

**Report from** Financial Management Services, Budget/Service Review Analyst

**Date of Report:** February 11, 2019

**Date of Meeting:** March 6, 2019

**Report Number:** FMS-B008-2019

**File:** 10.57.33

**Subject:** Budget Standing Committee Outstanding Work Plan Items

## Recommendation

That Budget Standing Committee (BSC) approve the removal of all previous items from the work plan attached as Appendix 1, with the following exceptions:

- Sunset clause that would close out portions of the CIP
- Recreation Subsidization Rates Framework – Pricing Policy Development
- Debt Management Strategy Review; and

That all items added to the BSC work plan during this term of Council remain on the work plan.

## Report

### Staff initiated reports vs. the BSC Work Plan Items

Staff's work originates from such items as the Strategic Plan and other strategic / guiding documents, operating and capital budgets, legislative requirements, operating and service standards, and work plans. Staff regularly bring reports forward to BSC for authorization or policy direction, as necessary. Staff initiated reports to BSC may be to meet legislated requirements for reporting, to create or change service levels, to set priorities, or to receive direction (e.g. policy approval) or authorization from BSC. The BSC Outstanding Work Plan List is a list of memo and reports requested by BSC which may or may not be related to an item that is already part of staff's regular work or on staff's annual work plan.

### New Work Plan will allow BSC to set its own priorities for reports

At the end of the 2014 – 2018 Term of Council the BSC Outstanding Work Plan List included 15 requests for memos and reports; addressing this backlog would require significant staff resources and time. In order to allow this term of BSC to set its own priorities, it is recommended that the BSC Work Plan be restarted. Current timing aligns with the BSC Strategic Planning Session scheduled for March 27, 2019.

Staff are in the process of preparing, or have plans to prepare in 2019, reports on the following topics which are related to requests currently on the BSC Work Plan; the reason the report is being prepared is provided in parenthesis:

- Sunset clause that would close out portions of the CIP (long term planning, financial sustainability)
- Recreation Subsidization Rates Framework – Pricing Policy Development (on-going work as part of program affordability for all, financial sustainability of programs, sector best practices)
- Debt Management Strategy Review (long term planning, asset management policy, new provincial legislation-588/17)

Given the status of this work, staff recommend that reports on these topics be included on the BSC Work Plan moving forward. Any other previous report requests could be brought forward to this term of Council for consideration of being added to the BSC Work Plan during the upcoming Strategic Planning session, during BSC meetings or by Council referral to BSC.

## **Report Request Process and Timelines**

Reports take considerable staff time, resources and expertise to prepare, review and publish. Reports prepared by staff are submitted through a rigorous process that requires ultimate review from Department Director, CAO/DCAO and Financial Management Services. Submission deadlines must be met in order for accurate reports to be submitted to BSC for review and action. The typical process for a report includes the following steps:

1. Councillor provides report request
2. Motion for BSC to vote on approval of report request
3. City Treasurer assigns report to appropriate department
4. Director assigns report to appropriate staff (report writer)
5. Report writer drafts report
6. Manager and Director reviews report, report writer updates as required
7. CAO/DCAO and City Treasurer reviews report, report writer updates as required
8. Report published on agenda
9. BSC considers report

While lengthy, this process is necessary to ensure that the report's content is accurate and comprehensive. When carried out properly, this process takes a minimum of 9 weeks, plus the time it takes to write the report. The report writing time varies significantly based on factors such as the complexity of the topic, research required, and time for internal and external consultation.

Before providing notice of an upcoming report request at BSC, members should always discuss the issue or request with the CAO or a member of the Senior Management

Team to determine the most efficient way to achieve the information request / intended outcomes (e.g. verbal update, memo, action by staff under delegated authority, etc.).

## **Alternatives to report requests**

In many cases, there are alternatives which will more expeditiously provide answers to committee members' inquiries. Use of these alternatives can improve customer service (by providing an answer to the public faster), and reduce the amount of staff resources required to provide a response, thus allowing staff to focus on other work plan items and BSC priorities.

These alternatives include contacting a member of the Senior Management Team, including CAO or DCAO. A member of the Senior Management Team may be able to provide an answer directly or may refer the Councillor to another staff member who can assist. Staff will be able to advise if the inquiry should be answered through a report.

## **Financial Implications**

The financial implications of responding to report requests varies based on each request; a [report on the costs of generating a report](#) was received by Council on September 14, 2015. BSC reports go through a very similar preparation process to Council reports. Therefore, the time and resources required to develop a BSC report are very similar to Council reports.

## **Relationship to Strategic Plan**

This report is not directly related to the Strategic Plan. Resetting the ORL will ensure that staff resources can be focused on the strategic initiatives or priorities of this term of Council.

