The Town of Cochrane
CAO Workplan

Findings	Risks (Why It Matters)	Action Plan Item (What We Will Do)	Who	Start	End	Updated	Status	Notes

Legend

On Target	
At Risk	
Off Target	
Not Started	

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Treasury & Financial Stability								
Treasury instability and capacity gaps — loss of purchasing oversight, workload overload, delayed reporting, and lack of long-term financial planning or succession structure.								
Purchasing position removed	Treasury compliance risk; audit issues, increased costs	Reinstate centralized Purchasing function	Treasury / HR	14-Oct-25		22-Oct-25		Position advertised
Treasury work overload	When treasury staff are overloaded, errors increase, reporting is delayed, and financial controls weaken, leading to reduced accountability and higher fiscal risk.	Provide structured Treasurer support Front Counter Support; possible NOHFC Intern	Treasury / HR	15-Sep-25		22-Oct-25		Interviews completed
Lack of Financial Reporting	When financial reporting is lacking, decision-makers lose visibility into the municipality's fiscal health, leading to budget overruns, cash flow issues, and weakened accountability.	Establish regular financial reporting cycle	Treasury / CAO					Reviewing financial report writer. Inputs must be up to date
Lack of Long Term Financial Plan	The absence of a long-term financial plan leads to unsustainable spending, missed funding opportunities, and an inability to maintain services or infrastructure over time.	Develop Long Term Financial Plan	Treasury / CAO					This is also part of Asset Planning

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Staffing & Workforce Sustainability								
Chronic staffing shortages, workload stress, and reliance on contracts are impacting service delivery and staff retention.								
General chronic understaffing; contract dependency	Chronic understaffing and reliance on contractors lead to inconsistent service delivery, higher costs, loss of internal expertise, and increased operational and compliance risks.	Engage targeted contract professionals (IT, HR, planning). Establish number of FTE's	HR / Management Staff					Gathering current information
Workload stress and staff retention issues	When workload stress is high and retention is poor, productivity drops, institutional knowledge is lost, and organizational stability and morale deteriorate.	Conduct workload and wellness audits	HR					
Population growth forecast (Growth Study)	When a town's staff and service resources don't match population growth, service quality declines, infrastructure becomes strained, and resident dissatisfaction and operational risks increase.	Align staffing with Growth Study forecasts	CAO / HR					Future discussion
Growth Study demands new structure	Organizational capacity risk	Redesign organizational chart; build succession pipelines	CAO / HR					Future discussion
Regional staffing constraints	Shared service capacity risk	Pursue shared services with neighbouring municipalities (by-law, planning, HR)	CAO / Management Staff					Will reach out to regional senior staff

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HR Framework, Roles & Culture								
Absence of a formal HR and governance framework has led to unclear roles, informal council direction, eroded trust, and declining staff morale.								
No HR framework	Without an HR framework, hiring, performance, and discipline become inconsistent, leading to low morale, legal risks, and weakened organizational accountability.	Launch modern HR framework (onboarding, appraisals, pay equity)	HR	14-Oct-25				New HR Manager, now in progress
Unclear job titles	When roles and titles are unclear, accountability becomes blurred, tasks are duplicated or missed, and teamwork and performance suffer.	Establish proper titles	HR					Needed for Pay Equity
Unclear roles; poor governance culture	When roles are unclear and governance culture is poor, accountability collapses, decision-making becomes inconsistent, and organizational trust and performance steadily erode.	Deliver governance training for Council & staff	Clerk					Role in organization
Council interference perception; informal direction	When council interference is perceived, even if unintentional, it still undermines trust, creates confusion about authority, and damages staff morale and confidence in the governance process.	Adopt Council–Staff Direction Protocol	CAO / HR					
Clear Council direction	When council direction is clear and consistent, staff can act efficiently, priorities remain focused, and decisions align with council's expectations and legal authority.	Adopt a Council–Staff Direction Protocol and Dashboard; improve Council motions	Clerk					In progress with clear Motions

Council–staff distrust	When staff and council don't trust each other, communication breaks down, decisions become polarized, and organizational effectiveness and public confidence sharply decline.	Implement Council Dashboard that includes list of Resolutions and / or Directions	CAO	01-Oct-25				
Lack of succession planning	Without a succession plan, leadership and operational continuity are jeopardized, critical knowledge is lost, and the organization becomes vulnerable during staff turnover or retirements.	Introduce succession planning framework	HR / CAO					
Staff morale declining	Psychological contract, culture risk, loss of key staff	Introduce recognition programs (milestones, staff BBQ, Christmas events)	CAO / Staff Social Committee / Council	21-May-25				Staff Social Committee in progress
Toxic behaviours; Lack of Accountability	When toxic behaviours exist in the workplace, morale collapses, teamwork breaks down, and turnover, stress, and mental health issues increase dramatically.	Adopt Leadership and Accountability Charter	CAO	01-Oct-25				Charter has been drafted

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Records, IT, and Processes								
Administrative inefficiencies persist due to poor records management, IT gaps, and the absence of digital performance tracking tools.								
Records disorganization / TOMRMS not used	When records are disorganized and TOMRMS isn't used, information becomes hard to find, accountability weakens, and the municipality faces compliance, audit, and legal exposure risks.	Implement TOMRMS standards and use Government Frameworks	Clerk	01-Aug-25				In progress
IT Gaps	When there are gaps in IT management, systems become unreliable and insecure, leading to data loss, cybersecurity risks, inefficiencies, and costly service disruptions.	Review arrangement with NOW and CochraneTel; issue RFP for IT Review	IT / CAO	23-Oct-25				Meeting with CochraneTel and NOW
Manual processes: inefficiency	When manual processes dominate, inefficiency increases, errors and delays become common, and staff time is wasted on repetitive tasks instead of strategic work.	Auotmate workflows; implement cloud-based systems. Part of IT RFP	IT / CAO / Management Staff					
No performance tracking tools	When there are no performance tracking tools, progress can't be measured, accountability weakens, and decision-making relies on assumptions instead of evidence.	Develop departmental metrics and strategic dashboard (Council & management use)	CAO / Management Staff	01-Jul-25				In progress. Quaterly reports have started issuing metrics

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Asset Management & Planning								
Asset management and risk planning are weak — staff are diverted, data quality is poor, and plans lack integration with financial and risk management frameworks.								
Asset Management staff diverted to other duties	When asset management staff are diverted to other duties, data updates and planning lapse, causing inaccurate reporting, poor investment decisions, and loss of regulatory compliance.	Reallocate Asset Clerk back to asset management duties	Treasury					
Poor asset data; limited planning	When asset data is poor and planning is limited, infrastructure decisions are based on guesswork, leading to misallocated funds, unexpected failures, and non-compliance with regulations.	Introduce asset tracking system. Make concerted effort to improve data	Management Staff					This is vital
Asset Management Plan is bad	A poor asset management plan leads to inefficient spending, service interruptions, and accelerated asset deterioration due to weak data and uninformed decisions.	Rewrite the Asset Management Plan	Treasury					This is vital

Lack of Risk Management	Ignoring risk management leads to preventable failures, financial losses, compliance breaches, and reputational damage by forcing an organization to react to crises instead of preventing them.	Introduce Risk Management Training and develop a Risk Management Plan	CAO					This is vital

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Water/Sewer Operations								
Water and sewer service continuity is at risk due to operator shortages and uncertainty over delivery models.								
Loss of licensed water/sewer operators; uncertainty over delivery model	Loss of licensed water/sewer operators and uncertainty over the delivery model jeopardize regulatory compliance, threaten public health, and increase the risk of service interruptions or Ministry orders.	Council decision on in-house vs third-party operator model; provide council requested information	Infrastrture Manager					Have been able to hire OIT's
Community & Facility Management								
Facility and recreation planning are not keeping pace with population growth, resulting in declining infrastructure condition, maintenance gaps, and unmet community needs.								
Community service gaps; underutilized facilities	Childcare needs	Relocate EarlyON to library to expand services	Child Care Manager					In progress
Community recreation needs	When community recreation needs are not met, public engagement declines, health and wellbeing suffer, and the municipality loses opportunities for growth, inclusion, and resident satisfaction.	Implement Recreation Master Plan	Socio-Economic Development Manager					Budget 2026 matter
Declining facilities; poor maintenance	When facilities decline and maintenance is poor, safety risks increase, repair costs escalate, and public trust and facility usage drop significantly.	Upgrade facility/janitorial standards	Infrastructure Manager					Budget 2026 matter
Facility maintenance gaps	When there are gaps in facility maintenance, small issues go unnoticed and escalate into costly repairs, safety hazards, and service disruptions.	Implement facility monitoring & compliance checks	Infrastructure Manager					Budget 2026 matter