

PORTFOLIO UPDATES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Committee

June 23, 2020

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Portfolio Updates in Response to COVID-19

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES & CITY SOLICITOR PORTFOLIO

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

Impact on Business Objectives, People and Services

The business objectives for the Office of the City Clerk have remained largely unchanged. Council provided direction to proceed with a Ward Boundary Review and an RFP for consulting services has been released. An RFP related to an Electronic Content Management System was issued for consulting services for an updated strategy.

All counter services have been suspended. Where possible, and electronic delivery model has been employed. Core functions of the department have been maintained, and some supplementary services have resumed on a limited basis.

The majority of the staff are working from home, as much as possible. Staff need to attend City Hall to facilitate meetings of Council, Committee and Committee of Adjustment. Some services, such as Corporate Print and Mail Services and Archives and Records Management Services, can only continue with staff on-site, although in reduced numbers to respect social distancing and reduced workload demands.

Electronic-Participation Meetings

The Procedure By-law establishes the principles and rules to be used for meetings of Council and its Committees. The Procedure By-law enhances stakeholder participation, community involvement and opportunities for valuable input from the public, other stakeholders and relevant experts on matters that come before Council.

On March 17, 2020, Council approved amendments to Procedure By-law 7-2011, to facilitate electronic participation at Committee of the Whole and Council meetings on a trial basis. This was done as a proactive measure to allow electronic participation at Committee and Council meetings to the extent possible under the Municipal Act, at that time. Since then, Bill 187 had been enacted by the provincial government, which provided for greater extent of electronic participation than previously permitted.

On March 30, 2020, Council approved further amendments to the Procedure By-law to allow for electronic participation in Committee of the Whole and Council meetings for Council Members. On April 8, 2020, Council approved further amendments to the Procedure By-law to allow for electronic participation by Members of statutory, ad hoc and subcommittees.

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Since these amendments were made, all Committee of the Whole and Council meetings have taken place through electronic participation. A number of task forces and statutory Committees, such as Committee of Adjustment, Heritage Vaughan and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, have also held electronic meetings. A complete list of meetings is below:

<u>MEETING</u>	<u>MEETING DATE</u>
Special Council	March 17, March 30 (x2), April 8, June 9, June 11
Special Committee of the Whole	March 17, March 30 (x2), April 8
Special Committee of the Whole (Closed Session)	June 9, June 11
Council	April 21, May 27
Committee of the Whole (1)	June 9
Committee of the Whole (2)	April 21, May 20, June 16
Committee of the Whole (Closed Session)	April 21, May 20, June 16
Committee of the Whole (Working Session)	May 12
VMC Sub-Committee	May 27
Heritage Vaughan	May 25, June 10
Accessibility Advisory Committee	May 28
Committee of Adjustment	May 28, June 11
Effective Governance and Oversight Task Force	May 19
Transportation and Infrastructure Task Force	June 3
Total Number of Electronic Participation	30
Meetings	

Electronic Deputations

The Office of the City Clerk, in consultation with the Office of the Chief Information Officer, have made available to the public the ability to make electronic deputations at Committee and Statutory Committee meetings. Deputations can be made in writing, through the Skype for Business app, or by telephone.

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Electronic deputations have been successfully accommodated at Committee of the Whole, Heritage Vaughan and Committee of Adjustment meetings. Deputants have connected through the Skype app or by phone, and have been able to engage in two-way communication with Members of Council.

Curbside Marriage License Service

With the lessening of Provincial restrictions, there has been an increased demand for the issuance of marriage licenses. Marriage licenses are issued by municipalities and are required for a legal marriage ceremony. While the Province has not made any changes to the regulations related to marriage licenses that would make it easier to issue them via electronic means, staff have developed a process that minimizes in-person interaction between the applicant and City staff. The marriage license is ultimately issued to the applicant outside of City Hall, while the applicant remains in their vehicle, to ensure separation between the parties.

Burial Permits

As with marriage licenses, staff have developed a process that minimizes in-person interaction between funeral home staff and City staff. The model developed by Vaughan proved to mostly mirror the regulations issued by the Province when they updated their regulations to allow for more electronic sharing of documents for burial permits. Volume of this work has tripled compared to earlier in the year.

LEGAL SERVICES

From the outset of COVID-19 Legal Services was able to transition to a work from home deployment model to maintain operations, with minimal disruption to service levels. Legal has been actively monitoring all legislative changes and working with the respective functional departments to ensure that City policies and procedures are updated in a timely fashion, and that all contractual rights and obligations are properly monitored to determine potential financial and operational impacts upon operations.

During the past 3 months, Legal Services has been actively working with By-law Enforcement, Vaughan Fire and Rescue Services, Building Standards, Finance and the Office of the City Clerk to ensure that all the necessary Council reports and by-laws required to comply with and enforce all Provincial Orders and regulations issued pursuant to the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act were finalized and submitted in a timely fashion.

In collaboration with the Office of the City Clerk, Planning & Growth Management, and Financial Planning & Development, Legal Services continues to support the development community and facilitate continued City-building in Vaughan. Legal Services has played

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a key role in the continued efforts to implement development approvals, assistance with the processing and consideration of development applications, and continues to assist in responding to inquiries from the development community with a view to supporting the Province's economic recovery.

In addition, Legal Services has leveraged the time tracking system that was implemented in 2019 to monitor team effectiveness while working from home to ensure service levels continue to be achieved. As well, in order to overcome data access limitation that arose from the implementation of a work from home deployment model, Legal Services has undertaken a data migration initiative to ensure that all team members have access to the electronic documentation necessary to support their ongoing and assigned tasks and responsibilities. The leveraging of both technology and electronic documentation has allowed for the successful transition to a remote workplace.

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE PORTFOLIO

INTERNAL AUDIT

Internal Audit continues to support the Term of Council Priority of Good Governance, by executing the engagements on the Council approved 2020 Internal Audit Risk Based Work Plan, while providing risk-based advice on any emerging COVID-19 issues to Council and SLT.

Internal Audit has been successful at transitioning to working remotely to advance audit projects. However, there have been some challenges including accessing physical documents and being able to communicate with departments who are operationally stretched administering the City's pandemic response. We have been able to overcome these challenges by being adaptable, flexible and taking on additional value added activities, such as providing advice to the COVID-19 Sub-Committee Task Force regarding the City's Business Reintegration Plan and staying informed of COVID-19-related fraud schemes and communicating them to Council and the Senior Leadership Team.

Internal Audit was able to celebrate International Internal Audit Awareness Month which occurs every year in May. It provided a great opportunity to promote and raise awareness of the internal audit profession and the City's commitment to accountability and transparency. This commitment is demonstrated in my ways, including having an independent internal audit function, the Anonymous Reporting System, an Integrity Commissioner, the Lobbyist Registrar, the Vaughan Accord and much more. Internal Audit continues to support the City by evaluating and providing recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of risk management and control activities and continues to administrator of the Anonymous Reporting System.

CORPORATE AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Vaughan's Corporate and Strategic Communications (CSC) department has employed all of its channels to ensure stakeholders – both external and internal – are well informed about the City's response and what they need to know.

The following is a snapshot of the communications issued by CSC from March 13-May 24, 2020:

- 78 public service announcements (PSAs)
- 10 news releases

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- 17 Mayor's communications (includes statements, keynote address and messages)
- 27 staff communications (includes City Manager communications, general staff updates from CSC)
- 95 special City Update eNewsletters
- 143 communications to Council (includes 104 council communications packages, communication update emails and constituent responses)
- An average of 326 social media posts across the City's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts have averaged approximately 670,000 impressions
- 43 Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) communications (includes memos and letters to provincial Ministry offices and daily IGR updates to Council)
- 3 voice-recorded household phone messages from the Mayor
- 1 special edition of City Hall Connects – a hard-copy newsletter sent to all homes and businesses in Vaughan

These efforts have resulted in approximately 84 COVID-19-related Vaughan-focused media products generated from news outlets (news articles, radio and television interviews). In preparation for these media opportunities, approximately 71 different media briefs were prepared.

The following is a snapshot of the webpage metrics from March 13-May 24:

- The dedicated COVID-19 webpage at vaughan.ca/COVID19 received 38,402 page visits
- The Newsroom page on vaughan.ca (vaughan.ca/news) has received 2,840 page visits

The following is a snapshot of the creative services CSC has produced to May 24:

- 125 special signage/displays
- 122 web graphic pieces
- 428 social media graphics
- 195 graphic pieces for City Update eNewsletters and media products
- 28 pieces for ads (example: social media ad campaigns)
- 34 photographs have been taken for graphic/creative pieces
- 95 multimedia videos
- 282 graphics for Council communications
- Total products created to May 24 is 1,309

What are our results – successes, challenges, innovations

The CSC team transitioned to working from home seamlessly, responding to issues and providing support around the clock from day one. The entire department has come

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together to ensure it continues to provide high-quality communications recognizing that although COVID-19 has been the focus and priority, city-building continues in Vaughan and all departments rely on CSC for communications direction.

Staff have faced some technology challenges with computer equipment and network access and have worked with the Office of the Chief Information Officer to rectify these matters.

Throughout the COVID-19 response, CSC has been committed to providing a range of communications to ensure messages are delivered in a timely manner. Through effective media relations, leveraging all channels available and always looking for new opportunities, this goal continues to be achieved.

OFFICE OF TRANSFORMATION and STRATEGY

In immediate response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Office of Transformation and Strategy (OTS) adjusted all corporate deadlines regarding a number of key initiatives in recognition of the Senior Leadership Team's needed focus on critical services in response to COVID-19.

This included strategic plan progress reporting, 2021 business plan development, 2021 business case submissions, corporate performance measures reporting, and service excellence project prioritization sessions. Where these initiatives and reports originally were to be submitted in March and April, deadlines were delayed to mid to late May. This provided internal capacity for management time to focus on the COVID response. OTS staff then worked closely with all departments across the organization to assess the impact of COVID on department business objectives and key activities related to the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

The Office of Transformation and Strategy was able to adjust its service delivery and mobilized supports in direct response to the crisis. In conjunction with Fire Chief Deryn Rizzi, Sharon Walker and the Emergency Management Team, the OTS established two teams: a COVID-19 Data and Analytics Team and a Lessons Learned/After-Action Report Team.

The COVID-19 Data and Analytics Team is focused on building a data model and dashboard housing all COVID-19-related data including case counts, inquiries and issues, VFRS response, economic development impacts, lessons learned, internal department impacts, corporate communication efforts, tracking of inquiries, quantitative and qualitative research and analysis.

The Lessons Learned/After-Action Report Team is tracking and documenting events, activities and decisions, which is important to the continuous improvement opportunities from any emergency events we manage. The team developed a framework for

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information collection and for the elements that will be required for the eventual post-event report that will need to be provided to the Province and our Council. The team has conducted two rounds of lessons learned interviews obtaining inputs from over 100 staff (senior leaders, managers and staff) One-on-one interviews were also conducted with the Mayor and Members of Council to obtain their input/feedback. In addition, an all-staff on-line survey was conducted from May 1st - May 15th which captured input from 705 respondents regarding their impressions on the City's response to COVID-19 from a staffing perspective.

People /HR Impact:

The entire Transformation and Strategy team has been effectively working from home since March 16th and has been able to conduct all its work through virtual meetings and facilitated group sessions via Skype or Office 365 Teams. Staff have felt safe and protected while also being highly productive.

