



**Subject: COVID Update – October 2021**

**To: Council**

**From: Chief Administrative Office**

Report Number: 2021-264

Meeting Date: October 25, 2021

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### **Recommendation:**

That Chief Administrative Office Report 2021-264 be received for information.

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### **Purpose:**

This CAO generated report is provided as a follow up to the COVID-19 pandemic update that was provided to City Council on September 27, 2021.

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### **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.

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## **Discussion:**

In the time since the last COVID update report to Council, the Province of Ontario has remained in Step 3 of the recovery roadmap put in place by the Provincial Government. There has been some relaxing of gathering limits for retail and hospitality businesses and cultural and sporting events where large crowds gather. Many private and public organizations have embarked on a return to normal activities such as youth sports organizations.

More recently, there has been speculation that the Province will further relax these restrictions or move beyond Step 3 altogether but, at the time of writing this report, no official announcements have been made.

As mentioned in the previous report to Council, the Province has instituted a system that requires participants in various activities to provide proof of vaccination before accessing the facilities where these activities take place. The City is fully compliant with Provincial regulations of this type.

The City has also implemented a workplace vaccination policy at the direction of Council. This policy governs City employees and lays out requirements for employees that have not been vaccinated, have only received one dose of a vaccine, or choose not to disclose their vaccination status. At this point, compliance with the requirements of this policy is very high and the City's Human Resources Department has put actions in place to ensure 100% compliance in the very near future.

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## **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.

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**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.

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**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, and the Region of Niagara and Niagara Region Public Health.

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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
  - 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.

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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.