

Ready, Resilient and Resourceful Committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, September 29, 2020

WARD(S): ALL

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

FROM:

Jim Harnum, City Manager

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful (RRR) Committee with information regarding the City's response to COVID-19. Information provided includes updates and action plans based on the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Roadmap for Success and the areas of focus for Our People, Our Places, Our Services, Our Finances, Our Economy and, Our Communications. This report also provides an update on the activities of the Emergency Planning Program and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

Report Highlights

- The Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Roadmap provides the key objectives and framework for the City's response, mitigation, and recovery related to the COVID-19 emergency.
- All Portfolios and departments have been working diligently to effectively respond to the COVID-19 emergency and have ensured the protection of staff, the public and the delivery of quality public services while city building continues.
- The City's roadmap for success includes actions related to Our People, Our Places, Our Services, Our Finances, Our Economy and Our Communications.
- A comprehensive plan has been developed for future business re-integration and includes protocols for staff management, case management, safety and physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, education and communications.
- An overview of the activities of the Emergency Planning Program and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

Recommendations

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

Background

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. From the onset, the City of Vaughan closely monitored the evolving situation and initiated numerous measures to ensure the safety of residents and City staff. Throughout the pandemic, the City has ensured that quality services are delivered for families, businesses and all citizens.

The Ready, Resilient and Resourceful (RRR) Committee of Council has been established as part of the City's ongoing COVID-19 response effort. The RRR Committee provides the governance structure to ensure that all members of Council are informed and kept up to date with the decisions made throughout the emergency response to the pandemic. The first meeting of the committee was held June 23, 2020.

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

This report provides the RRR Committee with information regarding:

- An update of actions taken based on our areas of focus including: Our People, Our Places, Our Services, Our Finances, Our Economy, and Our Communications.
- An update on the comprehensive plan which has been developed for future business re-integration which provides protocols for staff management, case management, safety and physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, education and communications.
- An overview of the activities of the Emergency Planning Program, the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and the recovery efforts by the Emergency Management Team.

Previous Reports/Authority

[*A Framework for Reopening our Province*](#)

[*A Framework for Reopening our Province – Stage 2*](#)

[*A Framework for Reopening our Province – Stage 3*](#)

[*COVID-19: The City of Vaughan*](#)

[*City of Vaughan Media Releases*](#)

[*York Region COVID-19*](#)

[*Public Health Ontario COVID-19*](#)

[*Government of Canada COVID-19*](#)

[*World Health Organization COVID-19*](#)

[*Extract from Council Meeting – June 29, 2020 - Update on City's Response to COVID-19 – Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Committee Report \(June 23, 2020\)*](#)

[*Extract from Council Meeting – June 29, 2020 - COVID-19 Update – Emergency Operations Centre Response \(June 23, 2020\), Ready, Resilient and Resourceful Committee Report*](#)

Analysis

The City of Vaughan has effectively responded to the COVID-19 crisis and the vast majority of our business objectives are intact and on target. Where change is required, we have taken a disciplined and evidence-based approach to modify where required and evolve to meet the changing needs of the organization, our citizens, our business sectors and our communities; yet still be able to meet our strategic priorities for the term of Council.

The City's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) remains partially activated at a level three since March 13, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual on-line meetings are held with the City's EOC team, the COVID-19 Task Force and regional and provincial stakeholders. The EOC will continue to operate at a level three as long as the City is operating under a declared state of emergency.

Throughout the pandemic, the City of Vaughan has supported the collective and integrated pandemic response of the Regional Municipality of York and the York Regional Medical Officer of Health, as well as Public Health Ontario and the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Pandemic response communications ensure information is effectively communicated to the public; and the City of Vaughan facilitated these efforts by disseminating information from York Region and Public Health Ontario through our own communications channels.

The City of Vaughan continues to provide public messaging to assist our residents to understand how to adhere to prevention measures in the form of bylaws, orders, and restrictions put in place locally, regionally, provincially and federally in order to control the spread of disease and reduce COVID-19 related illness and death.

From late February into early March of 2020, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has reviewed and established business continuity plans which outline the manner and means by which each department would minimize the impact of the pandemic on its provision of essential services. Implementing business continuity plans ensured that critical public services remained accessible, both to internal stakeholders as well as the public. The City of Vaughan monitored the societal disruption and ensured the continuity and recovery of critical services and where possible, enacted programming and initiatives to minimize adverse economic impact and supported an efficient and effective use of resources during response and recovery.