Innovations:

The OTS is also responsible for providing City staff with training and guidance in project management, change management, innovation and business process improvement. The team was able to quickly pivot to provide these services virtually through e-based learning formats. In addition, the launch of the Enterprise Project and Change Management Office and all related tools, templates and reporting formats was launched virtually with all documents available to everyone in the organization on-line.

ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Economic and Cultural Development (ECD) was ready for COVID-19 and have supported hundreds of businesses, artists, and cultural organizations, reaching thousands more via newsletters.

ECD's business plan, focused on creating a climate for job creation, advancing projects that create economic opportunity, and enriching our communities through arts and culture allowed the department to quickly respond to the crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In direct response to the COVID-19 crisis, ECD has:

- Maintained frontline services: more than one thousand local businesses through the end of May 2020 by resolving inquiries and delivering consultations
- Kept our business community informed: converted our webpage to a one-stop resource and information centre on emerging and available programs in response to COVID-19

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- Kept our business community informed: launched sector-specific e-newsletters that were release twice per week. Eighty-nine newsletters were released in the first two months of the pandemic with a thirty percent open rate to thousands of recipients

Economic and Cultural Development has been proactive in building resilience in the business and cultural communities.

To equip our business and arts communities to withstand the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, ECD has:

- Launched the Vaughan Business Action Plan to provide relief to the hospitality industry, make the delivery of goods easier, and maintain frontline business advisory services
- Created the Digital Boost program to help bricks and mortar small business adopt digital technology to continue business operations despite limitations to in-person commerce
- Established the visitvaughan.ca webpage to help visitors explore Vaughan now and visit later
- Digitized and expanded the Corporate Art collection with two new exhibitions since the beginning of April
- Conducted Corporate Calling programs to support the development of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), contacting more than seventy companies to ensure that they were aware of Ontario Together and York Region's PPE supply initiative
- Partnered to deliver webinars with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, the Vaughan Public Libraries, NiagaraU, and ventureLAB delivering more than twenty sessions to thousands of viewers
- Been an active partner in the York Region Business Support partnership with the Region's nine municipalities and chambers of commerce to support supply-chains, the agri-food industry, tourism and hospitality, and our small business community.

ECD was quick to adopt digital methods for service delivery.

ECD quickly recognized the need to deliver services online. Staff immediately began delivering all business advisory services via Skype or telephone. In addition, we reallocated available resources to ensure that all frontline staff had access to corporate phones.

Similarly, we partnered with local groups like the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce and NiagaraU to deliver webinars in lieu of our traditional in-person seminar offerings.

Economic and Cultural Development's (ECD) operations seamlessly transitioned to adopt alternative work arrangements.

ECD's full staff compliment began working from home the week of March 16, 2020. Staff have been utilizing the full suite of MSOffice tools and remain productive, pushing forward strategic initiatives like the Vaughan Mackenzie Healthcare Precinct study and the City's new economic development brand, in addition to responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

For the Ready, Resilient, and Resourceful Committee of Council, ECD has detailed an amendment to its existing business plan to pivot tactics within existing goals to help the business community transition to a post-COVID world.

More information on the above initiatives can be found in ECD's report to the Ready, Resilient, and Resourceful Committee, June 23, 2020.

The report demonstrates that ECD has developed a forward-thinking approach that will enable the department to deliver programming, outreach and education, marketing, and research to:

- Secure Vaughan as the Region's largest employment centre through programs that will help our business owners build resiliency into their businesses and adapt to the new normal
- Enhance Vaughan's key strategic economic drivers like our downtown commercial zone, manufacturing and logistics, the Mackenzie Vaughan healthcare precinct, and the tourism industry to create opportunities in a post-COVID world
- Share Vaughan's reanimated public spaces within social distancing measures and invite the community to experience the cultural fabric of Vaughan as the COVID-19 pandemic subsides through public art and cultural development, and highlight Vaughan as a welcoming community

ECD's tactics will work across three phases during and after the:

- Ready: started on March 17, 2020
- Resilient: measures meant to help businesses ramp up operations
- Resourceful: long-term projects and tools to help our businesses and economy withstand future crises.

COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO

ACCESS VAUGHAN

Access Vaughan (AV) the City of Vaughan's contact centre, plays a crucial role in the City's daily operations by providing accurate and timely information to citizens. The team of dedicated agents continues to respond Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., while our third-party service provider team responds overnight and on weekends to ensure citizens receive a live answer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Access Vaughan, with assistance from the Office of the Chief Information Officer, successfully deployed 94% of the entire team to work from home. One agent continues to work from City Hall in a safe and secure space to ensure additional continuity in the contact centre's service delivery. Moving forward, AV will continue to work with partners within the corporation to assure that agents have what is required in the alternative work environment to deliver excellent service to Vaughan citizens.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in the City of Vaughan, some 11 weeks ago, AV agents have received over 40,000 calls and responded to 3,000 emails. Overnight and on weekends, agents have received over 1,500 calls, ensuring that municipal emergencies are addressed immediately by on-call staff.

Together with the Office of Transformation and Strategy, as well as partners throughout the organization, AV is working towards launching the one-stop-shop counter service. This service will improve and enhance service delivery through one focused area. Furthermore, it will create efficiencies through process improvements and innovations. Lastly, it will ensure a safe and secure space for staff and for citizens visiting City Hall.

BY-LAW AND COMPLIANCE, LICENSING AND PERMIT SERVICES

Shortly after the state of emergency was declared on March 17, By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services (BCLPS) began monitoring COVID-19 related activity to identify patterns in non-compliance during the pandemic and to be better able to provide regulatory relief where necessary. In the first week of the emergency, BCLPS:

- Closed counter operations, discontinued certain services (such as issuance of special event permits) and began to offer remaining services by phone (such as screenings) or by e-mail (such as new licenses and renewals); and
- Modified its delivery of animal services, limiting public access to the animal shelter and discontinuing outreach programs. Reduced services also applied to services under contract to King and Richmond Hill.

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As the emergency concluded its first month, BCLPS:

- Had fleet vehicles from other departments redeployed to BCLPS, as Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) were deployed to enforce *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA) orders and Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) were deployed 7-days a week to provide support to the field;
- In conjunction with the City Solicitor, introduced COVID-19 Emergency Measures (CEM) By-law 037-2020 on April 8, giving the Mayor statutory powers (such as passing by-laws) and delegating certain authorities to the City Manager (such as cancelling, reducing or deferring fees and charges) and the Director (prohibiting or regulating access to City facilities); and
- Launched “Operation Guardian” on April 17 to provide a systematically proactive enforcement approach and initiated the Parks Education Teams through a redeployment from Recreation Services to provide park-usage data (nearly 51,000 people, across 20 parks, over four weeks) and educate the public (over 1,300 contacts) on City COVID-19 related policies and measures.

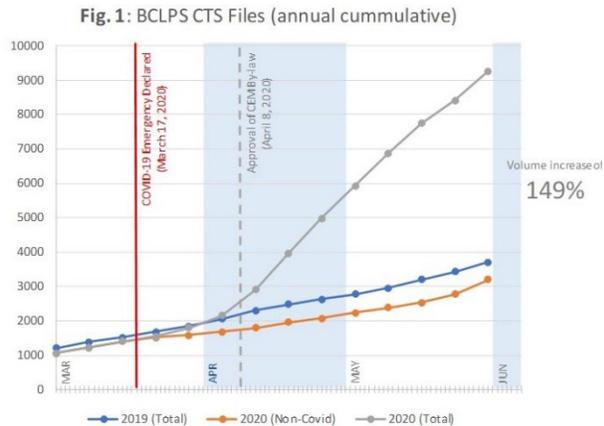
Throughout the emergency, BCLPS has supported residents and businesses by:

- Deferring payment of licensing fee renewals (up to 180 days) and disputed administrative penalties (90 days);
- Launching “Open for Business”, in conjunction with Economic and Cultural Development, and Corporate and Strategic Communications (and with over 200 business submissions to date); and
- In conjunction with Development Planning, Building Standards and Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service, recommending regulatory relief for eating establishment owners to create or expand existing patios. This initiative is subject to approval of by-laws by Council and permission by the Province for eating establishments to provide eat-in services.

The emergency has had a significant impact on departmental operations. Enforcement efforts have focused on COVID-19 related issues (i.e., the enforcement of the EMCPA and the CEM By-law), in particular park and shopping plaza patrols (litter and waste) and responding to complaints from the public, resulting in higher case file numbers (an increase of 149% over last year), but lower enforcement activity in other areas, especially parking (*see Figures 1 and 2*).

Despite the much higher number of case files, overall enforcement effort has not increased significantly, as most COVID-19 related case files relate to proactive patrols.

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The impact on business has been overwhelming with many businesses not being able to operate or being highly restricted in their operations. The result has been a collapse in the issuance of new licenses and license renewals since the emergency declaration (see Figure 3).

Despite a very significant drop in the number of penalty notices issued, the number of screenings has experienced an increase of 24%, likely due in part to a number of factors, including the ability to dispute penalties over the phone and media attention on the suspension of enforcement in other jurisdictions (see Figure 4).



BCLPS continues to respond in a timely way to legislative developments, evolving social trends and community needs while balancing these efforts with fiscal responsibility and the overall public interest.

RECREATION SERVICES

Effective March 14 at 5 p.m., Recreation Services (RS) closed community centres and the City Playhouse Theatre to the public to protect the health and safety of our citizens and staff during these unprecedented times. To date, Recreation Services has cancelled the following:

- March Break Camps and Spring Recreational programming
- On-site Concerts in the Park series and other on-site City-led events until further notice
- Vaughan fitness facilities until further notice
- Outdoor and indoor permits until further notice
- Audience-attended shows at the City Playhouse Theatre until the end of August
- Thornhill Outdoor swimming pool, Group Swim lessons at community centres, recreational swimming programs including aqua fitness and lane swims until the end of August
- All recreational drop-in programs including youth, adult and older adult activities until the end of August

Recreation Services has encouraged work-from-home arrangements where operationally feasible and has introduced safety measures for those staff required to be on-site, including creating work zones and dedicating staff to certain locations within facilities to ensure physical distancing.

During the facility closures, the department is conducting deep cleaning and disinfecting of all areas within our community centres, and advancing work scheduled for later in the year, such as pool shutdowns, fitness centre and preventative maintenance, in an effort to minimize future service disruptions. Commercial grade cleaning and disinfectants system are used to ensure surfaces are clean from germs and bacteria, while ensuring proper cleaning with appropriate products for various surfaces. Additional standing hand sanitizers and disinfectant wipes have been ordered for entrance/exits to encourage regular and effective hand washing and educational signage for proper use of hand sanitizers has been posted.

On April 27, a number of RS employees were redeployed to the BCLPS department as Parks Education Team Members at assigned parks to educate how to reduce the spread of COVID-19, answer citizen questions, and notify BCLPS Enforcement Officers if they observe any infractions.

A new webpage featuring virtual RS resources was developed to assist Vaughan residents and staff to manage their physical and mental health while social and physical distancing. These include home workouts with Vaughan fitness instructors, first aid basics from lifeguards, singing songs with Vaughan playschool instructors, and acting, dancing and singing skills practice with our theatre crew. Through our social media channels, RS has posted hundreds of videos to keep our community engaged and active. The department continues to provide many virtual campaigns and challenges with chances to win various prizes.

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In addition, RS introduced their Fitness Equipment Loaner Program, whereby fitness members can borrow small fitness equipment to continue working on their fitness goals at home.

Recreation Services in collaboration with Vaughan Public Libraries are leading the *Community Wellness Task Force* that focuses on priorities and initiatives to provide resources for health and wellness for the residents of Vaughan. *#TogetherVaughan* is an online portal designed in support of community wellness to keep our residents engaged and living their best life, regardless of circumstances, and spreading positivity around our community.

Recreation Services has introduced the Virtual Summer Adventures series this summer to keep kids active, engaged and entertained. City instructors will livestream popular summer camp activities and recreational programs remotely via Zoom.

Recreation Services' Events team is working diligently on Vaughan's first-ever virtual Canada Day celebration. This will allow Vaughan residents to mark this popular and much-anticipated event safely from the comfort of their homes, with exciting performances, activities and surprise shout outs from Vaughan loving celebrities.

On June 4, 2020, Recreation Services introduced a new organizational design that will strengthen the department's position to deliver on Council priorities and the Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

VAUGHAN FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

The work of Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS) is critical and essential to the health and safety of the community, and the dedicated team continues to serve 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Many of the components of their work have legislative implications, and they are ensuring they address public fire protection and safety issues. Fire codes and standards play an important part in making the City of Vaughan safe.

Firefighters are part of a tiered response system and provide emergency medical services; they play a vital role in responding to requests for assistance, triaging patients and providing emergency medical assessment and support for ill persons.

VFRS prides itself on being prepared for any scenario. Although SARS and Ebola taught us important lessons, COVID-19 continues to evolve and tests our operational playbook. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Boucher, the VFRS Medical Director, has altered, or in some cases suspended, some of our medical directives to fall in line with Public Health and Provincial Base Hospital guidelines. These changes are in effect to help protect staff from the possibility of an increased risk of exposure

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during resuscitation and medical procedures. Some of the more significant changes include; suspension of the Salbutamol (Ventolin) directive, hands only CPR and a change to the defibrillation algorithm for pre-hospital cardiac arrest, modified PPE and assessment guidelines designed to maximize physical distancing while still providing quality and timely interventions.

The COVID-19 Data and Analytics team was set up the first week of April on behalf of Chief Rizzi, the Manager of Emergency Planning and the EMT with the main focus of building a dashboard housing all COVID-19 related data. VFRS has partnered with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and the Office of Transformation and Strategy (OTS) to analyze VFRS' COVID-19 screened positive calls (callers identifying signs and symptoms for COVID-19) using incident data, ESRI Insights software and Environics data. As the world copes with COVID-19, the field of data analytics is very relevant for a fundamental reason. The data available to us that helps us understand and respond to this crisis is growing by the minute in volume, variety, veracity, and velocity. As we review, standardize, organize, and synthesize massive amounts of information to find insights, identify relevant patterns, it tells a story and helps us make informed predictions. In times of uncertainty, this discipline can be critical in inspiring societal and behavioural changes such as physical distancing, evaluating the effectiveness of the public health strategies, public education and communications strategies, *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA) enforcement, tactics implemented in different wards and fire districts and helps us identify best practices quickly. In this time of COVID-19, data analytics can be used to solve problems, achieve goals, and contribute to society. By looking at modelling and following the advice of expert analysts, we can all work together to flatten the curve of this pandemic.

A dashboard was created which tracks data not only in Vaughan, but also on a provincial and federal level. This dashboard also includes operational level data from the City's departments with respect to their response efforts. For example, data related to VFRS response, corporate communication efforts, Access Vaughan call data to name a few. This team is also responsible for conducting research which the Vaughan Public Libraries team members provide on a weekly basis. In April, the team's research focused on treatments, testing, companies retooling efforts, and provincial restrictions. In mid-April the research focused on triggers related to the re-opening of cities and countries. The month of May, the team began researching vaccine testing and socioeconomic impacts. Most recently the team is researching Ontario announcements and local municipality openings.

The dashboard is automated to update daily by pulling data from the York Region website and provincial and federal sources. From this dashboard, the team provides reports to senior leaders in the organization that provides insightful information to assist in decision making during these unprecedented times. Currently the team is pulling a daily report that displays the % of total cases in Vaughan over a 14-day and 21-day period that is provided to senior leaders in order to examine if the City is at or below 1%

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for a sustained time period. The team also provides a 5-day rolling average that mimics the provinces litmus test. This smooths the spikes and provides another picture of the curve in Vaughan.

The Analytics team also conducted geo analytics by mapping out positive COVID-19 emergency calls by community in Vaughan and mapping out institution outbreaks and locale businesses with known outbreaks such as that at local grocery stores. Most recently, the team layered in a chronology of significant events and holidays to the COVID-19 graphs to determine if there are any correlations to government/City announcements on the spread of COVID-19. The team has recently highlighted a spike in cases post Mother's Day. The data analytics includes a population (100k) comparison which has shown Vaughan having the most active cases per 100,000 population within York Region. The operational level data has informed us that City-building continues during this time. Building inspections are higher than this time last year as are permits issued by Development Engineering. The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre data shows how the population keeps growing at a fast pace, over the targets in some cases. The data also indicates that departments have pivoted in their approach to their service offerings and embraced technology. As our organization moves to a more outcome-based approach to our planning and evidence-based decision making, the utilization of this dashboard and the analytics is integral to this success.

Our Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service department was featured in the Vaughan Citizen, with the headline "[We're still there for people.](#)" This was a feel-good story which highlights the commitment of our team to serving our community each and every day. Our proactive COVID-19 testing of asymptomatic firefighters was also highlighted in "[Dozens of Vaughan firefighters begin voluntary COVID-19 testing.](#)"

The *COVID-19 Task Force* has evolved since inception in March 2020. There were a lot of moving parts and operational tasks to complete, requests for input and approvals from the Senior Leadership Team – Executive (SLT-E), and push out to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in the beginning of the declared pandemic. Since then, most operational challenges have been resolved. The *Task Force* has since identified a need to branch off into a sub-task force in order to plan our operations for a "new-normal" state. This *Sub-Task Force* has created a playbook that has already seen measures implemented for when we do have staff/citizens return to our facilities. When the decision comes to begin transitioning back to a traditional model, it is anticipated the *COVID-19 Task Force* will once again be tasked with operational decisions and tasks. Overall, the *COVID-19 Task Force* has allowed for interdepartmental relationships and knowledge to be shared in order to streamline operations.

CORPORATE SERVICES, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER & CITY TREASURER

All areas within Corporate Services - the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO), Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), Finance Planning Development Finance (FPDF), Financial Services (FS) and Procurement Services (PS) worked diligently to minimize service disruptions and enable the organization to ensure the delivery of Service Excellence to our citizens, from the beginning of the pandemic.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

As provincial directives were issued encouraging people to work from home, where operationally feasible, OCHRO and OCIO worked tirelessly to enable the deployment of alternative work arrangements.

Throughout the pandemic, OCHRO has supported staff with important messaging, policy direction and informative Q's & A's to assist with a variety of HR issues, including but not limited to: proper ergonomic set up; work-from-home guidelines to assist people leaders in effectively managing their team remotely; dealing with sick leaves and emergency leaves; managing child care issues; work from home information on Bill 186 leaves under the ESA as well as how childcare issues can be addressed if school closures continue for an extended period.

An Emergency Response committee was struck with CUPE, with a mandate to address Collective Agreement issues to ensure business continuity during the declared emergency. The membership includes the Acting Chief Human Resources Officer, two Human Resources Managers, the Director of By-law and the Director of Environmental Services as well as the CUPE Executive and CUPE National Representative.

The OCHRO worked with their counterparts across the region, the City of Toronto and other GTA municipalities, as well as senior levels of government discussing the response to COVID-19 and approaches to staffing impacts seeking alignment. There was consistency for the most part amongst our municipal partners with respect to handling layoffs, emergency leaves and redeployments. There was also consistency in the postponement of collective bargaining during the COVID-19 emergency response.

With the closure of facilities and the reduced income generated, actions were taken to ensure financial sustainability in the future, including considering what expenditures can be immediately stopped or deferred and staffing reductions, as appropriate. While every reasonable attempt was made to keep staff employed and whole from a pay perspective, temporary layoffs resulted for almost 1200 non-essential staff that were unable to work from home were made in concert with CUPE on April 6, 2020.

As part of the next phase in assessing longer term staffing impacts, the OCHRO developed a framework to ensure consistency on how redeployment opportunities were assessed and operationalized.

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Currently, only business critical recruitment and hiring is occurring, and any recruitment activity must be approved by the DCM. As well, where possible, when attrition or a contract ends, that position is not being filled.

The OCHRO is working on a reintegration plan and is nearing completion of Phase 1 of the Business Reintegration Strategy. In this regard, staff have conducted multiple on-site visits to assist departments with changes to work areas and pathways to ensure physical distancing and appropriate health and safety measures. OCHRO has worked with Legal, Facilities Management and OHS.

OCHRO is working with Recreation Services on a project plan to address staffing needs moving forward.

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FINANCE (FPDF)

FPDF has worked with each City department to estimate the financial impact due to COVID-19, with an initial focus on tax-supported operating impacts, ensuring cash-flow and liquidity projections remain sound. External market impacts (e.g. interest rate reductions) have been closely monitored to assess the impact on City's investment portfolio, executing near-and-mid-term adjustments as required.

Staff also worked with City departments to establish cost savings/deferral measures to help mitigate known and anticipated revenue shortfalls, while working to refine and enhance a spending restrictions framework.

FPDF staff have supported the City's efforts to lobby senior levels of government for financial support and on-going policy development. Staff worked on approach and assumptions across the York 9 municipalities prior to submission of a consolidated York Region response to City of Toronto and the GTHA. Staff continue to monitor funding relief and financial levers made available from other levels of government.

FPDP staff worked with all departments to assess delivery and cash flow timing of all 2020 capital projects. There will be continued focus on managing timing of non-essential capital project spend through the balance of 2020 and into 2021.

Timelines and guiding principles for the 2021 Budget cycle have been established. Budget kick-off is planned for June with approval targeted by Festive closure. The 2021 budget will be approached with a mindset geared towards conservatism, flexibility and sustainability. All initiatives will be prioritized prudently with focus on legislated deliverables, business continuity and service-level stabilization.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

In an effort to offer financial support, Financial Services extended the deadline to apply for the Elderly Home-Owners Tax Assistance program to May 15, marking the latest in a series of measures introduced to provide relief to seniors and help ease the burden caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As well, on May 13, a PSA was posted advising residents of the waiver extension of late penalties on interim tax bills until July 1, and the 30-day deferral of the final instalment dates.

High call volumes are being experienced by Property Tax staff regarding the tax instalment penalty waiver, with a greater percentage of tier two calls coming from Access Vaughan, as these require specific expertise/action by tax staff.

Staff also addressed actions on canceling the W/WW rate increase and a 60-day stormwater deferral, which were brought forward to a special Council meeting for consideration.

Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) data collection forms, in cooperation with Economic Development and OCIO have been developed and posted on-line for Hotels to provide essential data for the Tourism Vaughan Corporation (TVC). This data will be used by TVC to assist in shaping the City's tourism recovery plan and monitor the continuing impact COVID-19 is having on the tourism industry. The City has extended the suspension of the Municipal Accommodation Tax until September 1, 2020.

Additional volumes were experienced regarding the account set up and payment of Recreation Services (RS) refunds for program cancellations.

Financial Services, Financial Planning, and Procurement Services initiated a process to track all purchases and expenditures associated with the City's response efforts.

