



CORPORATE SERVICES *Staff Report*

REPORT NO: COR-2024-29

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Greg Clark, Director of Corporate Services/CFO

PREPARED BY: Greg Clark, Director of Corporate Services/CFO

REVIEWED BY: Sharon Chambers, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 10, 2024

SUBJECT: Tax Billing Communications

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report COR-2024-29 be received for information

SUMMARY:

- Due to staff capacity in the Finance division, delivery of options to communicate tax allocations is not possible at this time.
- Through the 2025 Budget process, staff will present Council with options for enhance communications of the allocation and user of taxes and fees.
- Policies regarding fiscal management, including transparency and openness will be presented to Council later this summer.

BACKGROUND:

At the May 6, 2024 Council meeting, Council asked staff about the ability to communicate the breakdown of taxes collected between the Region of Waterloo, School Boards and the Township of Wilmot. They provided the following direction;

THAT Staff report back at the June 10, 2024 Council Meeting with information on options to include a detailed breakdown of the allocation of taxes collected for the Township, Region of Waterloo and Education levy in the final tax billing mail-out, as well as the feasibility of the adoption of digital billing.

Through discussion Council is looking to improve the communication to residents regarding the allocation and use of their property taxes.

REPORT:

Since this motion was passed the main team member in the Finance division has left to take an opportunity with another municipality. They were able to provide background on current billing and interaction with residents, however, analysis and development of opportunities to move forward was limited given capacity constraints within the Finance team.

The township currently has 7,535 active tax accounts, which receive bills twice annually, beginning of February and June. The June bill represents the final billing for the tax year and was issued last week to all property owners. Of the bills issued, only 886 are currently electronic, the balance are hard copies delivered through the mail.

Given the timing and staff capacity, work to develop a communication strategy will continue over the summer as staff prepare the budget. Through budget, proposed changes to communications, as well as strategies to increase the use of electronic billing and other similar services will be presented to Council for consideration.

Communications may include, but are not limited to;

- Budget documents that clearly outline the various taxes and fees collected, including allocation and use
- Additional inserts in February interim bills and June final bills
- Enhanced web content regarding the allocation and use of taxes collected
- Information at service counters, both at the Township Office and other township locations

Consideration when developing communications strategies will be given to the reach and effectiveness of the above, as well as the cost and time required relative to that. Transparency and openness in the planning and management of the townships finances is a primary focus and additional policies will be presented to Council later this summer to allow Council to ensure their expectations are met.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Providing tax payers with clarity about where their tax dollars are going is foundational to ensure responsible governance.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There is no direct financial impact from developing the various strategies, there may be costs associated depending on which strategies are implemented. Staff will provide cost estimates for each when presented during the budget process.

ATTACHMENTS: