

Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands

Service Delivery Review – Executive Summary Report

December 23rd, 2021



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Understanding our Methodology

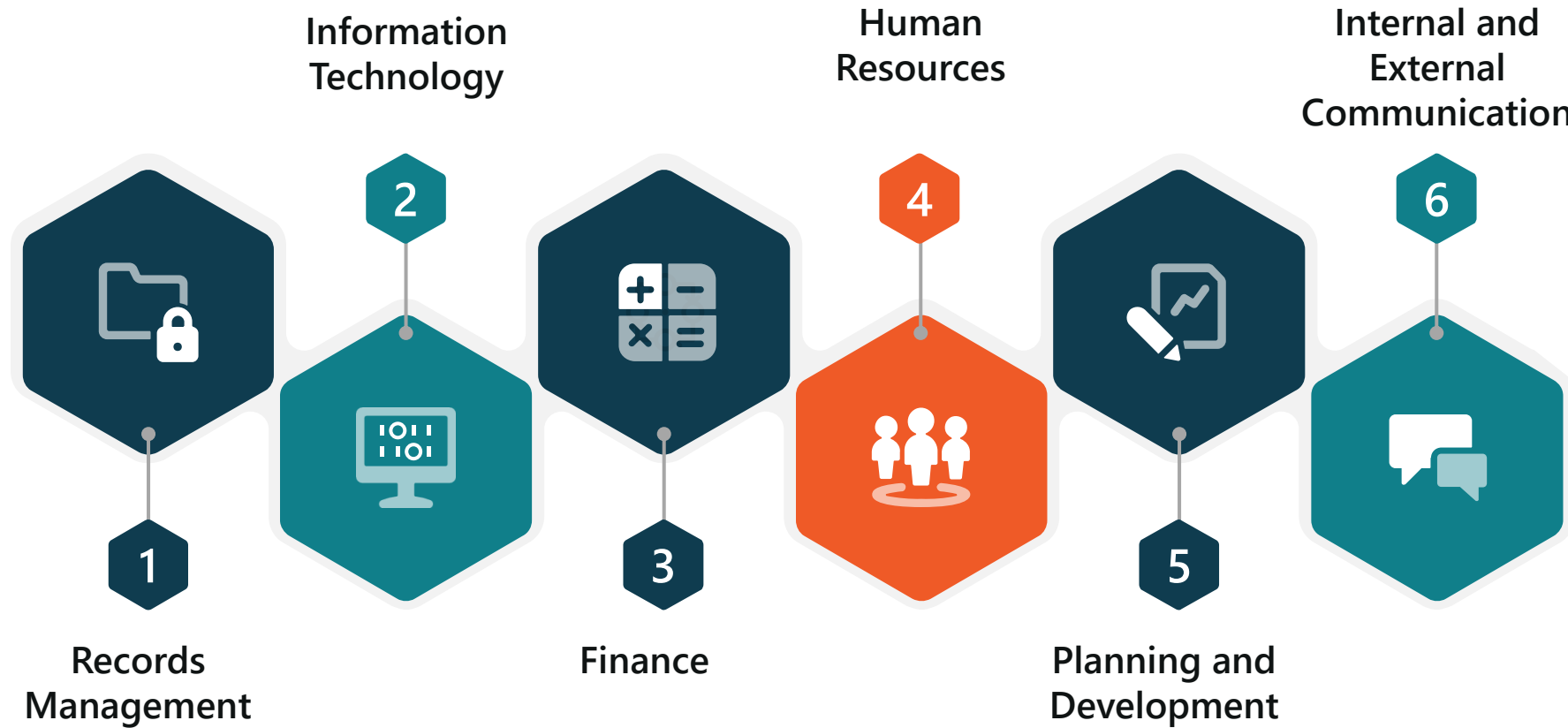


The Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands (TLTI) engaged MNP LLP (MNP) - a Canadian accounting, tax and consulting firm - to conduct a service delivery review that summarizes a current state assessment and offers recommendations to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of TLTI. The goal of this engagement is to identify inefficiencies, barriers and poor processes/practices, and provide corresponding recommendations for improvement. The recommendations outlined in this report support TLTI's first strategic Pillar *Delivering Effective and Accountable Government*.



