

Subject: Shared Services Inventory Update

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 31-2024 **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- Following the last joint update report (PDS 9-2024), this report provides a further refined shared services inventory that includes initiatives between the Region and Area Municipalities (AM) as well as now including those between municipalities.
- Over 200 existing shared services between and among the Region and AMs have been inventoried and categorized in Appendix 1 the extent of which the Region's role in this specific task has been to document the inventory and in no way imply achievement of these is or was a result of recent efforts which are separately documented in companion report PDS 29-2024.
- This inventory represents a point-in-time view into the extensive work already established, achieved and ongoing by the AMs and the Region on shared services and is provided simply as supplementary information.

Financial Considerations

This report is for information purposes only and as such there are no financial considerations associated with the inventory.

Analysis

Niagara's CAOs have been pursuing shared services – both in terms of shared services amongst area municipalities, as well as between the Region and municipalities – to make services more seamless and cost-effective, and processes more efficient for residents and business. A variety of shared services varying in scope, complexity, financial and operational savings, have already been actioned from shared fire service pilots, mergers of libraries, amalgamation of transit, and coordination of animal control services among many others. These initiatives are classified as informal, semi-formal, or formal and have been further refined into a subset of categories.

The categories provide greater detail about the type of shared service and align with the qualitative benefits that are possible (depending on where the initiative is in the lifecycle of the shared service, level of maturity, etc.). By organizing the shared service initiatives in a standardized way, it will further assist in reporting on benefits, documenting best practices, ease of implementation/replication, and will guide the development of a longer-term strategy. The categories fall under the levels of formalization as follows:

- Informal: Networking and Information Sharing
 - Municipal Staff Group (Niagara Region with AM, or AM with AM)
 - Mixed Group (Regional/Municipal staff, with members from the community, council, Agency/Board/Commission, or other organization)
 - External (non-municipal lead, e.g., Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee)

- Semi-formal: Partnerships and Collaboration
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
 - Compensated Resource
 - Non-compensated Resource

- Formal: Shared Service Delivery
 - Agreement (legal, binding, and/or agreed service levels)
 - Shared Service Provider (end to end service delivery)
 - Compensated Resource (staff, location, or other resource)
 - Procurement (joint tender)

As identified in PDS 9-2024, the Area CAOs have formed a consensus around the principles of why shared services are important to move our communities toward more resilient, sustainable, and efficient governments. These principles, established by the Area CAOs, connect to at least two of the benefits being reported. These are illustrated in the below table.

Table 1: Guiding Principles and Associated Benefits

Guiding Principle	Benefits
Serving the Public Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Quality of Service • Reduced Risk

Guiding Principle	Benefits
Increasing Efficiency and Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process / Time Saving • Improved Consistency • Improved Economies of Scale • Cost Savings/Avoidance
Improving Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Customer Service • Increased Quality of Service • Increased Modernization
Coordinating Use of Resourcing and Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Capacity • Improved Consistency • Cost Savings/Avoidance

With the support of the Area CAOs, the Strategic Transformation Office conducted Phase 2 of the shared services inventory collection, which encompassed documenting initiatives that are exclusively between Niagara’s 12 municipalities. There was significant engagement with staff from all AMs – without which the inventory would not have been completed. This exercise to collect an inventory of initiatives is aimed to illustrate the collaborative efforts between municipalities and highlight the commitment to continuous improvement and collaboration among Niagara’s municipalities. The magnitude of initiatives further outlines that there is no one solution that meets the local needs of all 12 municipalities, and that shared services allows for capitalizing on opportunities to connect with similar municipalities and optimize our governance structure.

An exhaustive list of all AM-to-AM shared service initiatives including the type of shared service and participating municipalities can be found in Appendix 3. Included in this inventory are any initiatives that are currently in progress, ongoing, or had a one-time assignment within the last five years.

Based on the AM-to-AM scope, there were 63 shared service initiatives identified by AM staff, as a type of shared service with one or multiple AMs. Of the 63, referring back to the aforementioned definitions, 27 percent are informal, 19 percent are semi-formal, and 54 percent are formal arrangements.

Appendix 1 illustrates a summary of all 220 shared service initiatives that were collected from regional staff and all twelve AMs for this inventory. This is the most comprehensive

effort to date to document the number, nature and participants in shared initiatives, highlighting the strong commitment to collaboration across Niagara.

Appendix 2 provides six examples of shared service initiatives (two within each level of formalization), that illustrate the detailed benefits associated with some of the different categories. Appendices 3 and 4 show the comprehensive list of the AM-to-AM and Region-to-AM, respectively, organized by the previously mentioned categories. The Strategic Transformation Office will continue to update the shared services inventory as net-new initiatives are established; and report these new items in future reports.

Alternatives Reviewed

Regional Council has identified a more Effective Region as a core Strategic Priority, including specific deliverables related to identifying, advancing, and implementing shared services. The Strategic Transformation Office, in working closely with the Area CAOs, are continuing to expand and implement new shared services initiatives to meet shared Niagara and provincial objectives for more effective government and increasing housing supply.

As an alternative, the Strategic Transformation Office could opt to not support the AMs on shared services and focus efforts on other assignments. However, shared services has been prioritized by the Area CAOs, and the Region is working collaboratively with them to continue to build upon the documented successes to-date.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The proposed shared services work is directly related to Council's Strategic Priority of an Effective Region and advances Objective 1.1 "Implement continuous improvement and modernized processes to ensure value-for-money in regional services and programs"; and Objective 1.2 "Explore and implement opportunities to improve service delivery outcomes through shared services".

The continued pursuit of shared service opportunities to transform service delivery also advances the Guiding Principles of fiscal responsibility; innovation; sustainability; partnerships; and transparency and accountability.

Other Pertinent Reports

[PDS 9-2024 Shared Services Update](#)

(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=e32f76c9-d12f-482c-9109-986f7ed6c503&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=15&Tab=attachments%C3%A2%E2%82%AC%E2%80%B9>)

[PDS 30-2023 Areas of Strategic Focus for Shared Services](#)

(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=37294983-8faf-46b5-ab3b-38efc44d4267&Agenda=Merged&lang=English&Item=24&Tab=attachments>)

[PDS 10-2023 Strategic Transformation Office – Overview and Priorities](#)

(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=ba3afccd-9ec1-4a45-a788-0976926cb376&Agenda=Merged&lang=English&Item=15&Tab=attachments>)

[CAO 2-2023 Update on Shared Services Initiatives](#)

(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=4ef69423-fb3f-4f15-9b43-7ceadc120106&Agenda=Merged&lang=English&Item=15&Tab=attachments>)

[CAO 2-2021 Update on Shared Services Initiatives by the CAO Working Group](#)

(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=a045e2b3-cb2b-4551-a63c-e4498175de88&Agenda=Merged&lang=English&Item=15&Tab=attachments>)

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Appendices

- Appendix 1 Shared Services Inventory Summary
- Appendix 2 Shared Service Initiatives – Detailed Examples
- Appendix 3 Shared Services Inventory (AM-to-AM)
- Appendix 4 Shared Services Inventory (Region-to-AM)