

2022 Annual Report on Information Management

BACKGROUND

The Information Management Branch (IM) is responsible for establishing and promoting an overall framework for the coordinated and cost-effective management of the records and information holdings of the Corporation of the City of Ottawa, regardless of form (i.e. physical or electronic) and throughout their entire life cycle, to ensure:

- That all records and information holdings are managed as corporate assets to support effective decision-making, meet operational requirements (such as supporting the achievement of corporate strategic and program/service delivery priorities), protect and enforce legal and other rights and obligations including the public's right to access under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA), and provide evidence of the Corporation's decisions, directives, and actions essential for government transparency and accountability.
- That the widest possible use is made of the information held by the City by ensuring it is organized to facilitate access by those who require it, at the right time, in the right form, and at a reasonable cost, subject to legal, policy and other constraints.
- That records and information holdings in all formats are retained only as long as needed, stored in the most appropriate and cost-effective storage medium and securely disposed of when no longer required to control costs.
- That records and information holdings serve to reconstruct the evolution of policy and program decisions and directives or have historical or archival importance and are identified and preserved.

The overall framework includes policies, procedures, systems and standards that establish operating requirements. These give direction to management and staff, providing guidance and tools to facilitate the management of the entire life cycle of the City's records and information, namely:

- Planning;
- Collection, creation and receipt;
- Organization, use and retrieval;
- Storage, protection, retention, and disposition through transfer to the City of Ottawa Archives or secure, authorized destruction; and

- Centralized records and information management resource support to program areas to enable them to meet their Information Management operating requirements.

More specifically, IM helps all City staff meet their current and evolving physical and electronic records management obligations by:

- Maintaining 14 records offices in five City buildings and supporting 219 decentralized records locations.
- Maintaining the corporate Records Management Policy and Procedures, the Corporate Records Classification Scheme (CRCS), and the associated *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* No. 2021-183, as amended.
- Securely disposing of records in accordance with the *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* No. 2021-183, as amended, and applicable federal and provincial legislation.
- Providing guidance on the Information Architecture (IA) of client SharePoint sites to assist with record compliance, information organization, search, reporting and usability.
- Providing expertise in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of IM policies, information organization and best practices.
- Providing Tier 1 and 2 system support for three records management systems.
- Training staff on the RMS and BIMS records management systems, SharePoint and IM fundamentals.
- Assessing business-specific systems for records-related risk.

Three policy instruments

IM is responsible for three policy instruments that direct City staff on how to manage their records:

1. The Records Management Policy and Procedures identifies the requirements and expectations regarding the creation, identification and management of City records.
2. The Corporate Records Classification Scheme (CRCS) is a tool that helps organize City records, as well as applies a schedule detailing how long records are kept and how they should be disposed.
3. The *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* provides the City with the legal authority to create, manage, and dispose of records. The City Archives is the disposition authority for the City of Ottawa and IM staff works in close collaboration with Archives staff.

Four recordkeeping systems

The City currently uses four information management systems to manage records:

1. Records Management System (RMS) is used to manage physical records. As described below, this application's platform is being updated and the new version will be released in early 2023. The new system brings stability while appearing identical to the previous system.
2. Business Information Management System (BIMS) is used to manage electronic records. BIMS has reached end of life and is gradually being replaced.
3. Records365 (R365) is being used to add recordkeeping functionality to SharePoint sites. SharePoint sites are currently being brought under record management compliance by R365 one site at a time. The R365 application, applied to SharePoint sites, is intended to replace BIMS.
4. MINISIS controls certain records that have been archived. This system is managed by the Archives.

Recommendations stemming from Council report ACS2022-CMR-OCM-0001

On November 9, 2022, a report to Council was presented with the title, "Update on the Ottawa Light Rail Transit Public Inquiry and Recommended Next Steps" ([ACS2022-CMR-OCM-0001](#)). The report contained recommendations related to City recordkeeping practices.

The recommendations that apply to IM are as follows:

- 2. Direct the City Clerk to undertake the following with respect to amending the Records Management Policy and associated policies, procedures and practices, and provide updates in the 2022-2026 Governance Review report on the approach the Clerk will take to:**
 - a. Establish a process to develop measures to ensure that Information Management and routine and active disclosure are considered at the start of, during and at the close of all major City projects through measures such as project-specific document management architecture, staff training, clear obligations and accountabilities for recordkeeping and public disclosure when external contractors are used, and having access to a dedicated Information Management resource, as described in this report; and**
 - b. Consult with the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario and work with Information Technology Services as part of a process to establish clear guidelines and processes with respect to temporary records, including transitory records created on instant messaging and social media platforms related to City business, for both staff and**

elected officials and on both personal and corporate devices and accounts, as described in this report;

Further to the above recommendation, the report titled, "[2022-2026 Council Governance Review](#)," advised that a progress update on addressing the above-noted direction would be provided by way of the Office of the City Clerk 2022 Annual Report.

