



Staff Report #AD-02-2025

Meeting: Committee of the Whole - 10 Feb 2025
Staff Contact: Ashley Watson, Business, Communications & Community Engagement Manager
Subject: Year End Report - 2024 Priorities

Suggested Motion

THAT we receive report AD-02-2025 regarding the Township of Ramara's Year End 2024 Priorities review as information.

Background & Discussion

Background

During the January 2024 Council meeting, Council formally adopted the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#), which includes four key Strategic Priorities designed to guide the organization's efforts over the next three years. Following this, on February 26, 2024, the Council approved the specific [2024 Strategic Initiatives](#), as detailed in the comprehensive [2023-2026 Work Plan](#).

Furthermore, at the Committee of the Whole meeting on August 26, staff provided a [mid-year review](#), which contained an in-depth analysis of the progress made on each priority, alongside high-level metrics that illustrate performance and impact.

Discussion

The 2024 Strategic Priorities were developed through a collaborative process involving Directors, the Council, and public input, establishing a clear roadmap for the objectives to be accomplished by the end of the year. Since March, staff members across all departments have focused their efforts on these priorities, facing a few challenges or delays in their implementation.

The presentation document categorizes each strategic priority into distinct statuses: those that are complete, those that are ongoing, those that exhibit good progress with completion anticipated in 2025, and those that have been deferred to 2025. Each category includes detailed information on the specific actions taken and timelines involved. Additionally, the presentation highlights relevant departmental statistics and outlines various significant achievements and completed projects across all departments, providing a comprehensive overview of the progress made towards the strategic goals.

Alternatives

There are no alternatives.

Financial Information

The financial implication of each priority is budgeted for through the budget process.

Year End Report - 2024 Priorities

Strategic Priority Areas:

Do the recommendations of this report advance the Strategic Priority Areas of the Township?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Which Priority Area(s) does this report support?



Service Excellence



Sustainable Infrastructure



Community Connection



Strategic Growth

Recommended Action:

THAT we receive report AD-02-2025 regarding the Township of Ramara's Year End 2024 Priorities review as information.

Attachments:

[Council Presentation - Year End Review - Priorities and Department](#)

Reviewed By**Approved By:**

Jennifer Connor,
Legislative &
Community Services
Director/Clerk

Department:

**Council/COW
Agenda Circulation
(Staff)**

Status:

Approved - 04
Feb 2025

Gayle Jackson, Chief
Administrative Officer

**Council/COW
Agenda Circulation
(Staff)**

Approved - 05
Feb 2025



2024 Priorities Year in Review

PRESENTED: COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
FEBRUARY 10, 2025

Strategic Plan

At the January 2024 Council meeting, Council Adopted the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and the four Strategic Priorities:

- 1. Service Excellence**
- 2. Sustainable Infrastructure**
- 3. Community Connection**
- 4. Strategic Growth**

At the February 26 Council meeting, Council adopted the 2024 Strategic initiatives as outlined in the 2023-2026 Work plan.

Strategic Priorities 2024

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Create a progressive and positive work environment that fosters innovation and continuous improvement, maintains organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and delivers quality services and programs.

PRIORITIES:

1. Implement innovative attraction and retention strategies, such as developing a marketing video.
2. Develop and provide training and development opportunities for staff and Council.
3. Complete an organizational review.
4. Complete a Financial Data Comparative Study.
5. Implement a budgeting software system and Office 365
6. Complete process for filling Ward 4 vacancy.
7. Continue to grow services and access to online services.

SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Invest in current and future assets that will respond to the long-term sustainability of the municipality, and the evolving needs of the residents and visitors through transparent and accountable decision-making and responsible financial management.

PRIORITIES:

1. Update and maintain Asset Management Plan for all municipal infrastructure.
2. Investigate and implement the Asset Retirement Obligations.
3. Update Engineer Design Guidelines.
4. Develop a Water and Sewer Servicing Plan.
5. Initiate water and wastewater services expansion on Lakeshore, Ridge, Maple and Lone Birch.
6. Complete a Water and Wastewater Rate Review.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Support a connected community by preserving and promoting our heritage, maintaining open and honest communication, collaborating with partners, and enhancing the health and safety of our community.

PRIORITIES:

1. Continue to acquire data, engage community and activity, and investigate new systems and tools to increase access and reach of communications.
2. Continue to grow strategic partnerships.
3. Develop a Special Events Strategy and Policy.
4. Update Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
5. Continue to monitor the community's needs and communicate emergency preparedness and safety.

STRATEGIC GROWTH





Create opportunities for sustainable growth that balances the diversity of the community while being responsible environmental stewards.

PRIORITIES:

1. Complete the Official Plan Update.
2. Complete the Lake St. John Flood mapping project.
3. Develop and implement Community Improvement Plan with Urban Design Guidelines.
4. Work with partners to identify opportunities to enhance tourism and business attraction.

Strategic Priorities 2024

SERVICE EXCELLENCE	SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE	COMMUNITY CONNECTION	STRATEGIC GROWTH
Implement innovative Attraction and Retention Strategies	Complete Asset Management Plan - Non Core Assets	Continue to acquire data, engage community, and increase comms tools	Complete Official Plan
Develop training and development opportunities	Investigate and implement asset retirement obligations	Continue to grow strategic partnerships	Complete Lake St. John Flood mapping project
Complete organizational review	Update Engineer Design Guidelines	Develop a Special Events Strategy and Policy	Complete Community Improvement Plan
Complete Financial Data Comparative Study	Develop Water and Sewer servicing plan	Develop a Special Update Parks and Recreation Master Plan	Work with partners to identify opportunities for business and tourism attraction
Implement Budgeting software and Office 365	Initiate water and wastewater services expansion	Monitor emergency preparedness needs and communicate	
Ward 4 By-Election	Complete water and wastewater rate review		
Grow services and access to online services			

 **Complete**
 **Ongoing**
 **Good Progress /Complete in 2025**
 **Moved to 2025**

Completed Priorities at Mid-Year

- Filling of Ward 4 vacancy
- Financial Data Comparative Study
- Asset Management Plan
- Investigate and implement Asset Retirement Obligations
- Lake St. John Flood Mapping Project

Year End Status Update

Service Excellence

Implement innovative attraction and retention strategies

- Completion of recruitment videos to be used for job advertising purposes.
 - The videos captures full time, part time and seasonal job opportunities.
- Compressed Work week
 - At the December 9, 2024, Council meeting, Council endorsed HR Policy #2.17 – Compressed Work week policy.
- OMERS (volunteer firefighters)
 - The Township of Ramara offers enrolment into the OMERS pension plan for volunteer firefighters.



Year End Status Update

Service Excellence

Develop and provide training and development opportunities for staff and Council

- Municipal Codes of Conduct: Essential to Good Governance
- Myers Briggs Personality Puzzle
- iCompass training
- Access to MentorCity
- Access to various training opportunities provided by the County of Simcoe (Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue, The Working Mind, Crucial Accountability, LEAN)
- Rama Maawnjiydiwag Gtigaan – Rama Community Farm from Rama First Nation
- First Aid / CPR, Working at Heights
- DiSC and Five Behaviours Training (SLT)

Year End Status Update

Service Excellence

Complete an Organizational Review

- Under the direction of CAO Drinkwalter, initial research was conducted
 - Staff Survey, One-on-One interviews, Director interviews
- Under the direction of interim CAO Dunn, three phase analysis with recommendations was completed.
 - Phase One presented to Council at the July 29 meeting
 - Phase Two presented to Council at the August 26 meeting
 - Phase Three presented to Council at the December 9 meeting.

Year End Status Update

Service Excellence

Implement a budgeting software system and Office 365

Budgeting Software

- The software is not fully implemented for the 2025 budgeting process, so the project will extend into 2025. Staff members are meeting weekly with their implementation specialist to finalize the project.
- The utilization of this software will reduce the need for manual processes and reliance on Excel spreadsheets.
- Our current financial software is quite basic and lacks flexibility. Additionally, replicating our existing chart of accounts in the budgeting software proved to be challenging, requiring a significant amount of case-by-case analysis to proceed with implementation. Staffing changes and other concurrent projects also contributed to delays in the project.
- Training will begin in the spring, and we expect the software to be ready for use in the 2026 budgeting process.

