

Staff Report

Report To: Corporate Services Committee
Report From: Desirée van Dijk, Information and Privacy Coordinator
Meeting Date: February 12, 2026
Report Code: CR-26-006
Subject: FOI 2025 Year in Review

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-26-006 respecting the 2025 FOI Year in Review, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

Highlights:

- FOI is short for Freedom of Information.
- 95 FOI requests were completed in 2025.
- 69% of the requests in 2025 were from Owen Sound Police Service.
- \$4,040 in FOI fees were collected in 2025.
- Approximately 322 hours were spent by the FOI Coordinator on FOI administration in 2025.

Vision 2050 - Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: The recommendation contributes to core service delivery or a corporate initiative that enables service delivery for one or more strategic priorities.

Previous Report/Authority:

[*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*](#)

[Report CR-25-023 FOI 2024 Year in Review](#)

[Report CR-24-003 FOI 2023 Year in Review](#)

Background:

The City is subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* ("MFIPPA"), which provides a right of access to certain records and personal information under the custody or control of municipal institutions. A request under MFIPPA is known as a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. The Clerks division coordinates FOI requests, and depending on the nature of the request, staff from across the organization search for and prepare records. This report provides statistics and related information from 2025, with some comparisons to 2020-2024.

Analysis and Options:

Number of requests: The "Number of requests" chart below provides the number of requests received over the past five years. Note that the number of requests continues to increase year-over-year.

Number of requests					
Requests	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Received during the year	20	39	77	79	95
Carried over from the previous year	+1	+2	+1	+2	+3
Carried forward to the following year	-2	-1	-2	-3	-2
Transferred to another institution		-1	-4	-1	-1
Total	19	39	72	77	95

Types of requests: The "Types of requests" chart below indicates the broad subject matter of the requests over the last five years.

Where there is a "0" in the chart, no requests relating to that subject were received. Where there is a "-" in the chart, these subject areas were not being tracked.

Types of requests					
Type of requests	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Communications	-	-	0	0	2
Environmental	-	-	4	2	0
Fire	-	-	4	0	2
Personal information	0	0	4	3	1
Property information	-	-	9	11	15
Requests for Art Gallery information	-	-	0	4	0
Requests from law enforcement	7	27	43	54	69
Tax information	-	-	0	3	2
Other	12	12	8	0	4
Total Requests	19	39	72	77	95

Law enforcement requests: The "Requests from Law Enforcement" chart below outlines the number and type of requests received from Owen Sound Police Service (OSPS) over the last two years. One request may include multiple camera types. For example, the total number of OSPS requests in 2025 (69) doesn't match the total number of request types (82).

Requests from Law Enforcement		
Types of requests	2024	2025
City facility camera (City Hall, JMRRC, etc.)	9	6
River District camera	19	38
Traffic camera	41	37
Other	1	1
Total Types of Requests	70	82

Owen Sound Police Service is a separate entity, and the City and OSPS have signed a Memorandum of Understanding which will allow select OSPS staff direct access to the River District cameras. Once details finalized, approved OSPS staff would follow a defined procedure to access the camera footage. The City would conduct regular audits to ensure compliance.

Time to completion: The legislated standard time to complete a request is thirty (30) days. The timeframe is extended where the City provides notice of extension and/or a notice to an affected person (a third party who may have an interest in records being considered for release). A notice of extension is made where the request is for many records or necessitates a search through many records, and meeting the time limit would unreasonably interfere with the operations of the institution, or where consultation with a person outside the institution is necessary to comply with the request and cannot reasonably be completed within the time limit. The "Time to completion" chart below provides the statistics over the last 5 years.

Time to completion					
Time	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
30 days or less	17	37	70	76	90
31-60 days	1	0	2	1	5
61-90 days	0	0	0	0	0
More than 91 days	1	2	0	0	0

Fees: As noted in previous reports, fees for FOI requests are nominal and set by MFIPPA legislation, which has not been updated in more than 30 years. The FOI application fee is \$5.00; fees to search and prepare general records for release are calculated at \$7.50 for every 15 minutes spent by any one person (\$30/hr), and reproduction fees are \$0.20 per page. Fees for search and preparation time are not charged for personal information. The fees collected and waived in the last 5 years are noted in the "Fees" chart below.

Fees					
Fees	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Fees collected	\$1,985	\$1,747	\$3,636	\$678	\$4,040
Fees waived*	\$255	\$600	\$968	\$945	\$0

*From 2022-2024, the City waived fees when it deemed the waiver fair and equitable as the record disclosure would benefit public health or safety, or where there was an undue financial hardship for the requester.

In 2025, the City began invoicing OSPS quarterly for billable hours in accordance with MFIPPA legislation. A total of \$1,950 was invoiced.

Appeals: Every FOI request has several opportunities for a requester or third-party to appeal a City decision to the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC). For example, response time, fees, access, the reasonableness of a search, etc. The "Appeals" chart below provides an overview of appeals in the last two years.

Appeals		
	2024	2025
Number of Appeals	2	4

Comparison with other municipalities: The "Comparison with other municipalities" chart below shows the number of FOI requests the City processed compared to other municipalities.

Comparison with other municipalities		
	Number of requests processed	
Municipality	2024	2025
Brockville	27	19 (+107 law enforcement)
Cobourg	31	48
Orangeville	29	19
Orillia	11	12
Owen Sound	77	95

Resource Alignment:

Financial Resources

The funds recouped by the City through FOI fees continue to represent only a fraction of the costs associated with administering the Freedom of Information program. In 2024, the City, along with the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) and other municipalities, sent a letter advocating for changes to MFIPPA.

Human Resources

In 2025, FOI requests required work by staff in the Building (5 requests), By-law Enforcement (2 requests), Engineering (2 requests), Fire (2 requests), Public Works (4 requests) and Tax (4 requests) divisions. Approximately twenty-eight (28) hours were spent by other divisions searching for and providing records.

Some activities related to fulfilling an FOI request, generally carried out by the Clerks division, cannot be charged back to the requester. These include communicating with the requester and staff about the request, deciding whether an exemption applies, providing third-party notice, case law review, responding to appeals, and consultation with municipal advisors or legal counsel. These hours are included in the "Time spent on FOI requests by the Information and Privacy Coordinator" chart below. This time equates to approximately nine (9) weeks of the Coordinator's annual workload and does not include the City Clerk's time reviewing material, nor other staff time gathering and submitting records.

Time spent on FOI requests by the Information and Privacy Coordinator					
Time Spent	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Approximate hours	200	125	335	275	322

Time and Scheduling

FOI requests take priority over all other records management responsibilities. This means that some important records management core tasks are delayed or not completed depending on the FOI workload in any given year.

Technology and Infrastructure

Vayle software helps track and manage requests. Additionally, the software saves staff time at year-end preparing the report required by the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC).

Climate and Environmental Impacts:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Communication and Engagement:

This report was posted to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the meeting and shared via the Information and Privacy Commissioner's annual report.

Report Developed in Consultation With:

City Clerk

Attachments:

None

Reviewed by:

Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk
Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Desirée van Dijk, Information and Privacy Coordinator at dvandijk@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440, extension 1222.