

Report CAOR-CC-09-14

To: Warden Milne and Members of County Council
From: Lance Thurston, Chief Administrative Officer and Members of Senior Management Team
Meeting Date: July 8, 2014
Subject: **Corporate Operating Plan – Second Quarter Update**
Status: Recommendation adopted by County Council as presented per Resolution CC101-14 July 8, 2014;

Recommendation

THAT County Council hereby receives for information purposes the Corporate Operating Plan – Q2 2014 Update report dated June 30, 2014, as recommended by the Chief Administrative Officer in his report CAOR-CC-09-14.

Background

The mandate of the County organization is to ensure the provision of a range of services on behalf of and for the citizens and business interests of Grey County. In doing so, the County is striving to:

Enable Economic Opportunity and Growth:

Wealth generation and the creation of work are the basic building blocks for livable, healthy communities where human initiative and stable families can flourish. Opportunities for entrepreneurial initiative, business expansion and training for jobs that offer upward mobility are critical to this success.

Foster Community Sustainability:

A community that is vibrant, strong and offers hope to its residents is a community in which neighbourhoods are safe, the environment is clean, housing is affordable, social support services and cultural/recreational opportunities are accessible and where civic spirit is nurtured by participatory decision-making, innovative design and celebration.

Strengthen Community Partnerships:

Economic opportunity and social/cultural development rely on broad community participation, both at the individual level and at the institutional level. Engaged individuals, governments and the private and not-for-profit sectors working together to provide relevant, accessible and coordinated programs and services that build towards the community's strategic direction.

In 2012 County Council adopted a *strategic management framework* to better enable County Council and staff to set priorities, align available resources to those priorities, and monitor performance against its stated objectives. The framework consists of:

- The Corporate Strategic Plan, which is the organization's blue print for the future
- The Corporate Operating Plan, which activates the strategic action items identified in the Strategic Plan over a three year horizon, and
- Departmental work plans, which detail how each initiative will be achieved by the lead department or group.

The Corporate Operating Plan, which is the subject of this report, reflects only the change agenda of the corporation, i.e. those strategic objectives that Council has determined are necessary to improve program and service delivery. This plan does not reflect the more routine yet still important day-to-day operational activities within each department.

The Corporate Operating Plan has a three year rolling time horizon, which means it is revised and rolled ahead by one year on an annual basis to keep it current. This makes it a very useful monitoring tool to gauge progress on the corporation's strategic objectives.

The 2014-2016 Corporate Operating Plan as updated to June 30, 2014 is linked to this report. It is also available on the county website or by contacting the CAO's office.

Discussion

The Corporate Operating Plan outlines the many different projects and initiatives that the County has undertaken over the past few years, is pursuing now, or will be in the next year or two. A review of the plan shows that it is a very full plate, so to speak, of projects and initiatives. And this does not include the important day to day operational activities of each department.

For the most part the County is making great strides in its strategic agenda. A number of projects have been completed and many more are proceeding well – on time and

within set budgets. In fact, some projects that had been stopped or delayed for various reasons over the past year have again been re-energized and proceeding on pace.

Some notable observations:

Bi-Focal Approach

The strategic agenda of the County is both inward and outward focused. Outward in the sense that the County is striving to work more collaboratively with community partners in bettering the lives and livelihoods of its residents and business interests. The County can be a significant and meaningful contributor to community building initiatives so long as it is well organized and performing its responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Hence, an inward focus strives to strengthen the organization from within – its organizational structure, its processes and practices.

To Prosper We Must Compete; To Compete We Must be Connected

A lot of time and effort is being invested by Grey County into projects aimed at bringing world class Internet connectivity to all of our communities. The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus focus on broadband infrastructure (the SWIFT project), the South West Economic Alliance's Intelligent Region initiative with its focus on applications of new technology, and the related Intelligent County project are all vital to the future prosperity of this area and are worthy of continued support from County Council and staff. Combined, these initiatives are consuming a considerable amount of staff time, particularly the two regional projects in which the County is a lead player. This is having considerable impact on progress being made on other activities particularly within the Office of the CAO, Information Technology and Economic Development – necessary short term pain that will yield long term gain.