Year End Status Update

Service Excellence

Implement a budgeting software system and Office 365

Office 365

- The project began in May 2024 after the purchase license was approved.
- The migration of email, outlined in phase one of the project, was completed in the fall of 2024, with the full migration finalized in early 2025.
- A significant delay occurred due to issues encountered during the processing and application of required licenses; however, this has now been resolved.
- Training will be offered in early 2025.

Year End Status Update

Service Excellence

Continue to grow services and access to online services

- The new Water usage Customer Portal went live in the fall of 2024.
 - This system enables users to monitor their water usage directly from a smartphone or another device, providing real-time and up-to-date information.
 - Due to technical difficulties, the Township of Ramara has temporarily suspended the ability to set up Alerts on the Customer Water Portal for water users. The Township and the manufacturer are actively working on a solution, and the alert system will be restored once the issue is resolved.
- Township is continuing to update forms, make it available online and increase online payment options for services
 - Monthly PAP for utilities
 - Freedom for Information Request Form
 - Building Permit and applications payable online early 2025

Year End Status Update

Sustainable Infrastructure

Update Engineer Design Guidelines

- Staff are working with Township Engineers on an update to match current practices in collaboration with Infrastructure, building, and planning.
- This project is ongoing and will be completed in 2025.

Year End Status Update

Sustainable Infrastructure

Develop a Water and Sewer Servicing Plan

- Staff began the process to complete the South Ramara servicing plan in 2024 and will bring forward that plan in 2025.
- Staff will complete the Atherley Servicing study in 2025.

Initiate water and wastewater services expansion

- In 2024, staff undertook the engineering to complete the water and sewer expansion project. This includes:
 - Lakeshore Drive from Simcoe Road to Concession Road 3 (water only)
 - Lone Birch Drive, Ridge Ave and Maple Trail (sewer only)
- Tatham Engineering is finalizing the documents to release for tender to explore the requirements and costs for the project.
- The expansion project has been moved to 2025

Year End Status Update

Sustainable Infrastructure

Complete Water and Wastewater Rate Review

- At the February 26, 2024, Combined Committee of the Whole and Council meeting, staff presented a Water and Wastewater Rate review.
- At the March 25, 2024, Council meeting, Council passed Bylaw 2024.21 to set the new water and wastewater rates for 2024. The new rate was effective July 1, 2024 and appeared on residents third and fourth quarterly bills. These rates have been re-examined during 2025 budget discussions.
- At the October 28, 2024, Special Committee of the Whole meeting, staff presented a Water and Wastewater Rate review and budget and Water and Wastewater presentation. This review formed the updated utility rates that will be in place from 2025-2033.
- At the November 25, 2024, Special Council meeting, Council passed Bylaw 2024.79 that sets the new water and wastewater rates for 2025-2033.

Year End Status Update

Community Connection

Continue to acquire data, engage community and activity, and investigate new systems and tools to increase access and reach of communications.

- Through various consultations conducted in both 2023 and 2024, staff are consistently seeking new tools and strategies to effectively reach more residents with accurate and timely information.
 - The Ramara Bulletin has been revamped into a newsletter format to provide residents with more information on important dates, news, and updates.
 - The Tax and Utility inserts have been updated to deliver more detailed information and to connect that information with resources available on the website.
 - The new Water Usage Customer Portal offers water users enhanced data and information regarding their usage.
- An investigation into engagement activities, tools, and systems that support communication and community engagement will continue in 2025.

Year End Status Update

Community Connection

Develop a Special Events Strategy and Policy

- At the 2024 Mid Year presentation, this initiative was moved to 2025 due to the limited staff compliment in the Legislative and Community Services department.

Update Parks and Recreation Master Plan

- In April 2024, the Township of Ramara retained Planscape Inc. to assist in the development of a 10-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Between July 8 to August 5, a Community and Stakeholder Engagement plan was implemented, which included a survey, two open houses and small group interviews.
- During the Council Meeting on October 7, Planscape presented an update on the Ramara Recreation Master Plan and outlined the requirement to hold an additional public open house to review the draft recommendations. In response, the Council requested that further communication initiatives be undertaken to enhance engagement for the final open house. The Open House is scheduled for February 5, 2025, at the Township Administration Building.

