2023 EFFICIENCIES & INNOVATIONS

In 2021, Council asked that starting in 2023 an annual list of cost saving efficiencies/measures be included in the Business Plan & Budget binders identifying specific amounts, with the use of subheadings and written in plain language.

To accomplish this, City staff launched an internal tool to collect and share efficiencies across the Corporation. In instances where staff time is saved, this time is 100% reinvested, allowing for staff more time to complete other work.

New City of Barrie App Developed Internally

$75,000
cost avoidance, by in-house app development

Pingstreet was the City of Barrie's official app. The city was formally notified by the vendor in February 2022 that Pingstreet would not receive any further updates. Barrie's Marketing & Communications and IT departments worked extremely efficiently and under tight timelines to source, procure, research, design, develop, test, and launch the City's new app. From Council approval to product launch, the project was completed in just three months (March to May 2022).

Lead: IT, Marketing & Communications

Collaborating departments: Service Barrie

1 hour
per user saved with more notification options

- Added 125 services/information pages compared to old app
- $75,000 cost avoidance per year by doing work in-house instead of paying previous vendor
- Est. 1 hour saved per user by having more notification options instead of having to search for the information
- 790+ direct reports through the app from May 2022 launch to March 2023
- 12,800+ app downloads from May 2022 launch to March 2023
- Both departments awarded with a Gold MarCom Award in the Digital Media – Mobile App/Web category for the new app

Strategic priority: Responsible Governance

Wastewater Sludge Quality Improvements

$315,000
annual savings in biosolids disposal

The concentration of primary sludge at the Wastewater Treatment Facility has historically been below typically accepted values. Evaluating and optimizing the primary clarification process improved the quality of the sludge, therefore reducing the volume generation and reducing disposal costs.

Lead: Infrastructure

Collaborating departments: N/A

- $315,000 annual savings in biosolids disposal costs beginning in 2022
- Approximately 75 tonnes of CO2 equivalent eliminated per year due to reduced volume to haul for disposal
- 25% reduction in primary sludge volume generation
- 20% reduction in biosolids volume generation

Strategic priority: Responsible Governance

APLI Updates via Streamline Development Approvals Fund

APLI updates include the digitization of 3 new development processes, enhanced building permit applications including automatic notifications, new and improved reporting functionality and self-serve invoicing, and digitization of additional development processes in existing development record types.

Lead: Business Performance & Internal Audit

Collaborating departments: IT, Finance

- $350,000 configuration cost to City avoided as it was covered by Provincial funding
- 100 staff hours saved annually for reinvestment
- Improved communication with applicants
- Improved customer experience

Strategic priority: Responsible Governance

100 hours saved
annually for reinvestment

FOI Search Procedure Improvement

Freedom of Information requests often involve overlapping searches between Waste Management & Environmental Sustainability and Operations. A review of the search process for a Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt project has eliminated the overlap and duplication.

Lead: BusWaste Management & Environmental Sustainability

Collaborating departments: Operations, Legislative & Court Services

- Approximately 1 hour saved per FOI request involving Waste Management & Environmental Sustainability and Operations
- Cost savings to requestors due to eliminated charges for duplicated search time (costs vary greatly based on overall search time, materials found and copied)

Strategic priority: Responsible Governance

1 hour saved
per FOI request

Improved Corporate Learning Management System

As part of the Learning and Organizational Development Strategy, a web-based learning system is now being utilized to offer and/or track all training offered to staff. Through this, Human Resources staff have greatly improved administration capabilities, and staff have a consistent place to find and sign up for all training opportunities. Training was previously offered over multiple platforms and more time consuming to manage. Instead of purchasing a new software to manage all courses, staff were able to expand and fully utilize an existing subscription.

Lead: Human Resources

Collaborating departments: IT

- 387 staff hours saved per year
- $33,000 annual cost savings beginning in 2024 by eliminating one of the previous training platforms
- $100,000 cost avoidance by utilizing existing software instead of purchasing new
- 80+ courses/training offered per year
- 200+ employees engaging in training offered
- 4 steps eliminated per employee training registration

