



**Meeting Date:** March 6, 2024

**Prepared By:** Tiffany Farrell, Director of Corporate Services

**Report No:** CPS-14-2024

**Subject:** Middlesex Centre Information Technology Master plan Reporting

**Recommendation:**

THAT Report CPS-14-2024, re: Middlesex Centre Information Technology Master Plan Reporting be received for information.

**Purpose:**

To provide Council with an overview of the progress made on Middlesex Centre's Information Technology (IT) Master Plan.

**Background:**

In 2021/2022, Middlesex Centre undertook an IT Review with funding through the Government of Ontario's Provincial Modernization Grant. Blackline Consulting was contracted to complete the work.

Linked to the review, Middlesex Centre developed and implemented a new IT Master Plan in January 2022.

This report provides an update to the recommendations in the IT Master Plan.

**Analysis:**

Recommendations from IT Master Plan

The IT Master Plan put forward seven recommendations for the municipality to consider. The following table summarizes Middlesex Centre's responses and updates to those recommendations.

Recommendation	Suggested Timing	Current Status	Middlesex Centre Comment
<p><b>1) Improve the Municipality's IT Resilience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migrate servers and storage to County data centre</li> <li>• Increase bandwidth to main office</li> <li>• Coordinate reoccurring cybersecurity readiness assessment with County IT</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Completed.	<p>Servers and storage moved to the County of Middlesex's data centre, except for the servers required to remain on site.</p> <p>Bandwidth was increased at the municipal office and Komoka Wellness Centre. Other sites are reviewed as the services become available in those areas.</p> <p>Improved security and cyber readiness completed. Some items of note include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyber insurance</li> <li>• Phishing program</li> <li>• Third-party security monitoring</li> </ul>
<p><b>2) Enhance IT's Service Delivery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend County IT contract to define service levels and reporting requirements</li> <li>• Pilot program on-site support</li> </ul>	2022 and ongoing	Part completed and ongoing.  Agreement should be completed in 2024.	<p>Middlesex Centre has worked with our IT service provider, Middlesex County, to have on-site support at three or four locations once a month. This program has been positive and will continue.</p> <p>Staff are working with County IT and County legal on finalizing the 2024 IT service agreement. Estimated completion is Q2 2024.</p>
<p><b>3) Revise IT Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve IT governance by including County IT in regular meetings</li> <li>• Create internal Change Advisory Committee and External IT Committee</li> <li>• Enhance shared service governance with Middlesex municipalities and County IT</li> </ul>	2022 and ongoing	Part completed and ongoing.	<p>Middlesex County's Director of IT Services attends senior management team meetings at Middlesex Centre on a quarterly basis. Additional meetings occur frequently between the Director of Corporate Services and the County's Director and Manager of IT Services.</p> <p>Currently staff are not pursuing an internal change advisory committee with other lower-tier municipalities. Middlesex Centre's IT agreement is different than the other municipalities, and staff have determined such a working group would not be beneficial at this time. Staff do work closely with the other lower tiers as certain projects require.</p>

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<p><b>4) Improve IT Policies and Procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a formal process to identify and assess risks and establish a risk framework</li> <li>• Create new IT policies and procedures, and review annually</li> <li>• Formalize and define key IT procedures</li> </ul>	<p>2023 and ongoing</p>	<p>Completed and ongoing.</p>	<p>Middlesex Centre uses corporate IT policies to provide overall direction and guidance to the organization relating to the proper, acceptable, and secure use of technology and information systems.</p> <p>In 2023, Middlesex Centre worked with the County’s Director of IT Services to update existing and develop new IT policies. These were adopted by Council in February 2024.</p> <p>The municipality’s updated IT policies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable Use of Technology Policy</li> <li>• Cellphone and Mobile Device Policy</li> <li>• User Accounts and Passwords Policy</li> <li>• Information System Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Policy</li> </ul> <p>The municipality’s new IT policies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wireless Access Policy</li> <li>• Information Security Policy</li> <li>• Malware Protection Policy</li> <li>• Information Technology Access Control Policy</li> </ul> <p>In addition to these eight policies, there are three policies that have been adopted at the County of Middlesex that cover Middlesex Centre owing to our agreement with the County for the provision of IT services. These three policies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back-up Policy</li> <li>• Patch Management Policy</li> <li>• Secure Configuration Policy</li> </ul> <p>All of these policies will now be reviewed on a four-year cycle.</p>

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<p><b>5) Modernize the Municipality's Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go to market to replace the accounting system</li> <li>• Integrate GIS with key systems</li> <li>• Create formal training program to ensure staff can fully utilize systems</li> </ul>	2024-2025	<p>Accounting System – Identified for 2025/2026.</p> <p>GIS – ongoing.</p>	<p>Middlesex Centre's accounting software has been identified for replacement. The software has limited application integration. While the accounting system integrates with some systems (e.g., budgeting, records management, and payments), no other systems are integrated to support staff work. Additionally, the software lacks the customer-facing applications that would benefit our residents.</p> <p>Staff would like to work with other lower-tier municipalities in the county as well as the County of Middlesex on the procurement and implementation of new accounting software.</p> <p>The cost to update the accounting system would be \$200,000-\$300,000, including software, implementation, and integration with other municipal software applications. This project would also require a significant amount of staff resources to complete. Staff will be creating an RFP in 2025 to begin this project.</p> <p>Funds have been allocated for this project since 2021 as part of the Modernization Reserve Fund. Originally \$150,000 was allocated, but with the additional interest earned, there is approximately \$200,000 available.</p> <p>Integrating GIS with key programs and systems such as Cloudpermit continues to evolve. In 2024, staff will be implementing a new asset management system that will align with GIS for tracking maintenance and repairs. Ongoing training is part of this work.</p>

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<p><b>6) Optimize Service Channels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to add/enhance resident services on website and other channels.</li> </ul>	<p>2022 and ongoing</p>	<p>Completed and ongoing.</p>	<p>Updates and improvements are made whenever possible. Online webforms are available, with other less frequently used forms available as fillable PDFs. New forms are added as required. Additional self-service options will be incorporated when new accounting software is procured in future.</p> <p>Some enhancements that have occurred since 2022 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GIS – Improved accessibility of zoning information, which is now provided for each parcel. There is a direct link to the zoning description in the Consolidated Zoning By-law.</li> <li>Cloudpermit – online building and planning service</li> <li>Univerus – online recreation program registration</li> <li>Paymentus – online credit card payment service</li> </ul>
<p><b>7) Pilot Innovative Technologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annually, hold innovation working session to assess new advancements</li> <li>Create structure to prioritize and pilot innovative projects</li> </ul>	<p>2024 and ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Teams meet at a minimum on an annual basis to discuss innovative goals to explore for the future.</p> <p>Additionally, there is a continuous improvement program launched in 2022 by the CAO that operates all year round with numerous initiatives being implemented.</p> <p>Specific items being worked on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automated workflow for many procurement processes completed.</li> <li>Automated workflow for human resources contracts and legal contracts and agreements completed.</li> <li>Automated workflow for accounts payable completed.</li> <li>Automating workflows for common customer service processes is planned for 2024; with a kick-off meeting having already taken place. The costs of this project will be covered in the existing budget.</li> <li>Innovative systems tested and added in each department / service area as appropriate. For instance, use of Sub-Zero Ice Management System by Community Services in arenas.</li> </ul>

Middlesex Centre's mission is "to deliver the highest standard in municipal services in sustainable professional and innovative manner." Staff apply this lens to all their work, including the delivery and use of information technology services.

### **Financial Implications:**

Annual costs associated with IT are included in the annual operating budget. This includes the annual service costs for the County of Middlesex's IT services.

In 2025 and 2026, staff will be budgeting for the new accounting software purchase and implementation in the operating budget (software is not a capital expense for Middlesex Centre). The cost will be between \$200,000 and \$300,000 with the majority being funded from the Modernization Reserve Fund.

### **Strategic Plan:**

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Responsive Municipal Government

Objective 5.1 in the strategic plan is to enhance customer service, with expanding digital services listed as a specific strategy.

Objective 5.3 in the strategic plan is to foster a culture of innovative, continuous improvement, and cost-effective service delivery, with reviewing and enhancing our processes listed as a specific strategy.

### **Attachments:**

N/A