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YORK REGION INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY (YRITS) 2006 UPDATE

The e-Government Sub-Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, January 18, 2006, from the Commissioner of Finance:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides the e-Government Sub-Committee with an overview of the 2005 Update to the York Region Information Technology Strategy (YRITS) and 5-Year Plan.

The IT Strategy highlights the approach and process for allocating the Region's information technology resources to a large number of projects to support the various departments of the Region. The 2006 Update to the IT Strategy was accomplished through active participation and input from the Corporate Technology Review Committee (CTRC) and other Regional staff.

3. BACKGROUND

During the fall 2005, the Information Technology Services Branch sponsored a collaborative workshop involving CTRC members and other management staff for the annual update of the York Region Information Technology Strategy.

The IT Strategy and 5-Year Plan document represents a synthesis of cross-departmental input guided by the goals and values of Vision 2026. The IT Strategy advocates that decisions on investments in information technology are based on sound business cases that identify the costs and benefits associated with individual projects as well as alignment of these IT projects with the services delivered by the business units of the Region.

3.1 Basis for the IT Strategy

The purpose of the Information Technology Strategy is to chart a roadmap to the future for the effective deployment of Information Technology in York Region. The IT Strategy is about making choices. Associated with these choices are corresponding costs and benefits. Strategic investment decisions in IT must fall within the constraints of the fiscal realities of the Region. The IT Strategy is also about leveraging the resources of the

organization to accomplish the programs and projects identified in the five year work plan resulting from the Strategy.

Information technology is an enabling tool that supports Regional business functions and activities. The adoption and use of information technology is wide-spread throughout the Corporation and many of the mission critical applications in the Region are dependent on the availability of key information technology, such as the voice and data networks, on a 7 day by 24 hour (7/24) basis.

The Information Technology Services (ITS) Branch provides and supports a wide variety of technology services and solutions for the Region. Services include the provision of telephones and voice mail systems, service desk (help desk) support, project management for technology solutions, computer networks for local and remote clients, desk top PC refresh, software application development and management of enterprise resource programs such as PeopleSoft and document management systems. Information technology has become fully integrated into the Region's day-to-day business processes.

Furthermore, as information technology and Region business operations become more interdependent, there is a growing need to optimize IT investment across the organization to avoid redundancies and waste. The key to aligning IT with departmental and corporate goals is to include IT in the business planning process early and at the highest levels and to encourage joint IT – business governance to measure trade offs, to spot redundancies, to identify opportunities and to set priorities using an IT and business capabilities road map. The IT Strategy provides such a road map and the existing CTRC (Corporate Technology Review Committee) is the appropriate group to foster this alignment and to demonstrate that IT can add value and be a catalyst for positive strategic change.

3.2 Methodology

The Update to the IT Strategy was developed using a facilitated workshop approach. An external facilitator, experienced with this type of workshop and strategy development was retained to navigate the process and ensure active involvement of all participants. The starting point in the development of the Update to the IT Strategy was the existing strategy document which was developed through a comprehensive review of other guiding documents, particularly Vision 2026. The workshop participants reviewed and reconfirmed the IT vision, goals and objectives already established in the IT strategy.

3.2.1 The Guiding Principles

The Workshop participants re-confirmed the following seven principles to guide the decision making process on information technology projects and associated IT investments:

- Customer Service
- Support for the Region's Core Business Needs
- Integration of IT Applications at Every Opportunity
- Strategic Investment in IT (Value For Money)
- Collaboration and Cooperation

- Alignment with Vision 2026 and Integration with other Government Jurisdictions
- Providing Secure & Responsible Information Management in Accordance with Legislative Requirements

3.2.2 Measuring Contribution and Progress – The 11 Key Strategic Outcomes

The workshop participants identified 11 Key Strategic Outcomes which the IT Strategy aims to deliver. They outline where the group sees the Region growing in the use of information technology to deliver value to the organization over the next 5 years. They highlight the strategic directions for York Region to pursue in order to deliver on these outcomes. Contribution of information technology projects to these 11 Key Strategic Outcomes also forms a “scorecard” in terms of how the Region is maturing in its strategic use of technology.

1. Secure & Reliable IT Infrastructure
2. IT Aligned with Business
3. Value Driven Strategic IT Investments
4. Customer-Centric Service Delivery
5. Online Government Transformation
6. Enabled Knowledge Workers
7. Region-Wide Online Employee Access
8. Streamlined Processes through Data Sharing & Integration
9. Maximized External Partnerships and, (once the above outcomes are realized)
10. York Region would be ‘Recognized’ for best practices
11. A Region that is in compliance with legislation requirements in management and retention of information and privacy

Prioritization of information technology initiatives using the above outcomes links IT to the mission critical applications of the Region. This will optimize Regional departments’ ability to deliver customer-centered, cost-effective, quality programs to the Region’s growing population and businesses. This will in turn, enable sustainable improved performance of the organization as a whole.

