



Subject: COVID Update – February 2021

To: Council

From: Chief Administrative Office

Report Number: 2021-53

Meeting Date: February 22, 2021

Recommendation:

That Chief Administrative Office Report 2021-53 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 January 25, 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 COVID Update to Council, the Province has extended the lockdown that is in place as well as the stay-at-home order. The Province has also extended the State of Emergency in Ontario. Under these various orders, most municipal services have been offered on an appointment only basis – essential services continue to be delivered with precautions in place for the safety of employees and residents. Some non-essential services, such as recreation programs, are not being offered during the lockdown period.

At the time of preparing this report, it appears that the Province will end the mandatory lockdown in February. It is unclear when the Niagara Region will be moved from the lockdown level to the colour-coded recovery framework. It is also unknown which level of the framework Niagara will be returned to. Each level (green, yellow, orange, red) comes with different restrictions on the amount of people that can gather in private and public spaces and the activities that are permitted in the Province. City Staff have prepared an internal recovery framework that establishes service levels for programs and services based on each colour level of the framework.

Staff will monitor Provincial announcements and implement the appropriate service level plan for the City based on the Region's recovery framework status.

Vaccination Sites

As mentioned by the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) at the February 8 Council Meeting, City staff has been actively working with Regional Public Health staff to identify appropriate locations in Port Colborne to be used as mass vaccination sites. At this time, Regional staff have expressed a preference for the gymnasium at the Vale Health and Wellness Centre. Staff have caucused with YMCA staff, and staff at the YMCA offer no objection to the use of that facility. City staff will work with YMCA staff to ensure that alternate locations are available for YMCA programs and services to minimize the disruption to YMCA members.

Financial Implications:

The City is in the midst of year-end accounting for the 2020 fiscal year, the City auditors will conduct the annual audit in March 2021 – a balanced budget is expected. The 2021

budget was prepared to allow the City the flexibility to continue to navigate through the duration of the pandemic while continuing to provide all municipal services without putting the City in a deficit position.

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.

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
Chief Administrative Officer
905-835-2901 ext. 306
Scott.Luey@portcolborne.ca

Report Approval:

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