## **Conclusion**

It is recommended that the BSC clear the previous Work Plan with the exception of the three reports: Sunset clause that would close out portions of the CIP; Recreation Subsidization Rates Framework – Pricing Policy Development; and Debt Management Strategy Review. It is also recommended that the reports requested by the new term of Council also remain on the BSC Work Plan.

## **Prepared, Submitted and Approved by:**

Kristine Douglas  
Director Financial Management Services/City Treasurer

<u>Date Requested</u>	<u>Requester</u>	<u>Staff Direction / Request / Action</u>	<u>Assigned to:</u>
Additional Report Requests from BSC			
February 13, 2017	Councillor Britton	That the Committee direct staff to explore partnerships with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority regarding the Shoreline Protection Program, Watercourse Rehabilitation Program and Morningstar Mill Rehabilitations	M. Green / D. Dillon October 2019
February 13, 2017	Councillor Haywood	Memo or follow-up presentation on how does the selection for road work takes place / happens?	D. Dillon January 2018 - Program Report
February 13, 2017	Councillor Britton	That the Committee direct staff to prepare a report providing ideas on how to decrease the internal design and approval process timelines as it relates to the City construction projects	D. Dillon With 2018 Program Report
November 20, 2017	Councillor Britton	Shared Service Opportunity for Physician Recruitment from the office of the CAO be deferred to the next budget cycle(2019)	ECDev -February 27, 2019
<b>November 29,2017</b>	<b>Mayor Sendzik</b>	<b>That staff report back for new term of Council in December 2018 to examine a sunset clause that would close out portions of the CIP - Façade Grants but reallocate funding elsewhere</b>	<b>PBS - Date: June, 2019</b>
February 5, 2018	Councillor Britton	That Active Transportation dollars from the federal government cannot be spent on existing road projects (i.e. bike lanes) 2019 and onward: and that staff provide more information on the next 10 projects available (\$250,000)	TES - 2019 Capital Budget Presentation
<b>April 16, 2018</b>	<b>Councillor Britton</b>	<b>Recreation Subsidization Rates Framework - Pricing Policy Development - next stage</b>	<b>PRCS - April, 2019</b>
April 16, 2018	Councillor Britton	Asset Management-staff look at future plans for buildings and possible consolidations & highlight if complete rebuild vs remodel, or if third part operator using facility.	TES
April 16, 2018	Councillor Britton	Asset Management-staff report on dealing with land parcels	FMS - Realty - Q2, 2019
April 16, 2018	Councillor Britton	Staff to continue to investigate pro-active ways if not using Sewer Baiting	TES-2019 Water/Wastewater Budget
<b>November 8, 2017</b>	<b>Councillor Garcia</b>	<b>Staff prepare report debt management strategies including development charges in comparator municipalities</b>	<b>FMS - Q2, 2019</b>
November 29, 2017	Councillor Harris	That staff report on a Corporate Energy Management Plan Upgrade that would include engaging third parties	TES
<b>NEW TERM OF COUNCIL - December 1, 2018 to November 30, 2022</b>			
December 17, 2018	Councillor Harris	Update ParaTransit Crosstown route statistics in March	Transit - March 2019
December 17, 2018	Councillor Miller	Report annually to the BSC and/or Council on the Skills Development Training that occurred in 2019 with additional \$40,000 added budget night	HR - Q4 2019

December 17, 2018	Councillor Williamson	By-Law Officer added to enforce public tree by-law and the potential private tree by-law. Referred to BSC for consideration in	PRCS/FMS - 2020 Operating Budget
December 17, 2018	Councillor Siscoe	CEMC position addition be referred to office of CAO for discussion about cost sharing arrangements with neighboring municipalities	CAO
December 17, 2018	Councillor Kushner	Referral from Council directing staff to notify outside ABC's that they will not receive more than the rate of inflation from the city in future years.	FMS - February 2019
December 17, 2018	Councillor Harris	That outside ABC's be surveyed as to their interest in cost-sharing the new IT Security position.	CSS - IT
December 17, 2018	Councillor Siscoe	Fraser Street EA be added at a cost of \$10,000 be referred to Capital Budget	TES - 2019 Capital Budget
January 7, 2019	Councillor Porter	Debt reduction strategy/plans for mitigating rising cost of infrastructure deficit	TES/FMS
January 7, 2019	Councillor Porter	BSC strategic planning session	March 26, 2019
January 7, 2019	Councillor Phillips	What impact has increased revenue from new businesses in downtown provided to lessen tax burden on residents.	FMS
January 7, 2019	Councillor Littleton	What grants are available for the Canada Summer Games & how much would St. Catharines qualify for.	
January 25, 2019	Councillor Harris	The Fire and Emergency Services Position (Community Emergency Management Coordinator) referred by Council to the office of the CAO for discussion about possible cost-sharing arrangement of this position with neighbouring municipalities.	CAO - TBD