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Agenda
Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee

November 12, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
City Hall - 808 2nd Avenue East - Council Chambers

The public can attend meetings in person. Meetings will also be livestreamed on the City's Council and Committee webpage. If there are technical issues with the livestream that can't be fixed within 15 minutes, the meeting will continue, and a recording will be available later, on the webpage or by contacting the City Clerk. People who can't attend the meeting in person for Public Forum, should send their comments to the Recording Secretary one business day before the meeting. These comments will be shared with members and included in the updated agenda.

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11. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION

There are no correspondence items being presented for information.

12. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

14. ADJOURNMENT

Minutes

Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee

September 10, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
City Hall - 808 2nd Avenue East - Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Chair Ian Boddy Vice Chair Marion Koepke Councillor Melanie Middlebro' Scott Greig
STAFF PRESENT:	Tim Simmonds, City Manager Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works and Engineering Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk Christina McLean, Committee and Executive Support Coordinator

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Boddy called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

There was no additional business.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.a Minutes of the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee meeting held on July 9, 2025

4.b Minutes of the Closed Session Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee meeting held on July 9, 2025

4.c Minutes of the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee meeting held on July 16, 2025

SR-250910-001
Moved by Vice Chair Koepke

"THAT the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee approves the minutes of the following meetings:

1. **The Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee meeting held on July 9, 2025;**
2. **The closed session of the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc meeting held on July 9, 2025; and**
3. **The Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc meeting held on 16, 2025."**

Carried.

5. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

There were no deputations or presentations.

6. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no questions or comments from the public.

7. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR WHICH DIRECTION IS REQUIRED

There were no correspondence items presented for consideration.

8. REPORTS OF CITY STAFF

8.a Report CR-25-105 from the Director of Corporate Services Re: Current State Assessment and M365 Optimization Roadmap - Update

The Director of Corporate Services provided an overview of the report.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Allan noted that the financial impacts for the recommended phase 2 projects are between $40,000 and $100,000 which are already in the software transformation budget and clarified that these are not additional funds being requested.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Allan noted that the large range of costs is due to the variable of how much work can be done internally versus through consultants.

SR-250910-002
Moved by Councillor Middlebro'

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-25-105 respecting Current State Assessment and M365 Optimization Roadmap – Update for Committee, the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes."

Carried.

9. MATTERS POSTPONED

9.a Report CR-25-106 from the City Clerk Re: Project 1c5 - Provision of By-law Services - Staffing

The City Clerk provided a presentation on Project 1c5 - Provision of By-law Services.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Bloomfield clarified that a part-time permanent position would be a year-round position working 3 days a week, and that the days and hours would be determined as needed operationally.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Allan noted that the contract for parking enforcement costs approximately $50,000 annually. The City Manager added that the future need of the parking contract could be reconsidered once new staff are in place. Additionally, he noted that while the Owen Sound Police Service (OSPS) do foot patrols downtown, additional by-law patrols would provide the City increased oversight over how often these patrols are happening, and that the OSPS patrols could be additional to this. He noted that the addition of a mobile phone designated for the River District enforcement would increase the ability for immediate response for business owners and residents.

In response to a question from Committee, Mr. Simmonds noted that having by-law officers continually patrolling the River District will begin to set a standard and precedent of having an enforcement presence in the area.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Allan clarified that the parking enforcement contract is paid for through the River District levy. By-law officers typically would not be able to be funded by these levies, as they benefit the City as a whole.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Bloomfield noted the proposed full-time officer is intended to be dedicated to the River District. She added that the proposed part-time officer would have flexible hours, and the schedule could be determined to best fit operational needs.

SR-250910-003
Moved by Vice Chair Koepke

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-25-106 respecting Project 1c5 - Provision of By-law Services - Staffing, the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to include a By-law Enforcement Supervisor and a part-time By-law Enforcement Officer in the Mayor’s 2026 budget for consideration by the Mayor (Option 1b)."

Carried.

10. MOTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN

There were no motions for which notice was previously given.

11. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION

There were no correspondence items presented for information.

12. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

There was no additional business.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The business contained on the agenda having been completed, Chair Boddy adjourned the meeting at 9:49 a.m.

Staff Report

Report To: Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee

Report From: Michelle Palmer, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness

Meeting Date: November 12, 2025

Report Code: CM-25-018

Subject: 5a1: Organizational Project Management System

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-018 respecting 5a1 Organizational Project Management System, the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

Highlights:

- A project management software solution will strengthen collaboration across project coordination, budgeting, and resource planning.
- ProjectTeam will increase the reporting ability, leading to improved communication, transparency, and accountability internally and externally.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Strategic Plan Priority: Service Excellence.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by strengthening the resiliency of City infrastructure or services.

Previous Report/Authority:

[CM-23-012 Service Review Implementation and Next Steps]

[CM-24-021 5a1 - Implement a Project Management System]

Background:

Service Review Project 5a1: Implement a Project Management System to replace the current Microsoft Excel-based process with a purpose-built solution that will provide customized reports based on identified needs and best practices.

In April 2024, staff brought forward a report to the Service Review Ad Hoc Committee outlining the use of a non-binding procurement process to select a robust system to manage projects, maintain consistent documentation, and ensure seamless collaboration across divisions.

After a comprehensive procurement process, involving a cross-functional staff team, an agreement was awarded to Solution Guidance Corporation ("SGC") to provide the software solution "ProjectTeam". ProjectTeam is a cloud-based project management software which can be accessed from any device connected to the internet. The intent of ProjectTeam is to enable a connected collaboration model, allowing staff to be able to work within one shared system where permissions, workflows, and data definitions are standardized, so the City can consolidate information without re-keying and without losing control of data quality. SGC are known for their commitment to technical leadership, support services, and capturing ongoing feedback from users to develop future release plans.

Analysis:

Since the Fall of 2024, staff have worked with SGC to customize the system to create digital versions of standard forms currently used, which previously had to be manually created. This is in addition to the standard forms available within the system. These forms will reduce the duplication of information, which was previously entered on various individual Microsoft Word, Excel, and Adobe PDF forms. The system has also been configured to have automatic workflows to enable the sharing of information with team members. Over 20 reports have been developed to pull information from individual and multiple projects. By streamlining all project documentation into one robust system, staff will save an estimated 100 hours currently spent on compiling data for reports. ProjectTeam will house capital detail sheets, project charters, procurement plans, drawings – anything that relates to a project.

Throughout the past few months, staff have been working with SGC to create training documentation, as well as providing training to the various user types within the system (project leads, project sponsors, etc.) to ensure that staff understand the functionality and have the appropriate tools to support the launch of the system. Feedback from the training has enabled staff and SGC to make any final refinements to the configuration.

Next steps

Over the next month, the Implementation Phase of the project will be initiated. This phase will include all projects currently within the 5-year capital plan and any projects planned for 2026, which will be completed using operating budget funding, will be entered into the system. ProjectTeam is expected to be fully in use by staff over the next two months. In alignment with the service review project 4a3 Annual Work Plan and Processes and the Creation of an Annual Operational Plan, the use of ProjectTeam will complement the creation of 2026 work plans for managers/supervisors as well as enable the creation of an annual operational plan, which will be presented to the standing committees in February 2026. This annual operational plan will provide a holistic view of all projects being undertaken by the City in 2026. Throughout the implementation phase, staff will continue to assess how the system is performing and making adjustments based on feedback from users.

Looking Ahead

Post go-live, the City will be using ProjectTeam to initiate service review project 1b2 Project Management and Change Management to further standardize documents and practices to reduce risks to projects, enhance efficiency and increase engagement of staff.

In addition, staff will be mapping out next steps to expand the utilization of ProjectTeam even further, including:

1. Collaboration with External Entities:

The City collaborates with dozens of external entities (e.g. general contractors and consultants). In ProjectTeam, the City has the ability to invite external partners to connect to specific projects with role-based access.

2. Integration with other Software Systems:

The City utilizes a variety of systems to capture financial information (Microsoft Dynamics Great Plains), manage work orders (Worktech/Pearl), map infrastructure (ArcGIS) and is in the process of replacing the current Excel-based budget tool with a budgeting and cost allocation software (Euna). ProjectTeam can integrate with the software solutions the City uses to create a unified system where data flows seamlessly between platforms, enhancing efficiency and reducing the risk of data inconsistencies.

Key attributes of these connected models:

- **Granular visibility:** External partners see only the forms, fields, and attachments they need; the City retains authority over official records and final approvals.
- **End-to-end audit trails:** Every action (creation, edit, route, approval) is logged.
- **Shared single source of truth:** Instead of emailing attachments and re-entering data, all parties work in one place, reducing errors and shortening cycle times.

The implementation of ProjectTeam marks a significant milestone in modernizing the City's project management capabilities. By transitioning to this comprehensive, cloud-based system, the City is poised to improve collaboration, streamline workflows, and enhance the quality and accessibility of project data. This initiative not only aligns with current operational strategies but also sets a foundation for efficient, effective service delivery that supports broad organizational goals and stakeholder engagement. Moving forward, continued focus on integration and collaboration with external partners will drive further efficiencies and solidify our commitment to innovative municipal governance.

Financial Implications:

The system has been implemented within the $100,000 approved in the 2024 capital budget. Ongoing subscription/support services is captured in the operating budget of approximately $25,000 per year (dependent on the number of users within the system).

Communication Strategy:

An internal communications plan has been developed and involves coordinated updates through internal newsletters, targeted emails to key stakeholders, and dedicated training sessions to ensure all staff impacted are informed, engaged, and equipped to maximize the system's capabilities effectively.

Consultation:

The internal project team consists of Michelle Palmer- Strategic Initiatives (project lead); Mark Giberson – Manager of Information Technology; Chris Webb – Manager of Engineering Services; Shawn Dubosq – Corporate Facility Projects Coordinator; Karen Galbraith – Financial Analyst; Sheyenne Hooghiem – Capital Asset and Risk Management Coordinator; and Carly McArthur – Communications Advisor. The project sponsor is Kate Allan.

Attachments:

None

Recommended by:
Michelle Palmer, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness

Submission approved by:
Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Michelle Palmer, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness, at mpalmer@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1246.

Staff Report

Report To: Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee

Report From: Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Meeting Date: November 12, 2025

Report Code: CS-25-116

Subject: Project 3a2 – Parks Service Levels – Report 2 Draft River District Service Level

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-116 respecting Parks Service Levels – Report 2 Draft River District Service Level, the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

Highlights:

- Throughout 2025, work on collecting park infrastructure and updating tree-related data has continued to establish a more accurate inventory of park assets. This work along with condition assessments, will help to inform the "service level" phase of the project.
- Parks has 5 key diverse service areas, including: Parks, Winter Control, Arboriculture, Cemetery, and River District.
- This report presents a draft Service Level Document and associated recommendations respecting the River District.
- Feedback on this first Service Level from the Committee and Council will help inform the area service areas.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Strategic Plan Priority: Service Excellence.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by strengthening the resiliency of City infrastructure or services.

Parks in urban areas help mitigate air pollution, reduce stormwater runoff and support biodiversity.

Previous Report/Authority:

CM-25-022 – Project 1a3 - Update on Engineering and Public Works Structure Review (July 9, 2025)

CS-24-104 - Project 3a2 Review of Parks Classification System, Service Levels and Associated Operating Costs – Report 1 (December 11, 2024)

CR-24-124 – 2024 Asset Management Plan–Parks and Open Spaces

(November 14, 2024)

CM-23-012 - Service Review Implementation and Next Steps (July 17, 2023)

CS-23-132 - Tree Inventory Update (December 13, 2023)

Greenwood Cemetery Master Plan and Cemetery By-law

City of Owen Sound Official Plan (2022)

Recreation, Parks & Facilities Master Plan, 2018

Background:

As part of the 2023 Service Review, Council had approved 49 initiatives under 6 broad themes. Within each theme, there are several actions. The context of this report addresses Theme 3: Reduce Service Delivery to align with municipalities of similar size and scope, and involves the following initiative:

Service Review Initiative 3a2: Undertake a review of the classification of Parks, the service level for each and associated costs of operating and maintenance.

In December of 2024, Service Review Committee considered an initial report which:

- Reviewed the current park classification system from the Official Plan and the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan – 2018-2028 (RP&FMP);
- Reviewed the current park and playground proximity analysis outlined in the RP&FMP;
- Updated the inventory of lands zoned as Open Space city-wide and placed parkland in appropriate park classifications;
- Recommended changes to the park classification system to better reflect updated inventory of open spaces; and
- Analyze updated inventory of open spaces against standard provision targets.

The initial direction by Committee, approved by Council, included:

- Approving the updated inventory and composition of the park classification system and directed this be included in the next update to the Recreation Parks and Facilities Master Plan;
- Direction to utilize a 10-minute walking distance of 800 metres as the target offset distance standard to establish the coverage area for neighbourhood parks and community parks; and
- Direction to utilize a 10-minute walking distance of 800 metres as the target offset distance standard to establish the coverage area for playgrounds and that publicly accessible school site playgrounds be included for the purpose of this analysis.

With the update to the park classifications and park inventory data, the following next steps were identified:

- Continue to collect park infrastructure and tree-related data (approximately 50% complete) to establish an accurate inventory of assets in P&OS;
- Continue to carry out planned condition assessments of the identified P&OS assets in collaboration with Corporate Services;
- Generate levels of service for key park assets informed by better-defined asset condition information to support the next phase of AMP;
- Capture development lands and the proposed open spaces and assess if new residential areas are adequately served; and

- Assess potential modifications to the operating budget structure and work order tracking configuration to support generating asset-based costing.