Since the June 23, 2020 update provided to Council at the Ready, Resilient, and Resourceful Committee, staff have completed the following actions:

- continued tracking of key data indicators that will assist with forecasting and preparing for recovery, return to business as usual operations and resurgence over time;
- continued development of reopening plans for City facilities and amenities for Stages 1, 2 and 3;
- continued acquisition of personal protective equipment;
- commenced distribution of cloth masks to City staff;
- commenced construction of mitigating measures such as plexiglass barriers in facilities that have essential workers onsite;
- continued to seek reimbursement from the federal and provincial governments;
- supported implementation of the patios program to allow existing restaurants to use their parking stalls and/or the sidewalk and curb lane fronting their restaurant for patio purposes;
- supported the “Keeping Vaughan Clean” beautification initiative;
- supported the migration of in-person services to digital platforms or alternative methods such as curbside pick-up;
- supported initiatives to mitigate the financial impact of COVID-19 on businesses, citizens charities and not-for-profits;
- monitored and planned for other risks occurring during the pandemics such as heat waves, demonstrations and severe summer storms; and
- conducted research of responses on a global scale to identify best practices and anticipate risks for planning for the possible second wave.

Attachment #1 provides an interim action report for the EOC.



OUR PEOPLE: IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES

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

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

Staff were sent home and those that could effectively work from home, have continued to do so with the help of technology and business process modifications. For staff that were unable to work from home as they performed critical services within the field, we ensured they were protected and minimized their exposure to the threat of COVID-19. For some staff, where a work from home option was not possible and where they were not providing critical services, we were able to redeploy a number of staff to provide parks education services until June 4th; and for others we had to proceed with layoffs.

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

Current State Update as of September 2020:

More than 50% of the City's employees continue to effectively and productively work from home.

Approximately 1100 employees were temporarily laid off as of April 2020. Since April 2020, more than 50% of Recreation Services seasonal contracts have ended and a significant number of employees have been recalled:

- 385 employees recalled for Recreation Services (Camps, Fitness, City Playhouse and Aquatics);
- 107 School Crossing Guards have been hired/rehired for the 2020/2021 school term;
- 57 staff recalled for Vaughan Public Libraries.

Following the Recreation Services organizational restructuring in June 2020:

- 30 union employees were laid off and given options under the collective agreements; 1 PT non-union employee was laid off;
- 5 employees opted for termination;
- 25 employees were placed in other positions through bumping rights and by using vacant positions for which they were qualified;
- 10 employees were displaced as a result of bumping and placed in other positions.

In addition to the items above, the following are key action items since June 2020:

- The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) continues to send bi-weekly newsletters to all staff that shares key information and resources for all staff and focuses on employee wellness. Over 11 editions have been shared to date and the feedback from employees has been very positive.
- The OCHRO team continues to regularly monitor and communicate the rapid changes to employment legislation under both the Federal and Provincial legislative frameworks, such as the Employment Standards Act amendments to legislative leaves (e.g. changes to Declared Emergency Leave and the introduction of the Infectious Disease Emergencies Leave - IDEL) and other legislative requirements.
- The OCHRO regularly updates the COVID Q&A's to provide corporate direction and guidance to staff and leaders. For example, direction with respect to out of Province work and instructions for staff for those who undergo testing for COVID-19 were recently added.
- OCHRO continues to work with Corporate and Strategic Communications on messaging to all staff to remind them of our COVID-related Health & Safety protocols.
- Additional information and supports regarding working from home was sent to staff and leaders including the requirement for all staff working remotely to complete a safety checklist for home offices.
- The OCHRO, with the help of Procurement, distributed face coverings by department for all staff.
- Developed an All Staff Orientation Guide and Re-Start Q&A's which will be shared with all staff upon the re-opening of City facilities.
- Continued discussions with HR municipal leaders across York Region and the GTA to review and compare COVID-19 impacts and responses, re-opening plans, bargaining and labour relations items.