3.2.3 IT Initiatives & Projects - Prioritization Process

Prior to the Update of the IT Strategy commenced in the fall of 2005, the Information Technology Services Branch had catalogued a “waiting list” of approximately 200 requests from departments for IT projects along with regular maintenance and growth projects needed to sustain the existing information technology infrastructure. These projects were grouped into 32 programs (Initiatives), based on common project characteristics.

The IT Strategy Update identified the IT programs (Initiatives), their relative priorities to the corporation and department program delivery, the budget categories (Base, Growth, Mandatory and Enhancement), a 5 year implementation schedule, as well as the shared responsibility for program delivery between ITS branch and the various departments.

Some of these IT programs and initiatives are dictated by other levels of government. In the event that there is a change to current legislation or a change by Provincial or Federal partners to existing and or new programs, the priority setting framework in the Strategy can be changed or adjusted with input from the CTRC.

Furthermore, the facilitated workshop included a round table discussion on pressures and challenges facing departments in the use of Information Technology. Among the pressures identified:

- The need for consistent and timely technology training. This is required because systems are complex and therefore training and ongoing support is essential.
- Records need to be managed in accordance with legislation.
- There is a need for improved delivery of executive information to Senior Management and Council using a centralized enterprise business intelligence tool.
- A requirement for a new Web based application for Emergency Planning.
- The current use of the Intranet should be reviewed to map out a strategy to better improve its usage within the organization.

Key corporate initiatives that are part of the 2006 Plan include:

- Documents & Records Management Program – implementation of E-Docs
- User Devices Program – deployment of Anywhere Desktop
- Enterprise Financial, Human Resource & Reporting Systems - PeopleSoft
- Networks Program – migration to Converged Network, Internet and Intranet initiatives
- IT Service Delivery Program (Service Desk & Application Support)
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Program – Call Centres and Portals
- Data Centres Program – Maintenance and Growth of Computing Infrastructure
- Broadband Networks Program – includes support for OneYork
- Mobile Computing Program – Wireless Initiatives

In addition to the above corporate projects, there are a number of Departmental projects with a significant IT component that are also scheduled to commence during 2006. Planning and implementation of these projects are incorporated into Departmental business plans.

IT support and involvement is required in many of the departmental initiatives including the following:

- Transit Program – Fleet Management Software Implementation; Fare Enforcement Automation; Bus Stop Management System
- Ontario Child Care Management System – Conversion to Provincial WEB based System
- Water & Waste Water Program – Continued Implementation of CWMS and SCADA Initiatives

- Health – Public Health Program – Health Information Architecture, IPHIS Implementation
- Health Long Term Care – Scheduling Software
- Growth Management Program – Traffic Micro-Simulation System
- Roads Program – Adaptive Traffic Signals, Red Light Cameras, Integration with GTA Traffic Signal Systems

A copy of the full report on the 2006 Update of York Region Information Technology Strategy is available on file.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The IT Strategy is a framework for assessing IT investments and allocating the limited IT resources. The Strategy will evolve over time as the Region undertakes significant projects to realize the Key Strategic Outcomes. Among the significant steps that have been undertaken for the implementation of the Strategy was the development of an overall Enterprise Architecture (EA). The EA approach takes a holistic and comprehensive view to data architecture, application architecture and technology architecture. Designing IT service delivery must include due consideration of the Region's EA as a foundation for the IT Strategy and for the 5 year work plan.

Another significant step is deploying the IT Strategy framework for the development of the annual IT Capital Budget. Already the ITS Branch has used the Strategy framework for priority setting in the 2006 Capital Budget.

Furthermore, a business case is to be developed for each corporate and departmental IT initiative. The business case must identify the costs, benefits and the expected return on investment from the implementation of the initiative.

With the inception of the Converged Network initiative which has been approved by Council, the data and voice networks will be integrated into a single network aligned with the One York vision and the Broadband Strategy.

Finally, the IT Strategy calls for building partnerships and relationships with various levels of government and the private sector, including the identification of funding opportunities for joint initiatives. This is again in keeping with the One York vision.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of the projects in the IT Strategy and 5-Year Plan will be subject to Council's approval of the IT Initiatives as submitted to Council in the annual Capital Budget. The priority projects identified this year will be undertaken within the approved 2006 Capital Budget of the ITS Branch of the Finance Department.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

In building major partnerships such as with the proposed OneYork initiative, there may be opportunities to share resources and reduce costs to both the Region and the area municipalities.

7. CONCLUSION

The York Region Information Technology Strategy developed in 2005 and updated to 2006 represents a blue print for the effective deployment of IT in the Region over the next 5 years. The IT Strategy Update report will be distributed for comment to the area municipalities and to other stakeholders who participated in the process.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.