



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Sandra Eremita, Business Analyst, Information Technology Services

DATE: November 23, 2023

REPORT NO.: CS-2023-034

SUBJECT: Single Source for Growth Tracking System

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. CS-2023-034, dated November 23, 2023 regarding Single Source for Growth Tracking System be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the Manager of Purchasing be authorized to issue a single source purchase order to Watson & Associates Economists LTD. 2233 Argentia Rd., Suite 301, Mississauga, ON L5N 2RX to an upset limit of \$100,000 plus HST for the implementation of the Growth Tracking System and the first year's hosting subscription fees;

AND FURTHER THAT Council pre-approves an additional \$30,000 increase to the 2025 operating budget for hosting subscription fees, and subject to price negotiations and satisfactory performance for each year thereafter;

AND FURTHER THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the necessary contracts and any ancillary documents.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Provincial and Regional policies require municipalities to monitor and report on housing trends on an annual basis through a State of Housing Report.
- Historically, the Town has relied heavily on a combination of data provided by Statistics Canada, the Region of Halton, manual counting, and individual departmental tracking lists due to a lack of appropriate internal monitoring tools.

- It has been identified that existing technologies do not fully meet Planning & Development growth monitoring needs, especially as the Town enters a period of significant growth.
- Currently, Planning & Development staff rely on manual, time-consuming processes to monitor and report upon the Town's growth and development progress.
- Staff are recommending the Town implements a customized Residential and Non-Residential Growth Tracking System that will provide Planning & Development staff with robust tools to better monitor, model and report upon growth and population targets.
- Staff determined that there were no commercial or readily available technical solutions on the market that would be able to meet the Town's needs and determined that Watson's solution would best satisfy the Town's business and technical requirements.
- The recommended technology will enable Staff to analyze growth trends, such as residential intensification, population growth rates, housing trends by structure type, and growth allocations by planning policy or other geographical area.
- The recommended technology also includes a residential 'Scenario Builder' which Staff can use to model housing activity by geography and time, to then forecast housing assumptions and anticipated population trends.
- The Growth Tracking System will be designed to answer the following questions:
 - Where is growth happening in the Town? How is residential and non-residential development tracking to planned growth within the Town and its sub-geographies?
 - What are the recent trends regarding the built form of housing (i.e., single detached, semi-detached (low density), townhouses (medium density) and apartments (high density), and non-residential development by sector and how do these trends differ by geographic area?
 - What has been the rate of recent population, housing, and employment growth in Halton Hills? How has this changed over different time periods?
 - How is population, housing, and employment growth in the Town tracking to current forecasts?

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The need for advanced technical capabilities was originally raised in 2018 as 'Vision Georgetown' planning was underway. Staff from Planning & Development, Finance and Information Technology Services have been engaged through various requirements and information gathering exercises.

Staff determined that there were no commercial or readily available technical solutions on the market that would be able to meet the Town's needs. Further discovery led staff to the evaluation of Watson's innovative population, housing, and employment growth tracking systems. Watson has extensive experience in developing various plans and forecasts for Canadian municipalities.

Staff determined that Watson's solution would best satisfy the Town's business and technical requirements and are recommending the Town proceeds with Watson's Residential and Non-Residential Growth Tracking System. The system can be customized to the Town's needs and utilizes data from various sources, to generate forecasts based on real-time development and building permit information and other changing growth parameters.

This system can model and spatially track, monitor, and report on population, housing, and trends at various levels of geography. It can incorporate residential building permit data and other relevant data sources. The extensive data and forecasting capabilities will give staff access to dynamic reporting and insights which will facilitate efficient and timely decision making.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report aligns to the Town's Strategic plan recognizing the value to provide responsive, effective municipal government and strong leadership in the effective and efficient delivery of municipal services.

and to

achieve sustainable growth to ensure that growth is managed so as to ensure a balanced, sustainable, well planned community infrastructure and services to meet the needs of its residents and businesses.

This report also identifies shaping growth as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement was not needed as this report is administrative in nature.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

This report was discussed in consultation with staff from Planning & Development, staff from Information Technology Services, the Manager of Purchasing and the Treasurer.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report will require funding in a future budget year and therefore needs pre-approval for an approved funding source.

The approved 2019 capital budget included funding for the implementation of a Growth Tracking system and this budget allocation was subsequently increased through the 2021 budget, following detailed research and review of available software options.

Following successful implementation of the growth tracking system, an annual operating budget increase of \$30,000 will be required starting in the 2025 budget year. This will be identified as an operating impact from the capital budget and will be funded from the tax base and requires pre-budget approval from Council.

Reviewed and approved by,

Bronwyn Parker, Director of Planning Policy

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning & Development

Bethany Yew, Manager of Purchasing

Moya Jane Leighton, Director of Finance & Town Treasurer

Murray Colquhoun, Director of Information Technology Services

Laura Lancaster, Commissioner of Corporate Services

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer