CITY OF
Burlington

SUBJECT: Information Management Strategy

TO: Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.

FROM: Office of the City Clerk

Report Number: CL-13-21

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers:

Date to Committee: November 10, 2021

Date to Council: November 23, 2021

Recommendation:

Receive and file the information management report from Ergo Group Inc. attached as appendix A, and the Information Management Strategy attached as appendix B to office of the city clerk report CL-13-21.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide information related to the Information Management (IM) Strategy.

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Background and Discussion:

The Burlington Leadership Team approved the Information Management Strategy in February 2021 (Attached as Appendix B). The strategy's vision is that "City information is reliable, available, managed and protected, driving effective decision making, and service delivery." The strategy builds upon the 2019 information management assessment conducted by Ergo Group Inc, and its recommended five-year road map (Attached as Appendix A) designed to improve information practices and enhance the City's overall information management maturity rate.

It is important that Council receive and understand both documents as they form the foundation of information management for the City of Burlington and sets the stage for report CL-27-21 the new Information Management Policy (approval required). As an introduction, the report provides the legislative framework, a comprehensive timeline, and introduces both the Ergo report and the Information Management Strategy. Both documents will work in concert with each other to help the organization more effectively manage and steward its information, through initiatives that will span over the next several years.

Legislative Framework

Managing the City's records and information is complex, not only due to the organizational context required to be preserved, but also the quantity of the content required to be accessible. In addition, there are many sources of legislation that govern the management of City information including the:

- *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25* as amended, requires the City to retain and preserve the records of the municipality and its local boards in a secure and accessible manner in accordance with a retention schedule. This Act does not allow the destruction of City information unless it is governed by authorized retention rules

- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended*, requires that the Head, the City Clerk as designated by Council, ensure that reasonable measures respecting the records in the custody or under the control of the institution are developed, documented and put into place to preserve the records in accordance with any recordkeeping or records retention requirements, rules or policies, and

- various provincial and federal statutes specific to the City's various lines of business including, but not limited to, the;
    - Building Code Act,
    - National Fire Prevention and Protection Act,
    - Ontario Health and Safety Act,
    - Employment Standards Act, and
    - Planning Act.

Like infrastructure and human assets, records and information must be effectively managed to be compliant with law and meet the growing public interest in how government records are kept. Information and the ability to retrieve and recall it, is the cornerstone of effective government and plays a prominent role in customer service and supports open government principles.

City's Strategic Planning for Records and Information

The City's Records and Information Management (RIM) Program was established in 1997 to fulfill the legislative requirements referred to above. Over the years the concept of records management has evolved as the types, and format of information that can be recorded, has grown. While the City has been successful in managing its paper records program, electronic records, email and structured data present a unique set of challenges.

The following list of previous reports demonstrates the evolution of information management practices at the City.

- 2011 internal auditor's report CA-09-11 recommending a *strategic approach to records management* followed by the 2012 clerk's department report CL-23-12, in response, which lead to the Council approving a records management policy and strategy.

- 2016 the City adopted its [Corporate Information Technology (IT) Strategy](#) which set a goal to adopt a culture where information is treated as an asset. The IT Strategy identified that coordinating an over-arching information management (IM) program was needed to invest and treat information and data as assets, to leverage their use in evidence-based decision making.

- 2017 the City formed an Information Governance (IG) Committee, a subcommittee reporting to the Burlington Leadership Team (BLT) to review policy and be responsible for generating strategic actions and the oversight of IM priorities, which supports information as a corporate asset. The IG Committee consists of representatives from across the organization and is still in action at present.

- In response to the unique challenges of electronic records, email and data, in 2018 staff retained professional Information Management consultants to review the City's information program, assess its information maturity and provide a road map of improvement recommendations.

- The City has placed a great emphasis on digital transformation, moving from a paper-based, often manual approach, to collection and use of information that can be leveraged and shared with greater ease. This is reflected in the Vision to Focus Strategic Plan and demonstrates the renewed commitment and corporate approach to managing information.

The Importance of Managing Information

Once created, information must be maintained in such a way that it will meet operational requirements by all that rely on it. This means that there must be effective tools to find and retrieve stored information, as well as to amend and share it. There must also be

rules established for how long the information must be kept, called retention, and required by the *Municipal Act*, in section 254. At the expiry of the established retention, i.e., at the end of its operational value to the City, it may be securely destroyed with proper sign-off for auditing purposes, unless it has continuing value as an historical or archival resource.

The benefits of managing information are numerous. It enables:

- Improved leverage/ return on investment (ROI) of the City's technology investments,
- Increased efficiency – having the right information at the right time,
- Improved effectiveness/performance – having the right information at right time,
- Enhanced customer service and the opportunity of self-serve options,
- Enhanced creativity and innovation, and
- Ensured compliance (legal and regulatory).