In addition to the above-noted recommendations, the Province released "[The Report of the Ottawa Light Rail Transit Public Inquiry](#)" on November 30, 2022. Information Management is responding to these directions, as detailed in the sections below.

Information Management's Response: SharePoint and Records365

Information Technology Services (ITS) has rolled out SharePoint sites to the entire corporation. Beginning in May of 2022, IM has been reviewing the sites, one at a time, and adding recordkeeping functionality using the new R365 tool. This work entails:

1. Evaluating and documenting each SharePoint site, making changes and updates to the IA.
2. Classifying the content of each library and building retention rules using R365.
3. Coaching and training staff to improve SharePoint adoption and ensure appropriate use.
4. Providing ongoing support and guidance as changing operational needs results in required adjustments to SharePoint sites.

By managing these SharePoint sites with R365, all records on a site are automatically classified and retained for the appropriate amount of time, as defined by the CRCS. This "in place" recordkeeping is invisible to users, allowing them to work with records in SharePoint as they normally would, while simultaneously bringing records under Records Management Policy into compliance. In addition, R365 facilitates searching and producing records to respond to ATIP requests, litigation, and audits.

Information Management's Response: embedding recordkeeping in City foundational documents and business processes

The IM Branch continues to identify and communicate the value of recordkeeping within the City's foundational documents and business processes. Doing so assists with Record Management Policy compliance.

1. Recordkeeping requirements were formally included into the Corporate Administrative Policy (CAP) Framework. This framework establishes processes to ensure that corporate policies and procedures are developed and documented in a consistent manner within City operations. The recordkeeping requirements update states:

- a. “As per the Records Management Policy, Official Business Records generated as a result of the execution of this policy must be declared as such in the appropriate SharePoint site, RMS (Records Management System) or approved business system.”
2. Recordkeeping requirements were clarified, and responsibilities were formally included in the Municipal Emergency Plan public document and state:
 - a. “The Office of Emergency Management is responsible for meeting the records management requirements of the Emergency Response. To further develop its support associated with this responsibility, the OEM will develop a comprehensive Records Management Plan and, in consultation with IT Services and the Information Management Branch, will implement a ‘records ready’ SharePoint site that can be used during EOC mobilization or as required. The SharePoint site will include the appropriate information architecture and libraries to ensure all relevant documentation is captured and stored in accordance with the City’s records management practices. Consistent with the current City of Ottawa Records Retention and Disposition By-law, records associated with an event will be lifecycle managed.”
 - b. “Recordkeeping is a component of comprehensive resource management, as per section 4.5.1 (7) of the Emergency Management Standard, Emergency Management Accreditation Program, ANSI/EMAP EMS 5-2019.”
 3. In response to the “Audit of Grants and Contributions,” released by the Office of the Auditor General in December 2021, the following recordkeeping additions to the Grants and Contributions Policy and Procedures were completed:
 - a. Clarifying and defining responsibilities for monitoring, documentation and recordkeeping functions.
 - b. Clarifying language pertaining to records management.
 - c. Adding the Grants and Contributions Program Compliance Checklist (Appendix A of the Grants and Contributions Procedures) to assist program owners in ensuring recordkeeping compliance with this policy.

Information Management’s Response: an action plan for 2023

In addition to the responses detailed above, the IM Branch has developed an action plan to address the recommendations stemming from Council report ACS2022-CMR-OCM-0001, which includes the following:

- Ensure that IM is considered at the start of, during and at the close of all large-scale infrastructure projects and includes a comprehensive Records Management Plan for each project.

- Develop an Information Governance Plan that identifies key official business records, the functional groups that create and use them, the technologies being used and a graphic/flowchart of how information will move between them.
- The City Clerk is to consult with the IPC on instant messaging and associated temporary (transitory) records. Please note that previous guidance on IPC instant messaging was incorporated into the Records Management Policy in 2016.
- Amend the Records Management Policy and procedure and include recordkeeping requirements from this report for large-scale infrastructure projects.
- Develop Elected Officials Records Management Policy and procedure for recordkeeping requirements, including those deemed transitory and official records of Members of Council.
- Develop Mandatory IM Training.
- Embed Third Party Recordkeeping Requirements into statements of work for any large-scale projects being managed by consultants.

These actions will be worked on throughout 2023. Additional actions may be added as the provincial LRT report is further reviewed and business requirements are identified.

