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## 2022 Business Plan & Budget

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### Information Technology

#### Prior Year Accomplishments

##### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

The Information Technology department continued with the management of the SMARTnorthumberland initiative, the County's Digital Strategy. In 2021, the major focus was on broadband connectivity in the County. This included the completion of and Council approval of a Broadband Strategy that led directly to the submission of funding proposals to the federal Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) and Improving Connectivity for Ontario (ICON) programs to support a home-grown "broadband as a utility" approach. Additional focus was directed towards a Digital Literacy campaign (with funding from the Federal Department of Canadian Heritage) offered to our residents that focused on technology security, bias and fact checking and COVID-19 disinformation. And finally, the implementation of a participatory budgeting tool (A Balancing Act) was instrumental in obtaining resident input into the County's budget process.

##### **Sustainable Growth**

The Information Technology department strives to ensure that backend technology supports are effective and sufficient to support ongoing organizational and community growth in a manner that is cost effective and value driven. Examples of 2021 accomplishments in this area include:

- Continued work towards the implementation of HRIS – a new cloud-based HR solution
- Implementation of a SharePoint solution for the County
- In coordination with the Accessible Web Content Steering Committee, continued work and website updates to maintain AODA WCAG 2.0 AA compliance and ensure optimal website operations
- Network, phone and security upgrades to ensure security and availability of business information



- An upgrade to our Great Plains financial solution
- Maintenance of the remote work solution to allow staff to continue to work through COVID-19 as we plan for return to work operations
- Continued involvement in the GPL rebuild
- Continued attention to and investment in IT security and cybersecurity solutions and best practices

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

The Information Technology department actively participates on the Ontario Health Team Northumberland Digital Subcommittee tasked with the development and implementation of a digital strategy for the health network. As part of this initiative, we have been facilitating access to the centralized eHealth Patient Records database for our Paramedics department and implementation of an eReferrals system.

### **Leadership in Change**

The Information Technology department provides managed IT services to 3 member municipalities and both local police services. Through these relationships, IT chairs the Inter-Municipal IT Working Committee (IMITWC) that focuses on working closely with its member municipalities to identify opportunities to be collaborative in nature. In 2021, the IMITWC continued to pursue opportunities around cost sharing an IT Security specialist resource and the development of organizational IT Security funds. The SMARTnorthumberland digital strategy lays the framework and plans to lead a technology-backed initiative in the County to better realize the opportunities that newer technology can bring to our County workplaces, County service delivery, and within the community.

## **2022 Service Objectives & Initiatives**

### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

The Information Technology department will continue to work towards improving its internal capabilities to better support the County's lines of business with the goal of providing and demonstrating business value and identifying and implementing technology-based efficiencies. The digital strategy implementation will continue and will focus on those items that will bring economic prosperity to the community. Special focus will be given to implementing the Broadband Strategy which aims to, with federal and provincial funding, deliver a "broadband as



a utility” service for its residents. Tech innovation opportunities will once again be actively pursued as we exit from COVID restrictions and the County grows and gains in prominence as a tech-friendly location.

### **Sustainable Growth**

Ensuring that technology keeps pace with the demands and expectations of our lines of business and opportunities as they present themselves, the Information Technology department will continue to build a responsive, efficient and secure technology infrastructure.

Internal initiatives to be pursued include:

- Continued modernization of business processes with an eye towards efficiency and effectiveness
- Continued emphasis on securing the technology infrastructure in the organization
- Continued adherence to a “state of good repair” and best practice IT Infrastructure initiatives
- Continued coordination with the Accessible Web Content Steering Committee to ensure WCAG 2.0 AA compliance to meet legislative AODA requirements
- Continued management of our shared services partnerships in a fair and equitable manner
- Integration of the Records Management function into the Information Technology department

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

Continued involvement with the Ontario Health Team Northumberland towards the development of a digital health strategy will continue to be of prime importance. Enhancement of the website e-service delivery options will continue with the goal of providing an online alternative for all County interactions – a true omni-channel service delivery model. And continued digital strategy implementation activities to ensure equality and inclusivity in technology initiatives in the County.

### **Leadership in Change**

The provision of managed IT services to member municipalities will continue and opportunities to work more closely with our member municipalities pursued. Collaborative projects like the IMITWC IT Security program will continue as funding opportunities will be pursued so to be able



to fund necessary security enhancements. And work on the SMARTnorthumberland initiative will continue focusing on:

- Modernizing the workplace and transforming County lines of business
- Addressing broadband challenges
- Facilitating digital literacy opportunities in the County

## Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

1. To address broadband challenges in the County through a coordinated, well thought out investment strategy
2. To create a more intelligent workplace and community, a SMARTnorthumberland, by introducing and making use of newer technologies
3. To use technology as an investment vehicle to attract innovation-minded businesses and professionals

### Sustainable Growth

1. To ensure that remote work technology solutions meet the needs and requirements of staff
2. To ensure that the County IT infrastructure (people, tools, and processes) are present to support and ensure organizational success
3. To continue to actively pursue state of good repair and best practice initiatives with respect to IT infrastructure
4. To safeguard the privacy and security of County data and information

### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

1. Ensure an effective omni-channel service delivery model for the County.
2. Continued emphasis on community benefit from technology initiatives and enhancements
3. Continue to support Northumberland's Health Team from a digital health perspective



## **Leadership in Change**

1. Continue to provide, grow, and enhance the quality of the IT managed services to promote a shared service approach
2. Continue to pursue collaborative opportunities using technology for the benefit of the County
3. Manage the County's Records Management function

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## 2022 Issue Paper

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### Creation of a Dedicated Cybersecurity Fund

#### Purpose

The purpose of this issue paper is to request the creation of a dedicated cybersecurity operating fund to allow for investments in additional cybersecurity products and solutions.

#### Background

Cyber breaches are a growing threat to organizations including government institutions. The Canadian Centre for Cyber Security's (<https://cyber.gc.ca/en/guidance/executive-summary-2>) National Cyber Threat Assessment included the following relevant findings:

- The number of cyber threat actors is rising, and they are becoming more sophisticated
- Cybercrime continues to be the cyber threat that is most likely to affect Canadians and Canadian organizations
- Ransomware directed against Canadian organizations are likely to target larger organizations and critical infrastructure

The continued rise in data sensitive breaches in 2021 has caused a significant increase in cybersecurity insurance, also affecting the County's cybersecurity insurance and rates. A proactively secure organization stands a stronger chance of preventing cyber events or data breaches that will have a lasting and costly effect on the organization.

#### Consultation/Options

In 2021, council approved the addition of an IT Security Specialist in the County. This expertise will go a long way towards meeting the cybersecurity goals of the organization and for our managed partners. Also important is the availability of a dedicated source of funds to invest in cybersecurity solutions to assist the organization in meeting those goals. Based on information obtained from industry thinktanks, the average organization spends 12-13% of its IT budget on IT security. The County currently invests only 7%. The following chart depicts the required investment to achieve a 12% commitment:



Required Additional Funding	% Spent on Cyber Security
\$25K	8%
\$50K	9%
\$75K	10%
\$100K	11%
\$150K	12%

## Financial Impact

Staff are requesting an initial ongoing operating investment of \$75K / year for the creation of a Cyber Security Fund, with an additional top-up investment of \$25K in 2023 and \$50K in 2024 to meet the goal of 12% of the IT budget spend dedicated to cyber security.

Year	New Investment	Total Year Over Year Investment
2022	\$75,000	\$75,000
2023	\$25,000	\$100,000
2024	\$50,000	\$150,000

The funds for this initiative will come directly from the levy.

## Risk Considerations

Cybersecurity continues to be the number one challenge for IT organizations. The impacts of a breach can be wide and far reaching. Recent evidence of breaches in Ontario municipal organizations indicate that recovery costs in the neighbourhood of \$250,000 and recovery time averaging around 3 weeks. The non-financial effects of cybersecurity breaches include regulatory penalties and reputational and brand damage.

## Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners

There exists an opportunity for our member municipalities to leverage off the IT Security Specialist resource through a cost recovery model.



## **Included in 2021 Long Term Plan: NO**

The Inter Municipal IT Working Committee has been engaged in this initiative for two years. Funding challenges have resulted in smaller steps to reach the ultimate goal of a stronger Cyber Security posture for all members. This issue paper will instantiate a long term sustainable goal for cyber security in the County.