



Subject: COVID Update September 2021

To: Council

From: Chief Administrative Office

Report Number: 2021-238

Meeting Date: September 27, 2021

Recommendation:

That Chief Administrative Office Report 2021-238 be received for information.

Purpose:

This CAO generated report is provided as a follow up to the COVID-19 pandemic update that was provided to City Council on July 26, 2021.

Background:

The City's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was activated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic on March 13, 2020 by bringing together the City's Emergency Control Group (ECG). The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the nation and the City continues to prepare, respond, and plan recovery from the impacts of the pandemic to the municipality. As described in a previous staff report, the City's response is based on four principles:

- Maintaining essential City services to the community throughout the emergency;
- Continuing to ensure the safety and security of the public and City staff;
- Ensuring the organization remains financially stable throughout COVID-19; and
- Continuing to remain consistent in the City's actions with the actions of other agencies.

In order to respond appropriately to the impacts of the pandemic and adhere to these principles, the City's response has been divided into three phases:

- First phase – initial response and precautions for users and staff

- Second phase – maintaining essential services
- Third phase – recovery and reopening

Currently, the City is in the third phase, recovery and reopening, as staff continue to execute plans that were developed for reopening the City's programs, services, and facilities.

Discussion:

In the time since the last report to Council, the province and local area has been mired in a 'fourth wave' of the COVID pandemic. Two policy issues that have emerged since the last update to Council are the Province's vaccine passport requirement and the City's vaccination policy.

Vaccine Passport

The Province of Ontario has introduced a three step "Roadmap to Reopen" and the current step is Step 3 in Ontario. On September 1, the Province announced the implementation of a 'vaccine passport' requirement for certain activities in the province. As of September 22, 2021, Ontarians will need to be fully vaccinated (two doses plus 14 days) and provide their proof of vaccination along with photo ID to access certain public settings and facilities. This approach focuses on higher-risk indoor public settings where face coverings cannot always be worn. This will have a direct impact on indoor recreation facilities such as the Vale Health and Wellness Centre but does not impact other City facilities such as the Library, Museum, or administrative buildings. Recreation staff are prepared to implement and adhere to the provincial requirements when they become effective.

City Vaccination Policy

Many health authorities recommend that workplaces – both private and public sector – adopt a 'vaccination policy' for the workplace. These policies are designed to help administer a workplace in which some workers are vaccinated, and others are not, as well as provide accommodation for those that cannot be vaccinated for medical or religious reasons. The City presented a staff report to seek Council direction to draft and implement such a policy. That report was approved, and staff are currently developing the policy.

Internal Consultations:

The City's Emergency Control Group continues to meet on a regular basis during the pandemic. From time to time, staff from other departments are present at these

meetings to discuss reopening of City programs and amenities including recreation facilities and programming, cultural services, and access to City buildings.

Financial Implications:

While the pandemic has had financial impacts on the City in 2020 and 2021, there are no new financial impacts since the most recent report to Council. City staff project a balanced budget for 2021.

Public Engagement:

The City continues to provide high-quality communication to the community by giving frequent updates of City initiatives and sharing information from other agencies such as the Federal government, the Provincial government, the Region of Niagara and Niagara Region Public Health.

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
 - Value: Financial Management to Achieve Financial Sustainability
 - People: Supporting and Investing in Human Capital
 - Governance: Communications, Engagement, and Decision-Making
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Conclusion:

The City's Emergency Control Group continues to meet during the pandemic to make operational decisions for the City's programs and services in order to maintain essential operations within the community. Staff will continue to report to Council for the duration of the pandemic.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Luey
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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.