

## Ready, Resilient and Resourceful Committee Report

---

**DATE:** Tuesday, June 23, 2020

**WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE: UPDATE ON CITY'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

**FROM:**

Mary Reali, Acting City Manager

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

---

**Purpose**

To provide the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful (RRR) Committee with information regarding the City's response to COVID-19. Information provided includes the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Roadmap for Success; an update from each portfolio on key actions in response to COVID-19; an assessment of the impact COVID-19 has had on the City's strategic directions; information regarding the impact COVID-19 has had on human resources and staffing; an overview of plans underway for business re-integration; preliminary overview of the City's experiences and lessons learned to-date; and, information regarding various innovations and process improvements in response to COVID-19 to mitigate against service disruptions and to ensure city building continues.

## **Report Highlights**

- The Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Roadmap provides the key objectives and framework for the City's response, mitigation, and recovery related to the COVID-19 emergency.
- All Portfolios and departments have been working diligently to effectively respond to the COVID-19 emergency and have ensured the protection of staff, the public and the delivery of quality public services while city building continues.
- All key activities within the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan have been assessed. All key activities are still targeted for completion within the term of Council, with modifications where required in response to COVID-19.
- The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer has worked across the organization and within collective agreements and in partnership with CUPE and the VPPFA to respond to the impact of COVID-19 to workforce requirements, recruitment, safety, wellness and mental health.
- A comprehensive plan is in development for future business re-integration and will include protocols for staff management, case management, safety and physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, education and communications.
- A team to focus on lessons learned throughout the emergency and to assist in the preparation of a future after-action report has conducted two phases of interviews with key leaders, staff and all Councillors to provide input to support continuous learning and improvement for future emergencies.
- Over 100 innovations and process improvements have been implemented across the organization to mitigate against service disruptions and to ensure city building continues. These innovations include the utilization and optimizations of technologies, automation, process improvements, partnerships, and financial efficiencies.

## **Recommendations**

1. That the Update on the City's Response to COVID-19 report be received.

## **Background**

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) assessed COVID-19 as a pandemic. From the onset, the City of Vaughan closely monitored the evolving situation and initiated numerous measures to ensure the safety of residents and City staff.

The City of Vaughan had been monitoring the situation since late January with enhanced monitoring by the EOC as of February 1, 2020. On March 13, 2020 the EOC was partially activated. On March 14, 2020 the City closed its community centres and libraries. The City of Vaughan was the first city in Ontario and the first municipality in York Region to declare a state of emergency on March 17, 2020. On March 18, 2020 all

city facilities were closed to the public and facilities in the City parks were also closed on March 25, 2020.

Throughout the pandemic, the City has ensured that quality services are delivered for families, businesses and all citizens. By March 30, 2020 we were able to hold the first electronic virtual Committee of the Whole and Council meeting. Throughout, the pandemic City building continues.

On May 27, 2020 Council unanimously endorsed the Mayor's Member's Resolution to establish the new Ready, Resilient and Resourceful (RRR) Committee of Council as part of the City's ongoing COVID-19 response effort.

The RRR Committee provides the governance structure to ensure that all members of Council are informed and kept up to date with the decisions made throughout the emergency response to the pandemic. The RRR Committee will report on issues related to the City's ongoing response efforts to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The first meeting of the committee is being held June 23, 2020.

The City administration has developed the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Roadmap which provides the key objectives and framework for the City's response, mitigation, and recovery related to the COVID-19 emergency.

This report provides the RRR Committee with information regarding:

- The Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Roadmap.
- An update of actions taken by all Portfolios and departments in response to COVID-19.
- An update on the COVID-19 impact on the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan.
- An update on the impact of COVID-19 on human resources and staffing and actions that have been taken.
- An update on the comprehensive plan being developed for future business re-integration which will provide protocols for staff management, case management, safety and physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, education and communications.
- A high-level summary of the preliminary results of the lessons learned initiative.
- A summary of over 100 innovations and process improvements which have been implemented across the organization to mitigate against service disruptions and to ensure city building continues. These innovations include the utilization and optimizations of technologies, automation, process improvements, and financial efficiencies.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

N/A

## **Analysis**

The following provides a corporate-wide overview of our response and mitigation initiatives related to COVID-19 and the pandemic crisis. It also provides information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the organization's staffing, operations and the City's key strategic initiatives.

