

Municipality of Lakeshore – Report to Council

Growth and Sustainability

Planning Services



To: Mayor & Members of Council

From: Ryan Donally, Division Leader – Planning Services (acting)

Date: May 1, 2024

Subject: Service Delivery Review – Planning, Engineering, and Building

Recommendation

Direct Administration to develop a detailed workplan and associated costing required to implement the recommendations and actions for Council's consideration, as presented in the Service Delivery Review – Planning, Engineering, and Building Council Report as presented at the May 28, 2024 Council meeting.

Strategic Objectives

Multiple Strategic Objectives are considered by this report including:

1b) Building and Stewarding Municipal Infrastructure

3a) Organize, Store, and Index municipal data to further evidence-based decision-making

3c) Modernizing and Enhancing Municipal Functions

4) Becoming an Economic Leader in Essex County

Background

In the 2023 Budget, Council supported a service delivery review that was funded from the Plans and Studies reserve (Project CAO-23-6639).

In the Fall of 2023, StrategyCorp was retained to conduct a comprehensive Service Delivery Review (SDR) of the provision of planning, engineering, and building services.

The Objectives for the project included:

1. Understand the current state of services by analyzing available data and documents and conducting in-depth 1:1 interviews with senior staff and key stakeholders.
2. Identify peer municipalities to glean insight into practices, policies and procedures which work well in similar jurisdictions facing similar challenges to Lakeshore.
3. Identify key risks to Lakeshore's future growth and development and a set of recommendations to address these risks – include implementation guidance.

Regular meetings took place over the Winter and early Spring months to complete the full service delivery review.

Comments

The results of the Service Delivery Review have been listed below and are detailed in the executive summary of Appendix A – Lakeshore Service Delivery Review Final. Each recommendation is accompanied by high-level implementation activities outlined by the consulting team.

Internal review of the Service Delivery Review has occurred in advance of this report to Council. An internal early-stage workplan for the recommendations and activities has been created and will be refined in the future. For Council's high-level awareness of the current status of implementation of the recommendations, the status has been added in italics. The designations are as follows:

- *Completed*
- *In-Progress*
- *Council Direction Required, and*
- *Future Work.*

Multiple statuses are identified below, as elements of each recommendation may have multiple steps or need multiple departmental buy-in. As noted, the internal implementation plan will be revised pending Council direction and discussion.

Immediate Risks and Recommended Actions

1. **Significant Infrastructure Challenges (*Risk Level – High*):**

The Municipality has reached a critical juncture with respect to infrastructure, specifically concerning municipal water and wastewater management, as it currently lacks the capacity to service any new development.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Establish Taskforce: Convene stakeholders to explore funding options, including partnerships and grants.
Status of implementation - In-Process and Council Direction Required

- b. Develop Financing Plan: Create a financing plan for the Water and Wastewater Master Plan.
Status of implementation - In-Process and Council Direction Required
- c. Implement Capacity Policy: Set transparent criteria for water and wastewater allocation.
Status of implementation - In-Process and Council Direction Required

2. Chronic Workforce Challenges (Risk Level – High):

Lakeshore’s Engineering, Building, and Planning Divisions experience chronic turnover and difficulty filling vacant positions due to challenging organizational culture. This has led to knowledge and skills gaps. In addition, Administration notes that there is a lack of qualified applicants due to a competitive job market in the region and in the province as whole. Using consultants to fill the vacancies and gaps can be challenging and leads to lengthening the review processes.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Professional Development: Conduct workshops for staff, fostering continuous learning.
Status of implementation - In-Process and Future Work
- b. Improve Recruitment: Expand efforts to attract diverse talent, ensuring competitive pay rates.
Status of implementation - In-Process and Council Direction Required
- c. Hybrid Work Models: Explore options for flexibility and productivity, responding to staff requests.
Status of implementation - In-Process and Council Direction Required

3. Team Dynamic and Process Integration Challenges (Risk Level – Med/High):

Tense internal team dynamics and a lack of integration among the Planning, Building, and Engineering departments pose significant hurdles to workflow efficiency.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Cloudpermit Implementation: Define new interdepartmental operating procedures for software setup.
Status of implementation - Complete and In-Process
- b. Technology Solutions: Utilize Office 365 and cloud-based platforms for communication/project management.
Status of implementation - In-Process
- c. Cross-Division Project Secretariat: Form secretariat to enhance interdepartmental coordination.
Status of implementation - Future Work

4. Lack of Long-Term Strategic Vision (*Risk Level – Med/High*):

The absence of a clear long-term strategic vision (economic ambitions, rural vs. urban, land use planning, etc.) poses a serious barrier to proper planning, resource allocation, and risk management.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Growth and Development Roadmap: Align Official Plan with strategic priorities. Prioritize key projects.
Status of implementation - In-Process and Future Work
- b. Infrastructure Plan: Develop long-term infrastructure strategy, updated every 5 years.
Status of implementation - In-Process and Future Work
- c. Environmental Assessments: Integrate comprehensive assessments for sustainable development.
Status of implementation - In-Process and Future Work

5. Planning Operational Challenges (*Risk Level – Low*):

It was observed that there are inefficient processes and a lack of documented procedures within the Planning Division, which may lead to further risk, including legal liability due to process violation.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Review Processes: Use Cloudpermit implementation (see 3A) to develop new planning-specific processes.
Status of implementation - Complete
- b. Develop Online Resources: Provide self-serve resources online to reduce administrative burden.
Status of implementation - In-Process
- c. Communications Strategy: Use transparent channels like a website or newsletter to manage expectations.
Status of implementation - In-Process

Overarching Risk:

The impact of the above risks may lead developers to pursue alternative opportunities outside of Lakeshore, potentially resulting in the loss of development charges. The loss of this revenue would threaten Lakeshore's ability to pay its existing loans.

Implemented Work – Planning Stabilization Team

On Monday, January 29th, 2024, considering significant challenges within the Planning Division, CAO McBride informed Council that he had initiated a Planning Stabilization Team that was to be led by Division Leader of Community Planning (acting). The scope

of this work segued well into the planned scope of work as outlined in the StrategyCorp. Several recommendations made in the final SDR have already been actioned by the Planning Stabilization Team and were noted above with either a Completed or In-Progress designation. Additional detail will be provided to Council in subsequent reports.

Next Steps

As noted in the report, immediate next steps include:

1. Priority Setting: Quickly identify and prioritize recommendations based on their urgency and potential impact.
2. Resource Allocation: Allocate necessary budget and personnel to lead and support the initiatives.
3. Work Planning: Develop concise planning templates outlining accountabilities, timelines, and key performance measures for each initiative.

Financial Impacts

Pending Council Direction, a detailed implementation plan will be created. This implementation plan will outline if any subsequent funding requests will be made to Council.

Attachments

Appendix A – Service Delivery Review – Planning, Engineering, and Building StrategyCorp Report

Report Approval Details

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| Document Title: | Service Delivery Review - Planning, Engineering, and Building.docx |
| Attachments: | - Appendix A – Service Delivery Review – Planning, Engineering, and Building StrategyCorp Report.pdf |
| Final Approval Date: | May 17, 2024 |

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Prepared by Ryan Donally

Submitted by Tammie Ryall

Approved by the Corporate Leadership Team