

Township of Nipissing Strategic Asset Management Policy

Background

The Corporation of the Township of Nipissing is committed to providing service to residents in a fiscally responsible manner that supports a healthy and vibrant community. With this commitment in mind, assets must be managed in a way that allows the Township to achieve its goals, plans and policies.

The adoption of this policy is an important step towards ensuring that critical municipal infrastructure assets and vital services are maintained and supported in a sustainable, efficient and effective manner.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent standards and guidelines for management of the Township's assets applying sound technical, social and economic principles that consider present and future needs of users, and the service expected from the assets. This means leveraging the lowest total lifecycle cost of ownership with regard to the service levels that best meet the needs of the community while being cognizant of the risk of failure that is acceptable.

Statutory requirements

The Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015, sets out principles to guide asset management planning in municipalities in Ontario. The Township of Nipissing will strive to incorporate the following principles whenever possible into the day to day operation of the Township:

Long-Term Planning

The Township creates an annually updated 5-year Capital Forecast document using input from all departments and from Council priorities, as set out in the Strategic Plan, and from current needs.

The Asset Management Plan adopted in 2017 provides the information on forecasted requirements, timelines, and estimated costs for road, bridge and culvert requirements. The plan will provide the same projections for facilities and fleet/equipment requirements by July 1, 2023.

Service Delivery

A Strategic Plan Review is undertaken at the beginning of each term of Council. Public meetings are held to receive public input on the current operations, suggested improvements and requested additions to services and programming. Council and Staff provide input on the same items and all data is then compiled into a revised Strategic Plan, presented and adopted at a regular Council meeting.

Budgeting and planning

A five-year capital forecast is maintained and updated annually with input from all Department Heads. A Quarried Granite Application Schedule using a 4-year term is in place and updated each year. These documents, together with the Asset Management road condition forecast, will be used to plan and budget for all major infrastructure investments each year.

Vehicle, equipment, and facility requirements, including purchases of new assets or capital improvements, are accounted for in the capital forecast tool and are planned for in advance when possible. Using advance planning allows for the creation and use of reserves to minimize the effect of capital purchases on the budget and tax rates. This approach provides a stable, dependable budget and tax system for residents of the Township while ensuring that the necessary assets are maintained as required and improved when possible.

The Township will continue to seek education and opportunities to enhance and improve existing services and implement the most efficient procedures for implementation. Council supports Staff education with attendance at workshops, meetings and training sessions related to the services delivered and also encourages strong working relationships with surrounding municipalities to further improve service delivery and realize any cost savings that may be available.

Clearly identified needs allow the Township to act within grant timelines when funding opportunities are provided by the Federal and/or Provincial governments.

Prioritizing

The Township shall clearly identify infrastructure priorities which will drive investment decisions. This may be accomplished by the annual review of the Capital Forecast document, Asset Management Plan and appropriate asset schedules, bridge and culvert study, road conditions reports, and immediate needs submitted by all Departments.

Council shall review and prioritize all items when discussing and ultimately approving the annual budget.

Economic development

The Township shall promote economic competitiveness, productivity, job creation and training opportunities. This shall be accomplished by updating the Strategic Planning document with each new term of Council, participating when possible in Federal and/or Provincial funding initiatives that support projects to update, improve or expand municipal services and responding to various community concerns and/or requests when presented to Council.

Transparency

The Township's Asset Management processes shall be evidence-based and transparent. Additionally, subject to any prohibition under an Act or otherwise by law on the collection, use or disclosure of information, the Township shall make decisions with respect to infrastructure based on information that is publicly available or made available to the public and share information with implications on infrastructure and investment decisions with the Government and broader public sector entities.

Consistency

The Township shall ensure the continued provision of core public services. This shall be accomplished by maintaining the proper Reserves, as provided in the Reserve and Reserve Funds policy, adopted by Council on May 22, 2018. Maintaining healthy reserves, capable of supporting operations, capital purchases and repairs as required, provides financial stability to the Municipality allowing for the use of the funds or proper borrowing as required.

