



## **The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council

**Prepared by:** Nick DiGesù, Manager of Information Technology

**Department:** Finance

**Date of Report:** December 10, 2024

**Report Number:** FIN-31-2024

**Subject:** Regional IT Mutual Aid Agreement

### **Recommendation**

That the report of the Manager of Information Technology dated December 10, 2024, FIN-31-2024 regarding “Regional IT Mutual Aid Agreement” be received;

And that, the Mayor and CAO be authorized to execute the Regional IT Mutual Aid Agreement.

### **Report**

A Regional IT Mutual Aid Agreement, attached as Appendix A, has been established between the City of Windsor, Municipality of Chatham-Kent, County of Essex and all of the seven lower tier municipalities in Essex County. The Regional IT Mutual Aid Agreement between municipalities can offer several key benefits, particularly in times of crisis or technical difficulties. These agreements create a formalized structure for collaboration, allowing municipalities to pool resources and expertise when needed. The following are some benefits:

1. Rapid Response to Crises
  - a. Faster Recovery: During cyber attacks, data breaches, or other IT disasters, the Town can quickly access help from neighbouring municipalities if needed, ensuring rapid response and minimizing downtime.
2. Resource Sharing
  - a. Cost Savings: Municipalities can share IT tools, personnel, and technologies, potentially reducing the need for every municipality to invest heavily in expensive redundant infrastructure or highly specialized personnel.
  - b. Better Equipment Access: Municipality may be able to gain access to the necessary hardware, software, and resources in times of emergency.

3. Increased Resilience
  - a. Business Continuity: By having backup support from other municipalities, critical systems and services (ie. emergency response, water management, or public safety systems) may be less likely to fail during IT emergencies.
  - b. Data Redundancy: In some cases, sharing data storage and backup systems across municipalities helps safeguard data in cases of localized incidents such as natural disasters, cyberattacks, or infrastructure failures.
4. Training and Preparedness
  - a. Cross-Training Opportunities: Regular collaboration allows IT staff to learn from each other, share best practices, and better understand each municipality's unique IT environment, improving overall preparedness. The Regional IT Working Group meets several times a year.
  - b. Coordinated Drills: Municipalities can work together to simulate cyberattack or disaster recovery scenarios, ensuring better coordination during actual incidents.
5. Improved Cybersecurity
  - a. Collaborative Defense Strategies: By working together, municipalities can share threat intelligence, jointly identify vulnerabilities, and implement coordinated defenses against cyber threats.
  - b. Reduced Risk of Isolation: When a municipality is targeted by a cyber attack, having an alliance in place ensures it is not tackling the threat alone. Neighbouring municipalities can work together with tools, resources, and expertise.
6. Scalability and Flexibility
  - a. Adaptable to Different Crisis Levels: The agreement can scale according to the severity of the emergency, whether it is a minor IT issue or a large-scale cyber crisis.
  - b. Shared Personnel Pool: In emergencies, trained IT staff from one municipality can assist others, helping to ensure continuity of government services and reducing the burden on staff within a single municipality.
7. Political and Public Confidence
  - a. Strengthened Public Trust: When municipalities demonstrate they have a robust plan in place to handle IT emergencies through mutual cooperation, public confidence in local government increases.
  - b. Political Collaboration: It fosters stronger relationships between local governments, enhancing broader regional cooperation beyond IT matters.

Overall, a mutual aid agreement offers enhanced resilience, cost-efficiency, and improved capacity to handle the growing complexity and threat landscape of modern IT environments.

## Comments

The Regional IT Mutual Aid Agreement was presented to area regional CAO's earlier this year and in August a final document was agreed to by all parties. This agreement provides the framework where a municipality in need of additional IT support during an event as described above could reach out to other municipalities for assistance in the form of IT personnel and/or IT related equipment. Depending on the circumstances, there is no obligation to provide assistance, but should a municipality wish to do so the request, timing, liability, approval and compensation issues have been defined in the agreement in advance thus saving time during the emergency. This model is very similar to Mutual Aid agreements between area Fire & Rescue Departments.

This agreement/letter of understanding is between the following 11 municipalities:

- County of Essex
- City of Windsor
- Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- Township of Pelee
- 7 lower tier municipalities within County of Essex

Highlights of this agreement include:

1. Request for assistance is made from a municipality in need by the CAO to the CAO of another municipality (Responding Party). The Responding Party can then decide to provide or not provide assistance.
2. Assistance can be provided in the way of personnel, services, equipment or materials.
3. Costs associated with the provision of Mutual Assistance are borne by the Responding Party except for reasonable daily expenses.
4. During the terms of the agreement, each party shall have in place and maintain general liability insurance.
5. The Responding Party will adhere to a Non-Disclosure Policy Agreement prior to initiating any assistance.

## Consultations

County of Essex  
City of Windsor  
Municipality of Chatham-Kent  
Town of Amherstburg

Town of Essex  
Town of Kingsville  
Town of Lakeshore  
Town of LaSalle  
Municipality of Leamington  
Township of Pelee  
Town of Tecumseh

### **Financial Implications**

In the event the Town (responding party) was called upon to assist another Municipality pursuant to the parameters within this agreement, the Town would be financially liable for staffing resources provided. In the event the Town (receiving party) needed assistance from another municipality, there would be the potential of daily expenses paid to the responding party during the IT emergency.

### **Prepared By:**



Manager of IT

Nick DiGesu

### **Link to Strategic Goals**

1. Enhancing organizational excellence - Yes
2. Strengthen the community's engagement with the Town - Not Applicable
3. Grow and diversify the local economy - Not Applicable
4. Build on our high-quality of life - Not Applicable
5. Sustaining strong public services and infrastructure - Yes

### **Communications**

Not Applicable

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	FIN-31-2024 Regional IT Mutual Aid Agreement.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Nov 25, 2024

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



Director of Finance/Treasurer

Dale Langlois



Chief Administrative Officer

Joe Milicia