Throughout 2025, work on collecting park infrastructure and updating tree-related data has continued to establish a more accurate inventory of park assets. The tree inventory is now approaching approximately 75% complete, with the remaining trees to be captured being in the north-west corner of the city, north of 16th St. West. Work has also been done on condition assessments that will help to better inform the "service level" phase of the project. Staff have initiated condition assessments on the following assets, which are in various stages of completion:

- Trail Condition Assessment
- Playground Condition Assessment
- Kiwanis Skatepark Condition Assessment
- Duncan McLellan Fields (inform development of capital upgrade priorities initially that will ultimately form part of a comprehensive sports field inventory condition assessment effort)

The request for Parks Service Levels is a large task. The City has 45 parks and about 5,200 assets within the parks. The approach to Service Levels has been divided into the following key functional areas and associated asset-specific services:

Functional Areas Within Parks

1. **Parks**
    - a. Playgrounds
    - b. Trails
    - c. Campgrounds* (HP, Kelso, Inner Harbour Fish Derby)
    - d. Inner Harbour
        - i. East and West Boat Launch and Fish Cleaning Stations
        - ii. Docks
        - iii. Harbour Wall and Walkway
    - e. Outdoor Pool* and Splash Pad
    - f. Waste Collection* (Parks, Inner Harbour Wall and other open space lands)

g. Sportsfields and Active Play Amenities*
    i. Ball Diamonds
    ii. Multi-use Fields (Soccer, Lacrosse, Rugby, Disc and Field Hockey)
    iii. Courts (Tennis/Pickleball, Basketball)
    iv. Skatepark
h. Horticulture
i. Turf Maintenance
j. Facility Maintenance*
    i. Washrooms (Parks, Campgrounds, other City maintained facilities)
    ii. Booked Park Facilities (HP Hall, Sportsfield Washrooms, Special Events Supplemental Washroom Cleaning)
k. Park Furniture and Amenities
l. Park Signage
m. Special Events Support
    i. Festival of Northern Lights (setup/maintenance/take-down)
    ii. Community Events/Festivals (HP, Kelso Beach at Nawash Park, River District)

2. Park Winter Control *

a. Park Roads/Pathways/Parking Lots/Facilities
b. Trails (Fitness Trail and Mile Drive Trail)
c. Facility Maintenance (JMRRC – walkways/sidewalk/entrances)
d. Bus Stop (7 bus stops near Cemetery, JMRRC & HP)
e. Outdoor Refrigerated Ice Rink
f. Toboggan Hill
g. Cemetery (roads/walkways/facility entrances)

3. Arboriculture (Urban Forestry)

4. Cemetery Services *

5. River District *

a. Site Maintenance (litter picking, supplemental garbage collection, sidewalk cleaning)

b. Banners

c. Seasonal Displays (light installation)

(Note: areas marked with one (1) asterisk are serviced 7 days a week.)

Parks Staffing Model

To understand service levels, it is essential to understand the current staffing model for Parks and Open Space (Attachment 1).

Within Community Services, the Parks & Open Space Division is currently supported by the following staff:

- Manager of Parks and Open Spaces (Operations and Capital) - provides strategic guidance to the operations of the five functional areas and delivers the divisions capital program. This position also provides support for the development team and facility booking and other policy development and projects within the City.
- Parks Supervisor - There is one operations Supervisor who oversees and directs the day-to-day operations defined within five functional areas: Parks, Arboriculture, Cemetery Services, the River District (April 1st to November 1st), and Park Winter Control (December 1st – April 1st).
- Parks Administrator and Cemetery Coordinator – performs an administrative role across all five functional areas and coordinates every aspect of the cemetery business operation (point of sale, customer service, financial tracking, regulatory reporting, interment scheduling, and burial layout, as well as attending interment services).

The warm-weather Spring/Summer/Fall season generally extends from April 1st to December 1st and is staffed by the following allocated resources:

- three (3) full-time staff:
  - one (1) - Horticulturist
  - two (2) – Park Attendants
- fourteen (14) seasonals (approximately 22 weeks)
- six (6) students (6-8 weeks)

Cemetery Services during the warm Spring/Summer/Fall season is staffed by the following allocated resources:

- two (2) full-time staff:

    - Park Attendants
- Two (2) seasonals (approximately 22 weeks)

Arboriculture is staffed by the following allocated year-round resources:

- Two (2) – Full-Time Arborists

The Parks Winter Control season generally extends from December 1st to April 1st and is staffed 7 days a week by the following allocated resources:

- Four (4) full-time staff:
    - Two (2) – Park Attendants (from Parks)
    - Two (2) – Park Attendants (from Cemetery) – these two cemetery park attendants are drawn from winter control operations as required to perform burials during the winter months
    - two (2) – seasonal winter staff (approximately 20 weeks)

It is essential to note that Cemetery Services, Arboriculture, and certain park-specific services, such as waste collection, facility maintenance, and special event support, are provided on a year-round basis. In some cases, the service level is decreased in the winter months to:

- Reflect the staff resource capacity to provide the service (waste container numbers are reduced by approximately 50% by removing containers that are not accessible in the winter), or
- Reflect a lower need for the service due to use and scheduling (Facility Maintenance – fewer washrooms to clean).

There are a number of key staff resource considerations that must be factored into the resource capacity equation, including:

1. Staff training, meetings, and administrative activities required to support operational work;
2. Time and resources required to onboard new staff;
3. Time off due to vacation, statutory holidays, sick leave, and other factors that contribute to staff vacancies, as well as challenges with seasonal staff recruitment and retention;
4. Equipment maintenance and repair; and
5. Planning and coordination time to support asset work (for example, the Horticulturalist invests time during the winter months to plan,

coordinate, order, and design the beds for the following planting/growing season).

The staff complement referenced is generally not dedicated to one specific service area. The limited number of full-time staff are utilized as needed, based on constantly changing operating pressures, staff skill sets (not all staff are trained or qualified to perform certain tasks or operate specific equipment), and staff availability. However, a focus has been placed on ensuring that Arboriculture staff focus all their work time on dealing with tree related work. This is in response to a large volume of work orders that are generated to address tree concerns and a growing backlog of tree work orders. Only under severe operating pressures or emergency situations are the Arborists assigned to perform work outside of their core duties (example: winter storm support).

Seasonal and student staff are hired to support the full-time staff compliment to address a significant increase in workload and a broader range of work activities that need to be performed during the very active warm weather season in the Spring, Summer and Fall.

A number of reports have been brought forward to Committee/Council that may impact the work that is performed by P&OS and the allocated resources required to support that work.