Future Action Plans:

The OCHRO is currently working on the following initiatives:

- Preparing for upcoming collective bargaining, taking into account the impact of COVID-19 as well as bargaining across the Province.
- Developing a workplace wellness program.
- Implementing the Emerging Leaders Program.
- Rolling out an Employee Engagement Action Planning Framework.
- Planning for a Workforce Management System (Time and Attendance Program).



OUR PLACES: BUSINESS REINTEGRATION PLAN

As of August 5, 2020, the City announced most City facilities - including Vaughan City Hall and the Joint Operations Centre - will remain closed to the public until at least January 4, 2021, in response to COVID-19.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, when Vaughan became the first city in Ontario and the first municipality in York Region to declare a state of emergency, the City has taken a disciplined, responsible and measured approach to closing - and gradually reopening - City facilities and amenities. The decision to keep select facilities closed marks the latest step to protect the health and safety of citizens and staff.

CITY FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

The following facilities remain closed:

- Vaughan City Hall
- Joint Operations Centre
- City Playhouse Theatre
- Community Centres (with the exception of fitness centres by appointment, arenas by permit and select pools by pre-registration)
- Vaughan Animal Shelter (except by appointment, for adoption purposes only)
- Vaughan Public Libraries (with the exception of Bathurst Clark Resource Library, Civic Centre Resource Library and Pierre Berton Resource Library)

The following amenities have reopened:

- Arenas (by permit only)
- Fitness centres (by appointment only)
- Indoor pools (by registration only)
- Indoor Squash courts (by appointment only)
- Off-leash dog park
- Outdoor basketball courts
- Outdoor bocce courts

- Outdoor exercise equipment
- Outdoor volleyball courts
- Park benches
- Park public washrooms
- Parking lots in parks
- Picnic tables and gazebos
- Playgrounds
- Premium/artificial fields and diamonds (by permit only)
- Skateboard parks
- Splashpads
- Sports fields and baseball diamonds
- Tennis courts
- Trails
- Vaughan Public Libraries (Bathurst Clark Resource Library, Civic Centre Resource Library and Pierre Berton Resource Library only)

The City's Business Reintegration Plan (BRP) for staff has been developed and will continue to evolve as more information becomes available from the Province and Public Health with regards to COVID-19.

The BRP 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 City 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 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. To support continued efforts in our places/facilities, the City will continue to monitor Grant Funding opportunities through Economic Development and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP).

Attachment #3 provides full details regarding the Business Reintegration Plan.



OUR SERVICES: SERVICE IMPACTS and ACTIONS

Throughout the response to COVID-19, all portfolios and departments have worked diligently to assess and implement precautionary measures

and put contingency plans into effect. Council has been provided with regular weekly update memos from each department outlining key activities and results.

The City has taken a disciplined, responsible and measured approach to implementing precautionary measures to protect citizens and staff from COVID-19. That same approach is guiding decision-making about reopening facilities. Although several City buildings remain closed and some programs have been impacted, city building has not slowed down.

Essential services remain intact and continue uninterrupted, including fire and emergency response, waste collection, water/wastewater services, by-law and enforcement services and the Access Vaughan contact centre.

Many virtual programs have been introduced - through online, teleconference or modified in-person methods - which offer an efficient and streamlined experience for residents.

The decision to reopen facilities and amenities is informed by a risk model developed by the City with public safety always being the priority. The risk model uses Vaughan-specific data and reflects guidance issued by York Region Public Health and the provincial government, such as the ongoing extension of province-wide emergency orders and the announcement enabling York Region to enter Stage 2 effective June 21st and Stage 3 of the reopening framework on July 24, 2020.

The following provides a summary of the key actions regarding our services and any applicable future considerations and action plans required to maintain quality public services while protecting the safety of our staff and citizens.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND CITY SOLICITOR

Public consultation remains an important part of the planning and city-building process. While Vaughan City Hall remains closed in response to COVID-19, the Office of the City Clerk in conjunction with the Office of the Chief Information Officer has ensured continued public participation via electronic-participation to Committee of the Whole and Council meetings including making a live electronic deputation via teleconference, telephone or written communication during the meeting. Members of the public can connect through their phone, personal computer, smartphone or tablet.