Information Management’s Response: more support to departments (two additional temporary FTEs)

As noted in previous annual reports, new applications and new technology are constantly appearing across the organization. Tools within the M365 investment allow for improved governance and findability, but new roles may be required to respond to emerging information governance risks. With more staff in a virtual, work-from-home environment, there is greater reliance on technology. This poses challenges from a duty to document perspective and from an access to information perspective. The City Clerk continues to monitor this situation, and in partnership with various stakeholders, is developing recommendations and guidance for appropriate roles. One example being the creation of a new SharePoint Security guidance document to assist staff in monitoring site access.

As noted in the November 9, 2022, report to Council titled, “Update on the Ottawa Light Rail Transit Public Inquiry and Recommended Next Steps” ([ACS2022-CMR-OCM-0001](#)), the Public Inquiry process further revealed the need for more support with respect to recordkeeping.

In response to these demands, this report recommends that Council approve the addition of two temporary Full-time Equivalent positions (FTEs) – Solutions Analysts (or similar position) – for the IM Branch in order to support the City’s ongoing

legislative obligations to maintain records, along with the organization's growing demand for diverse recordkeeping support, including proper management of electronic records stored in multiple systems. Staff anticipate including a pressure as part of the 2024 Budget that would make these two positions permanent.

KEY PROJECTS

Updating two recordkeeping systems

IM is working with ITS to replace two recordkeeping systems.

- RMS is used for physical records and will be replaced with an in-house application. The new RMS application will have the exact same feel and functionality, with the goal of minimizing change management, staff training and end-user disruption.
- BIMS is used for electronic recordkeeping and is slowly being replaced with SharePoint and an additional recordkeeping add-on, Records365.

IM staff are working on both of these projects simultaneously.

The new RMS: rollout

The existing RMS application was built in-house and released in 2003. The application is integrated into most lines of business and manages a total of 4.4 million records. Examples of records managed include: Employment and Financial Assistance case files, Sexual Health Clinic records, building permits, school immunization records, Fire Services inspections and investigations, etc.

The current RMS application was built on the PowerBuilder version 8 platform. Originally, ITS said they would no longer support the PowerBuilder platform and a new RMS would be built in the Microsoft365 (M365) environment. This work began in Q1 of 2019. In 2022, the M365 approach was deemed not feasible.

A new approach was adopted. The current RMS application exists on PowerBuilder version 8 and this version could be migrated to PowerBuilder 2021, making the application stable. This approach was re-investigated and deemed feasible. The software was migrated, and testing took place. Plans are underway to package and release this new version of RMS in Q1 of 2023.

The new RMS software is a version migration of the existing RMS software; therefore, the application will appear unchanged to users. This means there will be minimal disruption with this update.

Replacing BIMS with SharePoint and R365

ITS has rolled out SharePoint sites to the entire City and continues to work on improving existing sites. SharePoint serves as a replacement to network drives, providing a web-based location for staff to organize, manage, and collaborate on digital records. IM is leveraging this investment in SharePoint and is using it in part to replace BIMS. While SharePoint has some records functionality, it is not sufficient to

meet City recordkeeping requirements on its own. R365 adds that needed functionality.

In September of 2022, IM began the process of onboarding sites into R365. As previously mentioned, this process entails:

1. Evaluating and documenting each SharePoint site, making changes and updates to the IA.
2. Classifying the content of each library and building retention rules using R365.
3. Coaching and training staff, to improve SharePoint adoption and ensure appropriate use.
4. Providing ongoing support and guidance as changing operational needs results in required adjustments to SharePoint sites.

Many of the SharePoint sites examined by IM so far have structural issues (IA) or are being used incorrectly by staff. This has resulted in work to make the sites compliant with the Records Management Policy. It is anticipated that the remaining sites will also require extensive work. Many City staff are experiencing change management issues and require additional training and support with the new work environment of SharePoint. These factors are affecting the onboarding process but are necessary to support end-user adoption and assist with policy compliance.

If sites are onboarded and then further modified (with new libraries and new metadata, or because of a reorganization) sites will need to be revisited and the R365 rules for those sites may need to be reconfigured.

Business statistics

Some key statistics for 2022 are:

- Over 4.4 million physical records were managed in RMS, the physical records system, with 62,753 new records created in 2022.
- 441,020 records were onboarded to R365 and are under policy compliance.
- 520,958 electronic records were checked into BIMS.
- 1,336 staff took IM training courses on SharePoint Basics, records management systems, and the fundamentals of records classification.
- 21 amendments were made to the *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* No. 2021-183, as amended. IM made nine changes to align with changes in business process, federal and provincial legislation or industry best practice. The Archives made 12 changes to their Continuous Disposition Authorities appraisals.
- Approximately 29,669 physical records and 2,577 records boxes were ordered back from commercial off-site storage for staff to consult.