The following report has been summarized, and the operational impact noted:

Previous Report CM-25-022 – Project 1a3 – Update on Engineering and Public Works Structure Review

Report CM-25-022, Update on Service Review Project 1A3 and the Engineering and Public Works Department Structure Review noted, in part, this project was to "find efficiencies, streamline processes, reduce duplication of effort between functional groups and maximize opportunities to coordinate and support work".

That report identified stump removal as one area for potential realignment of Parks and Public Works responsibility, as well as roadway grass cutting. The report noted: It is anticipated that the Trees and Stump Removal could move (staff and equipment) in its entirety to the Parks and Open Spaces Division, more specifically to the Arboriculture (Urban Forestry) Team.

The report also noted that it is anticipated that grass cutting around guide rails can also be transferred and completed by the Parks and Open Spaces Division.

The report anticipated that with the alignment of this work, two (2) full-time staff could be transferred from the Public Works Division to the Parks and Open Spaces Division. It was also determined that the Public Works Department could share up to two (2) full-time staff with the Parks and Open Space Division throughout the busiest Spring and Summer months, reducing the number of Seasonal staff to be hired.

These comments from the July 2025 report will be incorporated as the review of service level areas is undertaken.

Analysis:

This report presents draft service levels for the River District.

The feedback to the first service area by Committee and Council will allow for the refinement of this draft service level document and the remaining service levels for the other functional areas within Parks & Open Spaces.

River District

The City's River District was established in 1978 by City Council under the Municipal Act as an "improvement area".

The mission of the River District is to develop a vibrant and sustainable business, cultural, and residential community by supporting initiatives that improve, beautify, and promote the River District on behalf of its Members. The Official Plan has objectives and policies that support maintaining and enhancing the viability and vitality of the River District Commercial area and Harbour as the primary economic, commercial, financial and cultural, tourism and employment focus of the City and region.

The purpose of an Improvement Area under the Act is:

- To promote the commercial area of the River District as a business and shopping area; and
- To oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally owned land, buildings, and structures within the boundaries of the River District, beyond that provided at the expense of the municipality generally.

The geographic area included in the River District is generally between 7th and 11th Streets East, from 1st Avenue East to 4th Avenue East.

The affairs of the River District are governed by a nine-member Board established by the City Council as a board of management under the Municipal Act.

In 2019, the former Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area Board of Management (OSDIA) and the City entered a new partnership agreement that allowed complementary parking in the River District area, sponsored jointly by the City and DIA. 2020 was the first full year of operations under this new partnership agreement. Under the Agreement, responsibility is established relating to general administration, budget, beautification, banners and decorations, watering, street and sidewalk maintenance, waste removal, events, marketing and promotion, and parking and enforcement.

This report focuses on the areas of beautification and maintenance.

River District Action Plan

The City and River District jointly funded the 2020 *River District Action Plan*, developed by BC Hughes as a three-year Marketing and Branding Plan. The plan established a clear downtown identity and marketing strategy through extensive public and stakeholder engagement.

The original plan was organized around four pillars — Branding, River District Management, Experience Development, and Promotion — each with defined strategic objectives and actions designed to strengthen the River District's role as Owen Sound's economic and cultural centre.

Many initiatives from the original plan have been implemented, and the plan's four pillars and strategic objectives remain relevant.

In 2025/26, work is underway to update the Plan.

Other River District Initiatives

The City Manager has prepared 3 reports (CM-25-027, 032 and 033) respecting the River District since a public meeting in July of 2025.

These reports have included the following actions and initiatives including:

<u>Coordinated Operations and Accountability</u>

- A coordinated project management framework for River District operations.

- Appoint a dedicated project lead and cross-department delivery team.
- Develop a formal project charter outlining goals, roles, and decision-making authority.
- Implement a coordinated operations and maintenance oversight system to eliminate service gaps.
- Maintain and use the new GIS-based infrastructure issues database to support timely repairs and improvements.
- Apply the RACI model to clarify responsibilities among departments and partner organizations.

<u>Stakeholder Collaboration and Communication</u>

- Regular stakeholder meetings to continue open dialogue and collaborative problem solving.
- Continue proactive communications that highlight River District vibrancy, success stories, and progress.

<u>Community Driven Improvements and Inclusion</u>

- Prioritize and action the 60+ ideas generated at the stakeholder discussion, including quick wins.
- Expand inclusive outreach to ensure participation from newcomer, racialized, and Indigenous businesses and community members.

<u>Safety and Social Supports</u>

- Implementation of Neighbourhood Response Team/Social Navigators (NRT) through Safe n' Sound, starting November 3, to act as a support for businesses and help work through situations during this housing and opioid crisis, funded by Health Canada, flowing through the Supportive Outreach Services program.
- Ongoing work with Owen Sound Police Services and Bylaw Enforcement

River District Assets

The River District has been included in the City's Asset Management Plan. A summary of the assets are included in Attachment 1.

A complete list of River District Assets is included in Attachment 1 (Note: this does not include roads, sidewalks, or underground utilities that are captured elsewhere in the City's Asset Management Plan).

Current Staffing Model

The responsibility for maintenance and beautification within the River District is shared between Public Works and Parks staff on a seasonal basis. Parks is responsible from May 1 to October 31, with Public Works responsible from November 1 to April 30 annually.

Parks collects approximately 17 waste receptacles in locations in the River District (primarily within the Riverside areas and parks) year-round, with a contracted service provider doing 62 cans along 2nd and 3rd Avenue as well as 8th, 9th, and 10th Streets. During the summer months, waste is picked up 5 days a week.

During the summer months, Parks staff provides:

- 7-day-a-week Watering of all baskets and pots
- 5 days a week litter picking, beautification, and maintenance tasks
- Pick up of improperly disposed waste 7 days a week
- 5-day-a-week waste collection from on-street locations
- Street sweeping (once a week by Public Works

During the winter months, Public Works staff provides:

- Sidewalk clearing once a day (as required)
- Additional clearing of mid-block crossings and street corners as well as pedestrian laneways/connections to municipal parking lots
- Snow removal in municipal lots
- Removal of banks as required

In 2024, $146,000 worth of Parks and Public Works staff time were coded to the River District in support of these activities.

The Draft Service Level document for River District (see Attachment 2) includes activities relating to:

- Waste Collection and Litter Control
- Street and Sidewalk Cleaning
- Beautification
- General Maintenance
- Safety and Security

The River District is an important social and economic focal point for the City. To ensure that the area is clean, beautiful and well maintained, the following actions are recommended:

Human Resources

Modify Parks and Public Works Responsibility

Historically, Parks and Public Works have divided work responsibilities based on season. It is proposed, and reflected in the draft Service Level document, that Public Works would be responsible for maintenance, including the sidewalk area and street, on a year-round basis.