Health Care Services

Health care is a major prosperity driver in this region. The economic base and the social fabric of this region depend on a strong health care sector. Grey County is a prominent player within the broader regional health care sector, providing direct services within long-term care and paramedic services, and funding public health programming through the Health Unit. Increasingly the County is also involved in a variety of community-based health care initiatives and health care policy considerations such as: Aging in Place strategies; Behavioural Supports Ontario; Community Paramedicine; the Healthy Communities Partnership; the regional hospital capital program as a major funding support; and of course local hospital redevelopment planning. As regional health care

service delivery continues to evolve in response to changing demographics and financial realities, the County will be called on more and more to be a part of the discussion and the solution.

Education

Education is another critical driver of the County's economic and social prosperity agenda. The knowledge-based global economy in which we as a county must now compete is demanding highly qualified and skilled people. Education is our future and the County increasingly is playing a more significant role in strengthening the education system within the County and has plans to become even more involved from a community development and economic development perspective. In particular, emphasis has been placed and will continue on the relationship between the County and Georgian College as well as the two school boards. This is driving a number of exciting initiatives, including: expansion plans for the Owen Sound campus of Georgian College and in particular its Marine Emergency Duties Training program and strengthening of its centre of marine technology and navigation excellence; food safety regulation training curriculum in support of the burgeoning local food sector; newcomer attraction and retention strategies, many of which are tied closely to educational opportunity.

Cultural and Natural Resources

Grey County has considerable competitive advantage in areas such as natural resources – scenery, agriculture, forestry, aggregates, deep water harbours; and its cultural industries – theatre, music, art, and heritage. The County is involved in all of these areas in a significant and increasing way either through direct service delivery or public policy and management initiatives as noted in the plan (tourism, forest management, county signage, trail development, Grey Roots development planning etc.).

A particular strategic focus is the Owen Sound harbour. This is a bit of a sleeper issue from the County's perspective and is expected to become more prominent in our public policy, planning and service delivery initiatives over the years. The harbour is foundational to many strategic initiatives at the county and regional levels. From its prominence as a world class recreational jewel to its importance as a working commercial/industrial Great Lakes harbour for agricultural products and commodities, construction and aggregate transshipment, lake freighter repairs, and future uses, the Owen Sound harbour is a significant attribute of county-wide significance that should be embraced in the strategic planning at the county level. There is also an exciting

programming tie-in with the emerging marine education centre of excellence at the Owen Sound campus of Georgian College.

Organizational Development

Many strategic initiatives in the Corporate Operating Plan are aimed at strengthening the County organization from within. Considerable effort continues on ensuring that how the county is organized (department structure, committee structure), the processes and practices it adopts, and its application of new technologies are contributing to enhancing the effective and efficient delivery of service. Significant changes have been made over the past few years and more are in process or planned. As the saying goes, change is the one constant in life or the *new normal*.

Two initiatives that are earmarked to commence in 2015 are a Service Excellence program and an Employee Wellness program. These are interconnected initiatives that if pursued and implemented well will strengthen the client/customer/resident and employee experience at the County significantly.

Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

Considerations

The tendency is to continue to add more projects and more initiatives to the corporate plate without taking something off the plate. Using the strategic management framework effectively gives Council and staff a tool by which this tendency can be managed to ensure that the corporate plate does not get heaped to overflowing.

Strategy is a matter of setting and executing priorities. More often than not it needs to be about what we don't do or discontinue, in order to focus time, energy and money on what is more on point.

Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

See above.

Attachments

[Corporate Operating Plan Q2 2014 Update](#)

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Senior Management Team,

Lance Thurston, Chief Administrative Officer