The Office of the City Clerk has successfully held 39 Electronic Meetings for Committee and Council since the COVID-19 Emergency. In addition to the 39, the Office of the City Clerk has held 17 Electronic Meetings for Committee of Adjustment, Task Forces, Sub Committees and Advisory Committees. A separate report will be brought to Committee of the Whole on amending the Procedure Bylaw to make electronic meetings a permanent option.

While City Hall remains closed to the public, administrative services are being provided as usual. Curbside marriage licenses continue to be issued. A total of 147 marriage licences have been issued so far through this method.

Future Action Plans:

- The majority of services are being provided without interruption and will continue to do so.
- A separate report has been brought to Council on amending the Procedural By-law to make electronic meetings a permanent option.
- The Committee of Adjustment is now virtually commissioning their applications, allowing for a complete e-submission process.
- The Legal Services department is introducing a Legal Document Management System (LDMS). The LDMS will position Legal Services to become a paperless office, which will allow for seamless adoption of permanent work from home deployments as part of our new normal.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Access Vaughan

Trending inquiries are related to property taxes, general by-law information, waste as it relates to the blue and green bin exchange program, parks and forestry inquiries relating to tree inspections and animal services inquiries -- most of which are related to wildlife. Continuing to trend are inquiries related to the reopening of fitness centres and, most recently, pools and arenas.

- 111,169 Calls since March 13, 2020 (beginning of pandemic)
- 71% resolution rate with single point of contact
- Recent spikes attributed: announcements of tax penalty deferrals ending, reopening of various businesses, including City of Vaughan fitness centres, swimming pools and blue bin and green bin exchange program

Future Action Plans:

- The project to implement a one-stop-shop counter service approach at Vaughan City Hall is underway.
- Future productivity improvements will include agents working remotely for the foreseeable future.

By-law and Compliance, Licensing & Permit Services

On March 18, 2020, By-law and Compliance, Licensing & Permit Services (BCLPS) established and chaired the Regional COVID-19 Enforcement Task Force. A cross jurisdictional team represented by the enforcement divisions of each municipality within York Region, York Regional Public Health, York Regional Police, Toronto Conservation Authority and Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario. The team continues to meet to discuss emerging issues, identify solutions, engaging in joint initiatives aimed at public health and wellness, ensuring consistency in approaches, application and enforcement methods and ensuring effective communications and information sharing within the team.

Enforcement Services Division:

By-law officers continue to patrol and respond to calls on a priority basis. Priority remains on public safety matters, enforcing provincial orders and regulations, the City's Emergency Measures By-law and the regulation of the use of local parks and open spaces in Vaughan.

On July 9, 2020 York Region Council endorsed a recommendation from the York Region Medical Officer of Health, instructing owners of enclosed public spaces to

have a policy mandating customers, visitors and employees to wear a mask or face covering. This requirement came into effect on Friday, July 17. By-law Officers continue to respond to related calls, inspect local businesses for compliance and coordinate efforts with Public Health officials as needed; focusing primarily on education with direct enforcement actions employed if necessary.

Policy & Business Planning Division:

Outward facing public and client services (e.g. licensing and permits) transitioned to an electronic format to allow for service continuance with minimal disruption. This included but was not limited to Administrative Monetary Penalty disputes and first attendance matters, handled by telephone.

On June 18 in support of local business operators, the necessary temporary by-laws were initiated to allow for local eating establishments and banquet halls to temporarily expand or establish additional outdoor patios, while maintaining physical distancing and adhering to all related health guidelines. This is the first directive issued by the Mayor and Members of Council under the City's Emergency Measures By-law. An application for permit is required for establishments looking to create a patio or expand their current patio to accommodate physical distancing requirements. To date, 97 licensed patios have been approved.

Event, filming and lottery permits are being assessed and processed on a case-by-case basis.

Following the declared emergency, business license renewals were afforded a grace period and deferral of renewal fees. The grace period established for business license renewals concluded on August 31st. Reminder notices have been sent to all licensed business accordingly.

Online payments of administrative monetary penalties, such as parking tickets, can be made at PayVaughanTicket.com. Citizens can arrange an alternative method of payment or schedule a dispute appointment by calling Access Vaughan, and scheduled disputes are being conducted over the phone.