Horticulture, arboriculture (including the mid-block planters), and banners would be the responsibility of Parks.

Dedicated River District Project Lead

Earlier this year, through reports CM-25-032, (Fostering a Vibrant River District – Report 2), the existing role of the River District Coordinator was revised and expanded to provide additional focus to:

- Provide strategic oversight and coordination of the efforts of the River District Project team;
- Coordinate projects, programming, and maintenance activities in the River District;
- Create an annual workplan and budget for the River District that aggregates the various workplans and budgets across the organization into a single point of reference;
- Act as liaison between City departments, the River District Board of Management, businesses, and community stakeholders;
- Track and report on progress of actions identified through stakeholder engagement;
- Conduct research projects with respect to business and community development, to support and enhance the Municipality's strategic objectives in the River District; and
- Seek external funding and partnerships to support revitalization initiatives.

The River District is supported by operational and capital efforts of staff across the organization. This includes everything from community development, the administration of the community improvement plan incentives, marketing and promotion, events, maintenance, beautification, and snow removal. A dedicated River District Project Lead will ensure cohesive oversight, strengthen collaboration across departments and stakeholders, and drive long-term strategies that enhance the River District's vitality, sustainability, and prosperity.

Increase frequency of sidewalk washing

This is reflected in the draft Service Level document. Following the spring wash, the service level is increased to one time each month June to September.

Fleet Resources

Sidewalk Sweeper and the "Right" Tools

The River District had an electric Glutton that was used for several years to pick up waste and debris from the sidewalk and curb edge, this piece of equipment is beyond its useful life.

In 2025, staff have trialed a power sidewalk sweeper, this sweeper could be used on River District sidewalks, in municipal lots, at other city facilities, park trails, and sidewalks throughout the City.

A full business case for this equipment should be developed as part of the overall City fleet strategy.

Other power equipment, gas-powered blowers, and gas-powered portable vacuums, as well as the sweeper, fit on or can be used as attachments on existing vehicles, would improve the current manual approach to the River District maintenance.

Ensuring staff have the right tools to efficiently clean and maintain the area is critical to ensuring an inviting and vibrant space.

Asset Management

The River District has a significant amount of public infrastructure from streets and sidewalks to trees, grates, benches and decorative poles and lights. Ensuring regular inspection, work order generation, and the maintenance of these assets is critical to extending their life and creating a positive image.

A system should be developed utilizing the City's Asset Management Plan and the Pearl Worktech System.

Communication, Education and Partnerships

Work with Communications Advisor on a strategy to support the use of Report a Concern

This approach ensures a consistent and reliable approach to tracking these issues. This applies to both City staff and the public.

This could include the use of QR codes in the area that would link to the Report a concern function. A person who comes into City Hall to report an issue can have staff enter the information into the system in real-time.

Expand the role of the Public

Expand the role of the public in the maintenance and cleanliness of the River District, engaging volunteers, groups, and businesses in stewardship programs. Programs such as "locals love it here" should be promoted.

Education on "who to call"

Prepare a communication on "who to call" for River District businesses, building owners, residents and the public. Ensure this information is available in print and online.

Update By-law Enforcement and Updated Regulatory Framework

Enhanced coordination with By-law Enforcement will help address issues such as cleanliness, property maintenance, and public safety, ensuring consistent standards that support the River District's role as the City's economic and cultural centre. Updates to several bylaws including Waste Management, Property Standards and the Streets Bylaw will improve enforceability and compliance.

The City's draft 2026 budget includes some additional financial resources to support bylaw enforcement.

Work to leverage and support partnerships

Police Services play an important role in fostering a safe and welcoming River District by maintaining a visible presence, responding to incidents, and supporting crime prevention initiatives. Their collaboration with the City, businesses, and social service agencies helps address community concerns, build trust, and enhance perceptions of safety. By working proactively on both enforcement and community engagement, Police Services contribute to creating an environment where residents, visitors, and businesses can thrive.

Social services, including Grey County and its partners, play a key role in supporting the vitality of the River District by addressing social and community needs that impact perceptions of safety, inclusivity, and well-being. Their involvement will ensure coordinated responses to issues such as homelessness, mental health, and housing stability, while also providing resources and supports that foster dignity and connection for vulnerable populations. Collaboration between the City, Grey County, and local agencies strengthens the overall revitalization efforts by balancing economic growth with social responsibility and community care.

The City Manager was notified on September 29 that, with funding from Health Canada, Grey County and Safe n' Sound are launching a Social Navigator program starting mid-October. This program will see two staff members, 7 days a week for nearly 10 hours per day, connecting with people in the River District, facilitating support to those in need, including but not limited to needle collection. More about this program will be released as it rolls out beginning with a County Staff report to Grey County Council, scheduled for October 9.

Update River District Action Plan

The original plan was organized around four pillars — Branding, River District Management, Experience Development, and Promotion — each with defined strategic objectives and actions designed to strengthen the River District's role as Owen Sound's economic and cultural centre.

Many initiatives from the original plan have been implemented, and the plan's four pillars and strategic objectives remain relevant.

In 2025/26, work is underway to update the Plan.

Financial Implications:

The City's Operating Budget supports the River District. Approximately $255,000 from the City's budget was work to support the River District in 2024. This includes both Parks and Public Works staff time.

The 2025 River District budget was $265,275, including $25,500 for maintenance and beautification.

The costs associated with the change in the role of the River District Coordinator are included in the City's operating budget.

Owen Sound Police Services provides a report at each River District Board meeting regarding enforcement in the River District. In May of 2025, there were 89.5 hours of foot patrol and 131 hours in June. A member of the Owen Sound Police Service attends each meeting of the River District Board. The cost of police services for the River District is included in the Police Operating budget.

The City's 5-year capital budget includes several expenditures relating to the River District, including the ongoing replacement of decorative street lights. Since 2018, $5.1 M has been invested in the Downtown River Precinct Phases 1 and 2.

Any costs related to modifying fleet would be addressed through the Fleet Management Strategy and the City's five-year capital budget.

Communication Strategy:

A significant effort is being made and will continue to be made to improve communication with businesses, residents, building owners, and the public. This includes both sharing information and making it easy to provide feedback.

Consultation:

Director of Public Works and Engineering, Manager of Parks and Open Space, River District Lead, Director of Corporate Services.

Attachments:

1. River District Assets Summary
2. Draft River District Service Level

Recommended by:
Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:
Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services at pcoulter@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 x. 1252.