It is the mandate of the City's IG Committee, led collaboratively by the City Clerk and Chief Information Officer (CIO) to raise the awareness and importance of information and data governance at the City, to promote a collaborative and transparent approach to effective corporate information management, and provide guidance to initiatives that involve information and data to ensure consistency of data sources and information best practices are in place.

While the Chief Information Officer (CIO) is responsible for the hardware and technical supports of infrastructure and security, the information and data contained in technology systems is owned by the department or service business area. Assistance with the management of such information through its lifecycle is provided by the IM program (City Clerk).

Similar studies regarding the state of the City's master data management as it relates to property, asset, customer, finance and person data domains have been conducted and echo the need for greater governance, standardization and consistency.

Further definitions, record-keeping principles, the information lifecycle and corporate repositories are provided in the Practical Tip Card for Managing Information, attached to this report as Appendix C.

Information Maturity Assessment (2018-2019)

In October 2018, Request for Proposal (RFP 206-18) was awarded to the Ergo Group Inc. (Ergo) for consultant services to perform an independent assessment of current IM practices in the corporation. This type of assessment is common, with Ergo completing similar engagements for the Region of Durham, City of Oshawa and City of Guelph.

Throughout 2018 and 2019 Ergo conducted their assessment which included engaging with staff to document and assess the City's practices for managing information and to prepare a report with recommendations and deliverables for the City's consideration. Their assessment, attached as Appendix A revealed that while progress has been made in developing and implementing a corporate Records Information Management (RIM) Program, much work remains to be done to improve the lifecycle management of the City's physical and unstructured electronic records and its structured data.

The IG Committee validated the assessment report in June 2019 and participated in the report finalization workshop. Subsequently Ergo completed their report in September 2019, which provides a 5-year roadmap designed to increase the maturity of information practices at the City.

Ergo concluded that using the Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles® of analysis, the City rated a score of 1.875 on a five-point scale across the eight Principles, reinforcing the need for improvements.

Strategy/process

In early 2020, after consultation with the IG Committee, staff conducted a review of the findings of Ergo's road map to align its priorities with a reliance on electronic records, onboarding process changes and virtual training and development opportunities required to support remote work and e-services of programs and services caused by the pandemic.

An Information Management (IM) Strategy, attached as Appendix B, was established that took into account past strategies and puts forward clearly defined goals and objectives that will allow the City to leverage information and reflects its value in evidence-based decision-making and enhanced service delivery.

The IM Strategy was approved by Burlington Leadership Team in February 2021 and is provided to Committee for context. The Strategy outlines the framework and necessary milestones required to improve maturity as recommended by Ergo. More importantly it establishes a vision, that the City should aspire to along its information management journey. Much like the Ergo report, the Strategy provides for four areas of focus:

- Establishing information governance
- Enhancing information protection
- Improving the availability of information, and
- Simplifying information management

The Strategy broadened the scope from the previous 2012 strategy that focused on records, typically physical paper records, to other forms of information. The constant growth of information and new technologies is changing the way the City does business

and the Strategy reflects an agile approach. The four goals and corresponding initiatives are designed to incrementally move the City towards the information management vision that,

> *City information is reliable, available, managed and protected, driving effective decision-making and service delivery.*

The recommendations contained in the Ergo report and reflected in the Strategy are intended to address the following risks and gaps:

- Independent and overlapping silos/systems of information
- Ad hoc practices resulting in a lack of consistency on where information is saved and how (challenges with maintaining .msg files as "records")
- Information not being managed through its lifecycle and poor adoption of the records retention schedule
- Exclusion of structured data from lifecycle policies and lack of best practices applied to structured data
- Lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities and corporate ability to apply "open by design" principles
- Challenges responding to information requests and issues with searching due to proliferation of records, and multiple levels of embedded attachments, etc.

The actions in the Strategy to manage electronic information are iterative in approach. Over time they will result in cost savings for the City, not only due to reductions in costs to store paper records off-site, also reduced productivity of employees spending time to search, locate and confirm the master source of truth.

Since the development of the road map and Strategy, staff have been successful in achieving many objectives including,

- expanding the IG Committee Mandate to include Data Management
- updating and expanding IM program coverage during onboarding
- developing Destruction Hold Procedure and Keep Records of Destruction Holds
- requiring departments to certify FOI request searches
- ensuring sufficient Notices for Personal Information collection are contained on all forms and surveys
- advocating and participating in Privacy Impact Assessments, and
- developing a Personal Information Bank Index

Resources to Implement

The 2021 initiatives in the IM Strategy were approved by the Burlington Leadership Team and focus on foundation building, providing much needed education and training on information lifecycle management, reviewing policies with the lens of mitigating risks, and developing standards and consistent business processes that reflect information management best practices (i.e. adoption and filing in accordance with the City's retention schedule).

