



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Social Services Sub-committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: June 15, 2021
Time: 3:30 P.M.
Location: Electronic Meeting
Sub-committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Bunting - Vice Chair, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Ritsma, Councillor Vassilakos
Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Eden Grodzinski - Manager of Housing, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Jeneane Fast - Housing Stability Policy & Program Coordinator, Jodi Akins - Council Clerk Secretary

To watch the Sub-committee meeting live, click the following link: <https://stratford-ca.zoom.us/j/85080037563?pwd=QjhmLzlZVlB1T3Q0WkVKbWthVi9HZz09>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website at <https://www.stratford.ca/en/index.aspx> following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Director of Social Services

4.1. Community Income Tax Clinic (SOC21-007)

4 - 5

Motion by _____

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report on annual Community Income Tax Clinic activities and outcomes (SOC21-007) be received for information;

AND THAT Social Services issue a thank you to all businesses that offered and provided their support and services.

5. Report of the Manager of Housing

5.1. 2020 Annual Report (Year 7) – Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys (SOC21-005)

6 - 15

Motion by _____

Staff Recommendation: THAT the 2020 Annual Report – Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys (2020-2024) be endorsed by Council.

6. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

6.1. Centralized Intake Implementation (SOC21-006)

16 - 18

Motion by _____

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Centralized Intake Implementation" (SOC21-006) be received for information.

6.2. Electronic Document Management Implementation (SOC21-008)

19 - 23

Motion by _____

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Electronic Document Management Implementation" (SOC21-008) be received for information.

7. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is Tuesday, July 13, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.

8. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by _____

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Sub-committee meeting adjourn.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: June 15, 2021
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Colleen Steckly, Administrative Assistant to Director of Social Services
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC21-007
Attachments: None

Title: Community Income Tax Clinic

Objective: To provide a report on the annual Community Income Tax Clinic activities and outcomes.

Background: The City of Stratford has coordinated an annual Income Tax Clinic for low-income residents since 1989, with the support of local accounting firms.

Analysis: This year we had the advantage of hindsight and a bit of experience based on last year's need to pivot on how we provided the annual income tax clinic under Covid-19. The services continued to be provided free of charge by three local accounting firms, including BDO Canada LLP, Famme and Company and McCutchen & Pearce Professional Corporation.

The City of Stratford was able to provide the service once again without interruption by communicating well in advance with clients through partner agencies and various media platforms, including the screens on the city transit buses.

To streamline the process, this year we asked all participants to drop off documents in sealed envelopes at the City Annex office utilizing the buzzer at the door. At the same time, it was communicated when the returns could be picked up at the same location. Most returns were completed within the week, despite the Covid-19 restrictions.

100 appointment time slots were reserved by firms to low-income individuals and couples to enable them to complete and submit their 2020 tax return. Eligible residents included individuals with an annual income of less than \$18,000 and couples with an annual income of less than \$28,000. Postage paid envelopes with proper mailing address for CRA were provided by the firm if e-file was not an option.

Preparation for the clinic by social services staff commenced in January, when firms were contacted to ascertain their willingness to participate. Due to Covid-19 restrictions one firm was not able to dedicate as many time slots to the clinic while others maintained or increased their commitment.

Since it's inception, this well-received program has served many residents. Over the past five years (2017-2021) the average participation has been about 137 persons per year. Participation this year was 100 persons which was down from previous years, and we are attributing that to Covid-19, not a lack of interest or value in the program. The City of Stratford is grateful for the service these firms provide to our low-income families.

Financial Impact: As indicated, all professional accounting services are provided free of charge to participants. Administrative time for the Corporation had no impact to service delivery of programs.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

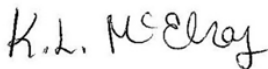
Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report on annual Community Income Tax Clinic activities and outcomes (SOC21-007) be received for information;

AND THAT Social Services issue a thank you to all businesses that offered and provided their support and services.



Colleen Steckly, Administrative Assistant
to the Director of Social Services



Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services



Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: June 15, 2021
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Jeneane Fast, Housing Stability Policy & Program Coordinator
 Eden Grodzinski, Manager of Housing
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC21-005
Attachments: 2020 Annual Report (Year 7) – Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys

Title: 2020 Annual Report (Year 7) – Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys

Objective: To present the 2020 Annual Report (Year 7) for the Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys.

