

## **Making a difference every day**

---

We are proud to present the City of Guelph's 2009 Making a Difference report, in an innovative and environmentally responsible format.

---

## **Welcome from the Mayor and CAO**

We are proud to present the City of Guelph's 2009 Making a Difference report. 2009 was a year in which we made considerable strides towards the achievement of our City's Strategic Plan goals.

Those goals are ambitious and affect all aspects of life in our community. Thanks to the leadership of Guelph's elected officials and the hard work of a talented group of employees, the City is making significant and measurable progress. We are pleased to provide examples of that progress in this report.

We're also proud to share a selection of stories about the unsung heroes in our community who exemplify the City's vision of making a difference. It is the men, women, and organizations like these that make our community such a special place. Guelph continues to make headlines across the country as a caring, safe, intelligent community with an outstanding quality of life. Our accomplishments in 2009 continued that momentum and positioned our city for further success and prosperity in the future.



Karen Farbridge  
Mayor



Hans Loewig  
Chief Administrative Officer



## **Strong leadership, productive partnerships**

*Through strong leadership and effective partnerships, the City of Guelph takes advantage of all of the opportunities open to us in order to benefit residents and the broader community.*

---

Guelph secured \$44.4 million in federal and provincial Infrastructure Stimulus Funds and \$3.6 million in recreational infrastructure funds to complete 25 major projects by March 31, 2011 that will renew our aging infrastructure and create a more beautiful, better functioning, and sustainable city.

---

Implementation of the City's People Practices Strategy continued with wellness, work force planning, diversity and inclusion initiatives.

---

In an exceptionally challenging budget year, facing a revenue shortfall of \$8.1 million in 2010, Council passed a fiscally responsible budget for 2010, with emphasis on keeping property taxes low while protecting City services.

---

New capital planning policies approved by Council signal that the City is doing business differently. Council has established minimum levels of reserves, limits on debt, and reviewed a ranking tool to assess priorities. The policies are designed to maintain the City's excellent credit rating and protect taxpayer affordability, while addressing priority capital needs.

---

About 100 local business and community leaders attended the inaugural Guelph Sustainable Solutions Workshop, the result of a partnership between the City, Guelph Hydro, Chamber of Commerce, University of Guelph, and businesses including The Co-operators, Linamar, McNeil Consumer Healthcare, and Meridian Credit Union. The workshop furthers Guelph's leadership in economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

---

Mayor Farbridge was invited to appear before the federal Standing Committee on Natural Resources to share Guelph's experience with its Community Energy Initiative (CEI). She also gave presentations about the CEI to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Canadian Urban Institute, and Quality Urban Energy Systems of Tomorrow.

---

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy invited Mayor Farbridge to speak about community engagement in Guelph, particularly related to Guelph's growth management planning, as part of its research on collaborative approaches to sustainable development.

---

**Making a Difference in the community**

**Skyline donates land for Habitat home**

Skyline—a local real estate investment trust—donated \$150,000 worth of land to Habitat for Humanity Wellington County. The centrally-located piece of land will provide space for a brand new duplex and give two Guelph families the opportunity to buy a safe and affordable home.

Habitat for Humanity Wellington County has built homes for 14 families in Guelph and Wellington County since its inception in 2000.

## **A diverse and prosperous economy**

*Guelph is a vibrant, growing, historic community that offers a diverse and skilled local workforce, sustainable employment opportunities, and an established economic base.*

---

A new economic development and tourism strategy for Guelph, Prosperity 2020, was developed with extensive community input. The strategy will guide Guelph's economic development and tourism for the next decade.

---

Site servicing began for the Hanlon Creek Business Park, a project that will attract businesses and investment and create approximately 10,000 jobs. The project's environmental protection, enhancement and monitoring exceed that of any other comparable City development.

---

Planning progressed for the Guelph Innovation District, a 1,000-acre site in the City's east end also known as the York District Lands. The vision for the lands includes innovation-sector employment lands integrated with a residential village. The City is close to finalizing a memorandum of understanding with the Province of Ontario, the site's principal landowner.

---



**Making a Difference in the community**

### **Italian Canadian Club raises funds for earthquake relief**

The Italian Canadian Club (ICC) of Guelph raised approximately \$28,000 for L'Aquila Abruzzo earthquake relief, helping victims of an earthquake that took place in central Italy in April 2009. Fundraising efforts included donations from ICC members and an all-day pasta buffet. Donations were also accepted at Guelph's annual Festival Italiano.

## Dollars and sense

*Just like your household budget, the City has to balance its income with its expenses; the day-to-day costs of operations and costs associated with long-term investments and infrastructure.*

*The City of Guelph's 'AA' long-term issuer credit rating was re-affirmed by Standard & Poor's Rating Service. The Rating Services also offered a 'stable' outlook for Guelph.*

### A closer look at what you get for your money

In 2009, the average Guelph household paid about \$232 each month in property taxes. This is divided up to support the following services and facilities:

---

#### **32%**

Access to life-saving services, including fire, ambulance and police, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This past year Emergency Services – Guelph Fire Department responded to 6,670 calls.

---

#### **17%**

Access to social services including affordable housing, employment services, subsidized child care and more, for individuals and families in financial need.

---

#### **14%**

A reliable public transit service that runs seven days a week; and well maintained, paved roads that are plowed in the winter.

Guelph Transit provides public transit along 20 routes throughout the city. Last year, Guelph Transit buses provided 5,933,616 passenger trips.

Each winter the City of Guelph clears snow and spreads salt and sand on 1,200 km of roadways, 660 km of sidewalks, 180 crosswalks, crossings, steps, walkways, and 650 bus stops.

---

#### **11%**

Maintenance of local parks; access to recreation centres with community pools and ice rinks; seasonal museums and the River Run Centre.

Each day the Guelph Public Library's five branches collectively lend out about 5,200 items. At least 2,000 people spend time at the West End Community Centre every day and over one million people use it each year.

---

#### **9%**

Maintenance of City facilities, ongoing access to information, customer service, financial administration, and human resources administration.

**6.5%**

Curbside waste collection, yard waste pick up, access to the Household Hazardous Waste Depot and programs such as the Paint + Reuse Program and electronic waste recycling. Last year the City collected 26,970 tonnes of curbside waste.

**5.5%**

Capital projects such as the South End Emergency Services Station, the Organic Waste Processing Facility, major roads and building repairs. These costs are offset by the City’s investments and other revenue streams.

**4%**

A well designed and organized city that attracts new business and accommodates growth sustainably.

**1%**

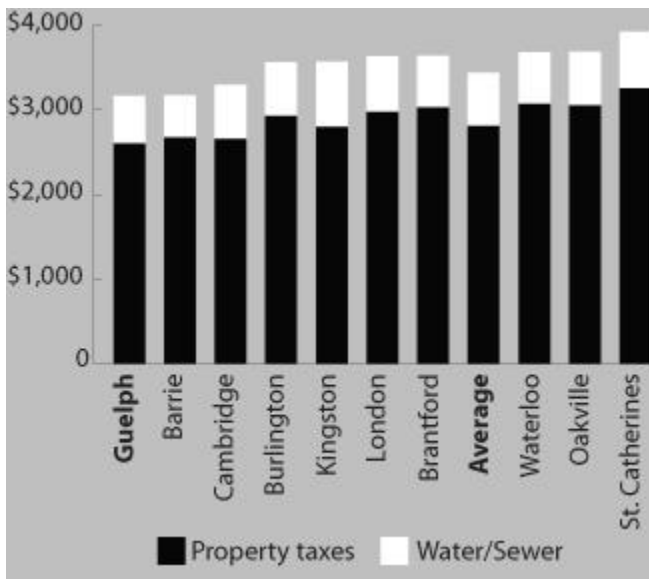
Council members, Mayor and CAO dedicated to strategic planning and priority setting.