River District Assets

1. **Artwork –** 3 Art Installations
2. **Benches –** 59 Benches of differing models and manufacturers
3. **Bike Racks –** 39 Bike Racks
4. **Dock –** 1 Floating Dock on East Harbour Wall
5. **Fences –** 20 Fences of varying types (Metal, Decorative, Chainlink)
6. **Flagpole –** 3 Steel Flagpoles
7. **Garbage Receptacle –** 69 Garbage Receptacles of varying models and types
8. **Gardens –** 46 Gardens of varying bed types (820 square meters total)
9. **Grass/Turf –** 3 Grass areas requiring Zero Turn Mower for maintenance. Total area 2324 square meters
10. **Horticulture Containers –** 195 Containers
11. **Outdoor Structures –** 3 Picnic tables, rescue flotation device, shade sails and bike rack shelter
12. **Parks –** 3 Parks - River District Promenade (east side of Sydenham R. 800 + 900 Block), Jervis Bay - East Side of Sydenham R., Bike Park, Inner Harbour East Side
13. **Retaining Walls –** 51 retaining walls (Concrete, Engineered and Block)
14. **Stairs –** 1 set of stairs. 46 steps with galvanized hand rails.
15. **Signs –** 53 signs of varying types. 22 Interpretive Signs, 26 Regulatory Signs, 2 Wayfinding Signs, 1 Memorial and 2 Other.
16. **Trails –**901meters of concrete trails including the East Inner Harbour Trail and the Jervis Bay East Trail
17. **Trees –** 598 Trees (including Planting Sites). Designated actions for these include: 35 recommended for Removal, 59 require Pruning, 174 are potential Planting Sites, 11 require Stump Grinding, and 319 identified as Monitor in good health.
18. **Utility Panels –** 5 Utility Panels

Draft Service Level

River District

Date: October 30, 2025

Revised:

1. Purpose

This plan defines the enhanced service levels provided in the **River District** (Downtown Core), recognizing its role as the city's economic and cultural hub. The goal is to:

- Ensure a high standard of cleanliness and appearance
- Support tourism, business, and community events
- Maintain a safe and accessible environment
- Encourage civic pride and beautification

2. River District Boundaries

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3. Service Categories & Levels

A. Waste Collection & Litter Control

Task	Frequency	Performed by	Details
Public Waste Receptacles	5 days/week (June to September)	Contracted provider	
62 cans – contract 17 locations – Parks	3 days/week (Sept to May)	Parks – cans in parks only and River area	
Manual Litter Pickup	Daily (Mon–Saturday, May 1 to November 30	PW	Includes sidewalks, laneways, planters, tree pits
	3 x per week Dec 1 to March 31		In winter, frequency will be impacted by snowfall and

Task	Frequency	Performed by	Details
			demands of snow removal
Waste receptacle cleaning	Litter picking around can – as needed	PW	
Waste receptacle pressure wash	1 x per month – June – Sept	PW	Wash area around cans and lids
Business and resident waste collection	1 x per week, year-round	Contracted provider	

B. Street & Sidewalk Cleaning

Task	Frequency	Responsible	Notes
Sidewalk Sweeping (Manual & Mechanical)	3x/week (May to Oct)	PW	Enhanced during tourism season
		PW	Overnight or early morning where possible
Street Sweeping (Mechanical)	Weekly (Apr–Nov)		The commencement of sweeping is weather dependant

Task	Frequency	Responsible	Notes
	Spring	PW	
Street flushing	Once a month during June – September Timing should be coordinated with large public events in the River District		After mechanical sweeping of sidewalk – flush with water to curb edge
Power Washing (Hot Wash)	Identify and prioritize areas based on budget	PW – retain contractor	Target high-traffic sidewalks, bus stops, spills
Winter Sidewalk Clearing (Snow/Ice)	As required by MMS	PW and xxxx	In the River District, the x bylaw requires sidewalk snow removal and cut throughs to be maintained by property owners
Winter mid-block crossing clearing	As required by MMS	PW	
Street Corners Clearing (snow and Ice	As required by MMS	PW	
Salt & Sand Application	As required by MMS	PW	

Task	Frequency	Responsible	Notes
Snow bank removal	As required	PW and contractor	Depends on weather for scheduling

C. Beautification

Task	Frequency	Responsible	Notes
Seasonal Planter Installation	Late spring to early fall Remove – around Thanksgiving	Parks	
Watering & Maintenance of Planters	7 days/week (June–Oct)	Parks	Daily in hot/dry conditions
Tree replacement	Spring and fall	Parks	
Tree pruning and maintenance	Ongoing	Parks	
Tree Pit Maintenance (Weeding, Mulching)	Monthly	Parks	Maintain mulch levels, remove weeds and litter Replace grates as required
Mid-block planters	Weekly June to Oct	Parks	

Task	Frequency	Responsible	Notes
	Plant and then maintain		
Hanging Baskets Installation & Care	Annually (Late Spring–Early Fall)	Parks	Watered daily during season
Noma Seasonal Lighting	Install in fall and remove in spring	Parks	Align with banners toward efficiency for staff and equipment and minimize road closure

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D. General Maintenance

Task	Frequency	Responsible	Notes
Street Furniture Cleaning (benches, bins, bike racks)	As required	Public Works	Spot-cleaning as needed
Light standards and banner poles and fences	As required by condition assessment	Public Works	
Asset Management Inspections and updating	In accordance with MMS	Public Works	
Repairs to Fixtures (benches, railings, retaining wall gardens, stone planters)	Within 72 hours of the report	Public Works	Work order generated by inspection or public report Depending on nature of issue priority will be

Task	Frequency	Responsible	Notes
			safety of public space with the remedial action following
Sidewalk repairs	As required by MMS	Public Works	
Inspection Patrols	Daily	All staff – Parks and PW.	Staff need to be trained to see and identify safety concerns and maintenance items and report to generate a work order for service
Public Washrooms (if present)	Cleaned Daily		The responsibility for this service and level of service is to be set by a separate process being led by the City Manager

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E. Reactive Service

Task	Frequency	Responsible	Notes
Graffiti	72 hrs from report	Public Works	If content is highly offensive efforts to reduce response time will be made
Biological waste	24 hrs	Public Works	May be longer on weekends
Vandalism	24 hrs	Parks or Public Works	Depends on the type Maybe longer on weekends
Trip hazard	In accordance with MMS	Public Works	
Tree branch or limb	24 hours	Parks	Triage based on nature of hazard and location
Other public safety concerns	24 hours	Parks or Public Works	Depends on nature of issue
Loitering in public spaces		Bylaw and Police Service	
Encampments		Bylaw and Grey County supported by SOS Team	

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6. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Metric	Target
Bag tag compliance	5% improvement per year
Number of report a concern – overflowing waste receptacle	Reduced by 2-5% per year
Reduce number of missing street trees each year	Reduce by 5% per year
% of streets/sidewalks cleaned per schedule	≥ 90%
% of planter/hanging basket survival	≥ 95%
# of public complaints through report a concern vs. prior year	↓ by 10% annually
Target 0 insurance claims relating to city infrastructure in the River District	

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9. Conclusion

The River District deserves a proactive, elevated service level to match its critical role in the city's social and economic vitality. This plan ensures that the area remains clean, beautiful, and well-maintained—enhancing Owen Sound's identity as a vibrant and welcoming destination.