Background: The 2020 Annual Report highlights the achievements made in Year 7 of the Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys. In this year, local communities approved an updated Housing and Homelessness Plan for the next five years (2020-2024). This update included a new vision and four strategic priorities:

Vision: **Everyone has the right to a home that is safe, suitable, and affordable, and to supports that help them keep their home.**

Strategic Objectives:

1. Ending Homelessness
2. Creating Attainable Housing Options
3. Sustaining Community Housing
4. Addressing a Diversity of Needs

In accordance with the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, the City of Stratford (as Service Manager for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys) is required to produce an Annual Report on the community's accomplishments in implementing this Plan. Attached is a report detailing the content of the 2020 Annual Report; an AODA compliant, web-friendly, graphic design version for the community is currently in development.

Analysis: Some of the achievements of the seventh year of the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan included:

- Continued collaborative planning efforts to prevent and end homelessness, including the establishment of a Coordinated Access System Leadership table;
- A 10% increase in new attainable housing options using rent support programs in private market rental units, including the introduction of the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB); *
- 83 households experiencing homelessness moved into permanent housing; *
- 78 households on the Centralized Waiting List moved into permanent geared-to-income units; *
- Relaunch of the Affordable Homeownership Loan Program;
- The distribution of \$320,000 in Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) capital funding to community housing providers for health and safety repairs and renovations; and the
- Preparation and training of community partners on legislative changes to the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

*Numbers are not mutually exclusive.

2020 was an unprecedented year as the world faced a global pandemic and it became even more apparent that permanent, safe, and stable housing was vital for the health and wellbeing of people everywhere. Locally, with the introduction of the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF), services were enhanced for those most vulnerable to housing instability and homelessness, with additional options and supports established to help people find and maintain permanent housing.

Financial Impact: There is no new or additional financial impact for the City associated with this report.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Developing our Resources

Optimizing Stratford's physical assets and digital resources. Planning a sustainable future for Stratford's resources and environment.

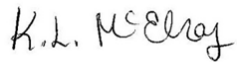
Staff Recommendation: THAT the 2020 Annual Report – Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys (2020-2024) be endorsed by Council.



Jeneane Fast, Housing Stability Policy and Program Coordinator



Eden Grodzinski, Manager of Housing



Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services



Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer

Housing & Homelessness Plan 2020 Annual Report Content

Introduction

The 2020 Annual Report highlights the achievements made in Year 7 of the *Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys*. In this year, local communities approved an updated Housing and Homelessness Plan for the next five years (2020-2024). This update included a new vision that:

Everyone has the right to a home that is safe, suitable, and affordable, and to supports that help them keep their home.

The updated Plan also introduced a revised framework of four strategic objectives and four implementation drivers to better reflect local needs and address emerging challenges.

Strategic Objectives:

1. Ending Homelessness
2. Creating Attainable Housing Options
3. Sustaining Community Housing
4. Addressing a Diversity of Needs

Implementation Drivers:

1. Collaboration
2. Using local data
3. Education and training
4. Focus on outcomes

This updated Plan continues to guide the work of housing and homelessness planning locally.

2020 was an unprecedented year as the world faced a global pandemic and it became even more apparent that permanent, safe, and stable housing was vital for the health and wellbeing of people everywhere. Locally, services continued for those most vulnerable to housing instability and homelessness, with additional options and supports established to help people find and maintain permanent housing.

Snapshot of Housing & Homelessness

Demand for Geared-to-Income (RGI) Housing

As of December 31, 2020 there were **276** applicants on the centralized waiting list for RGI housing.

Housing & Homelessness Plan 2020 Annual Report Content

Priority Status

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Special Provincial Priority (SPP) | 1% |
| Homelessness status | 39% |
| Chronological | 59% |

Demand by Unit Size

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Demand for 1 bedroom | 74% |
| Demand for 2 bedrooms | 12% |
| Demand for 3 bedrooms | 8% |
| Demand for 4+ bedrooms | 7% |

Applicant Type

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Singles and couples | 63% |
| Families | 25% |
| Seniors | 12% |

Where Applicants are Applying From

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Applying from Stratford | 57% |
| Applying from St. Marys | 5% |
| Applying from North Perth | 6% |
| Applying from West Perth | 3% |
| Applying from Perth East | 1% |
| Applying from Perth South | 1% |
| Outside Perth County | 22% |
| Blank | 5% |

Households Experiencing Homelessness

As of December 31, 2020, **103** households were experiencing homelessness in Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys according to the area's By-Name-List.