Strategic priorities: Thriving Community, Responsible Governance

$100,000
cost avoidance, by using existing software

4 steps
eliminated per employee training registration

Cost Savings with Increased Training Compatibility

While transferring existing courses to the new Learning Management System, some would not transfer and function properly. The Learning Management System company (Bridge) could have fixed the compatibility issues but would have required payment of $5,000 to do so. Utilizing free trials, City staff were able to fix the compatibility issues so the courses could be successfully used in the Learning Management System.
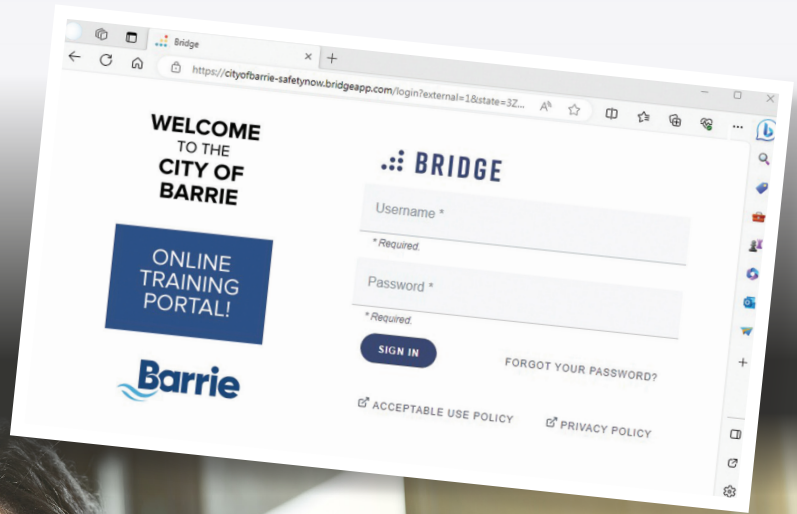
Lead: Business Performance & Internal Audit

Collaborating departments: HR

$5,000 cost savings by completing work internally

Strategic priority: Responsible Governance

$5,000
cost savings by completing work internally

Two-in-One Promotion Generates Awareness & Saves Paper

Staff created one post card to promote two programs: the "I Love Barrie" contest and the RecACCESS program. These would typically have been marketed separately, but putting one promotion on each side of the post card saves staff time creating marketing tactics, and saves costs for paper and printing, all while generating awareness for both initiatives at the same time to the same target audience.

**Lead:** Marketing & Communications

Collaborating departments: Legislative & Court Services

- 3 staff hours saved by utilizing the same marketing tactics instead of creating new

- $300 cost avoidance by printing in-house in our print shop instead of an external print vendor

- $300 cost savings by printing on both sides of the paper (one promotion on each side, saves 6,000 postcards)

Strategic Priorities: Thriving Community; Responsible Governance

$300 savings
for combining
2 separate campaigns

Optimized Alum Dosage at Wastewater Treatment Facility
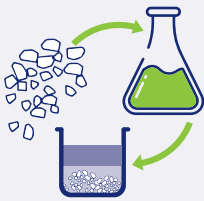
Infrastructure staff collaborated to replace the existing temporary alum delivery system that was installed in 2015 and had limitations due to its temporary nature. It did not allow for discrete alum dosage adjustments to each secondary clarifier or automatic diurnal flow adjustments. This project allowed for enhanced control and optimization of alum dosage at the facility, significantly improving the alum distribution system at the Wastewater Treatment Facility, improving the final effluent quantity and enhancing the ability to respond and react to process challenges and high flow events.

Lead: Infrastructure

Collaborating departments: N/A

- 12% reduction in alum consumption

- Approximately 9 tonnes of CO_2 equivalent eliminated per year with 22 less transport trucks per year required to deliver alum

- $100,000 chemical cost savings in 2022

- $150,000 annual chemical cost savings for 2023 and beyond

Strategic Priorities: Infrastructure Investments, Responsible Governance

12% reduction
in alum consumption

Improved Process for Website Content Management

With the redesigned barrie.ca and new content management system, there was an opportunity to pilot a revised approach to website content maintenance. Instead of developing training materials and administering training for "web content contributors" (old model) whose updates must then be audited and approved by Communications staff, IT and Marketing & Communications staff collaborated to support a centralized approach to website content management, where Digital Communications staff take a more proactive approach to content updates for the corporation.

Lead: Marketing & Communications

Collaborating departments: IT

- Est. 1150 staff hours saved per year by removing duplicate work and eliminating training that is no longer required
- Information is more relevant and up to date for the 2 million visits and 4.9 million pageviews per year (2021 figures)
- Est. 1900 hours saved for all website visitors in total with reduced need to search for up-to-date information
- 72% increase in number of content updates in Q1 2023 compared to Q1 2022
- Reduced average turnaround time for straightforward content updates from 2-3 business days to 20 minutes
- Eliminated >2 emails per web update request (Q1 2023 figures amounts to over 800 emails avoided)

Strategic Priority: Responsible Governance

Reduced average turnaround time

Automated Employee Onboarding

Previously manual operations such as giving employee access to certain systems and notifying administrative staff held up the onboarding process. For offboarding, manual checks were performed daily to see when system access needed to be terminated. Now, Human Resources indicating hire/rehire/retire/termination is the only manual task required in this process. The automation scans the system for employees that need to be onboarded/offboarded and then executes all access provisioning and email communication.