Service Delivery Review - Scope of Work

The following six (6) focus areas were the focus of this service delivery review:



Current State Assessment - Financial Overview



Property taxes are the major source of revenue for the Township. This is typically positive as too much reliance on government transfers and funding can be risky given political uncertainties. Additionally, the Township currently holds the second-lowest property tax rate in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. Only \$0.40 of every \$1.00 received in taxes is available to the Township, with the remainder being distributed to the County and school boards.

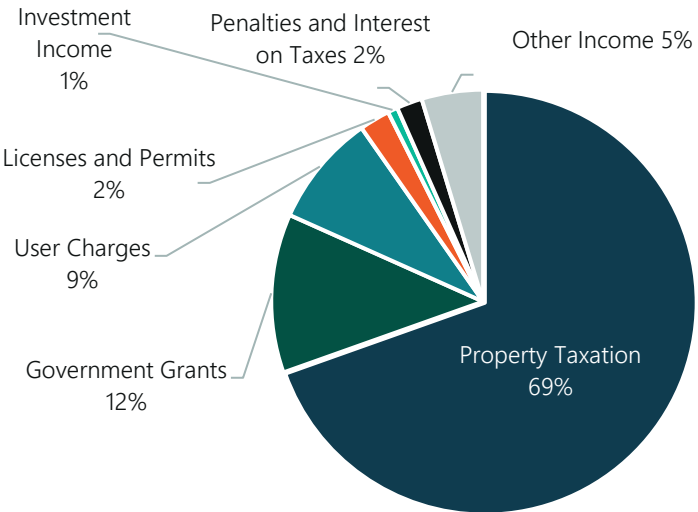
According to the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario's (FAO) *Ontario Municipal Finances' report*, municipalities/townships with populations up to 10,000 residents are expected to have a median budget surplus equivalent to 5.3% of revenues in 2020 and 2021. With a 2020 operating surplus of \$467,404 - equivalent to 3.27% of revenue - the Township measures below this median and thus should rely on a long-term funding strategy to meet future capital requirements.

The expenditures pie chart shows a relatively healthy distribution of expenditures between Protection to Persons and Property, Transportation Services, Environmental Services, General Government and other expenses. The largest operational expenditure is Police services, which are outsourced to the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), meaning the Township has less control over service costs.

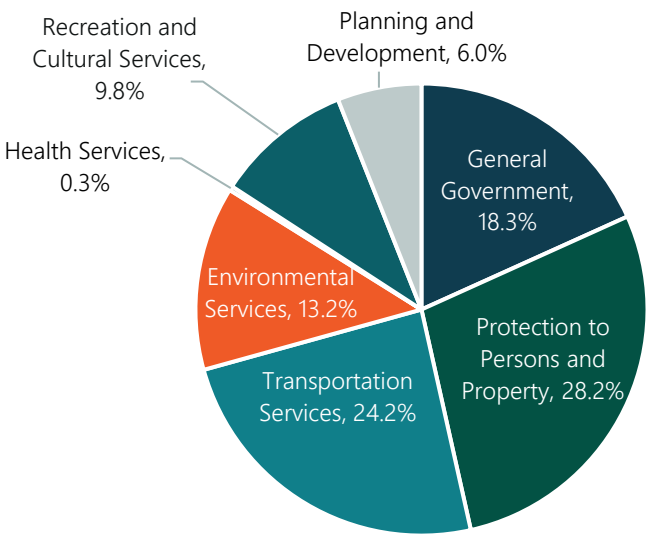
The Township showcases overall healthy financial management practices, with strong opportunities to continue improving service delivery levels, sustained by property tax increases and other sources of revenue, as appropriate.



