REPORT TITLE: **Increase to Housing Services Technology Capital Budget**

FROM: Janice Sheehy, Commissioner of Human Services and
Sean Baird, Commissioner of Digital and information Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the Housing Services Technology Capital budget 19-5032 be increased by $400,000 from working fund reserves to develop a technology solution to support the management of the Housing System.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS
- Current housing technology solutions are obsolete and no longer support the delivery of efficient services to clients.
- Enabling technology is critical to the transformation of Housing Services and an improved client experience.
- A 2019 capital budget for $2,000,000 was approved by Regional Council to procure enabling technology for housing.
- A Request for Proposal was issued in February 2020.
- An acceptable vendor proposal was received for $2,400,000 which exceeds the current capital budget allocation.
- In order to award the contract, staff is requesting an additional $400,000 be added to the capital budget 19-5032 from working fund reserves.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

In 2018, Regional Council approved the renewed 10-Year Peel Housing and Homelessness Plan (the Plan). One of the five strategies included in the Plan is *'Transform Service'*.

The objectives of the Transform Service strategy include improving housing outcomes for housing and homeless clients, enhancing the client experience and reducing administrative burden and costs. Achieving these objectives requires a significant investment in technology.

As part of the 2019 budget process, Regional Council approved an investment of $2,000,000 to support technology enhancements for Housing Services.

2. Vendor Procurement

Throughout 2019, staff worked to define critical business requirements and workflows to develop a Request for Proposal to procure a qualified vendor. A vendor that would provide a complete technology solution for Housing Services.

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On March 2, 2020, the Request for Proposal was issued for a cloud-based solution that integrates with the Salesforce Platform at the Region. The technology is to provide an integrated solution that will ensure the following outcomes are realized:

1. Improved client / provider experience by providing integrated and streamlined Housing Services.
2. Empowered clients / providers through ease of access (accessible services) and enabling them to make informed decisions.
3. Increased efficiency in the delivery of housing services as a result of automation.
4. Production of quality, clear, real time, static, raw and custom data for housing and homelessness to support operational funding, system and business performance.

Four vendors reviewed the Request for Proposal, however only one vendor submitted a proposal and was deemed to have the appropriate approach and the technical solutions required to address all business requirements. The proposed solution builds on the Region's Salesforce platform and is aligned to the Corporate Digital Strategy.

The complete vendor solution costs $2,400,000 which includes all vendor costs for planning, development, testing, training, supports, and implementation.

Approval of the increased budget will allow awarding of the contract to the vendor.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

There are financial and reputational risks with not replacing the legacy applications in Housing Services.

Due to the level of complexity in developing an integrated platform-based housing solution, there are a limited number of vendors who have the capability and knowledge to deliver such a solution. This is indicated by the low response to the Request for Proposal. Our inability to allocate additional funds to the capital project will jeopardize the transformation of Housing Services including the implementation of a needs-based approach to services and the mandated Coordinated Access System as previously approved by Council.

Moreover, continuing with the current legacy systems creates additional operational risks as these systems are on critical support. The result in time consuming, labour intensive and manual processing with little to no connectivity between databases. The risk of error is high.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is recommended that the Housing Services Technology Capital budget 19-5032 be increased by $400,000 from working fund reserves, for a revised project total of $2,400,000. As noted, this project increase will facilitate the implementation of the business requirements. Additional funds required for the future phases of the technology solution will be included for consideration in future budget years.

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CONCLUSION

One of the strategies in the Peel Housing and Homelessness Plan is Transform Service. The transform service strategy includes investments in technology. As part of the 2019 budget process, Regional Council approved an investment of $2,000,000 to support technology enhancements for Housing Services.

In March 2020, a Request for Proposal was issued for a cloud-based solution that integrates with the Salesforce Platform at the Region. One vendor submitted a proposal for a cost of $2,400,000. As the proposal was deemed appropriate, staff is recommending that the Housing Services Technology Capital budget 19-5032 be increased by $400,000 from working fund reserves, for a revised project total of $2,400,000. This increased investment will help the Region achieve the short and long-term outcomes as outlined in Peel's Housing and Homelessness Plan.

For further information regarding this report, please contact Aileen Baird, Director, Housing Services, Ext. 1898, aileen.baird@peelregion.ca.

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Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:

Department Commissioners, Division Directors and Financial Support Unit.

Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.

N. Polsinelli, Interim Chief Administrative Officer