- 85% were experiencing chronic homelessness
- 11% identified as Indigenous

Gender Identity*

| | |
|---|-----|
| Women | 48% |
| Men | 45% |
| Trans/Gender Non-Conforming/No Response | 8% |

**percentages do not add up to 100% because of rounding.*

Housing & Homelessness Plan 2020 Annual Report Content

Household Composition

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Families | 9% |
| Youth | 17% |
| Single Adults | 74% |

Level of Acuity

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| High Acuity | 63% |
| Moderate Acuity | 26% |
| Low Acuity | 11% |

Social Services Department Homelessness Response & Prevention

- **141** households accessed emergency accommodation
 - ▶ Average length of stay was **29** nights.
- **154** households accessed financial assistance through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) program:
 - ▶ 19% received assistance for moving costs
 - ▶ 30% received last month's rent deposit
 - ▶ 23% received assistance with rent arrears
 - ▶ 28% received assistance with utility arrears

Rental Costs

Average Market Rent (AMR)

| Unit Type | CMHC | Local |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| 1-bedroom | \$889 | \$1,239 |
| 2-bedroom | \$1,034 | \$1,421 |
| 3-bedroom | \$1,182 | \$1,720 |

Vacancy Rates*

Stratford – 1.5%

North Perth – 5.3%

**Data unavailable for entire Service Manager area.*

Housing & Homelessness Plan 2020 Annual Report Content

Rental Housing Affordability

| Income Percentile | | 10 th | 20 th | 30 th | 40 th | 50 th | 60 th | 70 th | 80 th | 90 th |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Annual Household Income | | \$15,200 | \$22,200 | \$29,600 | \$37,500 | \$45,700 | \$54,600 | \$64,400 | \$77,000 | \$102,000 |
| Affordable Monthly Rent | | \$380 | \$560 | \$740 | \$940 | \$1,140 | \$1,370 | \$1,610 | \$1,930 | \$2,510 |
| Type of Unit | Local AMR | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Bedroom | \$1,239 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Bedrooms | \$1,421 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Bedrooms | \$1,720 | | | | | | | | | |

Home Ownership Affordability

| Income Percentile | | 10 th | 20 th | 30 th | 40 th | 50 th | 60 th | 70 th | 80 th | 90 th |
|--|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Annual Household Income | | \$24,900 | \$38,800 | \$50,500 | \$63,100 | \$76,400 | \$90,700 | \$108,700 | \$132,000 | \$170,300 |
| Affordable Purchase Price | | \$90,500 | \$141,000 | \$183,500 | \$229,200 | \$277,600 | \$329,500 | \$394,900 | \$479,500 | \$618,700 |
| All Dwelling Types Avg. Resale Price \$437,622 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10% Below Avg. Resale Price \$393,860 | | | | | | | | | | |

2020 Accomplishments

Ending Homelessness

83 households experiencing homelessness moved into permanent housing in 2020.

- ▶ **35** (42%) were housed in the private market
- ▶ **17** (21%) were housed in the private market and receiving some type of rent support
- ▶ **20** (24%) were housed in community housing
- ▶ **11** (13%) were housed with the type of housing unknown

88% of housed households had experienced chronic homelessness (homeless for 6 or more months)

79%* of housed households had maintained their housing for 6 months or more.

**Percentage based on households housed between January and November 2020*

Housing & Homelessness Plan 2020 Annual Report Content

- ✓ Established the Homelessness Emergency Operations Group (HEOG) to create a coordinated response for people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.
- ✓ Secured a motel contract to provide isolation spaces for individuals experiencing homelessness who were presumptive, awaiting a test result, or were positive with COVID-19 and needed to self-isolate or quarantine.
- ✓ Established the Coordinated Access System Leadership Group (CASLG) – consisting of 12 community agencies - to oversee the implementation of a coordinated access system locally.
- ✓ Enhanced current outreach capacity by hiring an additional Social Services Outreach Worker.
- ✓ Increased the capacity of the Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP) by an additional 20 case management spots in the scattered site model of the program.
- ✓ Increased housing stability and homelessness prevention funding for:
 - ▶ Rent and utility banks;
 - ▶ Gift cards to purchase incidentals; and
 - ▶ Cell phones and minutes to reduce isolation, increase contact with support systems, and assist with housing searches.
- ✓ Partnered with The Local Community Food Centre to expand meal services to households accessing emergency accommodation at local motels.

