



**Subject: COVID-19 Vaccination Policy**

**To: Council**

**From: Corporate Services Department**

Report Number: 2021-239

Meeting Date: September 13, 2021

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**Recommendation:**

That Corporate Services Department Report 2021-239 be received; and

That staff be directed to implement a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy setting out vaccine requirements as outlined in Report 2021-239.

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**Discussion:**

The subject of vaccine policies has been widely discussed across Canada given the ongoing global pandemic and the increase of more transmissible and deadly variants. Throughout the pandemic the City's Corporate Leadership Team has been committed to ensuring City workplaces are safe and this commitment is evident in the policies and procedures that have been enacted throughout the pandemic.

As Council is aware, Niagara Region has confirmed they are implementing a vaccine policy and many local municipalities have indicated they will implement policies of their own. At the time of writing this report an anonymous survey has been sent to all staff regarding vaccination and vaccination policies. In addition to this, a Town Hall meeting has been scheduled for all staff on September 8<sup>th</sup>, which at the time of writing this report has not occurred.

The City's Emergency Control Group (ECG) unanimously recommends that a vaccination policy consistent with the City's Corporate Values, Collective Agreement Language, the Ontario Human Rights Code and all applicable legislation be drafted and implemented.

Such a policy would extend to City of Port Colborne employees, students, volunteers and members of Council, who would be required to comply with this policy. Staff recommend that for those who have not been fully vaccinated or who have chosen to not disclose their

vaccination status and have not provided proof of a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption the following recommendations be included in the policy;

- Completion of a mandatory education session;
- Adherence to extra PPE measures (masking at all time while in City facilities, etc);
- Requirement to attend rapid antigen testing at regular intervals (to be determined by Staff);
- If these staff are required to self isolate due to a potential COVID exposure outside of the workplace, they must use unpaid time or banked vacation or lieu time;
- Redeployment to a different work location if necessary;
- Accommodation to point of undue hardship.

Vaccination requirements are subject to bona fide Human Rights Code exemptions. In recognition of the City's obligations under the Human Rights Code, a worker who presents and substantiates a valid legal justification for exemption on the basis of grounds listed under the Human Rights Code will be accommodated in accordance with the City's processes. Those who have a bona fide exemption can still be required to undergo regular rapid antigen testing should the City choose to implement this requirement in its policy. Staff recommend that, in these cases, the City pay for the cost of the test, rather than the Employee.

As the pandemic continues to be an evolving situation staff recognize the continued need to be able to adapt policies and processes quickly, staff must be prepared to make changes to policy and adapt as required to new direction and guidance from the Provincial Government and local public health authorities. Any such changes will be made in accordance with the language of the City's Collective Agreements, the Ontario Human Rights Code and any and all applicable legislation.

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### **Internal Consultations:**

All City employees were provided the opportunity to complete a confidential and anonymous survey regarding Vaccination Policies in the workplace. At the time of writing this report the survey had not yet closed and was still available to staff to provide their responses.

A workplace "Town Hall" meeting has been scheduled with all employees on September 8<sup>th</sup>, which at the time of writing this report has not occurred.

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## **Financial Implications:**

The City's ECG recommends the cost for rapid antigen testing for employees who require testing under the policy be borne by the employee.

If the City decides to fund the cost of rapid antigen testing, there will be a cost per test. Staff is still sourcing available testing options at the time of writing this report.

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## **Public Engagement:**

This proposed policy would not pertain to members of the public.

Active screening is required for the public to access some City facilities, and proof of vaccination is required for other City facilities and activities based on user group regulations. These processes will remain in place.

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## **Strategic Plan Alignment:**

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Service and Simplicity - Quality and Innovative Delivery of Customer Services
  - Attracting Business Investment and Tourists to Port Colborne
  - People: Supporting and Investing in Human Capital
  - Governance: Communications, Engagement, and Decision-Making
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## **Conclusion:**

The ECG recognizes the severity of COVID-19 and has through monitoring the operating environment, become aware that several organizations including the federal, provincial and Niagara Regional governments have implemented or intend to implement vaccination policies.

Out of an abundance of caution and the fact that many organizations have moved to implement Vaccination Policies the ECG recommends to Council the adoption of a Vaccination Policy for the City of Port Colborne.

The Vaccination Policy will protect employees, students, patrons, volunteers and members of council.

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Respectfully submitted,

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**Report Approval:**

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.