To accommodate alternative work arrangements, as staff practice social-distancing in response to the COVID-19 virus, Accounts Payable temporarily revised procedures to allow the City to continue to process payments. Where signatures were normally required for A/P processing and creating and updating vendors, approvals through email routing were allowed.

At the same time Financial Services has successfully implemented a number of finance modernization automation initiatives, including:

- completing the primary phase of the Payroll Transition project and are mobilizing work on future near-term enhancements to payroll administration
- successfully automating the Records of Employment (ROE) process enabling 1,318 ROE's to be successfully submitted to Service Canada, ensuring that employees can apply for EI without any delay.
- streamlining the expense reimbursement process for staff. Instead of receiving a separate cheque for their reimbursement, staff will now receive their payment

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together with their bi-weekly pay. This new process will reduce processing time as well as cheque printing costs.

Lending support to various departments, Financial Services has also assisted in operationalizing the online Amanda portal, Curbside Marriage initiative, as well as completing a cash receipts review at the Joint Operations Centre.

Financial Services has been working on cash flow and 2020 property tax payment schedules. York Region will waive interest until January 1, 2021 on any portion of 2020 property tax instalments not remitted to the region as a direct result of a local municipality's COVID-19 response.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER (OCIO)

The City has planned and invested in a robust, resilient and flexible IT infrastructure that enables our administration to respond rapidly in case of emergencies. During the outbreak of

COVID-19, the City enhanced remote access capabilities and assisted in enabling City employees to access major business systems, corporate files, emails, telecommunications and video conferencing. The City's technology team supported departments with their business continuity plans to minimize the impact to residents.

The following services and capabilities highlight some of the major COVID-19 accomplishments:

1. Implemented electronic participation for the Office of the City Clerk to conduct virtual Committee and Council meetings.
2. Enabled over 1,300 users (70% of staff) to work from home.
3. Set up Access Vaughan Citizen Service Representatives and other departments requiring call center telephony to take calls from home.
4. Launched the Citizen Portal for residents and businesses to eliminate paper submissions at the Building Standards counter, as well as enable staff to download electronic files for review to improve productivity.
5. Provided resources to COVID-19 Data Analytics team.
6. Mobilized the By-Law and Compliance department and Building Standards department through the acquisition and deployment of hardware devices.
7. Implemented internal digital signature capability to assist with electronic approvals for remote workers.
8. Collaborating with Recreation Services department to implement Virtual Activities such as summer camps and virtual fitness classes through the acquisition of hardware and software.
9. Implemented new security measures to protect network accounts from phishing attempts against employees.

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10. Substantially increased Internet bandwidth to accommodate for a higher video conferencing demand.

The City's OCIO department continues to support new COVID-19 related requests and ongoing operations to serve our citizens and businesses.

PROCUREMENT SERVICES

Procurement Services explored all sources and channels to arrange for PPE and supplies for front-line workers, securing surgical masks for Public Works, Building Inspections and Facility Management staff and N95 masks for Fire and Rescue Services to enhance staff health, safety and morale.

Procurement Services was able to completely automate procurement processes both internally and externally with the vendor community and continued to perform business as usual with efficient and effective improved processes during the pandemic.

Procurement Services also worked with Infrastructure Development, Public Works and Legal Services to review the impact of Ontario's expanded list of non-essential businesses on the City's construction projects employing risk mitigation to ensure delivery of City's projects.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

To complement and support the various strategies implemented by the City, outlined below are some of the numerous actions, measures, tactics and initiatives undertaken by the Infrastructure Development portfolio to effectively manage the COVID-19 crisis as it related to advancing infrastructure and construction projects, sustaining and enhancing municipal buildings, sites and operations, and more importantly, looking after the City of Vaughan's most important assets, our people:

Employed Measures to Inhibit Virus Transmission | Service Delivery & People

From the onset of the COVID pandemic, the team took on the challenge and privilege of maintaining and protecting City assets, with a focus on the health and safety of our colleagues, citizens and the community at large. Since mid-March, along with delivering core programs and services to sustain City facilities, the team worked diligently - going above and beyond with *no break in service delivery* - to employ new strategies to specifically react to COVID concerns. Based on growing evidence that building sciences can be employed at facilities to inhibit the transmission of the virus, various actions were taken to clean and disinfect at increased frequencies; reinforce health and safety protocols; complete preventative maintenance; replacement/upgrade of filters for HVAC; deep specialized disinfecting of VFRS fleet; increased building humidity levels, fresh air circulation.

Developed New Contingency Plans & Programs | Service Delivery

Developed and implemented contingency plans, including enhanced cleaning and disinfecting programs; introducing engineering interventions, based on building sciences, to inhibit the transmission of the virus; enforcing health and safety protocols and provincial workplace guidelines; reviewing, assessing and revising property management works such as standards, guidelines, protocols, techniques, processes and products; and, employing innovative solutions to improve the condition and safety of all City sites.

Advanced City & Partnership Infrastructure Projects | Business Objectives

To sustain, enhance and expand Vaughan facilities and amenities, the ID portfolio actively advanced all master plans, environmental assessments, feasibility studies and design assignments. With support to our community partners Ministry of Transportation (MTO), Metrolinx and York Region, progress continued on the Highway 427 Expansion, Rutherford GO Station Expansion, and the Major Mackenzie Drive Widening (W of Pine Valley Dr.).

Enhanced Communications | People & Business Objectives

The ID management team hosted bi-weekly virtual "Team Huddles" and employed SharePoint Discussion Boards to maintain vital connections with staff across the portfolio. These conversations helped to inform, engage, resolve, recognize and celebrate as staff continued to work from home (Alternate Work Arrangements), and move forward together. ID staff quickly adapted by embracing technology (SKYPE and

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Teams site) to communicate with colleagues, reach out to stakeholders as well as meet with consultants. Where safely possible, field visits continued at essential workplaces/construction sites.

Assessed & Identified Essential Projects | Business Objectives

Consulted with Legal Services in the review of 93 ID projects with respect to essential/non-essential classification in compliance with the [Ontario Government's Essential Workplaces](#); subsequently, 91% of ID projects were not impacted.

Implemented Strategic Approaches to Uphold Healthy Buildings | Service Delivery

To uphold and advance “healthy” municipal buildings while facing new and unprecedented challenges, the department shifted its focus to respond to this ongoing crisis, taking a number of strategic actions and preventive measures, demonstrating resilience through adversity. We enhanced cleaning frequency; expended 25,000 disinfecting wipes; installed 365 high-efficiency HVAC filters; distributed 12,500 PPEs; dispensed more than 500 litres of hand sanitizer and cleaned and disinfected 21 VFRS fleet vehicles.

Completed Facility Renewals & Repairs | Business Objectives

Taking full advantage of imposed facility closures, the team managed more than 40 renovation projects at various City buildings – from arena refrigeration upgrades and facility renewals, to life safety sprinkler replacements and roof repairs, all to sustain and enhance sites for full operation when they re-open. Projects proceeded in compliance with provincial directives and workplace restrictions.

Developed New Rent Relief Program | People

Recognizing the economic hardship that City building closures have placed on our not-for-profit tenants during the pandemic, a Temporary Rent Relief Program was developed allowing the deferral of rent payments for all not-for-profit City tenants for a 3-month period, April to June 2020. This program was approved by Council on April 8, 2020.

Advanced City Infrastructure Projects & Initiatives | Business Objectives & Service Delivery

The ID portfolio continued to closely monitor this fluid situation as it related to the progression of essential City-building projects during this pandemic while adhering to the [Ontario Government's Essential Workplaces](#). Critical projects such as North Maple Regional Park, Carville Community Centre, Library & District Park, Clark Avenue Bike Paths, Vaughan Transportation Plan, Land Acquisition Strategy, Integrated Urban Water Master Plan, were all advanced accordingly.

Employed Program Management Process to Effectively Respond | Business Objectives & Service Delivery

Prior to the pandemic, the ID Program Management Office (PMO) developed and launched an ID Program Management Process to enhance and expedite the delivery of projects across the portfolio. The process encompasses best practices, escalation

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procedures, a regular reporting structure, and issue management. The team was ready to respond to COVID, treating it as an issue within each project and risks surrounding COVID were identified with mitigation strategies as staff continued to advance project delivery during unparalleled times.

Conducted Financial Assessment | Business Objectives

As part of the Program Management Process, cash flow assessments were conducted on active Capital projects managed by the portfolio – which reconfirmed the importance of these key City-building projects in supporting the City’s growth and recovery efforts; supplemented existing ID Program Management Office proactive practices that foster data-driven decision-making; and, resulted in informed considerations to bring forward as the Corporation looks to responsibly offset COVID-19 financial impacts.

Leveraged & Enhanced Internal Systems to Pivot | Business Objectives

The team leveraged and enhanced existing project reporting systems, portfolio management metrics and increased communications for effective oversight to facilitate issue identification and resolution. Effective internal systems and processes provided a solid foundation with the agility to quickly pivot to respond to the new and evolving business demands.

As the portfolio looks to the future with optimism, the entire team continues to do its part to support City growth with the advancement of essential Capital construction projects to benefit our great city and cultivate economic recovery. Investing in infrastructure is ultimately about investing in people – helping to ease the flow of people and goods; delivering parks, sports and leisure spaces for families to play and stay healthy; and, upholding water and wastewater systems for the community to enjoy clean water and pristine environments.

Workforce Reintegration Plan | People

Through a sub-committee of the City’s COVID-19 Emergency Task Force, the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer and Facility Management have led the development of a Business Reintegration Plan (BRP) to help support and shape the transition to the new “normal” workplace for City staff. To inform a comprehensive reintegration plan, the sub-committee completed the necessary background work and has developed an extensive draft plan for current review and feedback.

The BRP plan will help guide the Corporation to best prepare for the return of employees, while ensuring the transition is both safe and efficient. It covers key areas of action with consideration given to business models and any associated modifications, customer service and experience (citizens and businesses), provincial directives, as well as Corporate policies (i.e. Alternate Work Arrangements).

The BRP comprises three Start-Up phases, providing clear direction to help guide the Corporation to best prepare for the return of employees to municipal facilities, while ensuring the transition is both safe and efficient. Phase One outlines seven key areas of

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consideration – Administrative; Cleaning and Disinfecting; Personal Protective Equipment; Workplace Layout and Physical Distancing; Case Response/Management; Visitors, Contractors and Suppliers; and, Inbound Parcels/Packages Guidance.

Worked with Corporate & Strategic Communications, to develop a comprehensive communication plan to support the various phases of the reintegration plan to promote the return-to-work components, strategic measures and implementation timelines, including an extensive Q&A piece for City staff.

Systematizing Municipal Buildings for Return | Service Delivery & Operations

As the City prepares for recovery post-pandemic and ramps up to safely welcome the return of staff to the workplace, it is imperative that we implement key adjustments to support a seamless transition. Vital to a successful reintegration program is the introduction and enhancement of associated policies and strategies that allow employees to view the workplace as a carefully managed operation – a safe, healthy and welcoming environment. To that end, “Readiness Essentials” are being addressed and will be in place in advance of our workforce’s return.

The team is working towards the development of evidence-based plans to better manage and protect City sites in the post-virus world. These plans will inform various building and maintenance standards and guidelines for implementation at Vaughan City Hall, community centres, fire stations, the Joint Operations Centre and libraries. The process will include rigorously evaluating current cleaning and disinfecting practices as well as assessing pathogen types and building levels. Staff are also taking this opportunity to retool building checklists and evaluations to make sure facilities will not just operate efficiently, but will also help people feel safe, welcome and healthy, especially as they return to work.