Creating Attainable Housing Options

317 households received rent supports (e.g. housing allowance, rent supplement, housing benefit) to make the cost of their housing more affordable.

- ▶ This is an 10% increase from 2019.
- ✓ Relaunched the Affordable Homeownership Loan Program using proceeds from loan repayments and capital gains realized by previous recipients who sold their residential properties.
- ✓ Rolled out the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) with initial target populations of:
 - ▶ Households experiencing homelessness;
 - ▶ Survivors of domestic violence; and
 - ▶ Households living in community housing not currently receiving affordability support.

Housing & Homelessness Plan 2020 Annual Report Content

Sustaining Community Housing

78 households housed from the centralized waiting list for RGI housing:

- ▶ 20% were Special Provincial Priority (SPP) applicants
 - ▶ 35% were Homelessness status applicants
 - ▶ 45% were Chronological applicants
- ✓ Operating agreements with **3** federal housing projects concluded, impacting **36** RGI units.
- ✓ **5** community housing providers received COCHI money, benefitting **258** households.
- ▶ \$319,380 on capital repairs and improvements
 - ▶ \$13,500 on transitional operating grant to assist one of the federal projects with developing a plan to maintain their RGI stock
- ✓ **2** workshops (held online due to the pandemic) hosted for community housing providers and covered topics such as:
- ▶ Findings from the Operational Review
 - ▶ COCHI funding
 - ▶ Risk management during the pandemic
 - ▶ Legislative changes to the *Housing Services Act, 2011*
- 100% of housing providers attended the workshops.
- ✓ Prepared for legislative changes to the *Housing Services Act, 2011* by:
- ▶ Creating 5 new Service Manager Directives; and
 - ▶ Communicating the changes to community housing providers and tenants, applicants on the centralized waiting list, and the public.

Addressing a Diversity of Needs

- ✓ Collaborated with the United Way Perth-Huron on the launch of Help Do Local Good, an initiative to bring those impacted by the pandemic together with those willing to lend a hand.
- ✓ Supported the United Way Perth-Huron in setting up the COVID-19 Urgent Needs Fund to help local organizations increase program capacity, expand the reach of existing programs and shift the way they provide support to individuals and families in need.

Housing & Homelessness Plan 2020 Annual Report Content

- ✓ Partnered with the municipalities of Perth County, North Perth, and St. Marys, on the pilot of PC Connect, a reliable and affordable bus service to improve transportation between communities.
- ✓ Provided additional funding to Family Services Perth-Huron to support households struggling with various stresses due to the pandemic, including isolation, small business stress, and family issues.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: June 15, 2021
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC21-006
Attachments: None

Title: Centralized Intake Implementation

Objective: To provide information to Council about the upcoming implementation of Ontario Works Centralized Intake for the City of Stratford Service Manager area.

Background: As documented in Council Reports SOC20-009 and SOC21-001, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) continues to evaluate and analyze the delivery of Social Assistance programs across the Province. They are evaluating the current delivery of the Ontario Works program (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), focusing on the overall service delivery model as well as how these will be impacted by the economic recovery from COVID-19. As part of the recovery and renewal plan, the Province has been working toward implementing a centralized intake process whereby applicants are able to contact a centralized intake unit, managed by MCCSS, to apply for Social Assistance. As documented in report SOC20-009, the centralized unit will manage applications submitted through the Social Assistance Digital Application (SADA) platform and grant Ontario Works applicants their ongoing social assistance before transferring the file to the local office for ongoing case management support. These files will be processed either through the automated Risk Based Eligibility Determination (RBED) model, or through the centralized Intake and Benefits Administration Unit (IBAU). The Province anticipates 70% of applications will be processed by the central unit, which still leaves the option for local offices to complete applications for clients who are unable to utilize the centralized unit.