Year End Status Update

Community Connection

Continue to monitor the community's needs and communicate emergency preparedness and safety.

- Fire and Rescue Services has completed the Community Risk Assessment (CRA) for the municipality, and it is currently being reviewed to be forwarded to council. This Provincially mandated assessment is a document to support and help drive any necessary changes to our Fire Master Plan (FMP). This continual monitoring and maintenance, influence practices and identifies trends as well as needs.
- The needs of community engagement are currently satisfied with our heavy social media presence and community connections through our Public Education and Fire Prevention initiatives. Requests from the community have been met with a fire presence at events and public speaking engagements with numerous community groups.

Year End Status Update

Strategic Growth

Complete Official Plan

- The public meeting for the Official Plan was completed on August 12, 2024.
- The draft final document, including schedules, is available to the public to review and has been sent to the County of Simcoe and other required authorities for their review and comments.
- A staff report and recommendation will be provided to Council for discussion at the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting anticipated for April 2025.

Year End Status Update

Strategic Growth

Develop and implement a Community Improvement Plan with Urban Design Guidelines

- This initiative has been moved to 2025.

Work with partners to identify opportunities to enhance tourism and business attraction.

- Staff continue to work with Experience Simcoe County, Simcoe County Economic Development, Little R Economic Development Group and other agencies to collaborate, promote and initiate events, programs and ideas.
- Completion of winter videography and photography project to showcase winter recreation opportunities within Ramara.
- Investigation into filming opportunities and policies to be further explore in 2025.
- This initiative is ongoing in 2025.

2024 Department Stats

Administration

- **Hires**

- 6 full-time and contract (no new complement)
- 7 seasonal/summer students

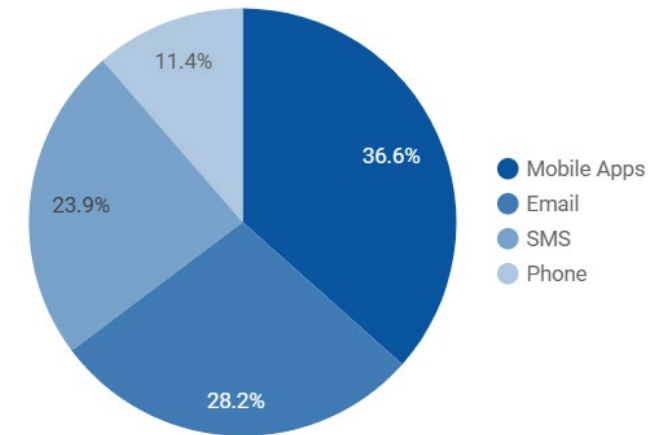
- **Grants**

- Applied for 17 grants
- Completed/Ongoing projects with funding
 - Trails maintenance and expansion projects
 - Over \$70,000 of funding received
 - Construction and installation of two playgrounds and outdoor multi-use court
 - Over \$246,000 of funding received
 - Recreation programs (Seniors' Social, Thursday Night lights)
 - Over \$12,000 of funding received
 - Economic Development (Video/Photo and Revitalization of St. Andrew Hall and Standard Bank)
 - Over \$150,000 of funding received

Administration

Communications

- Social Media
 - Township of Ramara
 - Facebook - 350 new followers, over 302K views, 217K reach
 - Instagram - 155 new followers on Instagram, 365 posts/441 stories, over 62K views, over 5.2K reach
 - Fire and Rescue Services
 - Facebook – 178 new followers on Facebook, over 164k views, 52.7k reach
 - Ramara Recreation
 - Facebook - 89 new followers on Facebook, 53K views, 18.7K reach
 - Instagram – 79 new followers, 114 posts/36 stories, 12K views, 2.3K reach
- Alertable
 - 98 Advisory and 1 informative post
 - 188,950 notifications
 - 1,340 subscribers (increase of 89 subscribers in 2024)
- Website data
 - 195K page views with over 59K users access the website with over 480K event counts.
 - Users come primarily from organic search or direct
 - The top three pages are the Township's main page, employment opportunities and news and notices page.