Vaughan Animal Services Division:

Vaughan Animal Services continues to serve Vaughan, Richmond Hill and the Township of King communities. Vaughan Animal Services Officers continually serve the communities through regular patrols and response to service calls accordingly. The Vaughan Animal Services Shelter remains closed, with limited access for adoption and pet recovery services by appointment only.

Future Action Plans:

- Vaughan Animal Shelter to remain closed until all facilities open. However, it is still providing all services.
- Consideration for future openings include in-person Hearings once City Hall opens. Potential limited counter services aligned with Corporate decisions.
- Services may be adjusted to continue to develop on-line services where possible. Enhance in-field solutions for field staff/officers.
- Migration to the AMANDA software system for improved case management and efficiencies is a possible future improvement.

Recreation Services

The City of Vaughan's Recreation Services department continues to take a disciplined, responsible and measured approach to gradually reopening community centres and providing programs, including in-person camps and fitness programs, virtual programming and indoor/outdoor fitness classes. Currently under review are in-person instructional swim lessons which will be considered after Thanksgiving.

The decision to reopen facilities continues to be informed by a risk model developed by the City with public safety always being the priority. The risk model uses Vaughan-specific data and reflects guidance issued by York Region Public Health and the provincial government.

Virtual Programing:

Recreation Services continues to offer a range of virtual recreation resources for all ages, abilities and areas of interest. This includes virtual fitness classes, which are posted six times a week on the Recreation Services YouTube channel, with more than 1,500 views of a single workout video.

Registration for the Virtual Summer Adventures program, which features weekly camps and daily activities for people of all ages and abilities, from preschool to older adults, results in 517 registrations and over \$40,000 in revenue. Family lessons for parents and children are available. Frequent enhancements are also made to the department's new webpage featuring virtual recreation resources for all ages, abilities and areas of interest. Available online programming includes:

- Vaughan Playschool educational reading, writing, math and science worksheets for children aged three to five years old.
- General activities such as cooking, arts and crafts, colouring and more.

Summer Camps:

From July 20 to Sept 4, in-person modified summer camps took place at Al Palladini, Chancellor, Dufferin Clark, Garnet A. Williams, Maple, North Thornhill and Vellore Village Community Centers. In addition, select heritage houses and sites also hosting in-person camps, including Armstrong House, Arnold House, Bakers Homestead and Maple Nature Reserve. Registration for all locations totaled 1,776 and generated nearly \$350,000 in revenue.

Fitness:

Fitness centres including squash courts reopened as of August 10 on a limited basis. Strict measures are in place to protect all users and staff, including the requirement to register in advance. In the first 4 weeks there were over 10,000 workouts registered. As of September 8, Recreation Services extended fitness centre hours: Monday to Friday from 5:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 7 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. (except for Father E. Bulfon Community Centre, which will close at 5 p.m. on weekends). Effective Monday, September 14, exclusive workout session times for older adults have been designated.

Fitness centres have controlled access, limited capacity and scheduled time blocks for patrons to sign up for in advance. Workout blocks are 75 minutes each, with a 30-minute shutdown in between appointments for cleaning and sanitization.

A modified schedule of indoor and outdoor fitness classes was made available to members starting August 17. Total registrations for fitness classes were 472 for the 3-week time period.

Saunas, lockers, showers, lost and found and the fitness track remain closed until further notice. Some equipment has been removed, including yoga gear, ab mats and neck pads.

Based on industry best practices and Public Health direction, steps have been taken to enhance air circulation and ventilation systems in Vaughan Fitness Centres in response to COVID-19. Air quality is constantly monitored and managed.

Pools:

As part of the City of Vaughan's disciplined, responsible and measured approach to reopening facilities in response to COVID-19, the City has taken a staggered approach to reopening pools:

- Tuesday, Sept. 8: Maple, North Thornhill and Vellore Village pools

- Monday, Sept. 14: Al Palladini, Father E. Bulfon and Garnet A. Williams pools
- Monday, Sept. 21: Chancellor, Dufferin Clark and Woodbridge pools

Recreational and length swimming is available to pool plan holders and Vaughan Fitness members. Pre-paid single visits by the public are available at a special promotional cost of \$3.25 (plus HST) for a limited time.

Aquafitness classes are available to plan holders and fitness members only, until further notice. These facilities and activities will be available on a limited basis and at a reduced capacity. Pre-registration online is required to use the pool.