Analysis: The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services contacted the local office in April 2020 to determine a start date for the City of Stratford Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) to join the Centralized Intake program. Through consultation with MCCSS, the Ontario Works Division decided that we would join the next phase of the program's launch, which has a go-live date of June 21, 2021. Once

the local office is live with centralized intake, applicants who can apply via the new process will be directed to the SADA or IBAU unit to complete their application. Once the application is processed, the local office will receive the electronic file and it will be assigned to an Ontario Works case manager for ongoing employment and life stabilization support. This process does not impact the eligibility criteria, nor the entitlement amounts, rather it offers a streamlined and alternate avenue for clients to apply for Social Assistance programs. MCCSS has built in several technological parameters that support applications and ensure that those files being granted are providing true and accurate information. This will lead to less clean-up required on newly granted files by local OW staff and reduce the administrative workload for local case managers required to process new applications and file transfers from other municipalities. Please see SOC20-009 for further details about the centralized intake process.

Local Ontario Works staff will continue to provide ongoing case management, and local staff can still process applications for clients who walk in or call the office. Furthermore, clients who are being reinstated within 6 months of leaving Ontario Works assistance, are experiencing homelessness, are under the age of 18, require a trustee, or are deemed “high risk applicants” by the centralized intake team will still be processed at the local level. This offers flexibility in the application process and ensures that there is no impact to service level standards. Training is being completed by MCCSS at this time, and management staff will train all local staff on the new business processes before the go-live date of June 21, 2021. There is ongoing support provided by MCCSS in the lead-up and after the go-live date to ensure that service level standards are maintained.

Financial Impact: There is no financial impact as a result of the Centralized Intake implementation at this time. Ontario Works social assistance payments for ongoing OW recipients are paid fully by the Province of Ontario.

There is no indication of reduced staffing levels due to centralized intake at this time, and the 2021 budget allocation has already been received. We expect financial impacts from the recovery and renewal plan, but do not anticipate these changes to reflect in the provincial budget until 2023.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

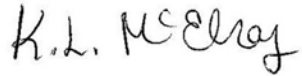
Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Centralized Intake Implementation" (SOC21-006) be received for information.



Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works



Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services



Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: June 15, 2021
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC21-008
Attachments: None

Title: Electronic Document Management Implementation

Objective: Provide Council with information regarding the implementation of Electronic Document Management within the Ontario Works Division.

Background: As part of the Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services continues to roll-out enhanced technology-based services for Ontario Works offices and recipients. As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager responsible for delivering the Ontario Works program, the local office will be expected to implement Electronic Document Management in conjunction with the other 46 Service Managers across the province.

Electronic Document Management (EDM) was developed as part of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) Social Assistance Reform mandate. EDM provides the foundational base for enhanced user experience, administrative efficiencies, and process optimization through the digitization of paper into digital records accessible through the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS).¹

EDM was implemented in all ODSP offices across the Province (July 2020) and continues to be implemented in Ontario Works offices through a phased approach. Currently, the Ministry is in Phase 3 of implementation which commenced in January of 2021 and the City of Stratford is currently scheduled to join Phase 4, with an implementation go-live date scheduled for November 8, 2021.

The EDM model consists of a suite of services including:

- Digital Mailroom Document Digitization

¹ EDM Get Ready Presentation

- Master File Digitization
- MyBenefits Document Upload
- Staff/Site Document Upload
-

EDM adds the following features through SAMS and MyBenefits:

- View, Download and Edit documents through SAMS
- Upload digital-born documents directly through SAMS (Site Upload)
- Client uploading of documents through:
 - MyBenefits Document Upload
 - 2-Way Messaging Document Upload (Go-Live: June 21, 2021)
- E-signature (future function)

Analysis: EDM-OW will reduce the amount of time spent on document management functions, reduce time spent processing mail and increase efficiencies by having mail received directly uploaded into SAMS. It will also allow staff to better monitor and track document submission without the need to reference a paper file. All documents that are required to be kept on file, as per document retention standards set forth by MCCSS, that are received via mail, email or drop-off at the local office will be uploaded directly into SAMS where they can be actioned accordingly. This will free time for active case management functions and enable staff to make faster decisions so that Social Assistance Recipients (SARS) can receive the supports and services they need. It will also reduce the need for continued paper files, printing of documents received via email, and streamline supports by ensuring all applicable documents are uploaded into one central system.

This service will also improve the client experience, reducing the time spent by staff searching for paper files as all documents will be available electronically to staff of the Ontario Works Division. Staff will be able to access documents more quickly, improve the security of client files and further standardize business operations to ensure documents being received are filed according to legislative requirements. Furthermore, implementation of EDM across all Ontario Works offices in the province will help improve the client experience when files are being transferred across municipalities, reducing the time needed to complete a file transfer appointment (FTA). This will also enhance the level of service provided when client files are transferred across-program, from Ontario Works to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), as all documents required by ODSP to grant will be available in the shared case management system.

