into three tiers:

Tier 1:

- All three groups indicated a green colour code
- Initiatives in the Tier 1 category have the highest priority ranking

Tier 2:

- Group responses leaned toward green or averaged yellow
- Initiatives in the Tier 2 category have the second highest priority ranking

Tier 3:

- Group responses leaned toward red
- Initiatives in the Tier 3 category have the third highest priority ranking

Initiatives within the tiered ranking system were discussed, amended and approved by Council at a Special Meeting on October 15, 2020. The results are outlined on the following pages.

#1

<p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>All neighbourhoods in the City are safe, vibrant, attractive, and inclusive.</p>	<p>Tier 1 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Complete new Official Plan b) Improve municipal capacity for by-law enforcement, including extended hours and expanded scope, to address concerns related to property standards, noise, nuisance, and compliance with COVID-19 regulations
	<p>Tier 2 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Mandate the City to lead by example in property standards and maintenance, ensuring municipal assets contribute to civic pride c) Continue to invest in downtown revitalization and advance the Downtown Master Plan d) Develop a multi-year asset management and funding strategy for all infrastructure categories, including natural assets, prioritizing investment for areas most in need and focusing on preventative maintenance to extend the life of municipal assets e) Work with Brantford Police Service and other community partners to develop a long-term, prevention-based approach to community safety that creates opportunity for local youth (Complete a Community Safety and Well-being Plan) f) Work with Brantford Police Service and other community partners to address short-term needs associated with community safety, including CCTV cameras, increased police presence and solutions to petty crime g) Develop a Youth Strategy, including opportunities for Youth Centre expansion h) Address deficiencies in Woodman Pool i) Complete new community centre in partnership with school board
	<p>Tier 3 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

#2

<p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>Social service support is provided to Brantford residents in need.</p>	<p>Tier 1 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Commence one or more additional housing developments, funded through proceeds from the disposition of municipal assets
	<p>Tier 2 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">b) Together with health care partners, participate in the continued implementation of the Brantford-Brant Community Drugs Strategyc) Support the continued implementation of the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy and other age-friendly initiatives
	<p>Tier 3 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A

#3

<p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>A safe, efficient transportation system connects the community across neighbourhoods, with neighbouring communities and provincial transportation networks.</p>	<p>Tier 1 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Implement traffic calming measures on streets with high numbers of safety concerns
	<p>Tier 2 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) 403 transportation access – complete Environmental Assessment and consider implementation options c) Complete Joint City-County Strategic Transportation Study d) Investigate City-wide traffic technologies to enhance traffic safety, including mobile radar units e) Develop a comprehensive plan to integrate active transportation networks with measures for improved connectivity and enhanced maintenance
	<p>Tier 3 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) Develop a long-term plan for public transit growth, including transit service options in the North West Business Park to coincide with shift changes

#4

<p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>There is high trust in the City through demonstrated progress in taxpayer affordability and value for money.</p>	<p>Tier 1 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Enhance communication to residents demonstrating evidence of high value for tax dollarsb) Present an implementation plan for the KPMG Service Review Report (2019) and proceed according to Council directionc) Review the City's accommodations strategies to consider lessons learned during COVID-19 related to working from home and other flexible employee arrangements
	<p>Tier 2 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">d) Establish a multi-year budgeting process and an affordability index to provide long-term budget guidancee) Improve corporate-wide coordination and after-hours availability for customer service
	<p>Tier 3 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A

#5

<p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>Growth is successfully accommodated in expansion lands.</p>	<p>Tier 1 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Complete new Official Planb) Complete Master Servicing Plan and develop innovative options for financing new infrastructure in collaboration with the private sector
	<p>Tier 2 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">c) Complete agreements associated with boundary expansion landsd) Forge strong relationships with the People of the Six Nations of the Grand River and the County of Brant to support projects that contribute to growth and prosperity
	<p>Tier 3 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A

#6

<p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>A stronger, more diversified tax base and a range of employment opportunities are created.</p>	<p>Tier 1 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Implement recommendations of the building and development process review and proceed according to Council direction, building an “Open for Business” reputation for the City of Brantford
	<p>Tier 2 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">b) Provide support and liaison to local businesses that have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly small businesses in the retail, service, tourism, and restaurant sectorsc) Seek innovative arrangements with the private sector for the provision of new infrastructured) Service industrial areas in boundary expansion lands
	<p>Tier 3 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A

#7

<p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>The City is mitigating its environmental footprint and adapting to climate change.</p>	<p>Tier 1 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Demonstrate the City's commitment to environmental leadership through visible projectsb) Complete the City of Brantford Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Assessment Tool and the five milestones under the Partners for Climate Protection Programc) Redevelop brownfield lands in conjunction with private sector and non-profit organizations which includes community consultation
	<p>Tier 2 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">d) Increase community waste diversion through a green bin programe) Increase investment in flood mitigation and protectionf) Develop partnerships and capacity and achieve funding from other levels of government to construct an anaerobic food and organic waste digester
	<p>Tier 3 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A

#8

<p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>The full potential and community benefits of the Grand River are realized.</p>	<p>Tier 1 Priorities:</p> <p>a) Increase investments in flood mitigation and remediation</p>
	<p>Tier 2 Priorities:</p> <p>b) Continue to advance the Mohawk Lake District in collaboration with the People of the Six Nations of the Grand River</p> <p>c) Revitalize existing parks and create new parks and amenities along the Grand River</p> <p>d) Promote complementary private sector enterprises and increase tourism marketing</p>
	<p>Tier 3 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A

#9

<p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>Dedicated, sustainable spaces are provided for heritage, arts, and culture.</p>	<p>Tier 1 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Update the Municipal Cultural Planb) Complete updates to the Museum Sustainability Planc) Continue to explore cultural opportunities within the Mohawk Lake District
	<p>Tier 2 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">d) Advance a cultural hub in collaboration with arts organizations
	<p>Tier 3 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">e) Proceed with improvements to the Brant County War Memorialf) Promote complementary private sector enterprises and increase tourism marketing for arts, history, culture and sustainable spaces

Next Steps

Council approved their 2021-2022 priorities at their Special Meeting on October 15, 2020. The results have been provided to City of Brantford staff, who will review and provide a report to Council with an implementation plan. This implementation plan will include a summary of required resources to be considered in the 2021 Estimates Process.

As implementation continues, Council has agreed to revisit their priorities regularly. The next review is scheduled for the Fall of 2021 to assess progress, consider changing circumstances, and adjust as necessary.