Staff Report

Report To: Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee

Report From: Tim Simmonds, City Manager

Meeting Date: November 12, 2025

Report Code: CM-25-036

Subject: Optimizing Resources: Financial and Operational Impacts of Service Review

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-036 respecting Optimizing Resources: Financial and Operational Impacts of Service Review, the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

Highlights:

- Through modernization, smarter resource use, and strategic partnerships, the City has achieved more than $1 million in savings, efficiencies, and new revenue, and is on track to exceed the $2 million target set at the start of Service Review when compounded annually.
- Staff have responded to evolving service needs by realigning roles and responsibilities rather than increasing headcount, maintaining fiscal discipline while improving service delivery.
- Despite strong results, the pace and scale of change have stretched staff capacity. Continued success will require attention to workload and support for those driving transformation.
- Beginning January 2026, staff reports will include a new Resource Alignment section to provide a fuller picture of financial, human, technological, and time-related impacts to reflect the principles of Service Review and supporting informed decision-making.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Strategic Plan Priority: Service Excellence.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by considering climate adaptation in the development of the City's strategies, plans and policies.

Previous Report/Authority:

Report CM-24-007 from the City Manager Re: Service Review - Building Service Excellence - Initial Report

Background:

Progress and Promise: 20 Months of Meaningful Change

The Service Review Committee held its first meeting on February 24, 2024, 20 months ago. At that meeting, staff introduced an ambitious three-year plan to launch or complete 49 projects. These initiatives aimed to modernize how the City works by introducing a project management approach and embracing new ways of operating.

Staff explained that the plan recognizes the complexity and interconnected nature of City services. Each of the 49 actions is designed to improve how we manage financial and organizational resources, making our operations more transparent and accountable.

The Committee also learned that the City’s organizational structure should reflect the outcomes of the Service Review, not serve as its starting point. Simply rearranging roles or departments without understanding the underlying issues does not lead to meaningful results.

Finally, staff anticipated that the Service Review would generate approximately $2 million in direct and indirect savings.

Analysis:

Ongoing Efforts to Deliver Value and Efficiency

City staff remain committed to embedding the principles of Service Review and its project management approach into their daily work. Many of the initiatives underway are improving efficiency, generating direct cost savings, and creating new non-taxation revenue streams. These efforts reflect both the specific projects identified through Service Review and broader work aligned with its goals. While the narrative below offers only a high-level snapshot, it demonstrates meaningful progress.

Staff will present a detailed report to the Service Review Committee in September 2026, outlining the results of each project. This year based on current progress, the City has currently achieved slightly more than a million dollars ($1,023,270) of either savings, revenue or efficiencies and is on track to meet and exceed the $2 million target within the first two years, as the continued benefits compound year-over-year.

The Cost of Change: Staff Capacity Is Stretched and Needs Support

While the benefits of Service Review are clear, the additional workload created by implementing new ways of working, along with the rollout of new systems and software, has placed considerable strain on staff across all levels of the organization. This pressure reflects the scale and pace of change being introduced, as staff continue to deliver core services, capital projects, and maintaining current service levels while also driving transformation without additional resources. The commitment to this work stems from a deep sense of responsibility and dedication to the community. However, the cumulative demands are stretching capacity, and the current pace is not sustainable. Although the long-term goal is to create more “slack in the system” through improved efficiency and smarter processes, the light at the end of the tunnel remains dim for many employees today. This reality underscores the need to assess and support staff capacity as the City continues to move forward with Service Review and its general operations.

Despite these strains, the City has remained committed to minimizing staffing growth, instead leveraging realignment and strategic redeployment to meet emerging needs.

Service Review in Action: Realigning Resources to Meet Evolving Needs Without Increasing Headcount

Since the start of the Service Review, the City has added zero net new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. This has been achieved through a deliberate and strategic approach that emphasizes redeployment and realignment of existing resources rather than expanding the workforce. When positions become vacant, staff assess whether roles can be restructured or reassigned to meet emerging needs without increasing overall headcount.

In addition to direct savings, Service Review is fundamentally about supporting the corporation by optimizing existing resources. Realignment plays a key role in this process, allowing management to redeploy staff and responsibilities where they are needed with minimizing costs.

As an example, the City created a new role—Committee and Executive Support Coordinator—and placed it in the Clerk's Department to help with governance, support for the Mayor and Council, and legislative services. Although this added capacity and a position on the City's organizational chart to the Clerk's team, it didn't increase the City's overall staffing or budget. That's because the City removed the Administrative Assistant position from the Public Works Department, reallocating resources where senior leadership saw opportunities to improve service delivery.

This new role has also helped other departments by taking on responsibilities like agenda management, report coordination, and committee meeting support. As a result, administrative staff across departments have been able to spend less time on these tasks and redirect their efforts toward core operational priorities.

Since 2023, the City Manager's Office has increased from 3.5 to 5 full-time equivalent positions. On paper, and in the organizational chart, this may appear as an expansion of the City Manager's Office; however, it represents a realignment of existing roles and responsibilities, not an increase in staffing. Resources were shifted to better support organizational needs, that being Economic Development and Communications.

Staff transferred the Manager of Community Development role from Community Services and did not backfill the original position. The role was reclassified as a Senior Advisor, saving approximately $15,000 annually. These savings, along with other efficiencies in the Manager of Community Development' operating budget, allowed the City to upgrade a part-time

Executive Assistant/Public Relations role to a full-time communications position.

These examples of realigning resources created new positions without increasing overall staffing or budget. These adjustments—reflected in the organizational chart—give management the flexibility to respond to evolving priorities, such as governance, communications, and economic development. From a service review perspective, this approach improves efficiency and helps departments focus more effectively on core operations.

Resource Alignment: A Service Review-Driven Idea Helping Staff Tell the Full Story Behind Their Work

Starting in January 2026, staff will replace the "Financial Implications" section in all Committee and Council reports with a new "Resource Alignment" section. This new section was developed using the guiding principles of Service Review, which aims to improve how the City manages financial and organizational resources while promoting greater transparency and accountability.

The new section should provide a more complete view of the resources needed to support staff work, including financial, human, technological, and time-related impacts.

The term "Resources" provides a broader and more comprehensive perspective than the word "Financial". It allows staff and Council to consider not only financial costs, but also the "Alignment" of human effort, technology needs, and time commitments that influence the overall success and long-term sustainability of the project or core service and is important in Council's decision-making.