The City has effectively responded to this crisis and the vast majority of our objectives are intact and on target. Where change is required, we have taken a disciplined and evidence-based approach to modify where required, evolve to meet the changing needs of the organization, our citizens, our business sectors and our communities; yet still be able to meet our strategic priorities for the term of Council.

The pandemic crisis has necessitated creative responses and has presented opportunities to innovate and improve /change processes and the way we deliver services. The city has embraced these opportunities and over 100 improvements and changes have already been implemented with many more under development.

We recognize that we must evolve and leverage our base strengths with new ways of doing our work.

## **READY, RESILIENT, RESOURCEFUL – ROADMAP FOR SUCCESS**

The City of Vaughan continues to manage its response and mitigations against COVID-19. In doing so, it continues to ensure the safety of our staff, protect public interest, manage tax-payers' dollars, safeguard investments and provide quality public services and programs to residents and businesses every day.

The City was alert and ready to act in response to the pandemic crisis given ongoing proactive monitoring in January 2020 and enhanced operations of our Emergency Operations Centre as of February 1, 2020.

**On March 13, 2020** the Emergency Response Plan was activated and the City cancelled all City and library March Break camps and daycare programming and closed facilities to the public.

**On March 14, 2020**, Recreation Services closed community centres and the City Playhouse Theatre to the public to protect the health and safety of citizens and staff during these unprecedented times.

**On March 17, 2020**, the Mayor declared a state of emergency signaling the City would take every precaution and every possible step to help break the transmission of COVID-19.

**On March 18, 2020**, City Hall, Joint Operations Centre and all facilities were closed to the public.

**On March 25, 2020**, all facilities within the City's 213 parks, including sports fields, tennis courts, benches and dog parks were closed to the public. Decisions regarding re-opening these places will be based on provincial orders and the advice of Public Health; a steady decline or flattening of case numbers; a risk-based approach to assessment; and appropriate levels of controls for the situation.

**On March 30, 2020**, the City held its first electronic-participation Committee of the Whole and Council meetings. Electronic meetings continued for the Council meeting cycles in April, May and June. In addition, electronic Public Hearings are scheduled for June.

**On April 8, 2020**, Council adopted an Emergency Measures By-law granting new authorities to the Mayor and staff to issue clear, responsive and decisive orders during the state of emergency.

In responding to COVID-19 and in establishing key initiatives and measures to mitigate against its impact, the City established a Ready, Resilient, Resourceful (RRR) Roadmap for success. The RRR Roadmap is based on key principles to manage the response and seeks to balance employee and public safety, fiscal responsibility, and citizen needs.

As we respond to and mitigate for the COVID-19 crisis we will come out of this as a stronger, more agile City. We are creating a "new normal" and we do not expect things to be the same. However, the City will be in control as much as possible on where it makes its changes and how it implements for success.

Our results will be a sustained recovery which facilitates a new normal. It will provide a framework for restarting our facilities and office locations with a consistent response and strategy. We will protect employees and make sure everyone stays safe, healthy and confident about returning to work. We will empower each department to work within the

roadmap and principles to develop service specific plans of action to meet the objectives of start-up and recovery.

The end result will be a stronger, more innovative and agile City that is even better prepared for future pandemic, natural and human-caused emergencies (in addition to a COVID-19 second wave). We will leverage new ways of doing business while still delivering quality public services. **As COVID-19 persists, City Building Continues.**

Please refer to attachment #1 for a detailed report regarding the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Roadmap for Success.

### **SERVICE AND OPERATIONAL IMPACT – PORTFOLIO UPDATES**

Throughout the response to COVID-19, all portfolios and departments have worked diligently to assess and implement precautionary measures and put contingency plans into effect. Council has been provided with regular weekly update memos from each department outlining key activities and results. In addition, the portfolio Deputy City Managers provided Council with verbal updates at the Committee of the Whole meetings of March 17, 2020 and April 21, 2020.