Further benefits that EDM will allow the local office includes:

Strengthens Program Integrity – EDM allows for the incorporation of automated program rules for documents being submitted and ensures all documents on file are appropriate and meet verification standards. This also allows for increased auditability and performance management.

Enhanced Program Access and Usability – EDM allows for increased access to service channels, provides electronic access to SAR's documents and improves SARS experiences when interacting with the local office.

Introduces Service System Efficiencies – EDM reduces paper handling, administrative work, misfiled records and filed records that do not meet file retention standards. It also allows for a real-time transfer of SARS document records between offices and programs (OW to ODSP). Furthermore, it strengthens and automates the records management process while also reducing time spent with paper documentation.

Functional Integration – Allows for further integration of online platforms such as MyBenefits and cross-channel/benefits integration amongst government services.

Environmental Impact – EDM will allow for a standardized platform to reduce the amount of paper being used in the local office. By offering an electronic channel for clients to submit documents, while allowing staff to manage electronic files, there is a reduced need for documents to be mailed, printed, and filed in the local office. This will reduce the amount of paper being utilized by our local office.

Impact of COVID-19 – The COVID-19 Pandemic has shown the need for increased technological support for Social Assistance programs. Currently, documents must be submitted via mail, scanned to the appropriate caseworker, actioned, then deleted or filed in the applicable folder. EDM will remove multiple steps by allowing documents to be scanned directly into SAMS, allowing for access by caseworkers when working remotely or in the community. It will save administrative time spent filing documents and will also reduce the need for records destruction as files will be stored electronically.

The City of Stratford CMSM is focusing on leveraging the Provincial Vendor-of-Record. This involves entering into a service agreement with Nimble Technologies, the vendor being utilized by the Ministry for all ODSP offices and several other municipalities across the Province.

- a. Through Nimble, there are two primary options available:
 - i. All documents are mailed to a central location for processing before being uploaded to SAMS or,
 - ii. Digital Day One Scanner which utilizes on-premises digitization of records through a scanner provided by Nimble.

The recommendation for Local Use is the Digital Day 1 option which involves "On Premise Digitization". The Digital Day 1 on-premises scanning solution is being put forward as a standard service offering to all Ontario Works offices who are looking to opt-into the EDM/OW Provincial Digitization Program. The Digital Day 1 service has been positioned to help the various Ontario Works office effectively manage their daily

drop-off document volumes. The value proposition of the Digital Day 1 service is three-fold:

- a. Digital Day 1 will help to effectively reduce courier cost associated with daily drop-off documents.
- b. Digital Day 1 will significantly improve the ingestion and processing times of all drop-off documents from approximately 36hrs - < 24hrs.
- c. The Digital Day 1 hardware/software is fully secure and supported.

The DD1 Scanner will allow local staff to scan all documents that are received in the office, and they will be uploaded into SAMS within 24 hours. Documents requiring urgent attention can be actioned immediately ensuring no impact on service delivery standards.

The local office will be required to complete a Letter of Intent so the system can begin to be created before signing a Master Service Agreement with Nimble Technologies.

Financial Impact: Based on current document volume and file retention standards, it is anticipated that document processing by Nimble Technologies will cost the Ontario Works Division approximately \$1450 per month. The DD1 scanner will cost an additional \$250 per month, creating a total estimate of \$1700 per month ongoing.

Master file digitization will cost approximately \$20,150 and was included in the 2021 Ontario Works budget, paid through the 50/50 cost sharing portfolio with MCCSS.

Ongoing costs for the scanning of documents and the rental of the DD1 scanner will be included in the 50/50 cost sharing portfolio of the Ontario Works budget. The ongoing monthly cost will be absorbed into the current administrative operating budget and will not result in an increase to the Ontario Works budget in 2021/2022.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

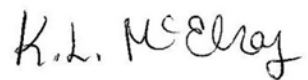
Developing our Resources

Optimizing Stratford's physical assets and digital resources. Planning a sustainable future for Stratford's resources and environment.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Electronic Document Management Implementation" (SOC21-008) be received for information.



Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works

Handwritten signature of Kim McElroy in cursive script.

Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services

Handwritten signature of Joan Thomson in cursive script.

Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer