

TOWNSHIP OF WEST LINCOLN CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE AGENDA

MEETING NO. THREE

Monday, May 11, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

Township Administration Building

318 Canborough Street, Smithville, Ontario

NOTE TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: All Cell Phones, Pagers and/or PDAs to be turned off. Members of the public who are attending and participating virtually are reminded to keep their microphones muted until they are acknowledged to speak. Additionally, for your information, please be advised that this meeting will be livestreamed as well as recorded and will be available on the Township's website.

Pages

1. CHAIR - Councillor Greg Maychak

Prior to commencing with the Corporate Services Committee meeting agenda, Chair Maychak will note the following:

1. Comments can be made from members of the public for a matter that is on the agenda by advising the Chair during the "Request to Address an Item on the Agenda" Section of the agenda.
2. The public may submit written comments for matters that are on the agenda to jpaylove@westlincoln.ca before 4:30 p.m. on the day of the meeting for consideration by the Committee. Comments received after 4:30 p.m. on the day of the Committee meeting will be considered at the following Council meeting. Comments submitted are included in the record.
3. This meeting will be livestreamed as well as recorded and available on the Township's website.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

The Township of West Lincoln, being part of Niagara Region is situated on treaty land. This land is steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. There are many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit from across Turtle Island that live and work in Niagara today. The Township of West Lincoln, as part of the Regional Municipality of Niagara, stands with all Indigenous people, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live.

3. CHANGE IN ORDER OF ITEMS ON AGENDA

4. **DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND/OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

5. **APPOINTMENTS**

5.1 **ITEM CS15-26**

4

Amandipp Singh, Founder, Enabled Talent

Re: Niagara Inclusive Workforce Pilot – Employment Access for People with Disabilities

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

6. **REQUEST TO ADDRESS ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

NOTE: Procedural By-law Section 10.13(5) – General Rules

One (1) hour in total shall be allocated for this section of the agenda and each individual person shall only be provided with **five (5) minutes** to address their issue (some exceptions apply). A response may not be provided and the matter may be referred to staff.

Chair to inquire if there are any members of the public present who wish to address any items on the Corporate Services Committee agenda.

7. **COMMUNICATIONS**

8. **STAFF REPORTS**

8.1 **ITEM CS16-26**

12

Manager, Legislative Services/Clerk (Justin Paylove)

Re: Recommendation Report LLS-05-2026 - 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Advanced Voting

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Recommendation Report LLS-05-2026 titled “2026 Municipal and School Board Election Advanced Voting” dated May 11, 2026 be received; and,
2. That, the following advanced voting dates and times be approved:
 - a. Friday, October 16, 2026 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the West Lincoln Community Centre, 177 West Street, Smithville, Ontario
 - b. Saturday, October 17, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the West Lincoln Community Centre, 177 West Street, Smithville, Ontario

8.2 **ITEM CS17-26**

16

Director, Legal and Legislative Services (Jessica Dyson) and Communication Specialist (Beth Audet)

Re: Recommendation Report LLS-06-2026 - Draft Communication and Engagement Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That, Recommendation Report LLS-06-2026, titled “Draft Communication and Engagement Master Plan,” dated May 11,

2026, be received; and,

2. That, administration be directed to bring forward a final Communication and Engagement Master Plan to a future Committee/Council meeting for Council's consideration and adoption.

8.3 ITEM CS18-26

43

Manager, Finance/Deputy Treasurer (Steve Emslie)

Re: Information Report T-05-2026 - Quarter 1 Financial Update

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That, Information Report T-05-2026, titled "Quarter 1 Financial Update", dated May 11, 2026, be received.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 ITEM CS19-26

Members of Committee

Re: Verbal Updates from Members of Boards and Committees - If required

9.2 ITEM CS20-26

Members of Council

Re: Other Business Items of an Informative Nature

10. NEW BUSINESS

NOTE: Only for items that require immediate attention/direction and must first approve a motion to introduce a new item of business. (Motion Required)

11. CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

There are no confidential matters.

12. DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

13. ADJOURNMENT

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at the hour of [time]

Enable Canada Tour

Making accessibility work in real life



Helping cities turn ideas into simple, practical actions

Amandipp Singh

Founder, Enabled Talent

Why This Matters

We already have good policies: But many people still face barriers in daily life

- **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**
- **Accessible Canada Act (ACA)**
- **Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)**



- **Getting around the city**
- **Finding and keeping a job**
- **Using websites and services**
- **Taking part in community life**

Why Now

Cities are growing and changing fast

Accessibility needs are increasing

Rules and expectations are clearer now

Accessibility Advisory Committees play an important role

Now is the right time to take action



Alt text: Woman in Wheelchair with Assistance

The Idea

This is not a conference
It is a simple working session

We bring together:

- Employers
- Colleges and universities
- City and government teams
- Community groups

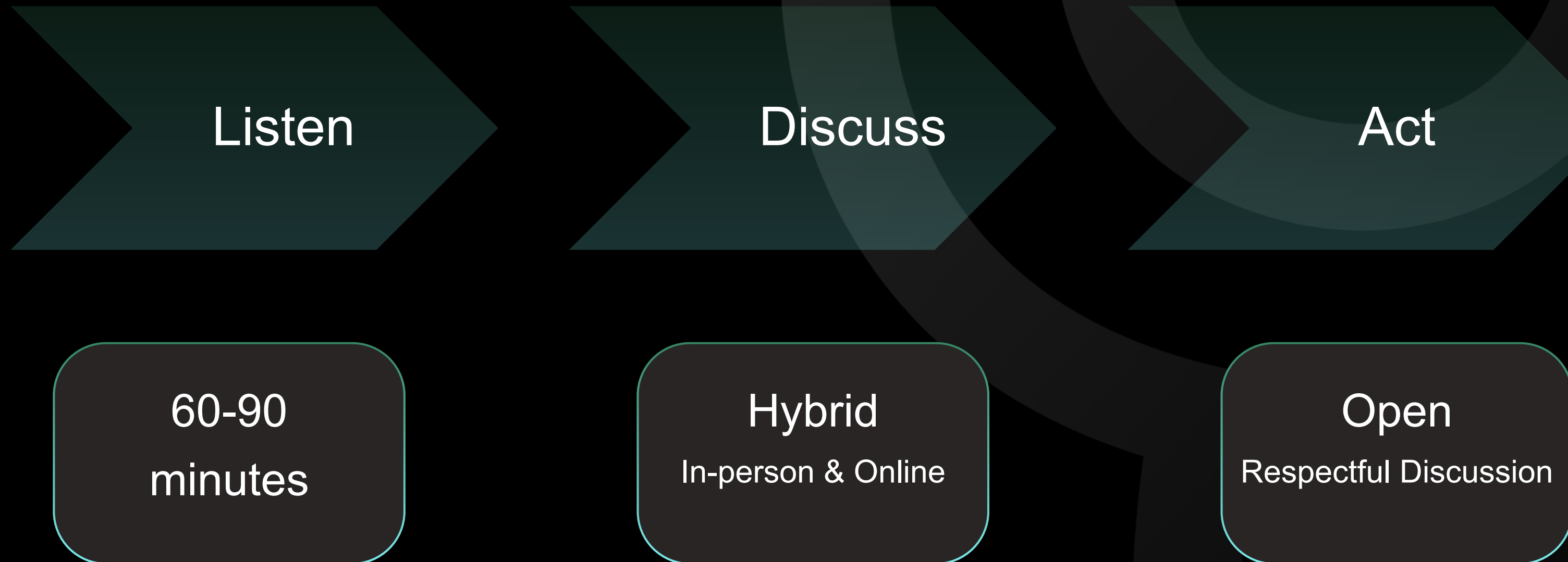
One room. One conversation.



Alt Text: Images from Enable Canada tour event hosed in Niagara and Brampton

How It Works

Simple approach:



Focus on real problems and simple solutions

Progress

Growing step by step, city by city

6+

Cities already involved
since december

Good participation from
different groups

Upcoming cities:

- Toronto
- Markham
- North York
- Thunder Bay
- Sault Ste. Marie
- Hamilton

Growing step by step



Alt Text: A stack of wooden blocks arranged in a tower with some blocks fallen to the side, indicating an ongoing game of lenga

VALUE TO CITY AND AAC

This helps the City and Committee to:

1

Understand real barriers in the community

2

Support AODA and accessibility goals

3

Hear directly from people and organizations

4

Connect with employers and partners

Move from advice to real action

INVITATION


We would like to work with your City

- Help us host a local session
- Share it with your community
- Join the conversation

Result:

- Clear ideas
- Simple steps
- Real progress

“We are just trying to make things a little easier, one city at a time.”

 www.enablecanada.ca

DATE: May 11, 2026
REPORT NO: LLS-05-2026
SUBJECT: **2026 Municipal and School Board Election Advanced Voting**
CONTACT: Justin Paylove, Manager, Legislative Services/Clerk

OVERVIEW:

- Municipal elections are conducted under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, which provides flexibility in voting methods.
- The Township will offer both internet voting and traditional in-person voting.
- Internet voting saw strong uptake in 2022, with identified needs for additional voter support.
- Barriers included digital literacy and access, particularly in rural areas.
- In-person voting on Election Day ensures an accessible option for all electors.
- The 2026 approach focuses on improving access, support, and overall voter experience.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Recommendation Report LLS-05-2026 titled “2026 Municipal and School Board Election Advanced Voting” dated May 11, 2026 be received; and,
2. That, the following advanced voting dates and times be approved:
 - a. Friday, October 16, 2026 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the West Lincoln Community Centre, 177 West Street, Smithville, Ontario
 - b. Saturday, October 17, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the West Lincoln Community Centre, 177 West Street, Smithville, Ontario

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Theme #

- N/A

BACKGROUND:

Municipal elections in Ontario are conducted in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, which provides municipalities with flexibility in determining voting methods and the administration of voting opportunities. The Township of West Lincoln has historically sought to balance accessibility, efficiency, and integrity in its election processes, while responding to evolving voter expectations and technological advancements.