Applied Strategic Approach to Recovery | Business Objectives

The ID portfolio continued to push forward with a clear focus on preparing for the future state by applying a strategic approach to position the City to be fully equipped to kickstart the local economy post-pandemic:

- Supporting and advancing all master plans, environmental assessments, feasibility studies and design assignments;
- Ensuring that important City infrastructure projects are proceeding on course and ready to break ground, boosting momentum to recovery; and,
- Actively monitoring stimulus measures from both the provincial & federal governments; looking to access funding to apply to shovel-ready projects and thereby drive direct growth.

SUCCESSSES

- Co-led the development of the **Business Reintegration Plan** to help support and shape the transition to the new workplace for City staff.

- **Achieved Gold Certification in Accessibility from the Rick Hansen Foundation for North Thornhill CC & Pleasant Ridge Library -**
In March, the North Thornhill Community Centre and Pleasant Ridge Library received Gold Certification through the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program. It's the City's third building to be certified gold, first community centre and second library. This speaks to the City's commitment to inclusivity and being a city of choice where people of all abilities can thrive.
- **91% of active Capital projects advanced without any impact** from the COVID pandemic - ID staff continued to embrace technology to communicate with colleagues, reach out to stakeholders as well as meet with consultants.
- **LED Streetlight Retrofit Program reached its 30% milestone** and remains on-track for completion by December 2020. This city-wide program will realize \$1M in annual cost savings as a direct result of energy savings.
- **Program Management Process in place to support business objectives during unprecedented times**
- **Leveraged & Enhanced Internal Systems to Pivot** to respond
- **Resilient Workforce Operated at Full Capacity** with a focus on linear, vertical and recreational infrastructure projects to keep the City growing, moving and thriving. Through this challenging chapter, the ID workforce has been resilient, reliable and dedicated - determined to continue to deliver infrastructure projects in a new environment by swiftly pivoting and adapting by means of ongoing engagement, technology and applying strategic recovery approaches. Portfolio project reporting metrics substantiate that the ID team remained steadfast in carrying out core business functions at full capacity.
- **Fulfilled all COVID information requests within deadlines** – compiled and facilitated portfolio data, statistics and updates to inform numerous Bi-weekly/weekly COVID Council Memos, EOC Interim Reports 1 & 2, as well as the Ready, Resilient & Resourceful Report
- **ID Program Management Office (IDPMO) Emerged as Vital Hub** – The IDPMO became the central hub for the ID portfolio, effectively facilitating the team through COVID-related tactics and communications. With existing staff resources and leveraging skill sets, the IDPMO applied best practices and a holistic approach to successfully review financial data, facilitate issue management, and apply a COVID lens where required.

Facility Renewals & Enhancements

Taking full advantage of imposed facility closures, the Facility Management (FM) department managed 40+ renovation projects at various City buildings.

Championed City Growth to Kickstart Recovery

To champion City growth and kickstart recovery, the ID portfolio continued advancing key city-building outputs with the following Capital project successes (March 1 to end of May 2020):

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- Managed \$6.4 million in project activities
- Awarded 15 infrastructure project contracts = \$7.7M
- Advanced 900-acre vision for North Maple Regional Park as plans progress for Phase 2
- Delivered \$3 million of linear infrastructure projects since mid-March
- 150+ active City Capital Projects:
 - 40+ in the Pre-Design/Design Procurement phase
 - 20+ in the Design phase
 - 20+ in the Construction Procurement phase
 - 30+ in the Construction phase
 - 40 in the Study/Plan/Environmental Assessment phase
- 91% of ID projects progressed without impact
- Submitted 27 pre-bid forms
- Facilitated the issuance of 21 bids
- Processed 165 invoices or progress payment certificates (PPCs)
- Hosted 24 staff engagement sessions to inform on and promote the ID Program Management Process

CHALLENGES

- **COVID-19 Financial Impacts** – After conducting a cashflow assessment, the ID portfolio provided informed considerations to bring forward as the Corporation looks to responsibly offset financial impacts as a result of the pandemic and revenue losses. Financial decisions made may directly impact whether certain ID projects move forward, move forward with modifications, are deferred or eliminated.
- **Lack of Central Repository** – As the IDPMO is midstream in centralizing all project related information, these systems (i.e. Eclipse) were not available and manual efforts were required to gather and consolidate data and information.
- **Frequency of Cashflow Review & Updates** – The Corporation currently generates quarterly Cashflow Review & Updates. To effectively manage the portfolio’s extensive Capital program, monthly cashflow and expenditure monitoring is required through JDE.
- **Rethink the City’s Space Management Program** – To address the post-COVID workplace as it relates to the implementation of the Business Reintegration Plan and associated workplace guidelines and Alternate Work Arrangements, space management construction projects have been directly impacted – some are on hold as we look to the organization for direction on reassessing tactics and developing a new strategy.
- **Report Preparation** – Compiling data and information from various sources to manually prepare reports in response to numerous information requests was challenging.

INNOVATIONS

- **ID’s Merger and Tagline** – Just before the COVID outbreak, the portfolio introduced our “Stronger Together” tagline and subsequent staff Town Hall theme to promote and celebrate the amalgamation of 5 existing City departments – its relevance was even more fitting as the situation unfolded around the globe.

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The “Stronger Together” theme placed emphasis on our staff with a focus on engagement, collaboration and innovation.

- **Developed COVID Central Teams Site** – developed a collaborative site to collect, store and share COVID-related data, information and updates with the portfolio
- **Bid & Tenders Central Repository** – Procurement Services trained ID staff and Legal Services on the use of the Bid & Tenders system to conveniently access up-to-date contract information directly; this assisted in responding to COVID-related contractor inquiries in a timely manner.

PLANNING AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

The Planning and Growth Management Portfolio, like others, was quick to initiate change to ensure the health and safety of staff. In-person meetings were cancelled in the very early stages of the pandemic and replaced by modified electronic processes.

Since that time, the Portfolio's Management Team has continued to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis on our business units and service level delivery, with a lens of protecting our most important asset – Our People! Providing our staff with the tools, resources and support, allows them to work remotely and successfully maintain our service levels. Since the closure on March 18, 2020, the Portfolio's capacity to work remotely from home has increased to 85%, allowing us to protect staff by reducing potential exposure in contracting the virus.

Inspection services in the field continue to be performed throughout the closure. Inspections performed are done so using safety measures including daily staff self-assessments, personal protective equipment (PPE) and physical distancing.

As the face of City Building, as it relates to planning and development approvals and facilitating construction projects, we continue to be mindful of the expectations of our partners, the development industry, external agencies and our valued Citizens. Our staff have proven to be quite resilient and adaptable during this unprecedented time as we continue to advance our business.

All departments within the Planning and Growth Management Portfolio continue to advance our day-to-day services (in a modified manner) and have implemented a number of innovative digital solutions to deliver our business. While the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging, it has provided an opportunity for all departments to continue to improve, modernize and digitize services and processes.

BUILDING STANDARDS

On May 6, 2020, the Building Standards department launched a new digital permitting portal enabling citizens and building industry professionals to apply, track and pay for permits online. The department is now equipped to electronically review residential and commercial plans as part of the building permit submission process. The use of the portal creates a fully paperless submission process, allowing city-building opportunities to continue and further supports the City's commitment to environmental stewardship during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

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A number of other digital modernization initiatives are also underway including the addition of services to the online STRATAWISE Portal which allows Citizens to apply for online Non-Building Permit applications.

Since the closure, Building Standards services continue uninterrupted. Staff are provided access to City network to facilitate remote work arrangements with scheduled rotating visits to the office. Building Standards maintain a skeleton staff at City Hall to continue to receive, renew and issue permits. Administration, zoning services and technical plans examination continue to be performed remotely with scheduled visits to the office. Building Inspection services continue uninterrupted to ensure building and construction projects are safe. From March 18 to May 31, 2020, the Building Standards department has performed 8,369 inspections and issued 436 building permits.

DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING

From the onset of the closure of City Hall due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Development Engineering Management Team has strived to accommodate staff and to create safe working environments, while maintaining the highest level of service possible to our residents and business partners.

The COVID-19 crisis accelerated an Alternative Work Arrangement mentality that was implemented while leveraging technology. This new approach to service delivery has demonstrated many new innovative solutions and procedures that has allowed staff to maintain efficiency and prioritize projects to assist with the economic stimulus that the Planning Growth Management Portfolio supports. Throughout the pandemic, all Development Engineering business functions have been maintained with new innovative processes.

In response to COVID-19, the Development Engineering review team has leveraged technology and has initiated and implemented several new digital processes. These processes include: development agreement signing in counterparts, digital signatures for agreement recommendation letters, digital circulation for approval and execution of development agreements. Accelerated and successful implementation and training of Bluebeam Revu to facilitate the efficient digital mark up of drawings allowed staff to quickly adapt. Staff are also working on process improvements such as subdivision drawing review / approvals, and are creating new processes to update development agreement packages. Currently, there are over 15 agreements underway as well, development applications continue to be processed.

The Development Transportation Engineering group continues to advance the Kleinburg Parking Strategy and will deliver a final report containing a list of robust and refined recommendations for Council consideration in September. The team has held digital

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stakeholder meetings and has been communicating with the public via email, newsletter and online. Planning is also underway for a virtual Public Open House. Transportation Engineering has coordinated digitally with multiple departments and procurement to finalize the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) RFP. In addition, the group has published the City's Parking Study Guidelines that outline the requirements for Parking Studies submitted with development applications and is currently updating the City's Transportation Impact Study (TIS) Guidelines to reflect changes in the industry.

The Development Inspection and Grading team launched an electronic permit intake process on April 6 to accept digital permit applications. The team is improving that process via an online portal that offers a one stop shop process to apply and pay for grading and pool permits effective June 8. Permit fees, securities, letter of credit reductions and releases continue to be processed electronically. Integration of Access Vaughan with Development Engineering's front counter, email and phone line processes took place to create one central hub for all Development Engineering related inquiries. The inspection and grading division functions remain uninterrupted and continue to provide field inspections at development construction sites. As of April 6, 2020, the Development Engineering Department has received 81 pool permits and 261 grading permit applications.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Despite the uncertainty during this time, the Development Planning Department is moving ahead with great certainty, continues to innovate and is delivering its services. The Development Planning Team is working remotely to maintain a modified "business as usual", so planning approvals can proceed immediately and enable "shovel ready" development projects. City-building continues.

The Development Planning Department has implemented procedures for full electronic-participation Pre-Application Consultation (PAC), Heritage Vaughan and Design Review Panel meetings. Staff continue to receive new development applications electronically, schedule Public Meetings, produce technical reports and implementing Official Plan and Zoning Amendment applications for consideration by Council. The Development Planning Team continues to meet with internal and external stakeholders to ensure projects move ahead as efficiently as possible.

In April and May, the Development Planning department received 10 new development applications, including applications for residential projects representing a total of 2496 units. Staff also conducted 8 PAC meetings, representing a potential 814 residential units. The Development Planning team continues to process development applications for the Council meetings in June and upcoming fall meetings. There are currently 59

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development applications, representing 29 separate items, being prepared for consideration at future public meetings.

In addition, staff reviewed 27 Minor Variance / Consent applications and prepared reports for consideration by the Committee of Adjustment

The Design Review Panel considered 3 high-rise mixed use projects, two located in the Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue area, and a mid-rise mixed-use project in electronic-participation meetings held in April and May representing 4,642 residential units.

The Development Planning Team has ten capital projects underway including Urban Design Studies and Streetscape Master Plans critical to guide developments for intensification areas such as the Vaughan Mills Centre and the Yonge Steeles Corridor to evolve into a vibrant, safe, active-transportation-oriented, sustainable and high quality public realm that attracts people and investment.

The Cultural Heritage Division continues to advance the Maple and Kleinburg Nashville Heritage Conservation District Plan Reviews and has initiated a Heritage Inventory Update. Since the City municipal building closure, the Cultural Heritage Division has issued 2 Heritage Permits, 4 Heritage Clearances (demolition), prepared 10 reports for consideration by the Heritage Vaughan Committee and are working on 31 other active projects for consideration at future Heritage Vaughan Committee meetings.

City building continues.

PARKS PLANNING

Since the beginning of the pandemic and the start of the Alternative Work Arrangements (AWA), all Parks Planning department staff continue to maintain the essential review functions of Development Planning Applications, Policy Planning, and Development Engineering approval and agreement processes. During the initiation of AWA, Parks Planning staff carried out meetings remotely through teleconference or video-conferencing capabilities, utilizing existing tools and software to maintain service levels. Staff supported other departments and cross portfolio groups in the development of GIS mapping for the advancement of key capital projects, planning and design master plans, acquisitions of City assets, and supporting By-Law and Public Works in response to the deployment of their resources, including the development of Citywide maps and ward maps.

From March 20, 2020 to May 28, 2020, staff reviewed and provided comments on 41 planning and development applications; attended and provided requirements for 18 Pre-Application Consultation meetings; reviewed and commented on 2 Block Plans (Block 27 & 59) and are developing 3 Request for Proposals (RFPs) to commission consultants to undertake local and city wide parkland, recreational facility and open space trail planning, design and implementation initiatives.

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Since the closure, Parks Planning staff successfully awarded an RFP for the Parkland Dedication Guideline and released the RFP for the Block 18 District Park Master Plan (Design). Staff also continue to advance and develop several recreational planning and design RFPs, which include the Vaughan Super Trail Feasibility Study (Rutherford Road to McNaughton Road), the Greenspace Strategic Plan; the MacMillan Farm Master Plan (Design) and finalizing a developer build park project in Block 50 (Steeles West Common). In order to ensure fulsome public engagement, staff are consulting with the Corporate and Strategic Communication department to develop alternative online public engagement platforms to address non-statutory public open house meetings for parks and open space trail planning studies and master plans. Website updates and email correspondence continue to be used to communicate with citizens and user groups.

During these unprecedented times, the use of recreational trails has been a key benefit to our citizens. The planning of recreational trails is also an important Council priority to advance the Citywide 100km Vaughan Super Trail concept. Parks Planning staff continue to build partnerships with external government agencies, through collaboration on Environmental Assessments and new major infrastructure initiatives across the City of Vaughan. In order to ensure the efficient and effective planning, design and implementation of Council's priority for the advancement of the Vaughan Super Trail, Parks Planning staff in consultation with internal stakeholders are developing a governance structure to prioritize recreational trail projects.

Most recently, staff have begun to resume subdivision site inspections for maintenance and assumption approvals. The continued progress and advancement of development and planning application reviews has allowed the department to advance new capital growth related projects and initiatives including securing 4.35 km of new recreational trails, the conveyance of approximately 9 hectares of new parkland (planned in 2019) and negotiating the conveyance of an estimated 5.8 hectares of new parkland in 2020.

POLICY PLANNING and ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability (PPES) department is in the fortunate position of being able to take advantage of the City's proposed Alternative Work Arrangements (AWA) program. When AWA was put in motion as a result of the pandemic, the PPES staff were able to be productively working from home within two days. Our team thanks Human Resources and the Office of Chief Information Officer for the tools to be able to make a seamless transition to working from home.

Our business processes adjusted to meet the objectives in the PPES Business Plan. PPES staff accepted the first fully electronic Block Plan submission. Secondary Plan studies are proceeding to prepare emerging land use plans. The consulting team for the Official Plan Review was secured during the COVID-19 response. This critical project to guide growth in the City is continuing to prepare for a formal launch of a civic

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engagement strategy while supporting studies are underway in consultation with a range of internal and external stakeholders through virtual meetings.

The Environmental Sustainability team is staying apprised of issues raised during the pandemic related to Green Directions Vaughan. This includes the increased awareness of local food and the numerous requests about community gardens, food security, and the importance of access to greenspace in areas of higher dwelling unit density. We are also tracking strategies for green economic recovery such as energy retrofits for buildings and investments in green infrastructure and active transportation.

Our main challenge relates to public engagement. All three teams (Policy Planning – Short Range, Long Range Planning, and Environmental Sustainability) require public engagement to move projects in a comprehensive and transparent manner that builds ownership of the proposed policies and plans. We continue to assess a variety of online community engagement alternatives, together with the City's consultants, to ensure this critical component of our work responds to resident and stakeholder expectations.

VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE

Since the beginning of closure of City Hall, 100 per cent of the VMC team had the ability and capacity to work from home. Staff worked with industry partners to make the necessary arrangements to hold Pre-application Consultation (PAC) meetings, accept new development applications, co-ordinate with internal and external stakeholders and arrange virtual meetings to ensure projects are advanced as smoothly as possible. Staff continue to work collaboratively with industry partners to ensure that the planning process continues seamlessly through this period to enable shovel-ready projects when the pandemic subsides.

VMC staff are currently working on 22 active development files. This includes 3 PACs representing an additional 7011 units. Based on the approved and proposed residential developments to date, close to 50,470 residents in almost 25,490 residential units are moving into the VMC, achieving 212% of the residential units and 202% of the population targets identified for the 2031 planning horizon. This includes a total number of new residential units currently occupied in the VMC at 2,137 with another 4,383 new residential units under construction. The VMC Team was successful in adhering to the original timeline and meeting the target for occupancy of a residential development in the VMC, including 510 condo units and 62 townhomes.

In May, the VMC Team virtually participated in the first VMC Sub-Committee meeting of 2020. The meeting included an update on the VMC Marketing Plan, an introduction to the first temporary public art installation, sited prominently along Regional Road 7 at the heart of the Mobility Hub, and an introduction to a pay-and-display on-street parking pilot. The pilot will help manage current demand for short duration on-street public

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parking from various road users and, on a trial basis, will permit the City to gauge future parking demand based on development activity and the increasing demand for curbside pick-up/drop-off and deliveries due to the current global COVID-19 pandemic. In order to meet the hard and soft infrastructure needs of this growing community, staff also provided an update on the VMC Secondary Plan and supporting studies.

The various VMC plans and studies inform each other and will be closely coordinated to ensure their collective contribution to the Term of Council Strategic Priority of City Building to “Develop the VMC as a complete community, with emphasis on cultural development”. VMC staff continue to work with staff and stakeholders to make progress on the studies and advance all reviews of development applications.

PUBLIC WORKS PORTFOLIO

Ready

From the onset of the emergency order, as City Building continued, so have operations and maintenance of our critical infrastructure by the Public Works Portfolio.

In Public Works, our people are the most important piece of service delivery. Our readiness is dependent on ensuring that our staff is safe, and that they have the skills, knowledge, and equipment to deliver service excellence irrespective of the situation. To do this, we immediately pivoted to:

- Enable all staff not required on-site to work from home; which is approximately 20% of our workforce;
- Increase the use of virtual meetings;
- Implement staggered and rotating shifts for frontline staff;
- Collaborate with our partners in the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer to perform onsite assessments of staff to identify and secure appropriate equipment and PPE to perform their job duties safely;
- Develop standard operating procedures around vehicle sharing and vehicle usage and litter pickup;
- Develop guidelines for staff who must enter homes in cases of emergency (e.g. water operators);
- Build social distancing into the way we communicate with our staff and provide services by moving staff starts to alternate work locations and satellite yards, and performing virtual tailboard meetings.

The departments highlighted below, provide our citizens the services they expect and rely on.

The ***Environmental Services Team*** (ES) has ensured uninterrupted delivery of safe, clean drinking water, wastewater collection and stormwater management. When citizens did their part by remaining at home, ES immediately supported their efforts by increasing Solid Waste collection service levels with minimal impact to leaf and yard waste collection.

The ***Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations Team*** (PFHO) With the necessary closure, delay, and/or cancellation of citizen services, have made necessary adjustments around their people, services and their finances. PFHO was flexible and ready to immediately close park amenities and sports fields; scale down services supporting playgrounds, splash pads and some park spaces. Resources were reallocated to areas that have needed more attention such as litter and debris pick up, particularly on our boulevards and in our woodlots.

The ***Transportation and Fleet Management Services Team*** (TFMS), has ensured continued delivery of all of its legislated and essential services without disruption.

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Winter maintenance, pothole, curb, sidewalk and minor road repairs, streetlight and traffic signal maintenance, street sweeping, road compliance programs, road occupancy permits, utility inquiries and field inspections, and vehicle and equipment maintenance and repair have all continued uninterrupted. TFMS maintained School Crossing Guard services for as long as was feasible and are now working towards a plan to ensure the service is prepared to resume safely when schools are re-opened.

Resilient

Public Works was not only ready to respond to COVID-19, but we have demonstrated **Resiliency** by making adjustments to the impacts of the pandemic. Just as we delivered our services prior to the pandemic, we continue to deliver services with little to no disruption to our citizens. However, as COVID-19 has altered the way of life of our community, we have had to adjust our services, where appropriate, to ensure the safety of our citizens.

The Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations Team closed 273 playgrounds and all park amenities throughout Vaughan's 213 parks.

On March 21st the PFHO team closed all 273 playgrounds across the City. Closure required the installation of warning signs and yellow caution tape to block off all equipment within our playgrounds.

On March 24th, prior to the order from the Province of Ontario, Vaughan was the first municipality in Ontario to close all amenities within parks. Park amenity closures are summarized below in Table 1:

Table 1.

Park Amenity	Quantity
Parks	213
Playgrounds	273
Multi use Ramps / Skate Parks	10
Basketball Courts	73
Soccer Fields	150
Tennis Courts	59 locations – 130 courts
Bocce Courts	23
Splash Pads	18
Baseball Diamonds	58
Swing Sets	606
Benches	948
Dog Park	1

Additional efforts required as a result of park amenity closures include,

- 775 warning signs installed;

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- 80 rolls of caution tape used to block off amenities;
- Removed
 - 130 tennis court nets;
 - 606 swing sets;
 - 73 basketball hoops;
- 10 skate parks were fenced off

Both of these decisions were made to protect our community – particularly from the risk of transmission from high touch areas and to reinforce physical distancing.

As a result of park amenity closures, the PFHO team reduced their seasonal hiring by over 50% to ensure the reduction in services matched our resources.

We continue to push out messaging educating citizens about the closures while reminding the community that they are free to walk, cycle, jog or run through our parks and trails. We encourage the community to go outdoors and enjoy the City of Vaughan’s beautiful scenery, while doing so in a safe manner in keeping with physical distancing guidelines.

The Re-Opening strategy of Park Amenities was based on a risk model

With public safety guiding all decision-making, Park Operations collaborated with Recreation Services, Legal Services, Transformation and Strategy and By-Law and Compliance to develop a risk model to guide our re-opening strategy.

