

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Finance and Administration
May 9, 2019

Report of the Commissioner of Corporate Services

2018 YorkInfo Partnership Annual Report

1. Recommendation

The Regional Clerk forward this report to the local municipalities, school boards and conservation authorities for information.

2. Summary

The purpose of this annual report is to inform Council of the leadership role the YorkInfo Partnership program provides in building data and analytics capacity across all Partner organizations. The program is led by the Region and consists of the nine local municipalities, two conservation authorities and two school boards. What began as a Partnership to understand the value of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), quickly became well-established with all members working together to build and leverage their collective investment in data, people and technology.

The report includes a background on the Partnership, a status on the projects in the 2015 – 2018 work plan and the 2019 – 2020 work plan.

Key Points:

- The YorkInfo Partnership has been in existence since 1996 and has a track record of delivering cost savings, creating efficiencies and modernizing service delivery.
- An approved multiyear work plan aligns 14 organizations around common goals across 4 projects and 12 knowledge sharing workshops.
- High impact projects support delivery of Asset Management, Municipal Comprehensive Review, Growth and Development Tracking and Open Data.
- Partners have access to data and analytics courses delivered through the York Region Digital Academy.
- The focus of the Partnership is on increasing data literacy and building data and analytics capacity within partner organizations.

3. Background

The YorkInfo Partnership is a collaboration amongst the York Region Municipalities and Public Agencies

In 1996, York Region established a formal Partnership called the [YorkInfo Partnership](#) that has been learning, building and sharing data. The program is led by the Region and consists of the nine local municipalities, two conservation authorities and two school boards. What began as a Partnership to understand the value of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), became well-established with all members working together to build and leverage their collective investment in data, people and technology. The program has evolved to capitalize on emerging data and analytics trends and capabilities and Partners collaborate to find cost savings, create efficiencies and modernize service delivery.

The YorkInfo Partnership has an award winning track record of providing innovation, reducing duplication and realizing cost savings

The Partnership is one of the first of its kind in Canada. Since inception, the Partnership has produced several “firsts” and award-winning innovations, including:

- Acquired the first GTA wide aerial imagery and terrain data. Multiyear contracts for an updated aerial imagery agreement saving Partners 50% of the costs in data capture and processing. As a result data is available back to 1954.
- Implemented the All-Pipes program enabling the mapping of water / wastewater infrastructure of the Region to be treated as a single network regardless of ownership. This program is critical for asset management and delivers cost avoidance of over \$150K / year. The program won the URISA Exemplary Systems in Government award in 2015.
- Launched the self-serve data depot allowing consultants and partners 24/7 access to the data without staff intervention. This saves hundreds of staff hours annually and won the 2016 GTEC award for Excellence in Municipal Systems.
- Deployed an Open Data program sharing data online for residents. By connecting Open Data systems, partners create one window access to data therefore enhancing the customer experience. Partners feed data in to applications such as Google, Yelp and Waze and interacting with residents in new and innovative ways to improve how they live and travel in and through the Region. The program won the 2018 award for Innovation at the Canadian Open Data Summit.
- Piloted a Data Co-operative project and online engagement hub for the Region’s Municipal Comprehensive Review to update the Regional Official Plan allowing for planning related data to be shared between regional and local planning staff. The project won the 2019 URISA Best Public Sector GIS award.

A well-defined governance structure and joint development of a multi-year work plan ensures accountability

The Partnership is a group of data and analytics professionals that work together for the common good. Work planning is a collaborative process to review and align Partner priorities to find common projects and shared workshops to support building capacity and helping partners attain their goals.

The Partnership's governance structure promotes accountability and resourcing to deliver desired results and realize benefits associated with collaborative opportunities. The Partnership's proven success has led to increased buy-in and support from senior management across the Partnership.

The Partnership reports annually to the local Chief Administrative Officers and consists of an Executive Board (comprised of Directors and Chief Information Officers) that set the vision and direction and a Coordinating Committee (comprised of Managers, Coordinators and Analysts) that deliver projects.

4. Analysis

Pooling resources helped ensure staff delivered projects in the 2016 – 2018 work plan

The 2016 - 2018 work plan was comprised of 11 projects that support the provision of responsive and efficient public service. Participation in projects is based on the interest and value to the organization and ability to contribute. Projects were augmented with informal workshops, formal training and ad-hoc collaborations that occurred between partners to help each other grow their program.

Highlighted projects in 2017 and 2018:

- Expanded the All Pipes infrastructure mapping program to incorporate a stormwater data model that increased efficiencies in how water / wastewater infrastructure is managed in a two tier municipal delivery model
- Piloted a Digital Plan Upload portal to automate digital drawing submissions resulting in increased time savings and standardizing the planning and engineering intake process
- Interactive workshops to share knowledge and best practices around Asset Management, Growth and Development Tracking and MPAC usage and restrictions.
- Delivered over 100 courses provided to more than 500 Partnership staff since 2005 saving Partner organizations over \$200,000 in training costs.

Partnerships create a unified voice and increase purchasing power

A benefit of having 14 partners working together is the strong unified voice that it creates. That unified voice increases purchasing power and lowers costs. As a result of pooling resources, Partners now have access to historical aerial imagery dating back to 1954 – greatly enhancing understanding of change across the Region. Over the next three years, we will jointly purchase 10cm aerial imagery and as well as highly accurate LiDAR data. Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) is a high precision three dimensional dataset that supports analysis of assets, floodplains and forest canopy coverage. These data will add significant value to the planning and delivery of many of the partners programs.

The culture of collaboration provides benefits to the taxpayer by creating a common base of understanding, a single source of trusted data and a reduction in duplication in effort.

A new work plan establishes priorities for 2019 and 2020

Partners have identified four data and analytics projects to be delivered over the next two years. These projects will set a new foundation for how data is collected, organized and shared with each other and the public. Twelve workshops will be held to help members understand emerging trends in data and analytics. The Partnership will continue to evaluate further opportunities for joint data and technology acquisition.

By 2020, the Partnership will:

Formalize a “Data Co-operative” and move to an Open by Default policy between Partners for data sharing. The Data Co-operative is a network for collaboration and allows Partners to share their trusted data, applications and work with other Partners through a legal framework, governed with appropriate access. The project currently supports the Municipal Comprehensive Review enabling Planners to share critical data in near real time to help make data informed decisions about the update to the official plan.

Inform decision making by acquiring new data sources. The Partnership has partnered with the City of Toronto to purchase the LiDAR dataset at a reduced cost. The outcomes will be available to all partners to implement in their programs.

Release more data online and make it easier to access. Open Data is a Regional strategic plan priority area and the Partnership is focussed on making more data available for the residents and businesses to use. This project will upgrade technology and connect Partner Open Data sites so that, regardless of the point of entry, users can receive the data they need from the source they desire.

Make it easier and faster to process digital data supplied by developers. The Digital Plan Upload portal will be further deployed to accept Planning and Engineering digital drawing submissions and integrate with the YorkTrax development system.

5. Financial

The funding to support the YorkInfo Partnership has been included in the Data, Analytics and Visualization Services 2019 budget. Partner organizations share the cost of acquiring data sets resulting in cost savings to all Partners. Two examples are the annual acquisition of aerial imagery and the agreement negotiated with Teranet Enterprise Inc. Enterprise Licence Agreements. The Region's Digital Academy training program also provides training to Partner organizations at no charge.

6. Local Impact

All nine local municipalities are members of the YorkInfo Partnership. Together with the Region, they benefit from enterprise license agreements, technology pilots, training and knowledge sharing providing efficiencies and value to residents and businesses.

7. Conclusion

The YorkInfo Partnership has a 23 year history of delivering results and has evolved to focus on data and analytics. The program promotes a culture of sharing, provides significant cost savings and focusses on finding efficiencies in how joint projects are selected and delivered.

For more information on this report, please contact John Houweling, Director Data, Analytics and Visualization Services Branch at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71529. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Recommended by: **Dino Basso**
Commissioner of Corporate Services

Approved for Submission: **Bruce Macgregor**
Chief Administrative Officer

April 25, 2019