For the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election, the Township will continue to offer two methods of voting:

- Internet Voting, available throughout the advanced voting period only; and
- Traditional In-Person Voting, during two specific advanced polls and Election Day.

Election Day will be held on October 26, 2026, where voters will be able to attend a designated voting location to cast their ballot in person. The locations will be the same as the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election, and are reflected below:

- Ward 1: Caistor Central School, 1794 Caistor Centre Road
- Ward 2: Gainsborough Public School, Regional Road 20
- Ward 3: West Lincoln Community Centre, 177 West Street

The continued use of internet voting reflects a broader trend across Ontario municipalities toward modernized and accessible voting methods. Internet voting provides convenience and flexibility for residents, allowing them to cast their ballot remotely at a time that suits them. At the same time, maintaining a traditional in-person voting option ensures that voters who prefer or require a paper-based process are accommodated.

In the 2022 election cycle, the Township experienced strong participation through internet voting, demonstrating a high level of community acceptance. However, the election also highlighted several areas requiring attention, including the need for additional voter support, particularly among seniors and individuals less familiar with digital platforms. Geographic considerations, especially within rural areas of the Township, also underscored the importance of bringing services closer to residents where possible.

As a result, the 2026 election approach has been designed to build on past successes, and act on areas of improvement. Enhancements include the continuation of advanced voting opportunities, as well as the introduction of targeted voter outreach and assistance initiatives aimed at improving accessibility, increasing voter confidence, and ensuring all eligible electors have a reasonable opportunity to participate in the democratic process.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Advanced Voting Opportunities

The Township will offer traditional in-person advanced voting on the following dates:

- October 16, 2026, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- October 17, 2026, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

These traditional advanced polls will both be held at the West Lincoln Community Centre. Utilizing the West Lincoln Community Centre provides the most amount of operational control and flexibility for election staff to provide advanced polls within West Lincoln.

While the traditional advanced polls will be located within Ward 3, administration has identified ways in which to engage and work within the outlying rural hamlets.

Voter Outreach and Assistance Centres

In addition to traditional advanced polls, the Township will implement a series of Voter Outreach Centres designed to support residents who may face barriers to participating in the election, particularly through the internet voting method.

The locations of the Voter Outreach and Assistance Centres are noted below:

- Wards 1 and 2:
Staff will provide hands-on assistance with accessing and navigating the online voting portal. These centres aim to address barriers such as limited internet access, travel distance, and unfamiliarity with technology. These locations will be the Public library branches located within each ward, being the Wellandport Library Branch and Castroville Library Branch.
- Legion Villa:
A dedicated outreach session will be conducted at Legion Villa to assist residents in casting their ballots using the internet voting system, ensuring accessibility for individuals who may find it difficult or inconvenient to travel to the polls.

These outreach centres will not operate as traditional polling stations (i.e., no paper ballots or tabulators) but will instead focus on facilitating access to the internet voting platform in a supported environment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no direct financial implications regarding the advanced polls, as the Township will be mostly using Township owned facilities.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:

This report was reviewed by the Legal and Legislative Department, and the CAO.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed advanced voting plan for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election reflects a balanced approach by offering both traditional in-person voting and internet voting options. By incorporating lessons learned and expanding voter assistance initiatives, the Township aims to enhance accessibility, improve voter experience, and support increased participation across the community.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. N/A

Prepared & Submitted by:

Justin Paylove
Clerk

Approved by:

Truper McBride
CAO

Reviewed by:

Jessica Dyson
Director, Legal and Legislative Services

DATE: May 11, 2026
REPORT NO: LLS-06-2026
SUBJECT: **Draft Communication and Engagement Master Plan**
CONTACT: Jessica Dyson, Director, Legal and Legislative Services
Beth Audet, Communications Specialist

OVERVIEW:

- The Communications Division initiated the development of a Communication and Engagement Master Plan in 2025, to establish foundational principles, outline goals, objectives and key actions to guide how, when and to what extent the Township communicates with its external audiences.
- The Draft Plan aims to transform the Township’s communications and engagement from a tactical, reactive approach to a strategic, proactive method.
- The Draft Plan follows a period of engagement and research and is being presented to Council for further discussion and input.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That, Recommendation Report LLS-06-2026, titled “Draft Communication and Engagement Master Plan,” dated May 11, 2026, be received; and,
2. That, administration be directed to bring forward a final Communication and Engagement Master Plan to a future Committee/Council meeting for Council’s consideration and adoption.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Theme #1

- **Build** a safe, connected, caring and active community

Theme #4

- **Advance** organizational capacity and effectiveness

BACKGROUND:

The Township’s first dedicated Communications role was introduced in the third quarter of 2021. While significant progress has been made, communication and engagement practices remain largely tactical and reactive.

Following the corporate restructuring in 2025, the Communications Division initiated the development of a Communications and Engagement Master Plan, to shift the Township toward a strategic, proactive, organization-wide approach and to prepare for increased service demands.

The Draft Plan was informed by engagement with Council, senior leadership and staff, as well as a review of municipal best practices.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Draft Plan outlines a comprehensive framework to guide communication and engagement activities for the next five years. It establishes a vision, mission, guiding principles and four strategic priorities:

1. **Elevate municipal identity and cultivate community pride**
Focused on branding, storytelling and strengthening West Lincoln's identity. The Draft Plan highlights the need to spotlight stories and defining characteristics that make our community unique.
2. **Expand reach and increase impact**
Emphasizes equitable access, multi-channel communication and targeted outreach. The Draft Plan notes that communication must reach all audiences to ensure equitable access to information.
3. **Foster an organizational communications mindset**
Aims to embed communication into internal culture, with clear processes and tools to increase collaboration, reduce siloing and build consistency.
4. **Build strategic communications capacity**
Focuses on continuous improvement, innovation and responsible use of AI and automation to explore operational savings through modernization.

Quick wins

Based on Council feedback themes, the following immediate, high-impact actions can be prioritized with current capacity to improve speed of public-facing communication with an emphasis on political visibility:

- Same-day turnaround on promotion of political initiatives
- Next-day turnaround on communication of Council decisions
- Social media policy (immediate development)
- Clear event promotion process
- Internal coordination and intake (Communications Service Guide)

The Draft Plan also includes a detailed implementation timeline with key action steps, exploring phased in resource investment to increase service levels.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There is no financial impact to receiving the Draft Communication and Engagement Master Plan.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:

This report, along with the Draft Communications and Engagement Master Plan, has been circulated to the Chief Administrative Officer for review and comment.

CONCLUSION:

The Draft Communication and Engagement Master Plan provides a strategic, forward-looking roadmap to modernize and strengthen how the Township communicates and engages with residents, businesses, partners and staff.

Overall, the Draft Plan balances long-term transformation (branding, resource growth, modernization) with practical operational improvements, positioning Communications as a strategic enabler of Council priorities and community trust.

Following Committee review, the Draft Plan will undergo further refinement to incorporate feedback and suggestions. A final draft will be provided at a future Council meeting for adoption.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Communication and Engagement Master Plan
2. Appendix A: Summary of Council-identified SWOT
3. Appendix B: Summary of Leadership-identified SWOT

Prepared & Submitted by:

Approved by:

**Beth Audet
Communications Specialist**

**Truper McBride
CAO**

Reviewed by:

**Jessica Dyson
Director, Legal and Legislative Services**

Communication and Engagement Master Plan

TOWNSHIP OF WEST LINCOLN

Prepared by Beth Audet

Executive Summary

The Communications and Engagement Master Plan (2026-2030) sets a strategic roadmap to modernize how the Township of West Lincoln communicates and engages with its residents, staff and community partners. The plan shifts the municipality from a reactive, ad hoc communications approach to a proactive, coordinated and strategic function.

At its core, the plan emphasizes building trust, transparency and accessibility through consistent, timely and audience-focused communication. It recognizes current gaps in capacity, tools, internal coordination and formal engagement practices, and outlines a phased approach to address these challenges over time.

