



## **Township of North Kawartha**

280 Burleigh Street, PO Box 550, Apsley, ON K0L 1A0  
Tel: 705-656-4445 | 1-800-755-6931 | Fax: 705-656-4446  
[www.northkawartha.ca](http://www.northkawartha.ca)

# **Report to Council**

To: Mayor and Council Members  
From: Alana Solman, Chief Administrative Officer  
Date: March 27, 2025  
Subject: Final Report – Comprehensive Employee Survey and Organizational Review

---

## **Recommendation:**

That Council receive the recommendations from the Comprehensive Employee Survey and Organizational Review conducted by Strategy Corp and further that the Chief Administrative Officer be directed to prepare an Implementation Plan for the recommendations.

## **Background:**

It has been quite some time since an organizational review or a comprehensive employee survey has been completed in the Township. These two tools are very useful when making corporate decisions that can impact human resources / recruitment, retention and succession planning, benefit analysis, service delivery, performance and efficiencies as well as the Township's reputation. The purpose is also to ensure that the right resources are in place to support service delivery and legislative requirements, now and into the next decade or two.

The Township engaged StrategyCorp – a third-party strategic advisory firm – to conduct a comprehensive employee survey and organizational review. The project aimed to support the Township in responding to changes within its operating landscape and in the continued delivery of excellent customer and employee experiences. The Township is appreciative of the professionalism, knowledge and input provided by the Strategy Corp team.

## **Analysis:**

The Implementation Plan will prioritize the recommendations into three time frames from current year to five plus years. While recommendations are based on feedback, analysis of the current state and best practices and suggestions for future state, Council



## **Township of North Kawartha**

280 Burleigh Street, PO Box 550, Apsley, ON K0L 1A0  
Tel: 705-656-4445 | 1-800-755-6931 | Fax: 705-656-4446  
[www.northkawartha.ca](http://www.northkawartha.ca)

and / or staff may not agree with every recommendation. Once the Implementation Plan is received by Council, a business case will be conducted for each recommendation which will include costs and budget implications. Staff reports on individual recommendations will be brought forward for the consideration and direction of Council. Some recommendations can be implemented without additional cost (not including staff time). The intent will be to utilize this information to respond to change and growth, recognize and improve capacity issues, improve operations, provide an excellent working environment, and provide the appropriate tools and resources for team North Kawartha to continue to provide excellent services and customer service to the Township.

### **Financial Implications:**

To be determined for each recommendation.

### **Strategic and/or Other Plans:**

Governance – Maintain a strong, accountable municipal government.

### **In Consultation with:**

Strategy Corp; NK Management Team and all employees in the Township of North Kawartha

### **Attachment:**

Schedule A: Comprehensive Employee Survey and Organizational Review Final  
Presentation dated February 2025



# Comprehensive Employee Survey and Organizational Review

**Final Presentation**

Township of North Kawartha

February 2025

# About the Township of North Kawartha

The Township of North Kawartha (“the Township” or “North Kawartha”) is a growing, four-season community located midway between Peterborough and Bancroft in prime cottage country. Council and staff provide programs and services to 3,000 full-time residents and nearly 12,000 seasonal residents.

## North Kawartha at a Glance:

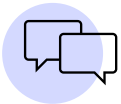
- As of fall 2024, the Township employs around **37 staff members** (~27 full-time and ~10 part-time employees), as well as manages a volunteer fire department.
- The population of North Kawartha according to 2021 census data was around **3,000 full-time residents**, although the Township swells to nearly 15,000 residents in the summer months when accounting for its approximately 12,000 seasonal residents.
- Owing to its natural appeal, the Township has experienced rapid growth in the past several years, with its **year-round population increasing by over 16%** from 2016 – outpacing the overall growth rates of both the province and the country.
- Currently, North Kawartha has **seven departments** led by the Management Team: Finance, Clerk, Building, Planning, Public Works, Parks, Recreation & Waste, and Emergency / Fire Services.

The Township has several major projects recently completed or underway, some of which are in collaboration with or led by Peterborough County, including:<sup>[1]</sup>

- ✓ [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)
- ✓ [Strategic Economic Development Plan \(2023\)](#)
- ✓ [Asset Management Plan \(2022\)](#)
- ✓ [Peterborough Community Safety and Well-being Plan \(2022\)](#)
- ✓ [Service Delivery Review \(2021\)](#)
- ✓ Sustainable Peterborough 2021-2031 Strategic Plan
- ✓ Corporate Branding (ongoing)
- ✓ New corporate policies (e.g., Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Cybersecurity, Records Management)
- ✓ Federal/provincial funding applications (e.g., Rural Economic Development Grant, Housing Accelerator Fund, broadband expansion)

# Organizational Review Context & Objectives

**The Township engaged StrategyCorp – a third-party strategic advisory firm – to conduct a comprehensive employee survey and organizational review. The project aimed to support the Township in responding to changes within its operating landscape and in the continued delivery of excellent customer and employee experiences. Project objectives included:**



Facilitating an accessible and inclusive engagement process to gather meaningful input from Township staff and Council members regarding opportunities to optimize organizational operations, capacity, and service delivery.



Identifying opportunities to improve the Township's current organization and staffing and better support employee growth, development, engagement, and morale.



Developing recommendations to help the Township improve productivity, enhance operations, and ensure North Kawartha is well placed to deliver on strategic initiatives defined by Council now and in the future.



Incorporating the significant knowledge and expertise of Township staff and municipal leading practices in recommendations.



Regularly transferring knowledge to Township staff to help equip employees to continue proactively addressing operational and process issues and challenges.

# Project Overview

The comprehensive employee survey and organizational review project consisted of four phases. The Final Report marks the conclusion of Phase 4 of this project:

Phase	Phase 1   Project Initiation	Phase 2   Research and Consultation	Phase 3   Recommendations Development	Phase 4   Finalization
Objective	Align on goals, scope, and timelines to support project success.	Develop a thorough understanding of the Township's operating landscape and organizational effectiveness through stakeholder engagement and desktop and comparative research.	Develop and workshop recommendations to design the future state.	Finalize updated organizational recommendations and support knowledge transfer.
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host Project Kick-Off</li> <li>• Develop Communications &amp; Engagement Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Data &amp; Documents</li> <li>• Conduct Leadership Interviews</li> <li>• Host Department Focus Groups</li> <li>• Launch Employee Survey &amp; Summarize Results</li> <li>• Conduct Benchmarking &amp; Best Practice Scan</li> <li>• Draft Current State Report</li> <li>• Present Current State Report to Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Design Principles</li> <li>• Host Future State Design Workshops</li> <li>• Develop Enterprise-Wide &amp; Departmental Recommendations</li> <li>• Develop High-Level Implementation Action Plan</li> <li>• Draft Final Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review, Refine &amp; Finalize Recommendations</li> <li>• Develop Public Presentation / Executive Summary</li> <li>• Present to Council</li> <li>• Close Project</li> </ul>
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Kick-Off Meeting &amp; Summary Memo</li> <li>✓ Communications &amp; Engagement Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Survey Summary Report</li> <li>✓ Current State Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Draft Final Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Final Report</li> <li>✓ Public Presentation/Summary</li> </ul>

# Our Approach to Assessing the Current State

To assess the Township's current state, StrategyCorp leveraged several primary and secondary research methods, including:

## Data & Document Review

Review of internal and external data and documentation to understand the Township's operations, organizational structure and capacity, and challenges.

## Leadership Interviews

Interviews and follow up conversations with the Mayor and Council, CAO, and management team to better understand organizational strengths and challenges and develop hypotheses for exploration.

## Staff Focus Groups & Interviews

3 sessions and 2 interviews with staff, focused on gathering input on Township strengths, pain points, and potential improvement opportunities.

## Comprehensive Employee Survey

Launched a digital employee survey (receiving 21 responses), including questions on job satisfaction, workload and capacity, perspectives on career growth and advancement, etc.

## Benchmarking & Leading Practice Scan

Assessed the Township's organizational structure against 6 comparators and leveraged the expertise of our Senior Advisor team to identify sector-wide best practices.

# Key Survey Findings (1/2)

StrategyCorp launched a digital survey between October 4 – 25 to hear directly from staff. Key findings include:

## Service Delivery

**69%**

of employees  
responded

...indicating they think the delivery of services to residents is going positively – either very well (53%) or somewhat well (16%)

**89%**

of employees  
responded

...that service delivery to other departments is going very well (47%) or somewhat well (42%)

### Improvement areas noted:

- ▶ Additional staffing resources needed
- ▶ Reduce redundancies and streamline processes that overlap across multiple departments/roles
- ▶ Transfer certain roles/responsibilities to balance workload and reduce overlap
- ▶ Training for departments on essential tools and programs and advance succession planning

## Organizational Culture

**53%**

of employees  
responded

...assessing the Township's strength of leadership in a positive manner – either very strong (37%) or somewhat strong (16%)

**53%**

of employees  
responded

...assessing the Township's organizational culture as positive – either very positive (11%) or fairly positive (42%)

### Improvement areas noted:

- ▶ Faster decision-making, more timely and efficient communication, and consistent follow-through on actionable tasks/priorities
- ▶ Provide more support for leadership, including dedicated human resources support
- ▶ New opportunities for professional development and training



# Key Survey Findings (2/2)

## What do staff like?

**53%**

of employees  
responded

...with positive levels of job satisfaction – either highly satisfied (32%) or somewhat satisfied (21%)

### Why employees wanted to work for North Kawartha

- ▶ Proximity to where they live
- ▶ Job stability and security
- ▶ Opportunity to positively impact the community
- ▶ Pension and benefits