*\* Based on average MPAC property assessment of \$257,000, total annual tax bill \$3,433 (\$2,786 for City services and \$647 for Provincial education).*

**How does Guelph measure up?**

*A survey of 82 Ontario municipalities showed that, compared to cities in the area offering the same services per capita, people living in Guelph pay less than the average residential taxpayer.*

**Average Annual Payment for City Services**



*Data Source: BMA Management Consulting 2008 Municipal Study available at [guelph.ca/finance](http://guelph.ca/finance). Average property taxes for single-detached bungalow, average annual water/sewer use 250 m3 with 5/8" service.*

Making a Difference in the community

**Rink Rats pull together to help build Civic Square centerpiece**

A skating rink and water feature in front of City Hall is closer to reality thanks to a \$2 million fundraising campaign led by a group of volunteers called the Rink Rats. The Rink Rats have raised \$1.85 million including a major \$400,000 pledge from the Nicholas Lambden Memorial Children's Foundation. The project also received \$1 million in federal and provincial infrastructure funding.

Construction of the Civic Square will take place in 2010.

## **A community-focused, responsive and accountable government**

*Being innovative, accountable, transparent and professional; always being customer- and service-focused.*

---

Guelph's new City Hall opened, improving service by combining five downtown locations into one. The move to the new City Hall was accomplished seamlessly, with almost no interruptions to service.

- The central ServiceGuelph counter offers a wide range of services, all in one location.
  - Compared to a typical office building, City Hall uses 30 to 40% less water and energy. It was built to meet the LEED Silver Standard, with features that include a green roof, a living wall, water-saving fixtures, and high-efficiency heating and cooling systems.
  - City Hall celebrates Guelph's heritage with architecture that incorporates the historic Winter Fair Wall and the City's old Fire Hall.
- 

The City launched 24-hour online access to residential building permit applications. Homeowners and builders can apply for building permits, schedule inspections, and search for building permit activity on any property in the city—all without having to make the trip to City Hall. Guelph's system is one of the most comprehensive online building permit systems in North America.

---

The Court of Appeal upheld the Superior Court of Justice's decision that the City did not breach its contract with SUBBOR in connection with the termination date for the company's demonstration waste processing plant built beside Guelph's waste facility.

---

To celebrate Local Government Week, Mayor Farbridge welcomed students to City Hall for tours and presentations to Guelph's "future voters," and City staff visited local high schools to talk about municipal-sector careers.

---

The City kept residents informed and engaged with an ever-expanding range of social media tools, including a Facebook page, Twitter updates, YouTube channel, and a Flickr page, in addition to weekly e-News. Mayor Farbridge and several Councillors also maintain blogs.

---

The community consultation phase of the City's Corporate Communications Plan development process was successfully undertaken.

---

Council approved the content of a new Council Governance manual with specific policies and protocols to continuously improve levels of accountability and transparency.

---

Regular performance monitoring and assessment of the enhanced Community Responder program revealed significant improvements to response times and community customer service levels.

---

Making a Difference in the community

### **Guelph water on tap at local events**

To reduce plastic water bottle waste, community event organizers declared a number of annual events 'bottled water free' in 2009.

Municipal drinking water was made available at the Multicultural Festival, Faery Fest, Canada Day celebration, Hillside Festival, Sunlight Music Festival, University of Guelph Homecoming, the Mother Daughter Walk for Heart and Stroke, and the City Hall Grand Opening. Participants were encouraged to bring refillable containers that they could fill with chilled water, free of charge.

## **An attractive, well-functioning and sustainable city**

*Sustainable growth ensures prosperity while maintaining a healthy community.*

---

Renovations are underway to transform Guelph's historic City Hall into the home of Guelph's Provincial Offences Court. The renovation work is uncovering certain heritage features that are being restored and incorporated into the new court.

---

The City's Natural Heritage Strategy progressed well, with the Phase 2 report approved and draft policies developed and released for public input. The Natural Heritage Strategy will provide an inventory of natural features in the City and establish a sustainable greenspace network.

---

Development plans for the former Lafarge lands, a vacant brownfield site, have been successfully modified to include residential components, a reduction in retail space, and lands for parks, trails, and infrastructure. The revised plan is supported by the neighbourhood residents' association and upheld by the Ontario Municipal Board.

---

A new transit terminal on Carden Street will accommodate Guelph Transit buses; inter-city VIA Rail and Greyhound buses; and GO Rail service, which is being extended to Guelph. Federal and provincial infrastructure funding was secured for the project in 2009, and construction will take place in 2010.

---

Work was initiated on the Downtown Secondary Plan process. Implementation strategies will be presented to Council in 2010.

---

Official Plan Amendment 39 was adopted by Council. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing also approved this work making it come into full effect with the exception of the Silvercreek lands. The Official Plan strives to maintain a high quality of life for the residents of Guelph, reduce uncertainty concerning future development, and to provide a basis for the Zoning By-law and other land use controls.

---

Making a Difference in the community

## **Community raises record-breaking amount for the United Way**

During the 2009 Campaign, Guelph and Wellington County raised a record-breaking \$2.66 million for the United Way and the agencies it funds. The total is \$10,000 over the campaign goal announced in September. As a result, 49 local agencies will receive funding from the United Way in 2010.

For almost 70 years, the United Way of Guelph & Wellington has worked to improve the lives of children, youth, adults, families and seniors living in our community.

## **A healthy and safe community**

*The City strives to deliver programs and services that meet the needs of the community and enable residents to live life to the fullest.*

---

Guelph was identified by Statistics Canada as the safest city in Canada, based on the number and severity of crimes. Guelph's score on the Canadian Crime Severity Index is 57.7, and the Canadian average is 90.

---

The Guelph Fire Department celebrated 100 years of service to the Guelph community. In 1909, Guelph had just one fire hall. Today, there are five fire stations (with a sixth under construction), and a fleet of 15 emergency response vehicles. In 2009, the Guelph Fire Department responded to 6,670 calls for service.

---

Council approved the Fire Department Strategic Plan which was developed with input from the community. This document will solidly chart the direction for fire service planning and management for the next five years.

---

The City began direct delivery of ambulance service, which was previously contracted to a private operator. Guelph-Wellington Emergency Medical Service (EMS) provides service to the City of Guelph, County of Wellington, and other areas as required by legislation.

---

The Victoria Road Recreation Centre installed two pieces of accessible fitness equipment designed for people with spinal cord injury, thanks to a donation from the Rick Hansen Foundation. The West End Community Centre also offers accessible equipment.

---

The City purchased, renovated, and opened a new emergency shelter for at-risk youth at 18 Norwich Street East. The facility is operated by Wyndham House under agreement with the City. Efforts are currently underway to increase the number of beds available at the facility from eight to 16.

---

The City partnered with the Volunteer Centre of Guelph/Wellington to develop "Snow Angels", a volunteer service to help seniors and persons with disabilities shovel the snow that plows leave at the end of driveways.

---

The City launched the "Be Nice—Treat the Ice" program, which offers a free salt and sand mixture to residents so that they can keep their sidewalks and their neighbours' sidewalks safe and free from ice.

---

Guelph Transit is developing a new Transit Growth Strategy and Plan for transit and mobility services. In developing a long term vision for transit in Guelph, the system will be analyzed from customer, staff, technical, and policy perspectives.

---

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan was developed and continues to be reviewed and assessed by staff. Recommendations will come forward to Council with a phased response to the Master Plan in 2010.

---



**Making a Difference in the community**

### **Canada's most caring community**

The team at the Guelph Wellington Volunteer Centre has made an exceptional impact on our community, matching volunteers to more than 400 agencies, and providing board training for non-profit agencies and businesses alike.