2020 Audited Revenue:
\$14,306,544



2020 Audited Operating Expenditures:
\$13,839,140



Current State Assessment – Key Findings



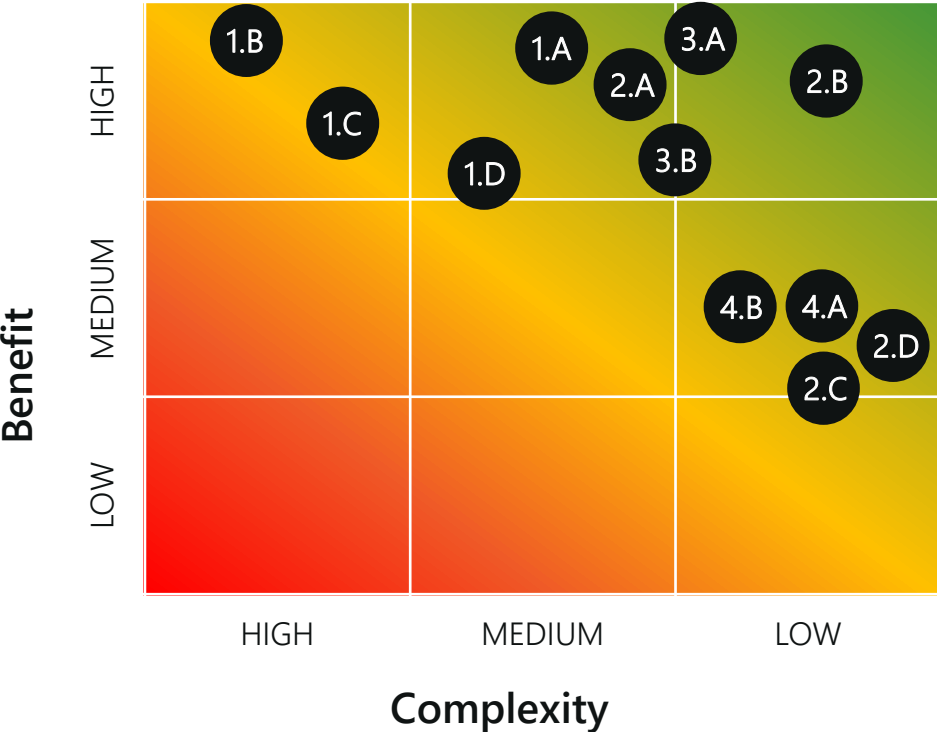
Based on MNP’s assessment of the current state of the Township - guided by information gathered through interviews, document review and additional research - the following key findings emerged and influenced the service delivery improvement recommendations.

Strengths	Challenges
<p>Immediate Priority Alignment - Key priorities and major points of concern are well known across management, which is actively looking for ways to improve internal operations and do more with the resources available to the Township.</p> <p>Digital Environment - Significantly reduced paper-based operations. This crucial first step towards a successful digitization of the Township's records management places the Township ahead of other municipalities/ townships when it comes to technology implementation.</p> <p>Updated Hardware – Recent replacement and tracking of hardware and useful life of these assets has proven crucial in ensuring staff have access to the appropriate resources to work efficiently in a remote environment.</p> <p>Information Availability - Financial information is recorded in a detailed and clean manner, making information readily available to TLTI. This increases transparency and accountability, while being conducive to proactive analysis to support budget improvements and operational efficiencies.</p> <p>Improved Connection Across Departments - There has been an active effort to better integrate TLTI's Departments into relevant conversations and processes, with the Fire Department being a notable example.</p>	<p>Information Misplacement Risk - Ineffective policies and procedures lead to an increased risk for misplaced information. This includes the misplacement or misfiling of documentation.</p> <p>Information Technology Resource/Knowledge/Strategy Gap - There is no dedicated staff for the IT function. Instead, the CAO and Director of Finance currently share responsibilities for this function. While effort is being placed to ensure policies are updated and systems work appropriately, the staff at the Township are working beyond their expertise and capacity to incorporate best practices and define IT policies.</p> <p>Atypical Technology - The Township utilizes business-focused database software for finance data and processes. This is atypical of financial technologies utilized across other organizations.</p> <p>Lack of Human Resources Expertise - The CAO is currently responsible for the HR function but does not have the expertise or certifications to incorporate best practices within HR Policies and Procedures. Currently, HR processes and procedures are based on an existing HR manual which requires review and update to reflect current standards.</p> <p>Informal Processes for Planning Applications - Application commentary is required from a variety of stakeholders and is currently submitted from each department/agency primarily through email communications, which can be time-consuming and inefficient to review.</p> <p>Decentralized Corporate Communications - There are currently no dedicated staff resources to a corporate communications function. Instead, each department develops and issues their own communications as required. As a result, there is no corporate oversight or review communications being released to the public.</p>

Recommendation Prioritization Summary



MNP developed four (4) types of recommendations - further broken down into twelve (12) suggested sub-recommendations below - for TLTI to consider. The recommendations are based on municipal service delivery best practices and focus on strengthening the six (6) identified focus areas. Below is a 3x3 matrix that illustrates the value and ease of implementation of these recommendations. This matrix was used to define quick wins versus long-term implementation activities.



Recommendations:

1. Technology Recommendations

- 1.A IT Strategy Review and Implementation Plan
- 1.B Effective Modern Electronic Content Management (ECM) system
- 1.C Online permits/application submission and tracking tools
- 1.D Online Payment System to be used across the Township

2. Strategy Recommendations

- 2.A Detailed Records Management Transformation Strategy
- 2.B Formalized review timelines and procedural guidelines and standards around commentary for processes under the Planning and Development Department
- 2.C Process map tools for all new/updated Planning and Development Department processes
- 2.D Standardize frequency and method of external communications

3. Recruitment Recommendations

- 3.A Human Resource Manager
- 3.B IT officer

4. Staff Training Recommendations

- 4.A Formalized Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- 4.B Formalized current succession plans and training materials

1. Technology - Immediate Priorities

The following recommendations should be commenced within the next 3-9 months, provided the Township can secure adequate resources.



Recommendation 1.A (2022 Q1 – 2023 Q1)

Conduct an IT Strategy Review and Implementation Plan to improve service delivery and streamline business processes through technology across the Township



Recommendation 1.B (2022 Q3 – 2023 Q2)

Establish an Effective Modern Electronic Content Management (ECM) system as part of Phase 2 of the IT Strategy and Implementation Plan



1. Technology – Long-Term Priorities

The following recommendations should be commenced in the longer-term, provided the Township can secure adequate resources.

2023
(Q4)

Recommendation 1.C (2023 Q4)

Consider implementing online permits/application submission and tracking tools for both internal and applicant use

Records
Management

Information
Technology

Finance

Human Resources

Planning and
Development

Internal and
External
Communication



2024
(Q1)

Recommendation 1.D (2024 Q1)

Consider Implementing an Online Payment System to be used across the Township

Records
Management

Information
Technology

Finance

Human Resources

Planning and
Development

Internal and
External
Communication



2. Strategy - Immediate Priorities

The following recommendations should be commenced within the next 3-9 months, provided the Township can secure adequate resources.



Recommendation 2.A (2022 Q3 – 2023 Q1)

Develop a detailed Records Management Transformation Strategy that leverages industry best practices to strengthen records management across the Township

Records Management	Information Technology	Finance	Human Resources	Planning and Development	Internal and External Communication
✓	✓				

2. Strategy – Long-Term Priorities

The following recommendations should be commenced in the longer-term, provided the Township can secure adequate resources.



Recommendation 2.B (2023 Q3)

Formalize current application review timelines and procedural guidelines and standards for applications under the Planning and Development Department to meet established key performance indicators

Records Management	Information Technology	Finance	Human Resources	Planning and Development	Internal and External Communication
✓	✓			✓	✓



Recommendation 2.C (2024 Q1)

Build process map tools for all new/updated Planning and Development Department processes to reflect department interconnectivities and role of newly implemented technologies and improved policies

Records Management	Information Technology	Finance	Human Resources	Planning and Development	Internal and External Communication
✓	✓			✓	✓

2. Strategy – Long-Term Priorities (Continued)

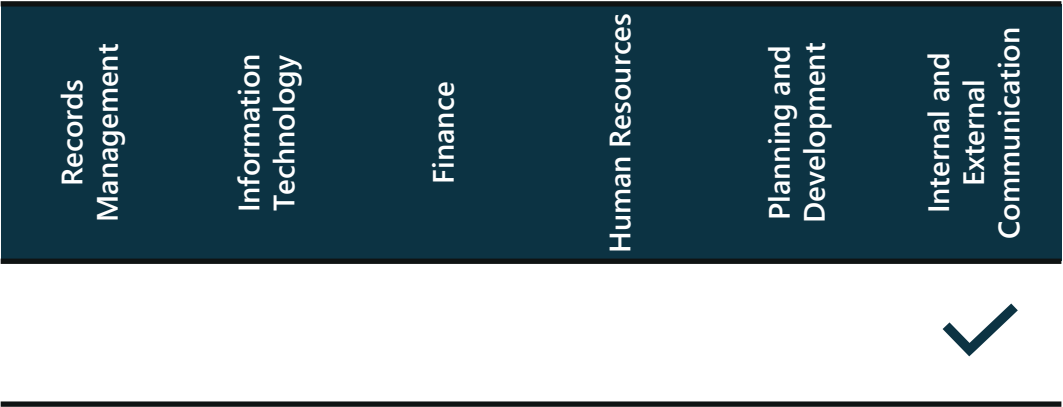


The following recommendations should be commenced in the longer-term, provided the Township can secure adequate resources.



Recommendation 2.D (2023 Q4)

Standardize frequency and method of external communications



3. Recruitment - Immediate Priorities

The following recommendations should be commenced within the next 3-9 months, provided the Township can secure adequate resources.

2022
(Q1)

Recommendation 3.A (2022 Q1 – 2022 Q2)

Hire a full-time Human Resource Manager that is responsible for HR and internal communications to centralize people and information governance and provide internal expertise to ensure compliance with policies, industry best practices, and legislated requirements

Records
Management

Information
Technology

Finance

Human Resources

Planning and
Development

Internal and
External
Communication



2022
(Q1)

Recommendation 3.B (2022 Q1)

Hire an IT officer on contract to support the implementation of technology recommendations outlined in this report and revise IT policies and procedures based on municipal best practices

Records
Management

Information
Technology

Finance

Human Resources

Planning and
Development

Internal and
External
Communication



4. Staff Training – Long-Term Priorities

The following recommendations should be commenced in the longer-term, provided the Township can secure adequate resources.



Recommendation 4.A (2024 Q1 – 2024 Q2)

Develop formalized Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to support staff buy-in and training for the transformed records management function



Recommendation 4.B (2023 Q1 – 2023 Q3)

Develop formalized succession plans and training materials



Next Steps

The following actions are recommended:

1. Council accepts MNP's Service Delivery Review Recommendation Report as a broad road map for the Township's strategic service delivery over the next 3 years.
2. The recommendations be reviewed by the Senior Management Team and future workplans and budgets allocate resources for each activity, as required.
3. As recommendations are advanced, staff report to council regarding timing and key milestones required to implement each of the activities. These reports may be submitted to Council for review and approval in sequence, based on the implementation road map set out in the Report.

Thank You



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