

FINANCE

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A. Background

A.1 Preparing the Service Strategy Business Plan

The Service Strategy Business Plan (SSBP) was created by a Project Team comprised of the Treasurer and Commissioner of Finance and the Departmental Management Team consisting of the Director of Financial Services, the Director of Corporate Finance, the Director of Internal Audit and the Director of Corporate Energy Management.

A.2 Key Contacts

Dan Labrecque, Treasurer and Commissioner of Finance
905-791-7800, ext. 4258
labrecqued@peelregion.ca

A.3 Additional Information

This is the second consolidated Service Strategy Business Plan developed by the Finance Department.

B. Description of Current Services

B.1 Program Location Map

Finance Department staff is located primarily in 10 Peel Centre Drive. Meter Operations staff works from the Copper Road Yard and some staff is located at other Regional facilities.

B.2 Profile of Current Services

Analysis and Advice

Preparation of financial and management analysis and advice on an ongoing basis

Advocacy and Education

Taking a leadership role in influencing policy decision makers at the municipal, provincial and federal governments. Enhance awareness of Regional policies, programs and best practices with all stakeholders

Assurance Services

Performing objective and independent reviews of management and corporate systems, processes and controls including specific examinations related to allegations of impropriety with regular reporting to Regional Council

Claims Resolution

Investigate claims to determine liability, negotiate resolutions and make claims payments or issue denials

Billing Services

Issuing and collecting of water and wastewater bills and special assessment bills, and handling of related inquiries

Financial Reports

Preparation of the annual business plan, annual report and tri-annual financial reports

Financial Management

Day-to-day and long-term financial management of the assets, liabilities, revenues and expenditures of the Region of Peel (including reserves and reserve funds, cash in the bank and investments, legal claims, risk management, energy, debt management, procurement of supplies and services, and the payment of vendors and staff).

Policies and By-laws

Research and development of financial and energy policies and by-laws for approval and adoption by Regional Council.

Risk Evaluation

Identification of risks that threaten the achievement of corporate objectives.

Water Meter Services

Installation, reading and repair of water meters.

B.3 Description of Clients/Customers

Regional Council

Our 22 member Regional Council includes the Regional Chair and Regional Councillors from the City of Mississauga, City of Brampton, and Town of Caledon. This also includes all of the Agencies, Boards, and Commissions (ABC's) Regional Councillors sit on as representatives of the Region of Peel.

Tax and Utility Ratepayers in the Region of Peel

The citizens and businesses who live and or work in Peel are ultimately the clients served by the various supports and services supplied by the Finance Department.

Audit Subcommittee

The Regional Chair and a Regional Councillor from each area municipality participate on the Audit Subcommittee.

Executive Management Team and Chief's Management Group

Our Executive Management Team (EMT) is comprised of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the Regional Commissioners and the Director of Strategic Initiatives. The Peel Regional Police Chief's Management Group (CMG) is comprised of the Chief of Police, the Chief Administrative Officer – Policing, the Deputy Chief, the Staff Superintendents and the Associate Administrator.

CAO and Chair

The CAO and Regional Chair both receive support and service from the Finance department.

Claimants

Any third party person or company who files a legal claim against the Region of Peel for damages related to personal injury, bodily injury, property damages or errors and omissions.

Commissioners, Directors, Managers and Supervisors (CDMS)

The Corporation's entire management, including commissioners, directors, managers and supervisors are the team that collectively have accountability and responsibility for the delivery of services.

B.4 Description of Suppliers, Partners and Stakeholders

Suppliers

- Consulting and professional services
- Technology solutions and support
- Banking services
- Insurance services
- Meters and equipment
- Energy commodity and distribution
- Facilities and equipment
- Billing services
- Investment services

Partners

- Regional Departments
- Development Community
- Area Municipalities
- Professional Associations
- Local Energy Distribution Companies
- Other Municipalities (outside the Region of Peel)

Stakeholders

- Regional Council (including the Peel Housing Corporation and Peel Regional Police Services Board)
- Provincial Government Ministries and Agencies
- Federal Government Departments and Agencies
- Tax and Utility Ratepayers

B.5 Significant Accomplishments

- Receiving Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Awards for the Annual Budget and Annual Report.
- Maintaining Triple-A Credit Rating and continuing to exceed investment market rate returns.
- Process related improvements and initiatives including process mapping for Peel Living financial services and the Region and Police Human Resource departments; revised service fees from Activity Based Costing modeling; direct labour benchmarking with Hackett Group (Corporate Reporting, Payroll, Accounts Payable, Purchasing and Accounts Receivable) and the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking (OMBI), payroll project, developing an Internal Audit Policy and Procedure Manual, updating the Financial Control and Development Charges By-Laws and related policies, developing a Regional Model to support the Official Plan and enhanced use of Peoplesoft general ledger functionality.
- Innovation and efficiency related improvements and initiatives including, outsourcing of printing, installing a record number of meters and accounts, and introducing radio frequency meters and joint Requests for Proposal (RFP) on Collection Services.
- Accountability related improvements and initiatives including the Peel Living financial services integration, expanding the customer base to include a Peel Regional Police (PRP) risk based audit work plan, implementing formal action plans and follow-ups in the Status of Management Action Plans annual report, and issuing purchasing reports.
- Corporate leadership related improvements and initiatives including establishing the Finance Steering Committee, co-coordinating the development of the GO Transit Development Charges Background Study, and standardizing purchasing terms and conditions for water and wastewater projects.
- Advocacy and education initiatives in the areas of OMBI, energy, ethics promotion risk assessment as well as development of both an Internal Audit Procedure Manual and an Audit Subcommittee Oversight Manual.
- Increased training for all front-line Finance Services staff covering change management and communications and upgrades to Accounting Services and Purchasing websites, cross training initiatives in Meter Operations
Formation of a Corporate Energy Management Division charged with Region wide energy management through the development of a comprehensive energy business plan

C. Trends and Issues

C.1 Emerging Trends

- Increasing variety of service models (outsourcing, privatization, in-sourcing) for all or parts of our services
- Increasing pressure on municipal tax and water rates
- Differing pressures at the area municipal levels make it difficult to obtain consensus on tax and rate increases at the regional level
- Changes in provincial and or federal fiscal policies
- Economic issues such as lower interest and tax rates, and increased energy prices and inflation rates are squeezing resources
- Municipalities are seeking “New Deals” with senior governments that recognize the pressures placed upon municipal finances and the importance of infrastructure investment for our economy and quality of life
- Increasing demands for process automation
- Government and citizen push for ethical and value driven performance through fiscal responsibility, accountability and transparency
- Increasing urbanization of the Greater Toronto Area
- Higher growth demands leading to emergency situations with widespread impacts
- Customers and clients expect more diversity from the programs and services offered (self service, multiple languages, extended hours of operation)
- Both health and physical environments are becoming more of a priority for Council and the public
- Workforce and population are aging overall (results in shrinking workforce and increased competitions for staff resources)
- Workforce is better educated and expects more (work at home flexibility, work/life balance, people are changing jobs faster)
- Deregulation in the energy sector along with unstable governance platform is leading to higher pricing
- Increased Regional infrastructure required to accommodate higher energy use
- Continuing changes to federal and provincial government legislation relating to energy and the environment
- Accessibility of programs and services to the public in a barrier free environment is now legislated

C.2 Key Strategic Issues

- Improving financial and non financial reporting and management capabilities
- Providing corporate and provincial leadership by developing protocols, processes, and policies to improve and add value
- Maintaining sustainable tax and water rates
- Establishing strategies for accessing the limited grant money that is available
- Continuously demonstrating value and accountability for the public good
- Continuously demonstrating honesty, integrity and transparency through open and easy communication and access to information
- Developing partnerships in the organization around financial management excellence and accountability through a commitment to measurement
- Committing to long-term planning
- Understanding how growth cost drivers impact our services
- Maintaining sustainable rates for development charges to pay for growth
- Continuously meeting new and changing demands from our customers (multiple language, and twenty-four hour, seven day a week service expectations)
- Balancing work and life demands and workload issues
- Developing a retention strategy through upward and lateral career advancement and appropriate training
- Developing a recruitment strategy that addresses tight knowledge and sophistication of labour markets
- Developing and maintaining communication links to all levels of government
- Promoting Regional energy initiatives and programs
- Developing risk mitigation strategies to combat volatile energy markets
- Recognizing the importance of Regional Employees

D. Mandate, Objectives and Actions

D.1 Mandate and Objectives

Mandate:

The Finance Department will ensure the financial integrity, accountability and sustainability of the Region of Peel for the public good of its taxpayers and residents.

Objectives:

1. To develop a strong Finance team.
2. To provide appropriate corporate leadership to ensure continued strong fiscal management.
3. To ensure processes are efficient, effective and accountable.
4. To identify and respond to the changing expectations of our citizens and clients.

D.2 Objectives and Actions

1. To develop a strong Finance team.

- 1.1 Develop an appropriate succession and knowledge transfer plan for staff in the Finance Department
- 1.2 Implement a staff recognition program within the Finance Department
- 1.3 Develop a comprehensive Finance communications strategy
- 1.4 Prepare training and development plans for all Finance staff that focus on areas required to deliver our mandate
- 1.5 Support career development opportunities by creating capacity through filling of vacancies and reinvestment of efficiencies

2. To provide appropriate corporate leadership to ensure continued strong fiscal management.

- 2.1 Initiate a corporate-wide risk management annual assessment program
- 2.2 Develop an asset and reserve management strategy
- 2.3 Develop an integrated corporate approach through partnering and leveraging to assess and manage the impact of new development
- 2.4 Develop and maintain a comprehensive business planning process for the Region
- 2.5 Ensure that financial and energy management systems, tools and procedures are in place to support effective decision-making

- 2.6 Manage energy use, and create and implement conservation measures
 - 2.7 Initiate and implement strategies to mitigate the risks and impacts associated with energy markets and changing regulatory environments
 - 2.8 Ensure competitive Regional tax and water/wastewater rates
 - 2.9 Work with other governments to ensure fair and equitable tax policies
- 3. To ensure processes are efficient, effective and accountable.**
- 3.1 Promote and ensure the financial management roles and responsibilities between Finance, Departmental Business Units and departmental programs are clearly understood and fulfilled
 - 3.2 Establish, communicate and report on appropriate performance measures
 - 3.3 To develop, evaluate and implement an energy procurement process
- 4. To identify and respond to the changing expectations of our citizens and clients.**
- 4.1 Communicate the Region of Peel’s performance results to taxpayers
 - 4.2 Formalize capturing customer feedback including potential barriers to service access
 - 4.3 Create and implement an appropriate Customer Service Plan
 - 4.4 Identify and implement reporting metrics

D.3 Strategic Plan Connection

The objectives and actions in the Finance Department’s Service Strategy Business Plan are consistent with, and support, the following Goals in the Region of Peel’s Strategic Plan, *Fast Forward Peel: Building a Strong Community Together*.

- Goal 2:** Assess and manage all aspects of growth that affect Peel services to ensure a more liveable region
- Goal 3:** Preserve, protect and enhance Peel’s natural environment and resources
- Goal 4:** Contribute to a strong regional economy
- Goal 5:** Be a citizen-focused Regional government

D.4 Service Principles

The Regional Values function as the service principles for the Finance Department.

E. *Monitoring and Measuring the Service Strategy Business Plan*

E.1 Objectives and Outcomes

- 1. To develop a strong Finance team.**
 - Highly skilled, trained and well informed staff
 - Improved service to our customers
 - Improved staff morale, motivation and job satisfaction

- 2. To provide appropriate corporate leadership to ensure continued strong fiscal management.**
 - Effective allocation of resources
 - Impact of development managed
 - Appropriate investment in infrastructure
 - An understanding of corporate risks
 - Enterprise Energy Management system in place
 - Roll out of energy procurement risk management strategy
 - Energy efficiency standards developed and communicated
 - Improved air quality through reduction in greenhouse gases

- 3. To ensure processes are efficient, effective and accountable.**
 - Continuous improvement mindset
 - Optimal utilization of Finance resources
 - Improved staff morale, motivation and job satisfaction

- 4. To identify and respond to the changing expectations of our citizens and clients.**
 - Improved service to our customers
 - Continuous improvement mindset
 - Improved staff morale, motivation and job satisfaction
 - Increased accountability to customers