In fact, Guelph's network of volunteers is so vast that MacLean's Magazine declared it "Canada's most caring community" for its volunteer participation.

## **A vibrant arts, culture and heritage identity**

*Guelph takes pride in its diverse culture, dynamic arts community and rich heritage; all of which contribute to a high quality of life for residents.*

---

1,900 properties were added to the Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Resources. The Register helps the City keep track of its cultural heritage resources and plan for their conservation.

---

The design was finalized for the new 24,000 square foot Guelph Civic Museum which will be housed in the former Loretto Convent. The project received \$6.5 million in provincial and federal funding. Construction began in January 2010, and is expected to be completed in March 2011.

---

Construction began on a new 7,500 square foot Guelph Public Library in the east end of the city to provide residents of the area with easy access to quality library services, collections and programs. The branch will open in mid-2010.

---

Guelph Public Library users borrowed more than 1.7 million items in 2009 - a 7.4% increase over 2007. 5,573 tutoring sessions were logged using the library's free online tutoring service, Homework Help.

---

A Local Immigration Partnership strategy is being developed to make Guelph a more welcoming, inclusive place for newcomers. The strategy is being developed by a group of community leaders with funding from the Government of Canada.

---

The Guelph Police Service released Fingerprints Through Time: A History of the Guelph Police. The book was written by Councillor Leanne Piper and retired Guelph Mercury writers Bob Rutter and John D'Alton, with contributions from many retired officers and families, the Guelph Civic Museum, Guelph Historical Society, and Guelph Public Library.

---

Riverside Park hosted more than 150,000 festival-goers at a number of successful events in the summer of 2009:

- Guelph and District Multicultural Festival
  - FaeryFest
  - Canada Day Celebration
  - Hindu Worship of Fire Deity
  - Sunlight Music Festival
  - RibFest
-

Council approved an operational review of the Farmers' Market By-law to ensure continued success. The Guelph Farmers' Market has been a focal point of the downtown for over 180 years and remains to be a community place where people come to shop for quality meats, cheese, produce, baked goods, preserves, and delicious foods prepared by the vendors.

---



Making a Difference in the community

### **Local students raise money to fight the spread of malaria**

Guelph's John F. Ross Collegiate Vocational Institute is the country's top fundraiser for the Spread the Net Student Challenge, raising more than \$59,000 to fight the spread of malaria in Africa. Due to its outstanding efforts, John F. Ross and its students were on an episode of The Rick Mercer Report.

## **A leader in conservation and resource protection**

*Guelph has a long, distinguished history of environmental stewardship and the City continuously works at developing innovative solutions to protect, preserve and enhance our city's natural features and resources.*

---

Several energy efficiency upgrades were initiated within City facilities. As a result, projected energy savings and greenhouse gas reductions for 2010 will be 2,022,306 ekWh and 592, 536 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> respectively. Upgrades include energy efficient lighting systems, new energy management systems, solar domestic hot water systems, a cogeneration plant, new HVAC units and high efficiency boilers.

---

Major steps were taken on the implementation of Guelph's Community Energy Initiative (CEI); a Think Tank on implementing the CEI, co-hosted by Guelph Hydro and Ontario Centres of Excellence, drew energy experts and stakeholders from Guelph and across the province. A Mayor's Task Force on Community Energy was formed to guide implementation.

---

A green fleet policy steering committee developed three key policies for greening the City's fleet. Together, these policies will result in enhanced fuel efficiency and asset management.

---

A contract to construct the new Organic Waste Processing Facility was signed, and demolition and site servicing work began in the fall. Construction will begin in spring 2010 as soon as the City receives an amended Certificate of Approval from the Ministry of the Environment to allow the City to once again process organic waste. The organics facility is expected to increase Guelph's waste diversion rate by 10%.

---

The City of Guelph celebrated the completion of eight major municipal water system upgrades. Since the introduction of the Safe Drinking Water Act in 2002, more than \$24 million dollars—including funding from the federal and provincial governments—has been invested in Guelph's municipal water infrastructure, allowing the City to provide safe, high quality drinking water to its residents.

---

Council adopted the Water Conservation and Efficiency Strategy Update, which, when implemented, will include a number of new and enhanced rebate programs to encourage water use reduction. The strategy aims to reduce daily water use by 8.7 million litres by 2019, resulting in energy savings of 2.3 million kWh of electricity per year and a reduction of 2,412 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

---

In 2009, the City's Waterworks division celebrated 130 years of providing municipal water to the community. Guelph's municipal drinking water undergoes more than 20,000 health related tests each year to ensure it meets the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards. Guelph residents can take pride in their drinking water—100% of the water from the municipal water system which was tested in 2009 met the provincial drinking water quality standards.

---

The City's electronic waste recycling program was expanded with a permanent bin at the Waste Resource Innovation Centre, so that residents can drop off e-waste at their convenience to have it recycled responsibly.

---

Timelines for completion of the Strategic Urban Forest Management Plan and Tree By-law Update were presented to Council.  
Council approved the 2009 Winter Control Salt Management Plan which meets Environment Canada requirements. The Plan improves the City's winter control operations and assists with source water protection efforts by identifying salt vulnerable areas and encouraging the investigation and implementation of new technologies.

---



**Making a Difference in the community**

### **Annual community clean-up bags close to eight tonnes of litter**

More than 600 volunteers picked up litter during the sixth annual Clean & Green Community Clean Up. More than 1,000 bags of litter and bulky items were collected from neighbourhood streets, green spaces and community parks, helping to ensure more enjoyable common spaces for everyone. Volunteers removed almost eight tonnes of litter during the clean up - an amazing community effort!

## **Recognition and achievements**

*The City strives to make a positive impact both locally and globally through exceptional and inspiring achievements.*

---

Maclean's magazine identified Guelph as the fourth smartest city in Canada, ranking it according to the Canadian Council on Learning's 2009 Composite Learning Index. Guelph placed first in the "learning to live together" category.

---

Guelph was named one of Canada's top ten places to live for University graduates, mid-career professionals, families with children, and retirees. The designation came from Richard Florida, author of *Who's Your City* and director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

---

City of Guelph employees contributed more than \$54,000 to the United Way of Guelph & Wellington.

---

Guelph Police Service members raised more than \$5,600 in support of the "Cops and Kids Christmas" initiative. To date, the Guelph Police have sponsored 35 families and raised more than \$35,000 in support of this effort.

---

The City's 2009 Conservation Calendar was recognized by the Municipal Waste Association as the best municipal calendar. The City also won a silver award for its waste collection vehicle ad campaign, which consists of seasonal program information and recycling tips promoted on waste collection trucks.

---

Readers of the Guelph Tribune voted the City their favourite water supplier in the Readers' Choice Awards.

---

River Run Centre's General Manager, Colleen Clack, was recognized by the Guelph Mercury as one of Guelph's top "40 under 40".

---

The City placed third in its category in the National Commuter Challenge. Participants in Guelph travelled more than 20,000 kilometres using more sustainable transportation methods, and prevented 3,391 kilograms of carbon emissions by choosing not to drive to work.

---

Guelphites used 2.9% less energy than usual during the Count Me In! Community Challenge, a significant improvement over 2008's 0.8% energy reduction.

---

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities appointed Ward 5 Councillor Lise Burcher as its Governance Representative for the Caribbean and Latin America. In this post, Councillor Burcher will advance FCM's international programs in the developing world.

---

Making a Difference in the community

### **Sister Christine appointed to the Order of Canada**

In May 2009, Sister Christine Leyser was invested into the Order of Canada, our country's highest civilian honour to recognize a lifetime of outstanding achievement, dedication to community and service to the nation.

For more than 25 years, Sister Christine has served as a pillar of our community, founding a network of facilities that provide social services, accommodation and a sense of community to those in need. Sister Christine and her team of volunteers are invaluable and a true inspiration to our community.