The model includes an assessment of Vaughan-specific COVID-19 data that’s informed by guidance issued by York Region Public Health and the Provincial government. Each park facility/amenity was assessed according to the relative risk of transmission along with available control measures to further prevent, eliminate or reduce potential transmission of COVID-19. Based on our model, Vaughan was well-positioned to make evidence-based decisions to match our current situation on a staged reopening approach.

Public Works commits to Keeping Vaughan Clean

In doing their part to flatten the curve by staying home, citizens are producing notably more household waste than usual. Some of this waste is finding its way onto and into roads, sidewalks, parks, rural ditches, boulevards and woodlots. The debris/litter/dumping material varies in size, weight, and risk and ranges from common litter to discarded PPE such as masks and gloves.

Although the City’s litter and debris program is currently reactionary, Public Works has implemented proactive litter collection as one aspect of the Keeping Vaughan Clean initiative in order to ensure the City remains clean and beautiful throughout and after the pandemic. Information gathered in the execution of this initiative will be used to develop a future litter and debris program.

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To date, the Public Works team has performed the following actions as part of the Keeping Vaughan Clean initiative:

- The Boulevard Maintenance Program commenced on March 11th, 2020, approximately a month earlier than scheduled.
- With weather improvements, the Street Sweeping Program started early, on April 1st, 2020. The first rotation of city-wide street sweeping was completed two weeks ahead of schedule, with 2,330 curb kms swept and 8,475 tonnes of road debris collected.
- Woodlots and open spaces were identified as litter hotspots. In response staff were deployed to woodlot locations. To date we have cleared 19 of our 25 woodlots and collected 192 commercial garbage bags of debris and litter.
- Lower than normal traffic volumes, innovations, and close coordination with York Region Public Health's Mosquito Larvicide program, enabled all planned catch basin cleaning (almost 10,000, annually) to be completed in the Spring. Completing this work early, avoids the contractor returning in the Fall, reducing disruption to the City's citizens and businesses.
- To accelerate litter collection, as well as to ensure the safe collection of waste – two Ride on Litter Vacuums that enable litter collection at a distance have been secured for pilot purposes. If the units are found to be effective, they may be identified as future tools to support litter cleaning activities.

The Transportation and Fleet Management team accepts in-kind donation for equipment to support Keeping Vaughan Clean

Joe Johnson Equipment donated a street sweeper and combination vacuum/flusher unit to the City of Vaughan as a service in-kind donation to support us in keeping our City clean. The vehicles were with the City for one month commencing May 6th and have been applied to new cleaning initiatives such as power washing of our business intensification areas and high traffic areas in Woodbridge and Kleinburg. Additionally, the cleaning on hard surface areas – such as traffic islands to prevent weed growth was also completed. The availability and use of this equipment are leading to assessments of potential new City cleaning activities and service levels that we currently do not perform.

Environmental Services responds to a sharp increase in solid waste tonnages by increasing service levels

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In the initial weeks of the COVID-19 crisis, staff noted an initial surge in both solid waste collection data and citizen inquiries to increase garbage uptake beyond the City's three bag limit. Environmental Services negotiated with Miller Waste to provide an additional Double-up-day (allowing citizens six bags of garbage on their collection day). To support this change and ensure that collection service remained reliable in the face of potential collector absenteeism, Yard Waste collection was simultaneously deferred. Tonnages have since returned to traditional levels.

Recognizing the importance of Yard Waste collection to our citizens, we worked in collaboration with Markham, Richmond Hill and Miller Waste to re-negotiate the start of this service to match the scheduled start date, aligning the City's solid waste service levels to those nearly identical to those published in the City's waste calendar.

Virtual coaching of citizens, by Environmental Services staff, reduces increased garbage collection needs

Staff are now offering virtual 1:1 waste consultation with citizens that have additional waste. These consultations provide coaching to citizens to help minimize materials placed in the garbage that could be diverted to other streams. Citizens are also offered the opportunity to purchase garbage tags over the phone and subsequently delivered by mail.

To keep water safe, Environmental Services prepares for absenteeism

The City's highly licensed water operators protect Vaughan's drinking water system. ES recognized that absences due to COVID-19 could pose a significant risk to maintaining the City's record of 100% Regulatory Compliance. To address this specific risk, ES staff responded by developing several contingencies as follows:

- Staff in other areas of ES were trained on the water sampling Standard Operating Procedures, providing critical resource backup.
- ES reached out to its partners in the Region and its other eight local municipalities to arrange mutual aid/reciprocal support for water and wastewater operations.
- ES applied to the Province requesting Regulatory Relief from mandated sampling. The application was approved for a 25% reduction in the event that the City experienced staffing impacts.

Resourceful

As the Public Works team adjusts and adapts toward a "new normal", we continue to be **Resourceful** and innovative in the way we provide our services and keep our team safe.

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Throughout the pandemic the teams have developed innovations and improvements as a result of our response efforts to COVID-19. These innovations and improvements are expected to provide long-term efficiencies, increased service levels, and improved staff engagement.

Public Works Celebrates National Public Works Week 2020, Virtually!

National Public Works Weeks takes place each year on the third week of May. Under normal circumstances, we celebrate our dedicated staff by hosting an all Portfolio kick-off flag raising event, a skills challenge versus our neighbouring municipalities, a thank you staff BBQ, and an open house into which we welcome our citizens. As a result of COVID-19, we could not gather as we typically would. As such we celebrated this important week virtually by:

- Partnering with Vaughan Public Libraries to conduct book readings by our Public Works Senior Leaders (1600 views and counting on social media!);
- Conducting site visits with Public Works frontline teams across the Portfolio;
- Hosting a Touch-a-Truck Heart Event with staff, and showing “heart” to the community;
- Connecting daily with Public Works staff by email and video, highlighting the valued work that they do across the portfolio, and thanking them for their unyielding dedication to their service and our citizens; and,
- Hoisting our Public Works Flag at the Joint Operations Centre and City Hall

City wide roll out of 150 Water Sampling Stations

Environmental Services performs drinking water sampling across the City to ensure that our citizens and businesses receive safe and clean drinking water, meeting regulatory requirements set by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. These samples are currently taken from inside buildings across the City, including some within private properties.

The installation of over 150 water sampling stations throughout the City will not only allow us to maintain our excellent regulatory compliance record but will also improve efficiency of water operations, keep staff safe and reduce inconvenience to private property owners since samples will be taken outside, directly from the City’s watermain.

Developed a flushing and testing plan for the reopening of our businesses

Environmental Services has developed a flushing and testing plan, to ensure when businesses begin to open, the water in the watermains (which would have seen lower demand during the shut down) is refreshed and ready for businesses to open. Working with Building Standards provided businesses a quick reference to reopening, including a reminder for them to flush their plumbing system and appliances before using them, if they haven’t been doing this proactively during the shut down. We are trying to avoid a series of odour/water quality complaints caused by water stagnating in the building’s internal plumbing/appliances (such as water heaters).

Water and Wastewater operators use work from home as opportunity to complete mandatory training

Keeping staff safe in the environment of unknowns throughout the crisis was, and continues to be, a top priority. Although most tasks performed by Environmental Services' front-line staff do not require direct public contact, during the first few weeks of the COVID-19 crisis, processes and procedures were developed to keep staff, citizens and business owners safe. As such, half of our water and wastewater operators were assigned to work from home. During this time, the operators were assigned to complete their regulatory mandated training, keeping their licenses up to date. This training would have normally been completed during working hours and utilizing the time they were working from home, every hour of their time provided value to the City. Once safety protocols, procedures and PPE were in place, these operators were transitioned back to provide their essential front-line services, keeping the City's water safe and managing its wastewater and stormwater.

Water Sampling Station installations begin, addressing challenges and risks from entering homes and businesses during the COVID-19 crisis and providing ongoing benefits to the water system

Environmental Services performs drinking water sampling across the City to ensure that our citizens and businesses receive safe and clean drinking water, meeting regulatory requirements set by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. These samples are currently taken from inside buildings across the City, including some within private properties. The installation of over 150 water sampling stations throughout the city will not only allow us to maintain our excellent regulatory compliance record but will also improve efficiency of water operations and reduce inconvenience to private property owners since samples will be taken outside, directly from the City's watermain.

Environmental Services supports Industrial, Commercial and Institutional business reopening with its supplementary watermain testing and flushing plan

Environmental Services has developed a supplementary flushing and testing plan, to ensure that when businesses begin to open, the water in the watermain (which would have seen lower demand during the shut down) is refreshed and ready for businesses to open. We will also be working with Building Standards to provide businesses a quick reference to reopening, including a reminder for them to flush their plumbing system and appliances before using them, if they haven't been doing this proactively during the shut down. We are trying to avoid a series of odour/water quality complaints caused by water stagnating in the building's internal plumbing/appliances (such as water heaters).

Environmental Services responds by modernizing processes and going virtual, creating operational efficiencies while improving Citizen Experience

In ES, modifications to existing processes and ways of doing business include the delivery of daily morning meetings via Skype, modifying garbage tag and bulk water

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sales to ensure continued service despite the closure of the JOC counter, and the City's first remote water meter repair.

Working closely with our partners from the Office of the Chief Information Officer and Financial Services, work has begun to move all ES' JOC counter transactions online using the AMANDA platform. Initial services are expected to migrate in July, with completion expected by October. This upgrade will enable modernization of payment processes, a reduction in manual transactions, better data security, and the ability for citizens and business owners to access service 24/7 from the comfort of their homes/workplaces.

Parks, Forestry and Horticulture converts areas within 32 locations to *Grow Zones*

To responsibly and prudently manage citizen tax dollars during the pandemic response, PFHO reviewed the opportunity to redirect staff resources where they are needed most so as to reduce the requirement for seasonal labour. The result was the implementation of approximately 30,000 square meters of ***Grow Zones*** at 32 locations across the City.

Grow Zones are locations that are left naturalized with no performed maintenance. The benefits of grow zones include erosion control improvement, groundwater replenishment, improved biodiversity, storm water filtration, promotion of sustainable landscaping, native plant growth encouragement, and weed growth. These areas enable the redirection of approximately 128 staff-hours per season to other essential activities. Future implementation of such improvements will enable our team to maintain and operate additional locations while minimizing the amount of additional resources and funding required.

PFHO has also dispersed staff to start locations closer to their assigned work area to further increase the availability of frontline staff. This results in less travel time for staff that can be directed into productive effort. Preliminary assessment of this initiative indicates a productivity improvement of approximately 7% in the Horticulture division.

Transportation and Fleet Management Services implements preventative measures to deter increased levels of illegal dumping

To counter illegal dumping in the City's rural area hotspots, the TFMS team has implemented the following preventative deterrence measures:

- Partnership with By-law and Compliance to include hotspot areas in evening patrols;
- Additional signage in the area prohibiting dumping and warning of fines; and,

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- Installation of jersey barriers along roadsides.

The measures have been found to be successful thus far and will be employed in other areas where dumping is deemed excessive.

The Public Works Portfolio will continue to provide our citizens services in which everyone can have a better tomorrow. Readiness, Resourcefulness, and Resilience are key elements of the culture of the Public Works team, and they will continue to be built into our services – services that have continued reliably and unabated since declaration of the COVID-19 emergency.

VAUGHAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

On Saturday March 14th, Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) closed its doors to the public. While our branches may be closed, VPL has remained open to new ideas and innovation resulting in the adoption of an entire new service delivery model to provide Vaughan citizens with a robust digital library and the introduction of curbside pickup. In tandem with this, we've made operational changes to rise to the challenge of COVID-19 and lay the groundwork for a safe and gradual return to operations.

Early Pandemic Response

Throughout the week of March 9, VPL quickly moved to increase cleaning of high touch surfaces, provision of hand sanitizers and promotion of public health measures. The CEO and Executive Management initiated a review of library pandemic planning and attended business continuity planning at the City of Vaughan (COV). The CEO joined the Emergency Management Team of the COV and began ongoing meetings with the Senior Leadership Team – Executive at the COV while VPL's Deputy CEO Customer Experience was appointed the COV COVID-19 Task Force.

On March 12th, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic, and the Province of Ontario responded by closing all publicly funded schools. To ensure the safety of our staff and customers, VPL made the decision on Friday March 13th to close all branches and cancel all programming beginning March 14th at 5pm - the first major library system in Ontario to make this call.

The Pivot to a Digital Service Model

Despite the challenge of a drastically altered workplace, VPL staff collaborated to develop a new digital service model that has been embraced by our customers. VPL already had a robust suite of online resources, including access to news publications, ebooks, audiobooks and databases. This has been bolstered by the addition of new titles, the doubling of borrowing limits on Hoopla and Kanopy which are providers of digital movies, and the purchase of new tools that can be safely enjoyed from home, such as the researching family trees through Ancestry.com and the French database Cantook Station.

The importance of programming has never been so vital as a contributor to the mental health, wellbeing and education of our community, yet our ability to deliver has never been so challenged. Despite this, VPL staff worked tirelessly to create a dynamic calendar of programming, engaging all ages and embracing the diverse groups that make up Vaughan. Highlights include:

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- Livestreamed storytimes on Instagram launched on March 23rd with 15-30 minutes of live stories, songs and activities for preschoolers. These sessions average between 30 and 50 connections per session, and average 189 views over a 24-hour period. To ensure access for all, pre-recorded storytimes have also been added to YouTube.
- New Francophone activities, including storytimes, adult socials and downloadable activities are available three times per week on VPL's social media and website.
- Bilingual Mandarin storytime is offered once per week in pre-recorded format.
- Guest speakers have informed and inspired attendees at a number of Zoom sessions, as diverse as personal finances during COVID-19, how real estate has been affected by the pandemic, and gardening with native plants.
- Adult book clubs have been hosted on Zoom, averaging 20 attendees per session.
- Similarly, children and teen book clubs have been introduced on Instagram, YouTube and Zoom engaging an average of 140 children or teens per session
- STEAM activities for school-aged children are produced three times per week and hosted via YouTube and our social media accounts. These pre-recorded, 5-minute videos showcase quick activities that parents can do with their children. On average 240 view and participate in these activities.

This represents just a small selection of the programming and activities available to the community. To make all of these programs as accessible as possible, we've increased promotion across all of our communication channels and created a dedicated web portal to host them. Our social media activity has more than doubled, and the eNewsletters promoting our programming and resources have switched from every two week to twice per week. Throughout this time, eNewsletter distribution has remained steady at approximately 15,000 recipients with open and click rates surpassing industry benchmarks. The new VPL at Home web portal has also experienced large numbers of visitors, with more than 18,500 page views since launch, with the average visitor spending roughly 4 minutes on the page - a clear sign that they are accessing and enjoying our content.

Use of digital resources has skyrocketed during the closure as the public look for materials that can be enjoyed without leaving the house and new digital resources procured. The largest increases in database use have been seen in the following:

- Tumblebooks (digital children's picture books): 350%
- Press Reader (newspapers in 60 languages) 215%
- Lynda.com (education and training programs): 212%
- NY Times: 203%
- Zinio (digital magazines): 149%

Use of VPL ebook, eaudiobook and digital movies has also increased significantly during our closure. To meet customer demands over 3,863 new ebooks and eaudio books

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have been purchased since mid-March. Increases in use of these digital resources has been as following:

Overdrive (ebooks and eaudio): 202%
Hoopla and Kanopy (digital movies): 314%

All of these resources are accessed with a VPL library card, so we've made registration for a temporary digital VPL library card far more accessible during the closure. Thanks to our own internal promotion as well as that of our partners in the COV and Council, we have issued more than five times the number of digital memberships as the same period last year, since branches closed their doors.

Community Outreach and the Introduction of Ask Us

VPL continued to be an active member of the community and has engaged its partners to nurture relationships and drive awareness of the resources available. An email and phone outreach was made to all of our partners to see how we can support the needs of their members and we have seen significant pick up of our resources, including inclusion of programming in school newsletters.

A personal customer care program was created to provide updates to over 6,000 customers with active hold requests and to promote knowledge of online resources. Staff demonstrated great compassion through the 1,524 telephone calls made to regular customers and vulnerable members of the community. These calls provided people with reassurance, advice on services available as well as social and mental support. The remaining customer care contacts were through email and were equally well received. Feedback from customers has been overwhelmingly positive.

The Ask Us virtual information desk opened to field questions about library services, as well as to assist customers in research. Ask Us has proven to be a valuable resource in assisting customers as they navigate our digital collection, often for the first time. This service is available on the VPL website, as well as by phone and through live chat on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter and monitored citizen social media posts.

Finally, two of VPL's 3D printers have been loaned to a local health care provider who are using our machines to produce 3D printed pieces for face shields for frontline workers.

Staffing

During the initial 3-week closure, all VPL staff continued to be fully paid for their scheduled hours of work, and managers conducted regular check-ins to ensure personal wellbeing and provide support so that valuable work could be conducted.

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When the province announced a decision to extend the closure of publicly funded schools, VPL made the difficult but necessary decision to extend the library closure and to temporarily layoff all 172 part-time and casual staff, both union and non-union, 62% of VPL staff complement. On April 2, 2020 staff impacted were telephoned by their Manager and informed of this decision. Each staff person was awarded the choice to accept a temporary layoff or to take a Declared Emergency Leave (DEL) which was a job protected leave. Staff were emailed a letter confirmed details of the conversation, an extensive Q&A and a pamphlet to guide them through their Employment Insurance (EI) or Canadian Emergency Relief Benefit (CERB) application. In collaboration with the City of Vaughan, staff receiving EI were informed that VPL would top up their benefits to 75% of their previous salaries. While news of the temporary layoffs was difficult, staff were understanding of the necessity of the action and responded graciously.

Substantial energies have been directed to communicating with our staff including those currently furloughed during these closed days. For active staff, every 2 weeks a Town Hall is coordinated for all to attend using Zoom and every 3-5 days a casual but informative update is issued by the CEO through email. In the interim, Managers frequently liaise with staff including regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings and area meetings using MS Teams. Staff Engagement also periodically distributes information to VPL staff as appropriate. The VPL Management Team continues to meet every two weeks as does the Executive Management Team to ensure communications is frequent and comprehensive. Staff currently furloughed are distributed the weekly CEO updates and Town Hall summaries in addition to sporadic communications from their supervisors. A commitment to regular and fulsome communication with the entire VPL team has been adopted to promote continued engagement and encourage staff retention. It is anticipated that one day, all will return to the workplace.

The resilience, adaptability and creativity of our staff has been a great source of pride to VPL and has been reflected in the outstanding work they've produced in what are new and uncharted waters. Staff have performed enthusiastically and continue to develop and present innovative approaches to digital service delivery.

Collaboration with the City of Vaughan

Vaughan Public Libraries continues to be an active participant on City of Vaughan teams and task forces. In addition to senior management participation, three VPL librarians are participating on the City's Data Analytics Task Force researching and analyzing information regarding such topics as government involvement and actions such as restrictions and regulations for various levels of government which have impacted Canada and internationally and grassroots community initiatives both at home and abroad being implemented and heralded. Two other VPL librarians are working with the City's Economic Development team researching business trends and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on all types of businesses among other topics.

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Vaughan Public Libraries and the City's Recreation Services department have initiated and are co-leading a Community Wellness Task Force, resulting in the creation of the TogetherVaughan portal - a site providing information to connect people with assistance and identify volunteer opportunities in our community. The Community Wellness Task Force also launched a social media campaign to celebrate positivity and goodwill with stories of neighbours helping neighbours, businesses going above and beyond and other uplifting stories worthy of recognition.

Curbside Pickup

VPL became the first library in the province to implement Curbside Pickup, a service that enables customers to digitally place requests for individual titles or general referrals and collect them from library entrances. Curbside Pickup was launched on May 14th and has been wildly successful. During the first two weeks of this program 1,800 customer requests were received and 9,000 items were loaned. To maintain physical distancing and the wellbeing of staff and customers, pickups are being timed and we have added extra pickup days in response to the high demand. Information about Curbside Pickup on the VPL website has been viewed over 13,000 times since launch. This service is currently being offered at our three resource libraries to provide easy access throughout Vaughan.

Our Facilities

To ensure staff safety returning to the workplace, modifications have been made to staff workspaces. Transit lanes and access routes have been identified with arrows on the floor to encourage safe movement and safe distancing of staff computers implemented. The advice of City of Vaughan Health and Safety professionals was sought in this endeavour. At Civic Center Resource Library, the plexiglass wall used to direct customers after hours has been repurposed to act as a shield between staff workspaces. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including masks, gloves and hand sanitizer is supplied to staff at entry points and all staff are individually oriented to new work processes and practices. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been defined and shared with staff and disinfectant wipes and disinfecting sprays are available throughout our facilities. During our closure a deep cleaning of all VPL locations has been conducted and minor building repairs undertaken.

Fiscal Impact

It is estimated that VPL will generate approximately \$1.4M in savings from March 14 - July 1, 2020, primarily via reduced payroll, but also partly through other operational costs and the delay in opening the VMC Library.

VPL Recovery Strategy

As we look ahead and plan for reopening our libraries many questions remained unanswered, the most significant being what will be the impact of the “second wave”? As a result, a somewhat fluid Recovery Strategy has been created that will serve as a roadmap to VPL’s reopening. This plan employs a risk assessment matrix to guide in the reopening decision and includes a phased-in approach. It is anticipated Resource Libraries will open in advance of Community Libraries and will serve as a pilot project for site modifications and introduction of new procedures. The safety of staff and customers was the key focus area of the VPL Reopening Task Force as they investigated how physical distancing and cleaning protocols could be maintained while still offering core library services.

It has become clear that to protect the health of our community we should not promote large gatherings thus programming will remain online for the foreseeable future, and we have announced the suspension of all in-branch programs for the remainder of 2020 with a commitment to review this decision periodically. We will continue to offer our online activities and will soon be expanding them through the addition of our inaugural Virtual Science Fair, as well as transforming the popular Teen Summer Reading Challenge and the TD Summer Reading Club to digital for the summer of 2020.

Recognizing the need for Vaughan citizens to connect digitally and access digital resources, VPL is expanding the reach of our free wifi externally at all three Resource Libraries. We also continue to investigate additional avenues to support customers need for access to technology.

There are currently over 130,000 items on loan to our customers, and we are planning to safely accept these items back to our collections with procedure to isolate returned items before handling and integrating into library collections. For now, all fines have been suspended and loan periods extended, but as curbside continues to prove successful, bringing these items back into our accessible collection has become more pressing.

In summary, in these uncertain times, VPL is confidently forging forward, addressing consistently changing conditions with innovation, enthusiasm and compassion.