

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of Committee of the Whole

From: Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: October 7, 2021

Re: York Region participation in the Provincial Audit and Accountability Fund Program and submission of Intake 2 Reports

This memo and attachments provide an update on York Region's efficiencies reviews completed through the Provincial Audit and Accountability Fund and satisfies the Provincial requirement for public posting of Intake 2 reports by October 15, 2021.

Participation in the Provincial Audit and Accountability Fund program

In [May 2019](#) the Ontario government announced the creation of the Audit and Accountability Fund (AAF). The \$7.35 million fund was established for large urban municipalities and district school boards interested in conducting third party reviews of service delivery and administrative expenditures with the goal of finding efficiencies while protecting important front-line services.

York Region was successful in obtaining funding of \$250,000 through Intake 1 to complete the Public Health Administrative Efficiencies Review that was reported publicly in [November 2019](#). York Region received this funding on April 6, 2020.

On [November 27, 2020](#), the Provincial government launched the second intake of AAF to allow large municipalities to benefit from further provincial funding to conduct service delivery and administrative expenditure reviews, with the goal of finding efficiencies while protecting and modernizing critical front-line services.

On February 26, 2021, York Region received confirmation from the Government of Ontario for funding of up to \$400,000 for two separate projects under AAF Intake 2:

- (i) Provincial Offences Act Courts Modernization Opportunities (\$250,000), and
- (ii) YorkTrax (on-line development application tracking) Modernization Opportunities (\$150,000)

All funding was for the cost of an independent third-party reviewer to deliver a final report with specific and actionable recommendations for cost-savings and efficiencies by October 15, 2021.

On [August 18, 2021](#), the Provincial government launched the third intake of AAF to support Ontario's large municipalities offering additional provincial funding to conduct service delivery and administrative expenditure reviews, with the goal of finding efficiencies while protecting and modernizing front-line services. Expressions of interest are to be submitted by October 28, 2021.

Review of York Region Court Services Modernization Opportunities Objectives

MNP LLP was selected through a Request for Quotation to prepare the York Region Review of Court Services Modernization Opportunities report. The review process included interviews with staff from York Region, local municipalities, Ontario municipalities responsible for courts, the Ministry of Attorney General and the Ontario Court of Justice.

The objectives of the project were to:

- Create an actionable digital roadmap that identifies strategic priorities and provides guidance to transform the current Court Operation systems to be accessible, efficient and scalable, and therefore meet public expectations for service excellence
- Create a Business Model to support future implementation of an Administrative Monetary Penalties System (AMPS) that will address backlog, better utilize resources while improving access to justice and customer experience, through efficiencies and automation of processes

Court Services Digital Roadmap Findings

Following thorough consultation and research, 13 initiatives were identified for the York Region Court Services digital roadmap, under the pillars of Foundational/Operational, Innovative and Transformative, as detailed in Attachment 1.

To be successful in implementing this roadmap, investment will be needed in technology, process redesign, training and development, and staff resources over the next 5 years.

Administrative Monetary Penalties System (AMPS) Business Model Findings

Based on a thorough assessment of York Region offences and insights gathered from municipalities operating AMPS programs, it is anticipated that if York Region expands the current Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) pilot, the potential increase in number of offences could easily overwhelm an already stressed courts system. An AMPS process could free up court capacity by diverting offence caseload away from the POA courts, as detailed in Attachment 1.

Examples of benefits of an AMPS Program include:

- Increased road safety
- Reduced customer wait times and flexibility in service options
- Revenue could fund additional road safety initiatives
- More effective use of court resources, with focus on more serious offences

Estimated future cost savings and efficiencies are contingent on implementation of recommendations and Provincial regulatory changes. The *Provincial Offences Act* is the current system in place to prosecute all camera-based offences (e.g. Automated Speed Enforcement and Red Light Camera). York Region will continue advocating to the Province to build a regulatory framework for certain charges under the *Highway Traffic Act* Offences to be administered under AMPS.

Review of York Region YorkTrax Modernization Opportunities Objectives

Perry Group Consulting Ltd. was selected through a Request for Quotation to prepare the York Region YorkTrax Modernization Opportunities Review report. The review process included interviews with staff that manage development applications in York Region, local municipalities, conservation authorities and school boards.

The objectives of the project were to:

- Review development application submission requirements across York Region and local municipalities, with a view toward standardization of forms, drawings, studies, and data submissions across the Region
- Complete a feasibility study into whether York Region's YorkTrax system could expand to support local municipalities' and partner development tracking needs

Submission Requirements Standardization Review Findings

Based on a thorough assessment of submission requirements for York Region and local municipal planning departments, opportunities exist to standardize nomenclature, application process, data requirements and terms of reference across the Region to improve the customer experience and position partners for simpler data sharing, resulting in significant efficiencies, as outlined in Attachment 2.

YorkTrax Expansion Feasibility Findings

The consulting team collaborated with staff from the Town of Georgina and York Region to evaluate this option in support of the Town's technology procurement process. The consulting team also conducted a review of systems currently in use in the nine local municipalities, school boards and conservation authorities.

Based on input from stakeholders, it was confirmed that each of the organizations are in a distinct stage of their own journey toward digitization and that an alternative approach to achieve process and data exchange would be more beneficial to all partners than expansion of the YorkTrax system, as outlined in Attachment 2.

While this study has recommended against the expansion of YorkTrax to local municipalities, YorkTrax has been successful and will continue to be an important part of York Region's development approvals processing and potential data exchange.

Examples of benefits of data exchange include:

- Application data, documents & comments are automatically and seamlessly transferred between systems and organizations
- Reduced errors, duplication and improve existing or future back-office systems efficiency and processing of applications
- Improved customer service and more efficient use of staff time

Estimated future cost savings and efficiencies are contingent on implementation of recommendations. Changes to the *Planning Act* are likely to be required to support greater simplification of the forms and to support true digitization of the planning process. York Region will continue advocating to the Province to expand digitization of the development application process.

Commitment to Efficiencies

York Region will be reimbursed for payments to MNP LLP and Perry Group Consulting Ltd. to complete this review after the Province's approval of the final reports. Staff will submit a final report to the Province by October 15, 2021 using the reporting template provided by the Province.

York Region has a long-standing practice of continuous improvement and a desire to explore and leverage additional opportunities for efficiencies. This commitment to innovation and efficiency is demonstrated annually in budgets and is balanced with the delivery of high-quality programs and services to our residents. The specific and actionable recommendations for cost-savings captured within the Courts and YorkTrax Modernization Opportunities reports will be considered through York Region's budget process.

Partnerships with Local Municipalities

Local municipal staff were consulted throughout both the Courts and YorkTrax Audit and Accountability projects to identify areas for opportunities to align, collaborate and standardize information. Work will continue with local municipal partners through the implementation of recommendations for each project to achieve efficiencies in municipal service delivery.

Conclusion

York Region is proud of our strong culture of continuous improvement. The report findings and identified specific, actionable recommendations will be considered for implementation within the York Region budget process.

For more information on this report, please contact Krista South, Executive Manager at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71208. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments (2)