- In accordance with the *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* and with departmental approval, 31,598 physical records were authorized to be securely destroyed and 242 records were transferred to the City Archives, and.
- 877 technical support calls for metadata and security access control updates and organization change were processed.

Initiatives for 2023 and beyond

Responding to Ottawa LRT Public Inquiry recommendations

As stated above, IM is working to further incorporate recordkeeping processes into policies and processes across the City. Additionally, SharePoint site templates are being developed to improve recordkeeping practices. An action plan has been laid out, also detailed above. This plan will be added to and refined as additional analysis of business needs arise.

Duty to Document and Senior Leadership Team Emails

Emails present a recordkeeping ‘volume, variety and velocity’ challenge to every organization. The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario has stated there is a ‘Duty to Document’ obligation. This specifically refers to how senior leaders need to document key decisions and decision-making records. Many emails sent and received by Senior Leadership are Official Business Records that meet these criteria.

Due to the recordkeeping demand, we now have to leverage technology. We are looking to automate the records capturing process by managing email at the identified email account level, not at the individual message level. A model for this automation was first developed and proposed by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in the United States. We are looking to further implement such an approach at the City.

This would reduce the recordkeeping burden and automatically classify records. It would protect, maintain, and provide access to staff, while preserving metadata and address privacy concerns. This would also support the City’s accountability and transparency pillars. It would provide information for decision making, support succession planning, and knowledge transfer and business continuity. Lastly, it would provide responsive records for litigation events, freedom of information requests or for internal audits.

IM took the first step to implementing this in 2016 by creating a records classification for “Senior Management Decisions and Directives.” This was done so that senior management would not have to choose from multiple classifications when declaring records. However, staff are still expected to manually check emails into a recordkeeping system.

After a review by City Clerk, a feasibility study will be required to determine whether Exchange/O365 or a R365 email connector should be deployed. In addition to which technology to use, work to determine how to filter out personal or non-work-related emails is necessary. We will also establish the technical level of effort, a timeline to implement and determine any associated costs.

This initiative will form part of a continuum of 'Duty to Document' efforts from the Office of the City Clerk. An update will be provided in next year's annual report. In the interim, staff have taken measures to secure emails from some Senior Leadership upon their departure from the City. This was done for business continuity benefits, and to support the provincial LRT Public Inquiry and an anticipated audit on the City's COVID-19 response from the Office of the Auditor General.

Technology is now outpacing information governance

As described in the "Information Management's Response: more support to departments (two additional temporary FTEs)" section of this report, there is an ever-growing number of new applications and technology appearing across the organization. This poses challenges from a duty to document perspective and from an access to information perspective. As such, new roles may be required to respond to the emerging risks associated with the way the information held by the City is controlled. The City Clerk continues to monitor this situation, and in partnership with various stakeholders, is developing recommendations and guidance for appropriate roles.

IM staff is developing a new SharePoint Security document aimed at assisting staff in monitoring SharePoint site access as one measure to address the challenges faced by the new technologies adopted by the City.

New RMS

RMS on the updated PowerBuilder platform is expected to launch in early 2023. It will be identical to the original application, so there is no user disruption or training required. Software rollout involves ITS to create a software package, testing that the installation works as expected, and communicating with staff that this process will be taking place.

Ongoing Records365 rollout and decommissioning of BIMS

Bringing SharePoint sites under R365 records policy compliance continues. Sites are being prioritized based on the number of records, the amount of activity on a site, and the sensitivity or confidentiality of the information.

At the end of 2022, 44 client SharePoint sites have been onboarded to R365. There were 441,020 records being managed by R365. It is estimated that there are approximately 700 sites to onboard, however this number will change as new sites are created by ITS. New sites may result from reorganizations as well as sites being created for specific projects.

The process for migrating records from BIMS to client SharePoint sites is still being worked on by ITS with input from IM. Once this is fully developed, client groups will have their BIMS records moved to their SharePoint sites, and BIMS access will be switched to read only.

Work From Home (WFH) record migration service

IM is working to assist employees who have been working from home and outside of official repositories, due to the COVID-19 situation, to declare and preserve those records. The majority of records will be unstructured and be stored in a wide variety of locations: OneDrive, and shared drives, etc. The IM Branch will provide a new migration service to facilitate the transfer of records and associated metadata into SharePoint sites with a new tool called Sharegate.