



Report to County Council

From: Peter Dutchak, Director, Engineering Services
Tyson Edwards, GIS and Asset Management Coordinator

Date: April 9, 2024

Subject: Geographical Information Systems – Shared Service Agreement

Recommendation(s):

THAT the report titled, Geographical Information Systems – Shared Service Agreement, be received and filed; and,

THAT the Warden and CAO be authorized and directed to execute the Geographical Information Systems Shared Service Agreement with Elgin's local municipal partners.

Introduction:

Since 2021, the County of Elgin has established and operated a web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) platform (called "Elgin GeoHub") to meet the County's needs, provide a service to our local municipal partners (LMPs) and the public.

A shared service agreement has been prepared to formalize the current arrangement, define service expectations, and provide mechanisms for additional services that could be provided by the County.

Background and Discussion:

A Geographic Information System (GIS) is a set of tools for mapping and analyzing things that exist and events that happen. GIS integrates and organizes layers of spatial data (where things are) with non-spatial or descriptive data (what things are) to give a better understanding of a place or process and can play an important role in supporting the day-to-day operations of a municipality.

Municipalities have continued to embrace GIS technology solutions to store and utilize their data that integrates into daily operations and the delivery of public services. As one example, an expected increased use of GIS internet-based mapping applications is required for municipalities to maintain compliance indefinitely with the Municipal Asset Management Planning Regulation (O.Reg. 588/17). Land use planning, Municipal Drainage, 911 property addressing, Conservation Authority regulated areas, and public

works asset maintenance/work orders are some other examples of regularly utilized data sets and tools that municipalities and other stakeholders rely upon daily.

In 2021, County Council approved the establishment a secure web-based enterprise GIS platform (<https://geohub.elgin.ca/>) for the County's own needs and for use of its member municipalities who wished to participate and at the County's cost.

Now, after 3 years of experience, all of Elgin's partner municipalities are utilizing this system to varying degrees. The Municipality of Central Elgin who had partnered with the City of St. Thomas for GIS services for many years is now migrating their data to Elgin's GIS server. The Township of Malahide, who pioneered GIS services across Elgin is also migrating over to the County servers as they close out the use of their own systems.

Currently there are 65 municipal employees who regularly use the system and this number is expected to grow as technical staff who specialize in GIS are being hired by municipalities and they integrate more municipal activities to GIS solutions. Over the last 12 months, approximately 15,000 people accessed the system verifying that the public and other stakeholders utilize this portal and the information and tools it provides.

This regional service has been provided by the County since 2021 without formal agreement. In order to formalize the GIS data hosting, management and administration services the County provides, a formal agreement has been prepared and attached to this report for Council's information. The agreement includes a standard list of ongoing services provided by the County (Schedule 'A') which includes the following:

- Provide secure access to the GIS server, Municipal Databases, ArcGIS Online, Geocortex and Portal.
- Act as the administrator of the GIS server, providing permissions/licenses and access credentials to municipal users.
- Ensure data backups are completed and software licenses are renewed.
- Maintain and update as required: property parcel fabric, municipal addressing and road network shapefiles.
- Add datasets to the Geocortex internal and external facing websites, as requested.
- Provide training for municipal staff to access and navigate GIS products.
- Circulate County-wide GIS data to approved third party agencies (e.g. MOH, OPP, OMAFRA, Tillsonburg Dispatch)

These base services will establish a consistent platform across the County and set service expectations. The agreement provides a mechanism whereas an LMP can request additional services be completed for their own needs. The County will receive all requests and has the authority to either accept or decline additional project work requests and with 2 business days. If accepted by the County, a timeline for completion and an estimate of the staff hours required to complete the project will be provided to the requesting municipality. If accepted by the requesting municipality they would reimburse the County at the hourly rate of \$75 as prescribed in the agreement.

The agreement has been presented to Elgin’s CAOs in a recent meeting with consensus.

Financial Implications:

The approximate annual cost to utilize the ESRI Enterprise GIS software license and GeoCortex suite is \$90,000 annually. This cost does not include periodic consulting, server hardware/maintenance costs and staff time.

A new 3-year term of the ESRI Enterprise License agreement has recently been renewed by the County and it requires each participating municipality to sign a data sharing agreement. Those agreements have been circulated for execution to each LMP.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Serving Elgin	Growing Elgin	Investing in Elgin
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring alignment of current programs and services with community need. <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring different ways of addressing community need. <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging with our community and other stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning for and facilitating commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural growth. <input type="checkbox"/> Fostering a healthy environment. <input type="checkbox"/> Enhancing quality of place.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring we have the necessary tools, resources, and infrastructure to deliver programs and services now and in the future. <input type="checkbox"/> Delivering mandated programs and services efficiently and effectively.

Local Municipal Partner Impact:

Building upon the success of the County wide GIS service pioneered by the Township of Malahide and re-established at the County in 2021, the County’s GIS system continues to evolve and provides a necessary regional service.

Communication Requirements:

GIS staff from the County and participating municipalities continue to meet and collaborate to resolve both individual and/or common GIS service priorities.

Conclusion:

In 2021, Elgin County Council approved the establishment of a County wide GIS System for access and use by Elgin's municipal partners and the public. After 3 years of evolution and success, all of Elgin's municipalities are utilizing the system to varying degrees and their use is expected to grow.

A formal agreement has been prepared and presented to local CAOs which defines the services provided and includes a mechanism to acquire additional staff services for individual project needs. Staff recommends that the attached agreement be circulated to Elgin's municipal partners for execution.

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

Peter Dutchak
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