Lead: IT

Collaborating departments: Human Resources

- Approx. 263 staff hours saved per year by automating manual operations and eliminating wait times for access
- Reduced 1,300 incident tickets to 5 (every activation/deactivation no longer requires a ticket, now exceptions only)
- Eliminated >10 process steps that are now completed automatically

Strategic Priority: Responsible Governance

263 staff hours saved per year

Water Distribution Services Mobilization

This improvement reviewed all existing paper processes to determine what needed to be captured digitally. Staff can now complete, assign and close work activities digitally, and document their findings in the field in real time via a mobile application.

Lead: IT

Collaborating departments: Infrastructure

- 90 staff hours saved per year by entering information into the system while in the field instead of after the fact with office staff assistance

- 10 staff trained on the application

Strategic Priority: Responsible Governance

10 staff trained

Digitizing Tree Removal & Preservation Permits

Digitizing the Tree Removal and Preservation Permit process included other improvements such as eliminating multiple levels of approval, reducing sign errors, and aiming to reduce incomplete applications. Permit information is now available to any staff with access to the software, instead of having to contact specific staff.

Lead: Development Services

Collaborating departments: Operations

- 10 staff hours saved per year with improved record management and easier location of information and application status

- Eliminated 1 step requiring the Director to sign permits as they are already signed by a Landscape Architectural Planner

Strategic Priority: Responsible Governance

Digitization of Tree Removal and Preservation permit process

Online Sports Field Status Updates

A custom mobile app was created to allow parks staff to send updates to the Barrie.ca website to indicate the status of the soccer and baseball fields. This allows staff to send updates from the location/field, rather than having to return to the office to record an answering machine message. Citizens can now get field updates on Barrie.ca instead of calling to listen to the voicemail message.

Lead: IT

Collaborating Departments: Operations, Marketing & Communications

- 92 staff hours saved per year

Strategic Priorities: Thriving Community, Responsible Governance

Custom Mobile app created saving staff hours

Department Payroll Processing Improvement

Previous Building Department payroll processing involved re-entering hours from timesheets into a multi-page spreadsheet, which was time consuming and cumbersome. The process has been improved by adding total hours on one spreadsheet, eliminating duplicate entries.

~208 staff
hours saved
per year

Lead: Building

Collaborating Departments: N/A

- 208 staff hours saved

- Eliminated duplicate entries, a very labour-intensive step from department's payroll entry process

Strategic Priority: Responsible Governance

Burn Permit Templates Make Tenant and Staff Experience Easier

Property owner permission is required if a tenant wants a backyard burn permit. Previously, that permission could be provided one time via email, handwritten note, text message exchange with the tenant, or by calling, which was a lot of back and forth between staff and the applicant. All these records were transferred to a binder for staff to search through each year to determine which were still valid. Now, a template is used to obtain owner permission for every permit/year, and staff spend less time searching for the previous permission on file.

~20 staff
hours saved
per year

Lead: Barrie Fire & Emergency Service

Collaborating Departments: Marketing & Communications

- 20 hours of staff time saved per year (in search time and back & forth with applicants)

- Est. 50 hours saved for all customers (template reduces back & forth exchanges with property owner and staff)

- The owner authorization template is now included in the online application process, so it can be completed entirely online

Strategic Priority: Responsible Governance

Telecom Expense Management Improvements

A new Telecom Expense Management System (TEMS) pulls information from all major telecommunication carriers staff utilize, instead of having to access multiple portals (for each carrier) to maintain mobile data for the corporation. This provides easier access to up-to-date, accurate information and allows departments to monitor and manage their information more easily and reduces manual tracking and notifications.

$6,228
cost avoidance

Lead: IT

Collaborating Departments: N/A

- 364 staff hours saved per year (Service Desk Specialist staff no longer have to access multiple systems, reduced manual tracking and notifications)
- $6,228 in cost avoidance – better visibility with improved reporting allowed us to reduce city mobile phone contracts including lines and devices
- $228 saved by being able to see and eliminate lines with zero usage
- Over 500 staff have improved access to mobile device and usage information (IT, end users, managers)
- Eliminated 4+ process steps to allow staff to manage their mobile accounts and hardware

Strategic Priority: Responsible Governance

Annual Renewal Program Mapping

Every year funds are allocated to renewal programs (watermain, road, sewer, sidewalk), and there was no easy way to ascertain if year-to-year programs would result in tearing up the road multiple times in a couple of years. Now, mapping annual programs helps staff quickly identify opportunities to combine projects along the same road.

35 staff
hours saved

Lead: IT

Collaborating Departments: Corporate Asset Management, Infrastructure

- 35 hours of staff time saved (manual review)
- New visual representation of annual programs available to staff to assist in their yearly plans

Strategic Priorities: Infrastructure Investments, Responsible Governance

Digital Information Standards Update Stages 1 & 2

Updated and optimized Civil 3D templates allow for a much more efficient transfer of data and the collection of additional data into GIS. Updates include eliminating a risk for error, better instructions for staff, and updated software with inherent efficiencies

210 staff
hours saved per year

Lead: IT

Collaborating Departments: Corporate Asset Management, Development Services, Infrastructure

- 210 hours of staff time saved per year (faster transfer and collection of data)
- $121,000 cost to City avoided as it was covered by Provincial funding"

Strategic Priority: Responsible Governance

Map of Sanitary Progress

Various maps, dashboards, and other field capture tools have been consolidated into the Sanitary Progress Bundle web map. Once all the data was mapped it became immediately clear that improvements to the flushing program with coordination of CCTV should occur as to not flush the same areas twice. Bringing data sources for different systems into one view allows everyone involved, that could be affected by the information within it, to better plan and coordinate their activities related to Sanitary maintenance.

Lead: IT

Collaborating Departments: Corporate Asset Management, Infrastructure, Operations

- 140 hours of staff time saved per year by allowing easier coordination of efforts so staff do not have to flush mains that will already be flushed during CCTV inspection

- Staff can check one source instead of 4 for Sanitary maintenance information

140 staff
hours saved
per year

Strategic Priorities: Infrastructure Investments, Responsible Governance

Managed Detections and Response for Critical IT Systems

The Managed Detections and Response project provides a centralized log collector that will be vetted and catalogued, instead of reviewing logs in silos when there is a cyber security incident. This includes 24/7 alerts, after hours coverage, and built in automation to remediate common and frequent alerts, freeing up city staff time.

Lead: IT

Collaborating Departments: N/A

- 300 hours of staff time saved per year with automated remediation of most logs and review time

- Eliminated level 1 and 2 alerts review

- Enhances our cyber security posture

**Cyber
security**
enhancement

Strategic Priorities: Community Safety, Responsible Governance

Wastewater Work Activities Map

Wastewater field staff can now visually see their assigned/completed activities on a map and are able to quickly capture their sanitary flushing and maintenance hole inspection details in the field, when and where the work is taking place. Office staff can view the dashboard and assign work accordingly, and all staff can see when the work is completed. This replaces manually documenting completed streets on a manual map.

Lead: IT

Collaborating Departments: Infrastructure, Operations

- 20 hours of staff time saved per year

- 8 staff trained on the field map application

8 staff
trained

Strategic Priorities: Infrastructure Investments, Responsible Governance

Digitization for Solid Waste Operations

Digitized paper inspections, and work management tasks to record the work being done and the time spent doing the work. Eliminated paper copies of work completed thereby eliminating filing tasks and scanning of documents. Asset locations have been digitized at the Landfill so staff can see where their infrastructure is.

Digitally analyze inspection results

Lead: IT

Collaborating Departments: Waste Management & Environmental Sustainability

- 14 hours of staff time saved per year

- 600+ pieces of paper saved per year

- ~2 new opportunities for staff: able to digitally analyze inspection results and work completed through reporting; able to view the assets on a map

- Made inspections easier for staff

Strategic Priority: Responsible Governance

Kidd's Creek Marina Restoration

Kidd's Creek Marina restoration and sediment removal projects were going to happen at separate times, with overlapping scopes of work. Staff aligned these two projects into one, with a lower-maintenance finish and avoided additional costs. Improved scheduling eliminated the need to cancel 12 Marina slips for the 2023 season, reduced flooding risk and further lost revenue for the city. Part of the reason the restoration was required was the large amount of sediment build up. This has been removed, and staff have added access maintenance holes to facilitate future sediment removal from the culvert prior to it reaching the Marina.

$100,000 cost avoidance

Lead: Infrastructure

Collaborating Departments: Development Services, Facilities, Operations~$100,000 cost avoidance by aligning the timing of two projects in the same area

- $36,000 revenue loss avoided as improved schedule no longer impacted any boat slip rentals

- $2,500 cost savings per year with new natural area having lower maintenance costs

- 5,000 cubic meters of sediment (500 dump trucks worth) removed from the culvert, channel, and marina

Strategic Priorities: Thriving Community, Infrastructure Investments, Responsible Governance