In addition, please refer to attachment #2 which provides a high-level summary of actions to-date.

### **COVID-19 IMPACT ON THE 2018-2022 TERM OF COUNCIL SERVICE EXCELLENCE STRATEGIC PLAN**

On March 19, 2019, Council unanimously approved the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan that serves as a guide that identifies Council's priorities for the Term of Council. The Strategic Plan was developed to align the City's priorities, people, processes and technology so that the City can deliver on our commitments for this Term of Council.

The Strategic Plan lays out six strategic priority areas reflective of Council objectives and three strategic priority areas of Service Excellence objectives. The 2018- 2022 Strategic Plan bridges Vaughan Vision 2020 to the forthcoming Vaughan 2051 plan which is a key activity under the current Strategic Plan.

## **Impacts of COVID-19 on Strategic Priorities**

As part of our response and mitigation to the COVID-19 crisis, the City has reviewed and assessed impacts to the key strategic activities. Given our proactive governance and oversight of the strategic activities, the majority of initiatives remain intact or, where required, can be modified to adjust to changes in response to COVID-19.

There are 105 key strategic activities, all of which were reviewed to assess the impact of COVID-19:

- 10% of key activities have been completed.
- 81% of key activities are on track to be completed within this term of Council:
  - 65 initiatives remain unchanged and will continue as planned for delivery in this term of Council.
  - 20 initiatives require some level of change (such as virtual delivery or automations to be optimized) given COVID-19 but remain on target for delivery within this term of Council.
- In addition, 9 new initiatives have been included. Five of these new key activities are in direct response to COVID-19. The majority of these are within the Economic Prosperity and the Service Excellence Strategic Priority areas. The other four key activities are in relation to phase 2 of existing key activities.

Please refer to attachment #3 for a full report and assessment of each strategic priority area and related activities.

## **COVID-19 IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES**

Our people are our most important asset and we have proven to be a City of exceptionally skilled, resilient and dedicated staff during these unprecedented times. In support of our employees, all decisions have embodied our key values as an organization of Respect, Accountability and Dedication. Our focus is steadfast with respect to ensuring that the health and well-being of our employees and citizens is our top priority.

Throughout the City's response to COVID-19, we have made critical and at times difficult decisions. As COVID-19 became a reality for Ontario and the City of Vaughan, we expeditiously closed the City's community centres and libraries and then subsequently closed all our facilities to the public.

Staff were sent home and those that could effectively work from home, have continued to do so with the help of technology and business process modifications. For staff that were unable to work from home as they performed critical services within the field, we ensured they were protected and minimized their exposure to the threat of COVID-19.

For some staff, where a work from home option was not possible and where they were not providing critical services, we were able to redeploy a number of staff to provide parks education services until June 4th; and for others we had to proceed with layoffs.

The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, in conjunction with management, CUPE and VPFPA, have focused on key responses related to communications, labour relations, safety, alternative work arrangements, recruitment, and workforce adjustments,

Please refer to attachment #4 which provides a detailed report on the key human resources and staffing related actions taken.

### **BUSINESS REINTEGRATION PLAN**

The City's Business Reintegration Plan is currently being developed and will continue to evolve as more information becomes available from the Province and Public Health with regards to COVID-19. The framework for this draft plan entails a high-level consistent approach to how staff are reintegrated back into City facilities, including those staff who have never left.

A sub-committee of the City's COVID-19 Emergency Task Force is advancing with significant progress on the "return to work" or reintegration plan for the Corporation.

Please refer to attachment #5 for additional information regarding the approach to business re-integration.

Please note that a full report will be provided to the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Committee at an upcoming committee meeting.