### What employees like about working for North Kawartha

- ▶ Interesting work
- ▶ Feeling that their work is valued, recognized, and appreciated
- ▶ Positively impacting the community
- ▶ Proximity to where they live

## What do staff think needs to be improved?

**37%**

of employees  
responded

...with mixed feelings about whether or not they were satisfied with their job

### Improvement areas to feel more valued at work

- ▶ Enhanced benefits (e.g., dental and extended healthcare coverage) and compensation
- ▶ Stronger recognition and acknowledgment for staff efforts and contributions
- ▶ Opportunities for professional growth and development and cross-training

# Current State Assessment | Framework

The Township's current state was evaluated through a four-layer framework, which included:



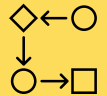
## Governance

Decision-making hierarchy, reporting lines, leadership roles and responsibilities, and management practices within the Township.



## Organization Structure & Staffing

Organizational hierarchy and staffing levels; the roles and responsibilities required to support immediate and long-term service delivery.



## Functions & Processes

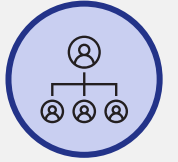
Key department operational functions and processes required for service delivery.



## People, Capabilities & Culture

Staff involved in delivering services and the skills, competencies, and enablers required for service delivery.

# High-Level Findings & Recommendations | Governance



Oversight and decision-making structures, systems, and practices are working well. There is an opportunity to adopt more structured approaches to succession management planning and the development of leadership.

High-Level Findings	High-Level Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ The Township is facing several upcoming retirements.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Implement a succession management plan.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Council and staff have a strong and productive relationship; a culture of collaboration exists within the management team.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Enhance the Township's learning and development approach for the management team through the creation – and ongoing discussion of – learning and development plans.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Leadership training and continuous education could be better structured.</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Clarity could be improved for Township staff regarding how to advance strategic priorities in their day-to-day work.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Regularly update and share the Township's Strategic Plan Report Card with staff and Council.</li></ul>

# High-Level Findings & Recommendations | Organization Structure & Staffing

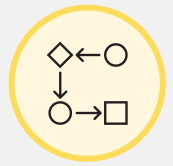


While staff are committed to their roles and serving residents, concerns exist regarding workload and competing priorities that staff must navigate.

High-Level Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ There is limited scheduling flexibility for front-line staff in the Public Works Department.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Concerns exist regarding staff workload.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ There is a need for additional administrative support across the Township.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ There is an abundance of competing priorities (including several non-statutory roles) within the Clerk's department.</li></ul>

High-Level Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Provide additional support to the Public Works Department.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Where appropriate, convert part-time positions in the Township to full-time status.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Facilitate a comprehensive review of job descriptions and specifications to ensure responsibilities are accurately captured and fairly distributed amongst teams.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Establish new administrative support positions.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Explore longer-term changes to the Township's organizational structure to better facilitate the sharing of resources and to balance staff workloads.</li></ul>

# High-Level Findings & Recommendations | Functions & Processes



Resident expectations continue to grow, and it can be challenging for staff to keep up with their regular responsibilities in addition to special projects.

High-Level Findings	High-Level Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Service demands and expectations continue to grow and evolve due to the increase in the number of full-time residents (particularly post-pandemic) and expanded municipal responsibilities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Evaluate opportunities for contracting-out services and/or shared services agreements to reduce pressure on staff.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Staff sometimes have varied roles beyond their core responsibilities.</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ More work is generally completed in-house vs. third-party contractors or external partners (compared to other similar municipalities), increasing staff workloads.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Introduce a structured project management framework to ensure effective support and oversight for critical projects.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ A significant number of special projects are impacting workloads.</li></ul>	

# High-Level Findings & Recommendations | People, Capabilities & Culture



While the Township's organizational structure is generally strong, several opportunities exist to address staff pain points, continue responding to staff needs, and lay the groundwork for future talent attraction and retention success.

High-Level Findings	High-Level Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Overall, a strong organizational culture exists within the Township.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Continue efforts to revise and implement consistent performance management practices; formalize staff learning and development plans.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ A more structured approach to professional development and training would be beneficial.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Review and update the Township's human resources policies and procedures.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Challenges are being experienced with staff recruitment and retention across all departments.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Conduct a regular benchmarking review of employee compensation, the employee benefit package, and other non-monetary incentives to ensure the Township remains an employer of choice.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ There is a perception that benefits provided by the Township are not competitive with the market; there is significant interest in a compensation review.</li></ul>	

# Next Steps

**The following immediate next steps are proposed for North Kawartha's management team:**

1. Discuss key findings and high-level recommendations with Township staff. Gather additional feedback and engage staff in the implementation of recommendations where appropriate.
2. Develop an implementation plan for recommendations the CAO and management team would like to proceed in implementing. Present the implementation plan to Council for consideration and approval.





1-866-231-6535  
[strategycorp.com](http://strategycorp.com)