Environmental conscience

The Township shall minimize the impact of infrastructure on the environment by respecting and helping maintain ecological and biological diversity, by augmenting resilience to effects of climate change and by endeavouring to make use of acceptable recycled aggregates.

Health and safety

The Township shall ensure that the health and safety of workers involved in the construction and maintenance of infrastructure assets is protected. Council and Department Heads will continue to promote a robust Health and Safety program within the Municipality, using a combination of group training, peer mentoring and individual training techniques.

Community focused

The Township shall promote community benefits, being the supplementary social and economic benefits arising from an infrastructure project that are intended to improve the well-being of a community affected by the project, such as local job creation and training opportunities, improvement of public spaces within the community and promoting accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Innovation

The Township shall make use of innovative technologies, services and practices, particularly where doing so will utilize technology, techniques and practices developed in Ontario.

In addition, the Township must adhere to the requirements outlined in the Minimum Maintenance Standards currently in force and any other legislation specific to the Township.

Existing Plans and Policies

The Township has developed and adopted a Strategic Plan, an Official Plan, an Emergency Management Plan, a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and an Asset Management Plan. These plans were designed to meet legislative requirements and work together to achieve the Township's mission of providing innovation and excellence in service delivery. These plans shall be reviewed as required by legislation, by Staff with input from Council and from the Community where appropriate, and annual spending requirements in support of the plans' objectives will be incorporated into the budgeting process. All of the Township's plans rely to some extent on the physical assets owned by the Township and the commitment of Council and Staff to ensure their strategic use. This includes the long-term maintenance, repair and replacement of existing assets along with the acquisition of new assets to meet the evolving needs in the Township.

In addition, the existing Township policies complement the planning documents by providing details for the implementation of strategic objectives.

Guiding Principles

Council shall oversee the management of all assets. This will be accomplished by approval of Asset Management Planning documents and required updates every five years and the annual review of the Asset Management Policy. They will review management's implementation of the plan as part of the annual budget process. They will support efforts to improve the plan and ensure it includes changes necessitated by updates to other Township strategic documents.

The Treasurer shall oversee and have executive authority over the policy implementation and ensure both the Asset Management Plan and the Asset Management Policy are in compliance with provincial Asset Management regulations. Staff will ensure that current year and long-range asset requirements are incorporated into the budget presented to Council annually.

Staff will update the Policy and Plan to reflect changes as needed and present them for Council approval at least every five years. Any changes will include those reflected in the updates to the Roads Needs Study, Structural assessment reports and all other condition assessments commissioned for assets covered by the plan.

Asset management planning will also comply with the grouping of assets and estimated useful life schedule stated in By-Law 2008-1248, policy to prescribe the accounting treatment for tangible capital assets. The assets to be considered in asset management planning are land, land improvements, buildings, machinery and equipment, vehicles and infrastructure. The estimated useful life provided in By-Law 2018-1248, Schedule A, is utilized when populating the 5-year capital forecast and works with other reports including roads needs and bridge studies.

General Policy

The annual development of the 5-Year Capital Forecast and Current Operating Budget as well as any long-term financial plans, will refer to the Asset Management Plan.

As part of the annual budget process, Council and Staff will reference the asset management plan to identify forecasted spending needs in the plan, verify progress made on the plan to identify potential gaps, and prioritize spending needs to address identified gaps.

Asset management planning will be aligned with the Township's Official Plan, Ontario's land-use planning framework, and the *Planning Act*. The asset management plan will reflect projected changes to the community and related asset impact. Methods, assumptions and data used in the selection of projected changes shall be documented to support the recommendations in the Asset Management Plan.

Climate change will be considered as part of the Township's risk management approach embedded in local asset management planning methods. This approach will balance the potential cost of vulnerabilities to climate change impact and other risks associated with the cost of reducing these vulnerabilities. The balance will be struck in the levels of service delivered through operations, maintenance schedules, emergency response plans, contingency funding and capital investments. The Township will continue to work toward climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Township recognizes the need for stakeholder input into the planning process and will foster informed dialogue using the best available information. Town Hall meetings, public meetings and newsletters mailed to all property owners several times each year will provide platforms for input and transparency on the continued direction of growth for the Township.