While the necessary work and resources to complete the 2021 objectives to establish a foundation will be primarily borne by staff in the Information Management section and the Information Technology Services (ITS) department, it must be acknowledged that as every employee creates corporate records, organizational participation in improving information practices and managing information through its lifecycle, is required. This involves changing business practices, often long-established and ingrained in people's way of working. It was acknowledged by the Burlington Leadership Team that a corporate commitment and accountabilities are required to ensure that the momentum and implementation of the Strategy is maintained.

In future years (2023 and beyond) when implementation of an enterprise information management system(s) is anticipated, it is recognized that additional resources will be necessary and budgeted accordingly.

Resources required will form part of the Designing and Evolving Our Organization (DEOO) program and will continue to form part of an evolution in the Office of the City Clerk, designed to support the principles of open government. In concert, resources in the Business Intelligence (BI) program, will be required to leverage and use information, analytics and statistics, more broadly.

Implementation Plan Progress Update

The Strategy represents an investment in staff and aims to equip them with the necessary tools, education, training and guidance to better manage their information. This is primarily achieved through a comprehensive communication program being implemented in partnership with Corporate Communications consisting of internal awareness messaging and education and training opportunities.

The Strategy is being implemented using ADKAR principles of change management techniques, focusing on ensuring awareness of information management principles and the City's Manager of Corporate Strategy and Continuous Improvement is a member of the IG Committee.

In addition, the Strategy is agile in its approach to take into consideration staffing impacts of other corporate projects. As the goals and objectives are not linear in

sequence, gains can be made in areas of policy development and training if tactical resources are stretched and business processes must shift.

Success of the Strategy objectives will mean that departments can provide better information and services to the public and it provides for the ability of the City to leverage its information so that accurate, complete and consistent master sources of truth can be used for data-driven services and analytical reporting.

Key metrics can be tracked including customer service response rates, delivery times for routine disclosure and access to information requests, enhanced and clean data sets available to use in business intelligence, and reductions to offsite storage.

Council receipt of the information is a necessary step in implementing the Strategy. Endorsement by Council demonstrates to the public, the importance of managing information corporately to provide excellent customer service and commitment to being accountable and transparent. It represents a commitment by staff to uphold these values through the work that they will be completing in the next five years.

Regular updates to Council on an annual basis of the IM Strategy objectives will occur, along with new reporting on the state of the access and privacy program.

Options Considered

In preparing this report Staff considered whether to provide the Ergo report in its entirety for Council's consideration or simply prepare a summary. Staff consulted various municipal comparators including the City of Guelph, City of Oshawa, Region of York and Region of Durham who all provided the detailed assessment and report findings.

The Ergo report provides necessary context on the information practices in place at the City, and that great efforts were made to combine the recommendations in the report where they continued be of significant relevance in processes that evolved due to the pandemic.

Financial Matters:

There are no financial implications associated with the approval of this report.

The necessary work and resources to complete the 2021 objectives to establish a foundation will be primarily borne by staff in the Information Management section and the Information Technology Services (ITS) department.

Additional staffing resources will be required in future years (2023 and beyond) for the Office of the City Clerk and Information Technology. Any requests for additional staffing will form part of the annual budget process, and the City's DEOO program.

Climate Implications

Reducing the printing of physical paper records contributes to lowering greenhouse gas emissions and provides cost savings to the City both in terms of off-site records storage centre and transfer/transport from the centre to City Hall, supplies and printing devices. In contrast, studies are emerging of the harmful impacts of the energy needed for internet and electronic devices, the rapid growth of discarded devices and negative effects of e-waste.

Engagement Matters:

Through the developing of the IM Strategy, the IG Committee was vital to ensuring that the Ergo report recommendations were examined considering the increased reliance on new electronic processes and workload. The IG Committee is composed of membership across the organization.

Partnership with Engagement occurred to refresh the assessment of information practices and Corporate Communications has been critical to introducing the Strategy and ensuring the monthly communication and awareness campaign is implemented.

Development of the Strategy and resource needs occurred in consultation with Managers and Directors in departments impacted.

Conclusion:

The Ergo report identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of the current Records and Information Management (RIM) program and provides key findings. It identifies the information governance maturity model ratings for the City when benchmarked against industry standards and the City scored a 1.875 average maturity score out of five across the eight principles.

The recommendations in the report were evaluated in light of impact on e-services and electronic records due to the pandemic. This resulted in a revised IM Strategy, attached as Appendix B to this report.

Historically, RIM practices were developed to manage paper records. The majority of information today is born digital. Therefore, the City must ensure practices are in place to ensure corporate information assets are secure and accessible over time.

The commitment to managing corporate information is reflected in both the Information Technology (IT) Corporate Strategic Plan and the IM Strategy.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

    A. Ergo Group Inc. Report
    B. IM Strategy
    C. Managing Information Practical Tip Card

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.