

Recommendation:

That the Clerk's Office-2024-29 report, dated December 17, 2024 regarding a request to migrate the Township website to GovStack be received, and;

That Council provide direction to Staff on whether to move forward with the website migration to GovStack, and;

That if approved, the cost of the migration is to be funded through the 2025 Budget.

Overview:

The current hosting platform for the Township's website, iCreate, will be discontinued in less than two years, necessitating a migration to a new platform. Township staff have worked with GHD (previously e-Solutions) to receive discounted pricing (20% discount and free staff training) to migrate sooner to Govstack, a new and superior platform that offers more creative freedom and self-management capabilities. GHD has informed staff that it is not able to hold this pricing while the budget process is completed in Q1 of 2025.

Migrating now, rather than waiting until the end of iCreate's lifespan is strategic due to the impending discontinuation of iCreate and the reduction in support the platform will receive going forward.

Throughout the Strategic Planning process, Staff and Council heard that the Township needs to modernize service delivery and our tools for communicating to the public. One of the focus areas was the Township website. Below is a list of issues with our current website.

Challenges with the current website:

- Current website is not user friendly and Township staff are limited to what they can do to change it.
- Current website does not use Google Analytics to measure success, therefore measuring performance is onerous at best.
- Current website does not allow for flexibility in design.
- Current website does not allow uploads of videos.
- Current platform for the website will be unsupported by GHD in less than two years.
- Design changes on the current platform require support from GHD which incurs additional costs.

With the potential move to GovStack, Staff have identified operations savings that can be realized:

- **Reduced Dependency on GHD Services:** With Govstack, the Township can make updates and modifications internally, reducing ongoing costs associated with outsourcing these tasks.
- **Avoidance of iCreate End-of-Life Costs:** Transitioning before iCreate is discontinued prevents potential cost spikes related to emergency migrations or temporary solutions.
- The new platform also provides backend users (Township staff) with more flexibility and the ability to be more creative. It also reduces the need to redevelop the website in future years.
- Govstack also provides high-level of website analytics, using Google Analytics, which currently doesn't exist. The Township will be able to measure the success, engagement of web pages and the overall website usage.

Further to the potential savings that can be realised, the move to GovStack will also provide an avenue for Staff to edit and improve the website on an as needed basis without assistance from outside consultants.

- Govstack allows for more flexibility in design and content management, enabling the Township to enhance its digital presence more effectively.
- The platform empowers our internal team to manage the website, reducing turnaround times for updates and new content creation.
- The platform will support/allow for the creation of new webpages, landing pages, and microsites for special project and initiatives the Township wishes to undertake.
- **Enhanced Security and Compliance:** Govstack provides better security features and compliance with modern web standards, reducing the risk of cyber threat.

Conclusion:

Through the Service Delivery Review and the Strategic Plan, the website and the ways in which the Township communications with the public have been identified as priorities for improvement. The potential move to GovStack will provide staff the tools to make improvements to the website without the need to obtain a new website saving time, effort and cost.

Financial Impact:

The cost negotiated to complete the early migration is \$19,296.00 (all prices shown are without tax). The annual cost of the website for 2025 will be reduced to \$6,330.00 from \$7,625.00, a savings of \$1,295.00 for the year. Further, with the migration the Township will discontinue it's subscription with Cludo (website search tool) which will be a savings of \$2699.00.



Service Modernization and Innovation

Modernizing, refining and innovating services for residents is essential to effectively meet the needs of our community, enhance our operational efficiency, and ensure we remain adaptable in a rapidly changing world.



Business Attraction, Expansion, and Retention

Business attraction, expansion, and retention is vital for the economic health and sustainability of our Township, such as job creation, tax revenue, investing in innovation, maintaining our quality of life, and supporting community stability.



Infrastructure Renewal

Infrastructure renewal is a critical investment for our Township as it will ensure our adherence to health and safety, economic development, investment attraction, environmental sustainability, quality of life, public confidence, and regional competitiveness.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Pre-Budget Request - Implementation of GovStack for Township Website.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Dec 11, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Todd Davis