Building and Planning

Building

- 313 Building Permit Applications
- 286 Building Permits issued
- 2,436 Total inspections

Planning

- Planning Applications:
 - Consents – 12 applications
 - Minor Variances – 23 applications
 - Zoning Bylaw Amendments – 6 applications & 1 Township-led
 - Official Plan Amendments - 3 applications & 1 Township-led
 - Site Plan Approval – 5 applications
- Zoning and Grading Application: 43 applications
- Cancellation Certificates – 1 Application
- Compliance Letters – 28 applications
- Pre-Consultations – 19 applications

Bylaw

- Service Request
 - Total of 559 requests were reported
 - Short Term Rental (23%), Canine Control (16%) and Long Grass Concern (13%)
- Parking
 - 311 Parking tickets issued
 - 1846 Parking Transactions completed totalling \$24,505 in revenue
 - 2,963 Parking permits issued
- Licensing
 - 496 Dog Licenses
 - 2 Kennel Licenses
 - 4 Refreshment Vehicle Licenses
 - 5 Lottery Licenses
 - 76 Short-Term Rental Accommodation Licenses
- Administrative Monetary Penalty
 - 44 issued for Short-Term Rental Accommodation totaling \$113,000 in Fines
 - 74 issued for Long Grass and Weeds totaling \$25,600 in Fines

Finance

- Online Forms
 - Tax Certificates - 210 issued
 - Paperless Billing – Taxes – 1058 subscribers
 - Paperless Billing – Utilities – 303 subscribers
 - Pre-Authorized Payments – Taxes – 1033 subscribers
 - Pre-Authorized Payments – Utilities – 537 subscribers
- Budget passed on November 25, 2024

Fire and Rescue Services

- **Type of Response**

• Amb/Assist/Medical	257
• OPP Assist	1
• Motor Vehicle Accident	55
• Structure Fire	14
• Vehicle Fire	4
• Machinery Fire	0
• Chimney Fire	1
• Marine & Ice/Rescue	27
• Hazmat - Gas/Chemical Spill	5
• Hazmat - CO Detector	14
• Electrical/Wires Down/Hydro Pole	12
• Fire Other: Garbage/Leaves	4
• Fire Other: Grass and Bush	7
• Burn Complaint	26
• Alarm / False Alarm / Smoke / No Fire	54
• Fire Investigation	0
• Mutual Aid	11
• Out of Area Assist	0
• Specialized Rescue / Utilities	5
• Other Public Assistance	1

TOTALS

498

Infrastructure

- Service Requests
 - 772 Service Requests
 - General Concern (27%), Drainage Concern (14%), Winter Operations (13%)
- Applications
 - 65 of Entrance Permit applications
 - 9 of Mailbox Permit Applications
 - 24 of 911 Greenblade Applications

Planned Capital Projects

- Ditching - 7.93 km of road
- Hot Mix - 4.98 km of road
- Surface Treatment - 1.41 km of road
- Slurry - 2.86 km of road
- Ramara Road 47 Reconstruction - 3.64 km
- Culverts replaced – 28 (due to age and condition)
- Large Box Culverts – 2 – Concession Road 9, east of County Road 169 and Concession Road 9, west of Highway 12.
- North Footbridge structural rehabilitation (LCPWC)
- Beach expansion and rehabilitation at Lovely Day Park, Lagoon City Public Beach and Lagoon City Private Baches
- Installation of multi-use sports court
- Finalization of installed playgrounds at Bluebird Park and Lagoon City Beach and Park
- Ramara Trail expansion – 1.2 km from the Casino to Airport Road
- Rama Trail revitalization – 1.5 km from Longford Mills to Quarry Point road

Recreation

- Program Participants
 - Children and Youth – 214
 - Adults and Seniors – 652
 - Summer Day Camp – 364
- Library Partnership Programs
 - Little Adventurers – 640 participants (24 sessions)
 - Fun, Frost, Family – 60 participants
 - Eggsplore Ramara – 15 families, 128 scans across 10 locations
- 7 new successful programs introduced, such as Thursday Night Lights
- 646 hours of Pickleball offered
- 10 programs offered outside of the Ramara Centre: Udney and Longford Community Centre, Lovely Day Park, etc.