The plan is grounded in a vision of a connected, informed and engaged community, supported by guiding principles of a one-team collaboration, people-focused delivery, integrity, agility and innovation. It establishes four strategic priorities:

- 1. Elevate municipal identity and community pride**
Through brand alignment, storytelling and promotion of local achievements to strengthen civic identity and connection.
- 2. Expand reach and increase impact**
By using multi-channel communication, improving accessibility and targeting diverse audiences to ensure equitable access to information.
- 3. Foster an organization communications mindset**
Embedding communication as a shared responsibility across departments, improving internal systems and reducing silos.
- 4. Build strategic communications capacity**
Investing in tools, processes, training and governance (including AI and automation) to enable more proactive, efficient and high-quality communication.

Overall, the plan balances long-term transformation (branding, resource growth, modernization) with practical operational improvements, positioning Communications as a strategic enabler of Council priorities and community trust.

Quick wins:

Based on Council feedback themes, the following immediate, high-impact actions can be prioritized with current capacity to improve speed of public-facing communication with a priority on political visibility.

- Same-day turnaround on promotion of political initiatives
- Next-day turnaround on communication of Council decisions
- Social media policy (immediate development)
- Clear event promotion process
- Internal coordination and intake (Communications Service Guide)

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Introduction

This is the first Communications and Engagement Master Plan for the Township of West Lincoln. It comes at a time of significant transformation for the municipality, following a corporate restructuring, in the midst of economic challenges and in advance of forecasted growth. The Plan aims to transform the Township’s communications and engagement from a tactical, reactive approach to a strategic, proactive method.

West Lincoln’s Communications and Engagement Master Plan establishes foundational principles and outlines goals, objectives and key actions to guide how, when and to what extent the Township communicates and engages with its external and internal audiences. This plan takes a comprehensive approach to align Council and Administration on the strategic direction of the Communications Division.

It is important to note that the service level targets identified in this plan are beyond the Township’s current resource levels and represent long-term strategic growth planning.

This document will be reviewed annually to ensure objectives are being achieved and to ensure alignment with corresponding Township plans, including but not limited to the Corporate Strategic Plan, Recreation and Parks Master Plan and IT Strategic Plan.

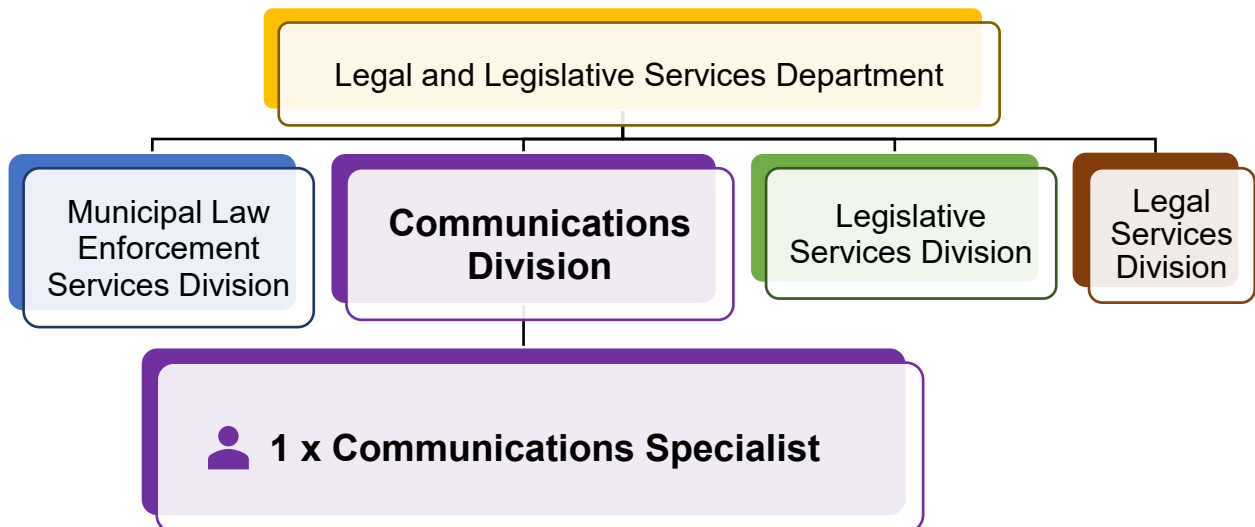
Where we began

The Township first introduced a dedicated Communications role in August of 2021 as a 50|50 shared service with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. This role continued in April of 2022 as a part-time role exclusively with the Township before transitioning to a full-time role in April of 2023.

It is important to acknowledge the efforts of the many administrative staff who worked to keep the public informed prior to the introduction of a dedicated Communications role and who continue to support communication and engagement efforts.

Important progress has been made but there continue to be gaps. This plan reflects what has been working in communication and engagement to date, what has not and sets priorities that will help the organization communicate and engage more effectively with all of its audiences.

The Communications Division operates within the Legal and Legislative Services Department and is comprised of one Communications Specialist, reporting directly to the Director of Legal and Legislative Services.



What we heard

Research and engagement

In developing this plan, the Communications division engaged with Council members and senior leaders to collect meaningful feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the Township's existing communication and engagement along with opportunities, potential threats and general aspirations for the future. Both internal and external audiences were considered.

The priorities reflected in this plan are also shaped by research and a review of support documentation, including Communications and Engagement Master Plans from other municipalities.

Thank you

Township Council: Thank you to Mayor Cheryl Ganann, Councillor Shelley Bradaric, Councillor Joann Chechalk, Councillor Greg Maychak, Councillor William Reilly and Councillor Jason Trombetta for your time and input.

Senior Leaders: Thank you to CAO Truper McBride, Director of Community and Protective Services Cynthia Summers, Director of Corporate Services Katelyn Repovs, Director of Growth and Sustainability Gerrit Boerema, Director of Infrastructure Mike DiPaola, Director of Legal and Legislative Services Jessica Dyson, Fire Chief Tim Hofsink and Interim Library CEO Cindy Weir for your input and support.

Township Staff: Thank you to the 35 staff members who completed the anonymous survey.

Key themes

The following is an overall summary of themes that arose in the research and engagement process. See Appendices A-C for the full Council and Leadership SWOT analyses and a summary of staff survey results.

Capacity, Tools and Structure: Across the organization, there is a clear need to strengthen communication capacity through increased staffing, modern tools and supported processes that can scale with organizational growth. Building internal capability, including improved onboarding, recognition practices and well-defined roles, will reduce misunderstandings, strengthen culture and improve both internal and external outcomes.

Formal Engagement Framework: There is desire for a standardized, strategic framework to guide public engagement across all departments. Clear phases, timelines, tools, outreach targets and feedback loops will create consistent, predictable processes that reduce risk, increase inclusivity and improve public trust.

Standardized Internal Communication: Internal communications is currently fragmented, with siloed teams and inconsistent updates. A modern system, taking advantage of the new M365 intranet and developing structured update processes, will improve information flow, strengthen cross-department clarity and ensure that staff receive clear, consistent opportunities to provide input. This includes digestible formats such as storytelling visuals, newsletters and regular internal updates.

Multi-Channel External Communication: Communication must reach all audiences to ensure equitable access to information. This includes rural residents, seniors, newcomers and those with disabilities. A balanced approach using both digital and non-digital channels (i.e., print materials, community boards, rural mailers, in-person outreach, town halls, pop-ups and community hubs) will reduce access to barriers. Targeted outreach and inclusive practices are essential to ensuring all demographics can engage.

Trust Building: Misinformation and low digital visibility present ongoing threats, underscoring the need for transparent, proactive communication. Consistent updates, clear storytelling and predictable communication rhythms will help rebuild trust and reduce confusion. Strengthening role clarity and cross-departmental trust will directly support communication objectives. Celebrating community pride and sharing meaningful stories will connect more authentically with audiences.

Collaboration and Partnerships: There is opportunity to enhance communication through strategic collaboration, both internally and with external partners. Leveraging existing community networks such as libraries, agricultural societies, seniors' groups and youth organizations will extend reach, improve credibility and support more inclusive and effective engagement.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement: Continuous improvement is essential. This includes monitoring emerging advancements, exploring modernization opportunities and integrating automation where appropriate to improve efficiency and streamline workflows. Investing in modern tools and innovative approaches will elevate internal processes and strengthen the overall communication and engagement ecosystem.

Where we're going

Vision

The Township of West Lincoln is a connected community, where information flows openly, every voice is heard and residents feel informed, included and actively engaged in shaping the municipality's future.

Mission

To foster trust, inclusion and meaningful engagement by providing clear, timely and accessible communication, creating opportunities for dialogue and strengthening connections between the Township, its residents and community partners.

Guiding Principles

One-team: We commit to a unified, coordinated approach that brings together cross-departmental expertise and empowers external champions. By working as one team, we ensure consistency, amplify our collective impact and strengthen trust through clear, aligned communication at every tough point.

People-focused: We design every communication to be accessible, inclusive and meaningful for all audiences. Our approach prioritizes clear, actionable outcomes and creates space for genuine two-way dialogue. We are committed to reaching people across all demographics and abilities, ensuring information is easy to understand and engage with. By elevating listening and feedback alongside information sharing, we build stronger relationships, deepen trust and enable community voices to shape our work.

Trust, integrity and accountability: We communicate with accuracy, honesty and timeliness to earn and sustain trust. Our commitment to integrity is demonstrated through transparent information sharing and clear, consistent follow-through. By maintaining strong feedback loops, we ensure our audiences not only receive reliable information but also see how their input shapes decisions, reinforcing accountability at every stage.

Agility: We respond with timeliness, flexibility and focus, ensuring our communication adapts quickly to emerging needs, opportunities and challenges. By being responsive and proactive, we keep our audiences informed, support confident decision making and maintain momentum in a rapidly changing environment.

Innovation: We commit to constant improvement by monitoring emerging advancements and exploring modernized approaches that enhance efficiency, effectiveness and integration. By thoughtfully adopting automation and new tools where appropriate, we streamline process, strengthen communication and ensure our engagement practices evolve with the needs of our audiences and organization.

Spectrum of Communications and Engagement

The following spectrum of communications and engagement in the Township of West Lincoln is adapted from the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2).



Examples:

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegations • Grants • Events • Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections • Bylaw education • Flood mitigation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks & Recreation Master Plan • Affordable Housing CIP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developer roundtables • Backyard chickens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MyWESTLINCOLN • Referendum questions |
|---|--|--|--|---|

Strategic Priorities

1 Elevate municipal identity and cultivate community pride

To strengthen West Lincoln’s identity, we will spotlight the stories and defining characteristics that make our community unique. We will align our visual identity and messaging to better reflect who we are. Through consistent, authentic and celebratory communications, we will showcase local achievements, recognize community contributors and promote a refreshed sense of place that resonates with residents. By fostering connection, belonging and positive representation, we aim to build a stronger civic spirit, one where residents feel proud of their community and confident in the role they play within it.

Objectives:

- 1) **Establish a cohesive, authentic brand identity.** Strengthen and implement a consistent, recognizable municipal brand that aligns all departments, initiatives and public-facing materials, reinforcing West Lincoln’s distinct identity and story.
- 2) **Foster civic pride and community connection.** Celebrate community strengths, achievements and defining characteristics to deepen residents’ sense of belonging and pride in West Lincoln’s history, identity and future direction.
- 3) **Strengthen economic awareness, partnership and visibility.** Showcase local economic opportunities, business success stories and quality of life to support business retention and attraction, strengthen relationships with the business and industrial sectors and increase West Lincoln’s appeal to prospective investors, residents and visitors.

Key Actions:

- 1.1.1. Develop a situation analysis of municipal branding and communication materials.
- 1.1.2. Initiate new brand development, including key messages, creative strategy, visual concepts and accessibility standards.
- 1.1.3. Develop a marketing action plan with strategic priorities and phased implementation across all departments and public-facing materials.
- 1.1.4. Implement municipal rebrand with staff training, public outreach and partnership development.
- 1.2.1. Create a multimedia storytelling framework to showcase West Lincoln’s history, municipal milestones and future growth along with community achievements, resident and local business spotlights.
- 1.2.2. Identify and coordinate pop-up opportunities to highlight local achievements and foster connection at community events.
- 1.2.3. Develop a procedure with clear parameters and standards to guide promotion of external events and initiatives through municipal digital media, including social media, signs, web calendars and sponsorship programs.

- 1.3.1. Connect with local organizations to build relationships, broaden reach and amplify shared stories.
- 1.3.2. Develop communication materials that highlight economic growth, investment readiness and local business success stories.
- 1.3.3. Partner with internal economic development team to create business-focused communication stream with regular updates, opportunities and engagement touchpoints.

2 Expand reach and increase impact

To ensure every resident can easily access, understand and engage with Township information, we will broaden the channels, tools and approaches used to share timely, accurate and relevant updates. By leveraging diverse communication methods, enhancing message clarity and meeting people where they are, both digitally and in person, we will strengthen awareness, improve transparency and support meaningful two-way engagement across the entire community.

Objectives:

- 1) **Advance equitable, accessible communication.** Broaden the overall reach of municipal communication by reducing access barriers and delivering clear, timely, relevant and accurate information across diverse communication platforms, ensuring residents can easily find and understand the information they need.
- 2) **Deliver impactful, targeted communication.** Enhance the influence of municipal messaging by tailoring content to the priorities and preferences of specific demographic and geographic audiences, using a strategic mix of tools to ensure messages resonate and prompt understanding or action.
- 3) **Enhance resident engagement and participation.** Pilot innovative engagement opportunities that encourage meaningful involvement, inspire community champions and empower all residents to confidently navigate municipal issues and participate in decision-making.

Key Actions:

- 2.1.1. Apply accessible design standards to all communication materials, ensuring readability, plain language captioning, transcripts and alternative formats.
- 2.1.2. Increase communication presence in high-traffic community locations such as libraries, arenas, community centres and other local gathering spots.
- 2.1.3. Launch a community newsletter and explore the revival of a community leisure guide that is delivered digitally and mailed to rural or low-connectivity households.
- 2.1.4. Develop a social media policy and campaign analytic framework to conduct regular audits to continually improve digital communication.

- 2.1.5. Develop an emergency communications policy and procedure to proactively prepare for communication that builds trust, supports media-literacy and public understanding during emergencies.
- 2.2.1. Conduct a gap analysis to identify demographics, neighbourhoods and audiences currently underserved by existing communication channels.
- 2.2.2. Develop a formal communication policy and procedure to create clear criteria for when and how the municipality proactively communicates on emerging issues.
- 2.2.3. Develop a plan to increase subscribers by topic.
- 2.2.4. Launch a welcome package program for new residents, providing newcomers with resources and easy pathways to understand and connect with municipal services and information.
- 2.3.1. Implement modern online engagement platforms that include surveys, interactive maps and real-time feedback options.
- 2.3.2. Create in-person engagement opportunities including Ward meetings, open houses, interactive project sessions, advisory committees and project-specific sessions responsive to local concerns.
- 2.3.3. Develop a proposal (for Council review) to recruit community champions through a focus group or citizen committee to encourage the sharing of accurate, consistent municipal information.
- 2.3.4. Develop a public engagement plan that integrates feedback loops into all public-facing material, to continually refine public engagement practices.

3 Foster an organizational communications mindset

To build a stronger, more connected organization, we will cultivate a culture where effective internal communication is understood, valued and practiced across all departments. This includes ensuring staff have the tools and support needed to communicate clearly and consistently with one another, share information proactively and collaborate with confidence. By strengthening internal communication habits and aligning staff around shared standards and expectations, we will enhance transparency, reduce silos, improve service delivery and empower employees to contribute meaningfully to the Township’s overall communication excellence.

Objectives

- 1) **Embed communication as a shared organizational responsibility.** Integrate communication into planning, project design and decision-making so all departments understand their role in contributing to clear, strategic and timely communication.
- 2) **Improve internal communication systems and culture.** Establish a regular, consistent rhythm of timely, clear and consistent internal communication that reduces siloing, supports collaboration and reinforces continuous improvement.
- 3) **Strengthen cross-department alignment and storytelling.** Encourage coordinated messaging and reduce duplication by fostering cross-department

collaboration, while building staff ability to identify and share stories that reflect organizational values and community impact.

Key Actions

- 3.1.1. Develop and distribute a clear internal Communications Service Guide outlining processes, timelines, responsibilities and intake requirements. Create a decision tree to help staff identify when to engage Communications.
- 3.1.2. Embed communication into overall project mapping with clear expectations for briefings, checkpoints, updates and post-project debriefs to evaluate communication effectiveness, identify lessons, and document improvements.
- 3.2.1. Develop a shared calendar with annual campaigns, seasonal messaging, predictable engagement cycles and milestone reminders to streamline cross-department workflows.
- 3.2.2. Provide plain-language summaries of Council decisions or major initiatives for staff. WL Wire newsletter.
- 3.2.3. Develop simple feedback tools (surveys, short forms) for staff to assess communication effectiveness and suggest improvements.
- 3.3.1. Reinforce collaboration with staff recognition for communication wins and collaboration (i.e., newsletters).
- 3.3.2. Launch an internal story submission process for staff, to help surface meaningful stories and content opportunities.

4 Build strategic communications capacity

To strengthen the Township's ability to communicate effectively and proactively, we will invest in the people, tools and systems that support high-quality, forward-thinking communications. This includes enhancing staff skills, clarifying roles and establishing consistent standards that guide how, when and why we communicate. We will explore responsible, cost-saving innovations, such as artificial intelligence and automation, to streamline routine tasks, improve workflow efficiency and free staff capacity for higher-value strategic work. By building strong internal capacity, supported by training, collaboration, consistent frameworks and automation, we will ensure the Township can modernize its communication practices, increase productivity, reduce long-term costs and deliver timely, accurate and impactful communications that meet the needs of our community and organization.

Objectives:

- 1) **Invest in people and skills.** Grow team capacity with continuous training and additional staffing to manage growing needs, emerging issues and proactive planning.
- 2) **Modernize tools.** Integrate advanced platforms and systems and pilot responsible AI- and automation-enabled solutions that boost productivity, enhance content

quality, streamline workflows and support high-value strategic work under strong governance and ethical safeguards.

- 3) **Define roles, expectations and processes.** Clarify communication responsibilities, processes and triggers so staff, leadership and Council understand when, how and why we communicate and engage and to ensure consistent and efficient collaboration.

Key Actions:

- 4.1.1. Provide ongoing practical training.
- 4.1.2. Secure temporary part-time, co-op or student support while reviewing resourcing, building a consulting budget to increase team capacity over time.
- 4.1.3. Develop protocol to manage issues and potential crises to prevent escalation to emergency (i.e., for widespread disinformation, malinformation, reputation breakdown).
- 4.2.1. Roll out a shared social media content calendar with automated reminders and task assignments
- 4.2.2. Collaborate with IT to develop an artificial intelligence policy that enforces ethical use and encourages operational savings through modernization.
- 4.3.1. Establish clear communication standards by developing a consistent suite of simple, accessible templates and clear, scalable workflows to deliver effective communication through digital and mailed newsletters, public notice boards, short videos, infographics, visual summaries and clear language that explains decisions, projects and processes.
- 4.3.2. Establish process for Township event promotion with clear work flow and timing expectations for notification, execution and follow-up.
- 4.3.3. Provide training for Council on communication best practices and media.

Steps to success

Implementation

Action items are listed as opportunities with the intent to be considered by Council during future budget deliberations. While several of the listed goals and action items may be accomplished within the Township's current resources, many of the initiatives would require new funding or staffing considerations.

The communications landscape continues to evolve. As such, so may these actions over time. The Communications Division will remain flexible and adaptable, regularly monitoring and reviewing progress and adjusting accordingly as part of annual business planning processes.

Following Council approval of this plan, the Communications Division will work with senior leadership to outline and define success indicators and tracking mechanisms to support performance evaluation, measure success and report back on progress.

Proposed timelines

Action	Deliverable	Service Level	Investment	Timeline
1.1.1.	Situational analysis	New	Consultant	2026
1.1.2.	Initiate branding exercise	New	Consultant	2026
1.1.3.	Marketing action plan	New	Consultant	2027
1.1.4.	Implement municipal rebrand	New	Consultant	2028
1.2.1.	Storytelling framework for recognition of external partners	New	Consultant	2027
1.2.2.	Pop-up opportunities	New	Team resources	2029
1.2.3.	External promotion procedure	New	Team resources	2027
1.3.1.	Local organization network	New		2027
1.3.2.	Economic Development material	New	Budget	2029
1.3.3.	Business-focused communication stream	New		2027
2.1.1.	Accessible design standards	New	Consultant	2027
2.1.2.	Increase presence in high-traffic areas	Enhanced	Team resources	2029
2.1.3.	Community newsletter and Leisure Guide	Enhanced	Budget	2027
2.1.4.	Social media policy and campaign analytic framework	New		2026
2.1.5.	Emergency communications policy and procedure	New		2027
2.2.1.	Gap analysis	New	Consultant	2027
2.2.2.	Communications policy and procedure	New		2027
2.2.3.	Plan to increase subscribers	New		2027
2.2.4.	Welcome package	Enhanced	Budget	2027
2.3.1.	Online engagement platform	New	Budget	2028
2.3.2.	In-person engagement opportunities (project specific)	Enhanced		2027
2.3.3.	Proposal to recruit community champions	New		2026
2.3.4.	Public engagement plan with feedback loops	New	Team resources	2027
3.1.1.	Internal Communications Service Guide	New		2026
3.1.2.	Communication project mapping	New		2026
3.2.1.	Shared calendar of strategic comms planning (annual)	New		2027

Action	Deliverable	Service Level	Investment	Timeline
3.2.2.	Plain-language Council summaries – pilot project delivered via email	New		2027
3.2.3.	Feedback tools, i.e., quarterly staff survey	New		2027
3.3.1.	Recognition for internal communication champions	Enhanced		2026
3.3.2.	Internal story submission process	New		2028
4.1.1.	Practical training	Enhanced		Ongoing
4.1.2.	Additional staffing and resource review	New	Team resources	2027 + 2029
4.1.3.	Issue/crisis communication protocols	Enhanced		2027
4.2.1.	Shared social media content calendar	Enhanced		2027
4.2.2.	AI policy	New		2027
4.3.1.	Suite of templates	New	Consultant	2028
4.3.2.	Township event promotion process	Enhanced		2027
4.3.3.	Council training/orientation on corporate communication best practices	Enhanced		2026 Council orientation

Appendix A: Summary of Council-identified SWOT

Strengths

Communication Channels & Tools

- Active social media presence with engaging tone and visuals.
- Township website, email subscriptions, LED signs, posters, press releases, surveys.
- “Report a Concern” tool.
- Internal information flow to Council has improved.
- Designated communications person ensures consistency and clarity.

Community Engagement

- Strong legacy of community involvement through churches, fairs, and local organizations.
- Successful events (Mayor’s Levee, fire hall open houses, boat cruise).
- Community groups (e.g., Legion, Ag Society, 4-H, fire departments) help spread information.
- Residents who want to be engaged are engaged.
- Small-town advantage for spreading word quickly.
- Cultural richness and deep agricultural roots.
- Strong community pride and identity.

Staff & Organizational Efforts

- Efficient, organized communications staff achieving much with limited resources.
 - Council and staff gaining better understanding of communications roles.
-

Weaknesses

Reach & Accessibility

- Many residents (especially older adults, newcomers, rural) not using digital platforms.
- Township communications often fail to penetrate rural or older demographics.
- No reliable local newspaper or TV/media coverage.
- Lack of signage outside Smithville; outdated and hard-to-read signs.
- No welcome package for new residents.
- Lack of reliable internet access in some areas.

Engagement Gaps

- Residents often learn about things after decisions are made.

- Disengaged community; hard to catch interest.
- Fragmented engagement between new and long-time residents.
- Reception staff not engaging with visitors.
- Lack of youth-focused tools and rural outreach.
- Missed opportunities with libraries and community hubs.

Internal Coordination

- Poor interdepartmental communication.
- Timing issues with notifications and event promotion.
- Inconsistent follow-up on “Report a Concern.”
- Overload of internal info to Council; balance needed.

Information Overload & Visibility

- Township posts not appearing in feeds due to algorithm bias.
 - Email burnout; residents desensitized to info.
 - Selective memory and apathy—info is present but ignored.
 - Relevance of social media content diluted by broad scope.
 - Township not seen as the go-to source for local information.
 - Underutilized assets like LeisurePlex and community centers.
-

Opportunities

Expanded Communication Tools

- Recreation guides (print/digital), printed calendars.
- Public notice boards in parks, libraries, high-traffic areas.
- Council News summaries in municipal mailings.
- Use of AI tools and Canva for messaging.
- Create a community newsletter or portal including township and non-township news.

Targeted Engagement Strategies

- Focus groups (seniors, youth, newcomers).
- Ward meetings with themes and structured dialogue.
- Participatory budgeting and feedback mechanisms.
- Online forums for community support (e.g., ride-sharing).
- Open houses in various wards.
- Event-based engagement booths (e.g., fire hall BBQs).

Community Hubs & Partnerships

- Leverage gathering spots (e.g., Abingdon Hall).
- Stakeholder meetings with community partners (Kiwanis, Legion).
- Reevaluate and establish targeted networks/community hubs.

- Partner with Ag Society, 4-H, and others to co-host events and share communication channels.
- Reintroduce separate social media for recreation programming.

Outreach Enhancements

- Flyers mailed to rural wards.
- Include critical info in tax bill packages.
- Extend radius for planning notices beyond legal minimum.
- Identify hidden corners for info distribution.
- Use social media and township website to fill the void left by traditional media.

Signature Events & Recognition

- Celebrate youth accomplishments, cultural events, and agricultural milestones.
 - Recognize achievements in council meetings, online, and through events.
-

Threats

Digital & Social Challenges

- Misinformation, disinformation, malinformation.
- Algorithm bias and low visibility of township content.
- Cybersecurity risks (e.g., Russia, internet outages).
- Digital divide and rural internet issues.

Public Perception & Engagement

- Political distrust, disinterest, and perception of secrecy.
- Residents feel unheard; engagement seen as performative.
- Volunteer burnout and reliance on few individuals.
- Bullies and agitators undermining public confidence.
- Ideological divisions and extreme groups.

Operational Constraints

- Budget and staffing limitations.
- Unclear job expectations and lack of consistent processes.
- Vandalism risk for public boards.
- Over-communication leading to desensitization.
- Limited funding and staffing may hinder ambitious engagement plans.

Community Identity Risks

- New residents may not integrate or engage with existing community structures.
 - Without proactive engagement, the township risks becoming a pass-through community.
-

Goals

Strategic Communication

- Develop seamless, multi-channel strategy.
- Ensure consistent messaging across staff, leaders, and media.
- Increase transparency with regular updates and storytelling.
- Combat misinformation with fact-based, non-propagandistic messaging.
- Crisis communication planning.

Inclusive Engagement

- Targeted messaging for seniors, youth, newcomers.
- Accessibility for disabilities and language barriers.
- Inclusive community engagement and participatory budgeting.
- Reach at least half the community—encourage word-of-mouth.

Community Building

- Promote township campaigns at events.
- Celebrate local successes visibly and frequently.

Operational Improvements

- Improve internal coordination and timing of notifications.
- Establish feedback loops for tools like “Report a Concern.”
- Expand staff capacity and define priorities.
- Explore flex-time roles for event coverage.
- Launch online community support platforms.

Visibility & Outreach

- Update signage and explore alternative outreach (e.g., mailers).
- Boost social media visibility without paid ads.
- Plan annual re-evaluation of social hubs and outreach methods.
- Staff should be active and recognizable in the community.

Appendix B: Summary of Leadership-identified SWOT

Strengths

Communication & Engagement

- Proactive, responsive communications team with strong public visibility.
- Clear, direct messaging and effective emergency communication.
- High public interest in local events; Township and Library are positively perceived.
- Strong social media presence.
- Informal networks (e.g., Caistor) help spread information quickly.
- Project-based engagement enables focused outreach.

Internal Collaboration & Presentation

- Consistent messaging builds public trust.
- Professional, visually consistent news releases.
- Staff educate Council members, creating internal champions.
- Strong internal communication within small departmental teams.
- Established partnerships between Communications, Recreation, Arena, and Library.

Accessibility & Responsiveness

- Small team size allows for nimble communication.
 - Easy access to Council and staff; minimal bureaucracy.
 - Use of multiple platforms: website, social media, electronic boards, notices.
 - Council support for improving communications and engagement.
-

Weaknesses

Resource Constraints

- Only one communications specialist managing all responsibilities.
- Budget and staffing limitations hinder broader efforts.
- Staffing shortages and limited Library operating hours.
- Communications is understaffed, risking burnout and scalability issues.

Internal Communication & Role Clarity

- Siloed departments and unclear responsibilities.
- Heavy reliance on email; feedback often lost.
- Volunteer firefighters and Library staff excluded from some communications and events.

- Removal of Library CEO from leadership reduces collaboration.

Engagement Challenges

- Engagement often reflects vocal minorities; low input on critical topics.
- Drop-off in engagement after initial meetings.
- Historical defensiveness hinders open communication.
- Recreation's negative perception affects Communications.

Operational Gaps

- Routine services lack consistent updates.
 - Inconsistent messaging to developers/stakeholders.
 - Reliance on individual initiative over systemic processes.
 - Limited visibility of external engagement efforts.
-

Opportunities

Public Engagement & Outreach

- Town halls in parks, pop-up events, story walks, mobile services.
- Train community champions to share accurate information.
- Advisory committees for targeted feedback (e.g., road safety).
- Strategic engagement planning aligned with budget cycles.

Education & Transparency

- Lunch-and-learns, visual campaigns, weekly updates.
- Clearer public education on planning and communications processes.
- Use storytelling to connect with residents and showcase services.

Strategic Collaboration

- Joint promotions and digital signage across departments.
- Partnerships with Chamber of Commerce and other groups.
- Coordinate with IT to support scalable communication tools.

Technology & Tools

- Emergency tools (e.g., AtHoc), video messaging.
- Monitor neighborhood Facebook groups for sentiment.
- Explore platforms like Social Pinpoint or Qualtrics for engagement.

Branding & Identity

- Build a stronger, consistent corporate brand.
- Position recreation centers and Library as welcoming hubs.

Council Communication Enhancements

- Use visuals, infographics, and digestible summaries to inform Council.
 - Strengthen Council relations through regular updates.
-

Threats

Misinformation & Distrust

- AI-driven disinformation and impersonation risks.
- Fragmented messaging from multiple voices (e.g., Councillors).
- Decline in traditional media makes outreach harder.

Public Perception & Engagement Fatigue

- Small errors escalate quickly; staff reluctant to be public facing.
- Engagement fatigue among staff and residents.
- Council misunderstanding may undervalue staff efforts.

Resource & Organizational Challenges

- Budget limitations and staffing shortages.
- Community growth without proportional service investment.
- Lack of departmental support for communications.

Regulatory & Technological Risks

- Public resistance to complex policies.
 - Concerns about over-sharing operational data (e.g., GPS tracking).
 - Poor coordination with developers and regional partners.
-

Goals

Communication Modernization

- Launch a centralized intranet for internal communications.
- Integrate technology to improve responsiveness and clarity.
- Establish trusted, exclusive communication channels.

Internal & External Education

- Educate staff, Council, and residents on operations and policies.
- Improve understanding of the communications role across the organization.
- Strengthen internal systems beyond email.

Inclusion & Collaboration

- Ensure all employees, including volunteers, receive appropriate communications.
- Improve signage and expand programming.

Community Engagement

- Expand engagement opportunities: town halls, open houses, proactive outreach.
- Provide staff and Council with a roadmap for effective engagement.
- Use champions, town halls, and advisory groups to deepen public involvement.

Capacity Building

- Add consulting budget lines and explore part-time or student support.
- Establish metrics to track workload and effectiveness.
- Develop developer engagement policies with stakeholder input.

DATE: May 11, 2026
REPORT NO: T-05-2026
SUBJECT: **Quarter 1 Financial Update**
CONTACT: Steve Emslie, CPA, CA Manager of Finance/Deputy Treasurer

OVERVIEW:

- Presentation of operating and capital financial results, as of March 31, 2026.
- Summary of purchasing activity and budget amendments approved by the CAO, up to March 31, 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That, Information Report T-05-2026, titled “Quarter 1 Financial Update”, dated May 11, 2026, be received.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Theme #4

- **ADVANCE** organizational capacity and effectiveness

BACKGROUND:

Administration has completed a review of operating and capital results up to the end of March 31, 2026.

Schedule A is a summary of the Operating Revenues and Expenditures up to March 31, 2026, on a net basis and by service area. It is important to note that the financial results presented are based on vendor invoices that have been received and processed to date. The analysis has taken into account the timing and seasonality of certain budget lines. The column titled “Budget” under the “Operating YTD” heading indicates the portion of the budget that would be expected to be expended as of March 31, 2026. Under the “Operating Total” heading, the “Budget” figure reflects the approved total 2026 budget.

Schedule B to this report is a presentation of financial results, up to March 31, 2026, by “object” code and includes capital expenditures. It is important to note that the funding of capital expenditures takes place as part of the Township’s year-end accounting processes. Once this happens, capital revenue will equal capital expenditures.

Schedule C to this report is a listing of the Township Reserve Fund and Reserve Balances, with estimated balances projected to December 31, 2026. These balances are unaudited and subject to change, as Administration works to finalize of the 2025 year-end financial statements.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Revenue Analysis:

All revenue items are currently on track. At the April 2026 Council meeting, Council approved the final 2026 tax rates. With this, Administration plans to issue final property tax bills in June, with two instalment dates for the end of July and the end of September. The issuance of the final tax bills is of significance, as property tax revenue accounts for approximately 65% of the Township’s operating budget revenues (excluding fee-based water and wastewater budgets).

Administration processed the 2026 interim property tax bills in February. A total of \$16,995,920 was calculated on 6,322 roll numbers. Of this, \$5,385,461 represents the Township levy, with the remainder representing the Niagara Region and Education levies. Bills were mailed on February 5, 2026. A total of 921 bills were emailed this year, compared to 596 last year, representing a 54.5% increase and demonstrating greater adoption of modernized services.

Expenditure Analysis:

Administration has reviewed the first three months of 2026 financial operations. This review included a comparison of actual results to budget. Administration continually monitors the operating expenses.

Regarding the first quarter, covering the January – March 2026 period, there is nothing that requires Council’s attention.

Reserve Analysis:

Schedule C outlines the projected reserve balances up to December 31, 2026. These balances do not include any anticipated allocation from the 2025 year-end surplus. Based on information available at this time, Administration has forecasted that the following reserves would be in an overdrawn (deficit) position at the end of 2026:

1. Election Reserve – this reserve is used to fund the costs of a municipal election, effectively allocating the costs over a multi-year period rather than expensing the total cost in the year of the election. Through the 2026 budget process, Administration projected a small overdrawn reserve balance at the end of 2026. Depending on the

results for the 2025 year-end and the remainder of 2026, there may be an increased reserve contribution requirement as part of the 2027 budget.

Purchasing Activity:

The Township’s Purchasing and Tendering Policy (POL-T-01-2015) grants purchasing authority to the CAO up to \$100,000. This authority applies to the approval of quotes, requests for proposals, and tenders. In addition, the CAO has authority to approve up to \$100,000 in instances where prices are not obtained through a competitive process, and a request to purchase by way of negotiation, as outlined in Section 10 of the Purchasing and Tendering Policy, is requested.

For those purchases made through negotiations, the CAO approved the following procurements between January – March 2026, in accordance with the Purchasing and Tendering Policy:

Vendor	Amount	Project
AECOM Canada ULC	\$29,940	Hydraulic analysis
Aplin & Martin Consultants Ltd.	\$75,000	Townline Rd and Anderson Crt Sanitary Sewer upsizing engineering services
Peninsula Excavation Inc.	\$12,600	Underground watermain tie-in
Tanshaw Sanitation	\$6,750	Replacement floor scrubber
ADR Institute of Ontario Inc.	\$12,750	Conflict resolution & de-escalation training
Equinox Library Services	\$12,220	Integrated library system
Aldos Shutters and Blinds	\$7,200	WLCC Gymnasium blinds
Bogar-Paterson Ltd	\$24,073	HVAC Unit 1 at Town Hall
Applied Electronics	\$26,190	Council Chambers A/V upgrade
Binotech	\$53,550	IT systems support / monitoring of network
Garden City Display Fireworks	\$10,000	Canada Day event fireworks
Chantler's Environmental Services Ltd.	\$12,420	Portable toilets
Bleacher Guys	\$17,427	Abingdon Baseball Park bleachers
Bos Landscaping Inc.	\$46,020 (3 year term)	Caistor Community Park grass cutting & ba diamond grooming
Soundbox Productions	\$8,000	Sound, lighting and production services for Canada Day event
Darch Fire Inc.	\$19,492	Ventilation fans

Budget Amendments:

Amendments to the approved budget are requested by Administration when they become

aware of changes to the original Council approved budget. Report LLS-08-2025, presented to Council on August 11, 2025, outlined an amendment to the Delegation of Authority By-law 2025-02 to include the Corporate Services/Treasurer Schedule. Schedule C to this By-law states that the following power is delegated to the CAO and Treasurer:

“Authority to make amendments to the annual budget adopted by Council up to \$20,000 per item, provided such amendments do not increase the current year’s approved annual budget or tax levy.”

Therefore, any amounts over \$20,000 would go directly to Council for approval. The chart below provides details as to all approved budget amendments. Any amounts that exceed \$20,000 have been approved by Council and are denoted with the appropriate report or resolution number.

Number	Description	Report	Amount	Funding Source
BA2026-01	Dispute/conflict resolution training	N/A	\$13,000	Transfer from Contingency Reserve
BA2026-02	HVAC Townhall Facility - Unit 1 Replacement	N/A - Email	\$24,500	Transfer from Facilities Reserve
BA2026-03	Ontario Fire Protection Grant	WLFD-02-2026	\$32,000	Government Grant
BA2026-04	Niagara Community Foundation Grant for Tree Planting Project	N/A	\$11,054	Niagara Community Foundation Grant
BA2026-06	Water Van upfitting	N/A	\$9,200	Transfer from Water Reserve
BA2026-07	2026 Road Rehab - SGR 8 & Twenty Rd	IC09-26	\$(250,000)	Transfer from Capital Reserve
BA2026-08	Project management / strategic plan software	N/A	\$11,700	Reallocation

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications as a result of this information report.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:

If any large variances exist between budget and actual results, the applicable departments are asked to provide feedback on the variance reasons.

CONCLUSION:

This report is to inform Council of the Township’s operating and capital results up to March

31, 2026. This report also updates Council on the purchasing authority exercised by the CAO, along with approved budget amendments, up until the end of March 2026.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. SCHEDULE A Operating Results by Service Area as of March 31, 2026**
- 2. SCHEDULE B Operating and Capital Results by Object as of March 31, 2026**
- 3. SCHEDULE C Reserve Balances Projected to December 31, 2026**

Prepared & Submitted by:

**Steve Emslie, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance/Deputy Treasurer**

Approved by:

**Truper McBride
CAO**

TOWNSHIP OF WEST LINCOLN

For the Three Months Ending March 31, 2026

	Operating YTD				Operating Total			
	Actuals	Budget	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)	Actuals	Budget	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
General								
General	(\$4,639,632)	(\$3,236,940)	\$1,402,692	(43.%)	(\$4,639,632)	(\$12,948,010)	(\$8,308,378)	64.%
Equipment	(\$272,758)	(\$480)	\$272,278	(56725.%)	(\$272,758)	\$0	\$272,758	0.%
Total General	(\$4,912,390)	(\$3,237,420)	\$1,674,970	(52.%)	(\$4,912,390)	(\$12,948,010)	(\$8,035,620)	62.%
General Government								
Governance & Elections	\$132,593	\$106,890	(\$25,703)	(24.%)	\$132,593	\$440,230	\$307,637	70.%
Office of the CAO	(\$76,385)	\$106,530	\$182,915	172.%	(\$76,385)	\$425,890	\$502,275	118.%
Legal & Legislative Services	(\$94,235)	\$144,510	\$238,745	165.%	(\$94,235)	\$585,460	\$679,695	116.%
Corporate Services	(\$145,491)	\$281,190	\$426,681	152.%	(\$145,491)	\$1,153,390	\$1,298,881	113.%
Townhall Administration Facility	(\$27,950)	\$29,670	\$57,620	194.%	(\$27,950)	\$120,470	\$148,420	123.%
Total General Government	(\$211,469)	\$668,790	\$880,259	132.%	(\$211,469)	\$2,725,440	\$2,936,909	108.%
Protection Services								
Fire	\$822,493	\$485,240	(\$337,253)	(70.%)	\$822,493	\$1,923,930	\$1,101,437	57.%
Building Permit & Inspection Services	\$110,518	(\$900)	(\$111,418)	12380.%	\$110,518	\$0	(\$110,518)	0.%
By-Law Enforcement	\$17,487	\$21,090	\$3,603	17.%	\$17,487	\$85,710	\$68,223	80.%
Provincial Offences Act	\$0	(\$930)	(\$930)	100.%	\$0	(\$3,770)	(\$3,770)	100.%
Animal Control	\$5,634	\$6,200	\$566	9.%	\$5,634	\$24,700	\$19,066	77.%
Total Protection Services	\$956,132	\$510,700	(\$445,432)	(87.%)	\$956,132	\$2,030,570	\$1,074,438	53.%
Transportation Services								
Roads Paved & Unpaved	\$855,587	\$688,080	(\$167,507)	(24.%)	\$855,587	\$2,767,600	\$1,912,013	69.%
Bridges & Culverts	\$18,454	\$44,800	\$26,346	59.%	\$18,454	\$181,600	\$163,146	90.%
Traffic Operations & Roadside Maintenance	\$692,623	\$218,610	(\$474,013)	(217.%)	\$692,623	\$837,200	\$144,577	17.%
Winter Control	\$30,495	\$36,690	\$6,195	17.%	\$30,495	\$124,250	\$93,755	75.%
Crossing Guards	\$5,298	\$7,320	\$2,022	28.%	\$5,298	\$29,410	\$24,112	82.%
Streetlights	\$293,980	\$90,300	(\$203,680)	(226.%)	\$293,980	\$361,100	\$67,120	19.%
Total Transportation Services	\$1,896,436	\$1,085,800	(\$810,636)	(75.%)	\$1,896,436	\$4,301,160	\$2,404,724	56.%
Environmental Services								
Wastewater	\$219,074	\$149,609	(\$69,465)	(46.%)	\$219,074	\$0	(\$219,074)	0.%
Storm Sewer	(\$160)	\$30,510	\$30,670	101.%	(\$160)	\$122,060	\$122,220	100.%
Water	\$389,740	(\$2,250)	(\$391,990)	17422.%	\$389,740	\$0	(\$389,740)	0.%
Total Environmental Services	\$608,654	\$177,869	(\$430,785)	(242.%)	\$608,654	\$122,060	(\$486,594)	(399.%)
Heath Services								
Cemeteries	\$22,790	\$31,620	\$8,830	28.%	\$22,790	\$129,040	\$106,250	82.%
Total Heath Services	\$22,790	\$31,620	\$8,830	28.%	\$22,790	\$129,040	\$106,250	82.%
Recreation & Cultural Services								
Parks	\$96,295	\$141,810	\$45,515	32.%	\$96,295	\$740,890	\$644,595	87.%
Recreation Programs	\$81,516	\$175,230	\$93,714	53.%	\$81,516	\$717,780	\$636,264	89.%
Recreational Facilities	\$24,897	\$192,300	\$167,403	87.%	\$24,897	\$704,120	\$679,223	96.%
Libraries	\$221,481	\$243,300	\$21,819	9.%	\$221,481	\$1,008,820	\$787,339	78.%
Total Recreation & Cultural Services	\$424,189	\$752,640	\$328,451	44.%	\$424,189	\$3,171,610	\$2,747,421	87.%
Planning & Development								
Planning & Heritage	\$97,323	\$108,780	\$11,457	11.%	\$97,323	\$437,930	\$340,607	78.%
Drainage	\$3,297	\$7,530	\$4,233	56.%	\$3,297	\$30,200	\$26,903	89.%
Total Planning & Development	\$100,620	\$116,310	\$15,690	13.%	\$100,620	\$468,130	\$367,510	79.%
	(\$1,115,038)	\$106,309	\$1,221,347	1149.%	(\$1,115,038)	\$0	\$1,115,038	0.%

TOWNSHIP OF WEST LINCOLN
Summary of All Units
For the Three Months Ending March 31, 2026

	YTD				Annual			
	Budget	Actual	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)	Budget	Actual	Remaining (\$)	Remaining (%)
Operating Revenue								
Tax Levy	\$2,678,130	\$5,291,305	(\$2,613,175)	(98.%)	\$10,712,490	\$5,291,305	\$5,421,185	51.%
Street Light Levy	\$13,050	\$24,509	(\$11,459)	(88.%)	\$52,190	\$24,509	\$27,681	53.%
Sidewalk Levy	\$35,220	\$69,646	(\$34,426)	(98.%)	\$140,950	\$69,646	\$71,304	51.%
Supplemental Levy	\$17,790	\$0	\$17,790	100.0%	\$71,200	\$0	\$71,200	100.0%
Payment In Lieu	\$181,590	\$0	\$181,590	100.0%	\$726,330	\$0	\$726,330	100.0%
User Fees	\$2,039,434	\$1,816,516	\$222,918	11.0%	\$8,121,415	\$1,816,516	\$6,304,899	78.0%
Government Transfers	\$373,749	\$405,111	(\$31,362)	(8.0%)	\$1,494,930	\$405,111	\$1,089,819	73.0%
Other Revenue	\$322,650	\$201,216	\$121,434	38.0%	\$1,291,100	\$201,216	\$1,089,884	84.0%
Allocation of Program Support	\$563,040	\$2,252,140	(\$1,689,100)	(300.0%)	\$2,252,140	\$2,252,140	\$0	0.0%
Funding From Reserves	\$489,797	\$0	\$489,797	100.0%	\$1,434,025	\$0	\$1,434,025	100.0%
Total Operating Revenue	\$6,714,450	\$10,060,443	(\$3,345,993)	(50.0%)	\$26,296,770	\$10,060,443	\$16,236,327	62.0%
Operating Expenses								
Salaries and Wages	\$1,936,980	\$1,556,407	\$380,573	20.0%	\$7,947,410	\$1,556,407	\$6,391,003	80.0%
Benefits	\$591,650	\$439,231	\$152,419	26.0%	\$2,338,230	\$439,231	\$1,898,999	81.0%
Debt Interest	\$183,690	\$319,030	(\$135,340)	(74.0%)	\$734,770	\$319,030	\$415,740	57.0%
Administrative Expenses	\$93,770	\$54,088	\$39,682	42.0%	\$375,550	\$54,088	\$321,462	86.0%
Supplies and Equipment	\$109,410	\$100,317	\$9,093	8.0%	\$438,260	\$100,317	\$337,943	77.0%
Repairs and Maintenance (Materials Only)	\$534,690	\$542,766	(\$8,076)	(2.0%)	\$2,139,150	\$542,766	\$1,596,384	75.0%
Utilities	\$150,780	\$88,634	\$62,146	41.0%	\$603,360	\$88,634	\$514,726	85.0%
Insurance	\$112,590	\$0	\$112,590	100.0%	\$450,180	\$0	\$450,180	100.0%
Subscriptions and Periodicals	\$4,200	\$8,575	(\$4,375)	(104.0%)	\$16,810	\$8,575	\$8,235	49.0%
Contracted Services	\$1,235,740	\$697,951	\$537,789	44.0%	\$4,945,490	\$697,951	\$4,247,539	86.0%
Special Projects	\$408,749	\$86,439	\$322,310	79.0%	\$472,500	\$86,439	\$386,061	82.0%
Rents and Financial Expenses	\$10,860	\$4,922	\$5,938	55.0%	\$43,610	\$4,922	\$38,688	89.0%
External Transfers	\$14,610	\$0	\$14,610	100.0%	\$58,400	\$0	\$58,400	100.0%
Internal Functional Adjustments	\$236,880	\$947,640	(\$710,760)	(300.0%)	\$947,640	\$947,640	\$0	0.0%
Allocation of Program Support	\$326,040	\$1,304,500	(\$978,460)	(300.0%)	\$1,304,500	\$1,304,500	\$0	0.0%
Tax Write Off	\$17,670	\$556	\$17,114	97.0%	\$70,800	\$556	\$70,244	99.0%
Debt Principal	\$236,760	\$331,288	(\$94,528)	(40.0%)	\$947,050	\$331,288	\$615,762	65.0%
Contribution to Reserves	\$615,690	\$2,463,060	(\$1,847,370)	(300.0%)	\$2,463,060	\$2,463,060	\$0	0.0%
Total Operating Expenses	\$6,820,759	\$8,945,405	(\$2,124,646)	(31.0%)	\$26,296,770	\$8,945,405	\$17,351,365	66.0%
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$106,309)	\$1,115,038	(\$1,221,347)	1149.0%	\$0	\$1,115,038	(\$1,115,038)	0.0%
Capital Revenue								
User Fees	\$47,901	\$0	\$47,901	100.0%	\$191,600	\$0	\$191,600	100.0%
Government Transfers	\$925,001	\$579,466	\$345,535	37.0%	\$1,300,000	\$579,466	\$720,534	55.0%
TCA Sale Proceeds	\$0	\$25,000	(\$25,000)	0.0%	\$0	\$25,000	(\$25,000)	0.0%
Funding From Reserves	\$1,037,678	\$0	\$1,037,678	100.0%	\$2,606,600	\$0	\$2,606,600	100.0%
Total Capital Revenue	\$2,010,580	\$604,466	\$1,406,114	70.0%	\$4,098,200	\$604,466	\$3,493,734	85.0%
Capital Expenditures								
Land Improvements	\$2,499	\$5,302	(\$2,803)	(112.0%)	\$10,000	\$5,302	\$4,698	47.0%
Facilities	\$75,001	\$44,866	\$30,135	40.0%	\$135,000	\$44,866	\$90,134	67.0%
Equipment	\$147,703	\$44,390	\$103,313	70.0%	\$426,700	\$44,390	\$382,310	90.0%
Rolling Stock	\$98,748	\$0	\$98,748	100.0%	\$395,000	\$0	\$395,000	100.0%
Transportation Infrastructure	\$962,128	\$533,581	\$428,547	45.0%	\$1,748,500	\$533,581	\$1,214,919	69.0%
Environmental Infrastructure	\$345,753	\$144,896	\$200,857	58.0%	\$1,383,000	\$144,896	\$1,238,104	90.0%
Total Capital Expenditures	\$1,631,832	\$773,034	\$858,798	53.0%	\$4,098,200	\$773,034	\$3,325,166	81.0%
Capital Surplus/(Deficit)	\$378,748	(\$168,569)	\$547,317	145.0%	\$0	(\$168,569)	\$168,569	0.0%

**TOWNSHIP OF WEST LINCOLN
ESTIMATE OF RESERVE FUND AND RESERVE BALANCES PROJECTED TO DECEMBER 31, 2026**

	ESTIMATED CLOSING	COMMITMENTS	UNCOMMITTED
RESERVE FUNDS:			
BUILDING DEPARTMENT	\$ 1,566	\$ -	\$ 1,566
LIBRARY	\$ 619,731	\$ 138,246	\$ 481,485
TOTAL RESERVE FUNDS	\$ 621,297	\$ 138,246	\$ 483,051
RESERVES:			
BRIDGES	\$ 953,415	\$ 269,696	\$ 683,719
CAPITAL	\$ 2,440,004	\$ 1,257,382	\$ 1,182,622
CEMETERY	\$ 201,146	\$ 25,763	\$ 175,383
CONTINGENCY	\$ 1,881,635	\$ 553,000	\$ 1,328,635
ELECTION	\$ 169,945	\$ 195,040	\$ 25,095
EQUIPMENT	\$ 598,417	\$ 156,000	\$ 442,417
FACILITIES	\$ 430,856	\$ 84,500	\$ 346,356
FIRE	\$ 1,427,351	\$ 87,900	\$ 1,339,451
HOSPITAL	\$ 8,400	\$ -	\$ 8,400
INDUSTRIAL PARK	\$ 455,759	\$ -	\$ 455,759
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	\$ 122,154	\$ 55,000	\$ 67,154
INSURANCE	\$ 187,655	\$ -	\$ 187,655
PLANNING	\$ 558,784	\$ 378,888	\$ 179,895
ROAD SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT	\$ 107,100	\$ 75,000	\$ 32,100
SEWER	\$ 2,292,512	\$ 989,619	\$ 1,302,893
SIDEWALKS	\$ 280,055	\$ 19,440	\$ 260,615
STREET LIGHTS	\$ 63,624	\$ -	\$ 63,624
WATER	\$ 1,604,320	\$ 810,207	\$ 794,113
WIND TURBINE COMMUNITY FUND	\$ 311,366	\$ 10,000	\$ 301,366
WINTER CONTROL	\$ 658,820	\$ -	\$ 658,820
WLCC (WEST LINCOLN COMMUNITY CENTER)	\$ 607,387	\$ 352,700	\$ 254,687
TOTAL RESERVES	\$ 15,360,706	\$ 5,320,136	\$ 10,040,570
TOTAL RESERVE FUNDS AND RESERVES	\$ 15,982,003	\$ 5,458,382	\$ 10,523,621