### **LESSONS LEARNED – OUR EXPERIENCE TO DATE**

In conjunction with the Emergency Operations Centre and the Emergency Management Team, the Office of Transformation and Strategy established a Lessons Learned /After-Action Report (**LLAAR**) Team to assist in the collection and analysis of information required for reporting purposes. It also serves as valuable input into the development of an Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency Strategy for the City post-COVID-19. The LLAAR Team has also been facilitating meetings and discussions across the organization regarding impacts to business operations, how COVID-19 has presented opportunities for changes in the way we do business and in documenting over 100 (and counting) innovations and process improvements since the onset of the pandemic.



Lessons Learned interviews were conducted with leaders (Deputy City Managers, Directors, Managers, Supervisors) and various staff across all portfolios and departments to better understand the impact COVID-19 has had on the City's staff and the services we deliver to our community. In addition, one-on-one interviews were conducted with the Mayor and all members of Council to obtain their input. Lastly, an all-staff survey was sent to all staff across the organization so they could provide their input.

Although a detailed Lessons Learned and After-Action Report will be provided to the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Committee and Council at a future date by the VFRS Chief and the EMT, attachment #6 provides an overview of the lessons learned approach, questions, and summary of the key themes that have been identified so far.

## **INNOVATION AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS**

Challenges presented by COVID-19 have impacted the City of Vaughan, as they have all organizations and industries worldwide, prompting a renewed urgency to examine the way we do business. In the spirit of resilience and resourcefulness, the City of Vaughan has proven to be able to quickly pivot, adapt and be nimble in its response to COVID-19 and its impact on our services and operations. Staff in every department across the organization have risen to the challenge to continue city building and the provision of quality public services to our citizens and our community.

Staff from across every portfolio and department have worked diligently and innovatively to develop **125** innovations and process improvements to date since the onset of COVID-19. These innovations and process improvements include virtual meetings, curbside services, on-line payment processing and electronic submissions. They have proven benefits in efficiencies, effectiveness and capacity building for the future.

An important takeaway from these learnings and adaptations, is identifying the sustainability of the change and embedding these new practices as a new baseline of operations in how we deliver service going forward. We do know that many of these changes - innovations, improvements, enhancements - will carry over to provide better value, higher levels of citizen service, lower costs or a combination of these.

Please refer to attachment #7 for a full report on all 125 innovations and process improvements.

## **Financial Impact**

This report does not have any financial impacts. A separate report is being provided to the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Committee by the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer and City Treasurer with full information regarding the financial impact of COVID-19.

## **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

The City of Vaughan continues to work with York Region and the York Region Public Health Unit throughout the COVID-19 emergency response.

## **Conclusion**

This report has provided the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful (RRR) Committee with information regarding the City's response to COVID-19. Information provided includes the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Roadmap for Success; an update from each portfolio on key actions in response to COVID-19; an assessment of the impact COVID-19 has had on the City's strategic directions; information regarding the impact COVID-19 has had on human resources and staffing; an overview of plans underway for business re-integration; a preliminary overview of the City's experiences and lessons learned to-date; and, information regarding various innovations and process improvements in response to COVID-19 to mitigate against service disruptions and to ensure city building continues.

As COVID-19 persists, City building continues. In addition to the efforts of the City staff and members of Council to date, the City will continue to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure the effective delivery of quality public services while ensuring the safety of our staff and residents.

**For more information, please contact:**

- Mary Reali, Acting City Manager and Deputy City Manager, Community Services and Acting Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management
- Wendy Law, Deputy City Manager, Administrative Services and City Solicitor
- Michael Coroneos, Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer and City Treasurer
- Zoran Postic, Deputy City Manager, Public Works
- Nick Spensieri, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development
- Kathy Kestides, Director Office of Transformation and Strategy
- Margie Singleton, Chief Executive Officer, Vaughan Public Libraries

## **Attachments**

1. Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Roadmap for Success
2. Portfolio Updates in Response to COVID-19
3. Impact of COVID-19 to 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan
4. Innovations and Process Improvements in Response to COVID-19
5. Human Resources and Staffing in Response to COVID-19
6. Business Integration Plan in Response to COVID-19
7. Lessons Learned

## **Prepared by**

Kathy Kestides, Director: Office of Transformation and Strategy ext. 8412