

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA

REPORT NO. SI-2024-0014

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
COUNCIL**

June 19, 2024

SUBJECT: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Southlake Regional Health Centre (Southlake), Northern York South Simcoe Ontario Health Team (NYSS OHT) and the Town of Georgina.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That Council receive Report No. SI-2024-0014 prepared by the Corporate Strategy and Transformation Division, Strategic Initiatives Department, dated June 19, 2024, related to the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Southlake Regional Health Centre (Southlake), Northern York South Simcoe Ontario Health Team (NYSS OHT) and the Town of Georgina.**
- 2. That Council authorize staff to develop and enter into a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Southlake Regional Health Centre (Southlake) and the Northern York South Simcoe Ontario Health Team (NYSS OHT) that would formalize a collaborative relationship between the parties for the purpose of making improvements in a variety of health and wellness related areas, including the development of facilities and resources within Georgina, new and expanded health and wellness programs/services, advocacy, data sharing and community/stakeholder engagement, exploring research and innovation, and fostering collaboration and capacity building.**
- 3. That the Town's Healthcare Strategy initiative will be modified to deliver on the scope of the MOU with leadership provided through Southlake and the NYSS OHT.**
- 4. That the remaining budget (approximately \$210,000) for the Health Care Strategy be repurposed to recruit a project lead resource for approximately 18 months, to be managed by Southlake and reporting in through an agreed upon governance structure, that would be 100 per cent dedicated to implementing and advancing the MOU. The details related to the above funding arrangements will occur through a separate funding agreement that will be tied to key deliverables, timelines and metrics with regular progress reporting to Council.**
- 5. That the Town's Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), inclusive of any supporting documents and agreements, including the above-mentioned funding agreement, on behalf of the Town of Georgina.**

2. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to develop and enter into a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Southlake Regional Health Centre (Southlake) and the Northern York South Simcoe Ontario Health Team (NYSS OHT) that would include commitments to establish additional health and wellness programs/services and facilities within Georgina that will increase access to care for our residents, closer to home.

The MOU would be managed by a project lead to be retained by Southlake and reporting in through an agreed upon governance structure. The position would be 100 per cent dedicated to leading, implementing and advancing the MOU, expanding healthcare services and facilities within Georgina and fostering relationships with other OHTs, hospitals and local health and wellness partners, where applicable, to ensure improved access to healthcare for all residents.

Staff are also seeking approval to modify the Town's Health Care Strategy initiative that includes repurposing the remaining budget approved through the business case 24-CI-SI-05 for the Strategy, to deliver on the scope of the MOU, with leadership to be provided through Southlake and the NYSS OHT. The details related to the above funding arrangements would occur through a separate agreement.

3. BACKGROUND:

In November 2023, staff brought forward a [Report to Council](#) that included recommendations to develop a Health Care Strategy and Action Plan with key components including the hiring of a Health Care Strategy Lead, retaining a healthcare systems expert/lobbyist through a public Request for Proposal (RFP) process, and creating a taskforce to inform the Strategy development.

As part of the 2024 budget, Council approved a business case [24-CI-SI-05](#) for \$225,000 with an aim of supporting the development and implementation of the Strategy. In April 2024, a Health Care Strategy Lead was retained to support and advance the work.

To date, staff have worked diligently to identify and confirm data sources, review existing local health care information and better understand the role, responsibilities and planning being undertaken by the various partners within the system.

Staff have engaged and participated in several meetings with various community partners committed and interested in advancing access to health care in the community, including NYSS OHT and Southlake Town Halls, meetings with local doctors, hospitals and other health care providers, etc.

In so doing, staff have gained a greater understanding of the key and active roles of Southlake and the NYSS OHT in the planning and delivery of health care services within the community.

Within the local health care system the Northern York South Simcoe Ontario Health Team is mandated and funded by the Province to work with local organizations to provide a wide range of health and wellness services to the residents of northern York Region and southern Simcoe County.

The goals of the NYSS OHT are to enhance collaborative efforts to bring connected care to the communities they serve, as well as to improve access and reduce gaps in the health care system.

In June 2023, Council provided a letter of support to the NYSS OHT related to a submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) to enhance the development and delivery of Primary Care in Georgina. The EOI was approved by the Province in early 2024.

The Southlake Regional Health Centre provides medical care to over 1.5 million people in communities across York Region and South Simcoe County, including the Town of Georgina.

This year marks Southlake's centennial anniversary and the charting of an exciting path forward to help guide the organization into the future through the development of a new Strategy for Southlake. As part of conversations with the Town, Ontario Health identified Southlake as the primary hospital for Georgina. This is also reflected through current and historical healthcare utilization data.

In May 2024, Southlake approached the Town to discuss and receive feedback on a new Strategy and associated distributed model of care approach, including the development of new healthcare facility within Georgina. The approach involves providing additional healthcare services closer to home and across the communities that Southlake serves, through expanded programs and new facilities. This model would also provide improved access, better patient experiences and help to address health equity issues, while also freeing up capacity at Southlake's primary location in Newmarket.

As part of the Southlake's Strategy development process, their staff is conducting engagement sessions with various municipalities (East Gwillimbury, Bradford, King, Newmarket Aurora and Georgina), with a timeline to present the Strategy to its Board in September 2024.

With the development of the Town's Health Care Strategy having commenced in Q2 of 2024, it is still in its early stages.

By way of an update, the individual in the part-time Health Care Strategy Lead position recently advised that they will be leaving for another position (full time) and the Request for Proposal (RFP) to secure a Healthcare Systems Expert/Lobbyist has been prepared but not yet issued. Work related to reposting of the position and advancing the RFP have been paused due to this report and the recommendations.

4. ANALYSIS:

To build a strong health care system all partners must work together toward a common vision, goals and actions.

Southlake and NYSS OHT hold significant health and wellness expertise and play critical roles in the development and advancement of services/programs for the residents of Georgina, working collaboratively with other OHTs, hospitals and local health and wellness providers, where applicable, to strengthen the health care system and improve access to services for all residents.

Taking their expertise and commitment to developing health and wellness programs/services for the residents of Georgina, as well as the early stages of the Town's Strategy into account, there is an opportunity to modify the initiative and leverage efforts/resources, to work together toward a shared plan that would expand the delivery of and access to health and wellness in Georgina.

As such, staff are proposing to develop and enter into a non-binding MOU that would formalize a collaborative relationship between the Town, Southlake and NYSS OHT with a commitment to making improvements in a variety of health facilities and resources within Georgina and the development of new and expanded health and wellness programs/services, advocacy, data sharing and community/ stakeholder engagement, exploring research and innovation, and fostering collaboration and capacity building.

The MOU would be managed by the hiring of a project lead to be retained by Southlake for approximately 18 months and reporting in through an agreed upon governance structure. The position would be 100 per cent dedicated to Georgina and advancing the components of the MOU. The funding for the position would be tied to key deliverables, timelines and metrics with regular progress reporting to Council.

The proposed non-binding MOU represents a significant commitment by Southlake, the NYSS OHT and the Town to enhance health and wellness in Georgina. It also provides an opportunity for the Town to maintain the intent and key components of the Health Care Strategy, while at the same time, working together with Southlake and NYSS OHT to accelerate implementation and action.

Staff do want to ensure through the go-forward discussions on the MOU that issues such as doctor and nurse shortages/recruitment and hospice care, etc. are addressed, as well as enhanced collaboration among healthcare partners serving residents across the Town of Georgina and a method for key stakeholders to provide feedback on the implementation of areas within the MOU as appropriate.

This joint commitment and work through the MOU will provide the Town, Southlake and NYSS OHT with an opportunity to lead the way in demonstrating how advanced partnerships and collaborations within the community can strengthen the local health care system and achieve improved health and wellness outcomes for residents.

5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Pillar: Creating a Vibrant, Healthy, and Safe Community for All

Goal #2: Support a safe, healthy and inclusive community

Action #4: Advocate for enhanced health and wellness services, partnerships and investment attraction for Georgina

6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:

Council approved \$225,000 in the 2024 budget for a Town of Georgina Healthcare Strategy. With the project getting underway in Q2 less than 7% of the budget has been expended with a balance of approximately \$210,000 remaining.

To support the MOU, staff are proposing to repurpose the Health Care Strategy budget to fund the recruitment of a project lead that would be 100 per cent dedicated to Georgina and leading, implementing and advancing the MOU.

The lead position is to be retained by Southlake for approximately 18 months and will report in through an agreed upon governance structure. The details related to the funding arrangements would occur through a separate agreement tied to key deliverables, timelines and metrics with regular progress reporting to Council.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:

There are no legislative public notice requirements associated with this report.

8. CONCLUSION:

The NYSS OHT recently received approval from the Province on an Expression of Interest (EOI) to expand access to integrated primary care in Georgina. In addition, Southlake Regional Health Centre recently approached the Town of Georgina about collaborating on a distributed model of care that would involve bringing expanded services and additional healthcare facilities into Georgina. Among the key benefits of both is providing care closer to home for our residents.

To further align our intent for a Health Care Strategy with the current work of Southlake and NYSS OHT and continue to enhance collaboration, as well as strengthen capacity across the health care system, staff is seeking permission to modify the Town's Health Care Strategy initiative including repurposing the remaining project budget (approximately \$210,000) to develop and enter into a non-binding MOU with Southlake and the NYSS OHT and separate funding agreement for a project lead position that would be 100 per centre dedicated to advance and improve access to health and wellness in Georgina.

APPROVALS

Prepared By: Susan Lazzer, Project Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Reviewed By: Olga Lawton, Manager, Corporate Strategy and Transformation

Recommended By: Shawn Nastke, Director, Strategic Initiatives

Approved By: Rob Wheeler, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Approved By: Ryan Cronsberry, Chief Administrative Officer