The new Resource Alignment section will provide context for:

- Financial Resources
- Human Resources
- Time and Scheduling
- Technology and Infrastructure

<u>Financial Resources</u>

Assess the total cost of the project, including initial investment, ongoing operational expenses, and potential contingencies. Consider whether the budget is sufficient and sustainable, and whether funding sources are secure.

Human Resources

Evaluate the availability and capacity of staff or contractors needed to deliver the project. This includes skills, workload, training needs, and whether additional hiring or reallocation is required.

Time and Scheduling

Consider the timeline for the project, including key milestones and deadlines. Assess whether the proposed schedule is realistic given other organizational priorities and whether delays could impact other initiatives. Was this part of an annual workplan?

Technology and Infrastructure

Determine whether existing systems and infrastructure can support the project or if upgrades are needed. This includes software, hardware, facilities, and any dependencies on external platforms or vendors.

From Smart Thermostats to MAT Revenue: More than $1 Million in Combined Impact

The agreement with Grey County for court security has resulted in more than $370,000 in direct taxpayer savings, while the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) will by year-end have generated $317,000 in revenue to support tourism, events, and capital projects.

Arena operations have benefited from smart thermostat upgrades and building automation system enhancements, which are reducing energy consumption, equipment wear, and after-hours callouts. Additionally, the Attack Empties Return Reimbursement offsets staff time and labour costs, saving the City between $3,500 and $5,000 annually.

Event programming and tourism initiatives have leveraged MAT proceeds and sponsorships to multiply the impact of City investments. For example, Harbour Nights transforms a $10,550 budget into $30,000 in event spending, supporting the cultural community and improving quality of life for residents. Relocating tourism services to the Gallery has fostered better collaboration and resource sharing, while art collection relocations and staffing adjustments have saved costs and supported fundraising efforts. The implementation of art camps and the hiring of a Fundraising Coordinator have further strengthened outreach and revenue generation.

Operational efficiencies extend to facility management and parks. Transitioning garbage collection at high-volume parks to private contractors has reduced costs and allowed staff to focus on growing operational pressures. Updated agreements have freed up operational space, and new revenue streams such as Derby Camping have improved safety and reduced post-event cleanup. Careful scheduling of ice installation and conversion of seasonal staff to full-time roles have also contributed to positive budget impacts.

The Building Division has realized significant time savings through the adoption of CloudPermit. This digital platform has enabled staff to support high-volume planning applications, improved record keeping, and made notifications to MPAC more timely. Collectively, these initiatives have strengthened the division's ability to deliver services efficiently and responsively.

Corporate Services has advanced modernization and efficiency across IT, Finance, HR, and Clerk's Services, generating annual soft savings estimated between $118,000 and $250,000. Investments in digital platforms such as Digital Document Signing, Euna Budget Software, CloudPermit, and Project Management Tools have streamlined workflows, reduced manual processes, and improved accuracy and collaboration. These technology upgrades have allowed staff to focus on higher-value work and reduced administrative backlogs.

Service delivery improvements are evident in several areas. The implementation of DocuPet has automated dog tag processing, saving 18 hours of manual entry and generating $3,150 in revenue for a $354 service cost. CloudPermit has saved 250 administrative hours annually, while Virtual City Hall has automated certificate generation, saving 10 hours per week and 100 hours per year in manual inquiries and account updates. These efficiencies have improved staff productivity, service turnaround times, and customer experience.

By-law and enforcement services have benefited from updates that shift enforcement costs from the tax levy to offenders, improving cost recovery. Parking and fine administration are expected to see increased revenue following service reviews and the adoption of digital enforcement and centralized processes.

Human Resources has streamlined recruitment and onboarding through the introduction of Picsume, reducing administrative workload and improving time-to-fill metrics. The redistribution of clerical functions has improved internal coordination and reduced duplication of effort. Continued tracking of recruitment data will help identify solutions to reduce declined job offers related to housing availability and compensation competitiveness. Overall, these initiatives have strengthened the division's capacity to deliver services efficiently and support organizational goals.

Public Works & Engineering has focused on optimizing resource use and reducing duplication through shared equipment, cooperative project delivery, and interdepartmental collaboration. Shared fleet management and formalized replacement schedules have reduced repair costs, with newer vehicles costing $2,147 per year compared to $5,800 for older units. Replacing long-term rentals with owned or leased units should have more than $41,340 annually.

Water meter conversion to radio-read technology has improved leak detection, customer budgeting, and service reliability. Electronic billing has further reduced postage and administrative costs, while the next phase will introduce an online portal for real-time usage data, enhancing customer service and conservation efforts.

Waste management and recycling agreements have provided funding for calendar printing and app integration, reducing costs and supporting waste diversion. Updated hazardous waste rates have increased revenue and distributed costs among partner municipalities, while operational reviews of compost sites have informed future planning. Successful grant applications have secured more than $10.35 million in funding, reducing the need for City-raised funds and supporting major infrastructure projects.

Continuous review of departmental structure, policies, and intermunicipal agreements has improved communication, reduced redundancy, and clarified responsibilities. Fee revaluation and new partnerships, such as FlixBus and the GOST bus route, have enhanced revenue and service delivery.

Fiscal Responsibility in Support of Quality Service

As the work of Service Review approaches its two-year milestone from its initiation, Staff continue to drive efficiency and modernization across all divisions, generating more than $1 million in financial and operational benefits. Initiatives have delivered direct taxpayer savings—such as

$370,000 from court security—alongside annual soft savings of up to $250,000 from Digital platforms and process improvements saving hundreds of staff hours, while smarter use of resources, partnerships, and technology have lowered operating costs. In addition, Staff have prepared, submitted and ultimately had success in securing more than $10.35 million in infrastructure grant funding. However, with these positive outcomes, Staff are aware that this reality underscores the need to assess and support staff capacity as the City continues to move forward with Service Review and its general operations.

To better reflect and communicate these efforts, a new Resource Alignment section will be added to staff reports. This section will provide context for organizational changes, highlight how existing resources are being reallocated to meet evolving service needs, and demonstrate how operational decisions align with fiscal responsibility and improved service delivery.

The role of the Committee in supporting and guiding these initiatives should be recognized as they too are part owners of this progress, helping shape decisions that benefit Owen Sound. Continued focus on collaboration, modernization, and cost recovery will drive further efficiencies and support the City's strategic goals.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications associated with receiving this report for information. However, it should be noted that the work to date has had an impact of more than $1 million of direct and indirect savings, revenue and efficiencies.

Communication Strategy:

Staff will not issue any further communication related to this report, aside from the staff report itself and an update to the Service Review landing page on the City's website, which will be completed by the end of Q1 2026.

Consultation:

Strategic Leadership Team

Attachments:

N/A

Recommended by:
Tim Simmonds, City Manager

Submission approved by:
Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Tim Simmonds, City Manager at tsimmonds@owensound.ca or ext. 1210.