Prior to arriving at the community centre pool, a provincial public health self-assessment is required. Masks must be worn upon entry, exit and while travelling through the facility and on the pool deck. A mask or face covering is not required in the pool.

Enhanced daily cleaning and disinfection of high-traffic areas and high-traffic surfaces has been implemented, including in changerooms. Access to changerooms is limited and users are encouraged to come as prepared as possible to swim. Lockers and showers are not available until further notice.

Arenas:

Arenas have reopened for permit use only. Al Palladini Community Centre twin pad commenced September 3rd, with all remaining arenas opening on September 14. Permits are staggered to allow for 30-minute cleaning and disinfecting between user groups.

Permits:

All indoor permits, with the exception of arenas and pools, will be considered after Thanksgiving.

The City continues to work with our Community Service Organizations on ensuring a safe return to ensure all protocols and guidelines are adhered to.

Events:

The City's first-ever virtual Canada Day celebration, presented by Greenpark Group, was held on Wednesday, July 1 with the JUNO award-winning and Grammy-nominated group Barenaked Ladies headlining the festivities. Plans for future events are in development.

Future Action Plans:

- Fall in-person registered general recreation programs and swim lessons will be considered after Thanksgiving.
- Indoor permits will be considered after Thanksgiving.
- Elimination of the printing and home delivery of the Recreation Guide to just under 90,000 households by enhancing our online experience and registration tool.
- Elimination of cross city busing for summer camps by focusing on enhanced program planning.

Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service

In collaboration with Global Medic, Egg Farmers of Ontario and Housing York Inc., Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS) distributed over 1500 COVID-19 safety kits; including reusable cloth face masks and soap, over 7500 kg (16,500 lbs) of non-perishable food, and 3600 eggs at various public education activities, to support the vulnerable members of our community. These initiatives were highlighted on CTV News "Toronto Together," CBC News, and CP24.

Vaughan Fire & Rescue Service joined the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth for a donation of face shields and face masks to the St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church.

A series of articles have been written for the Vaughan citizen highlighting COVID-19 safety protocols, and how to prevent COVID-19 fatigue.

Emergency Planning:

The primary focus of the division is the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. As the pandemic situation has stabilized, routine program elements that were suspended since March 13, 2020 have been reactivated. Work has been initiated on addressing the recommendations from the first interim action report and the Grid Ex V after action report. Simultaneously with the COVID-19 activities, ongoing monitoring and notification to City personnel of other possible threats to the community continues.

Mandatory Program Elements:

The hazard identification risk assessment review has been completed and the critical infrastructure review is underway. The community emergency management coordinators have the requisite training outlined by Emergency Management Ontario.

- *Emergency Plans and Procedures*

With the spring and summer months, severe thunderstorm weather began in Canada. To ensure that we had the capacity to shelter residents in the event of

a secondary emergency, shelter set-up plans were updated to reflect social distancing requirements. The emergency plan and procedures are in the process of being updated based on recommendations from the Grid Ex V exercise and the two COVID-19 pandemic interim action reports.

- *Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)*

Future modifications to the EOC layout have been recommended. The EOC dashboard program has been migrated to a new platform and tested by selected members of the emergency management team. The new version, Incident Point is scheduled to go live in October 2020.

- *Staff Training*

Within this year, three different training sessions were provided in emergency management systems for 50 staff. Training for over 200 members of the emergency management team will be provided virtually on the Incident Point software in late October and early November.

- *Public Education*

Traditional in-person public education initiatives have shifted to virtual platforms. Up until the onset of COVID-19, the program participated in two events, conducted two workshops for 129 people and distributed over 20,365 pieces of literature. The YouTube safety video site had over 488,100 views. Since the onset of COVID-19, Corporate and Strategic Communications has issued over 1,100 communications of which many qualify as public education information. The COVID-19 website received 66,581 visits which can be counted as public awareness.

- *Annual Emergency Exercise*

The planned exercises for 2020 of the emergency colour code drills, evacuation and sheltering of Maple Health Centre and the emergency management team scenario have been placed on hold due to COVID-19 response requirements. An amendment to Ontario Regulation 380/04 under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA) exempts the requirement for municipalities to conduct an annual emergency exercise in 2020. The amendment took into account the emergency response activities in the Municipal Emergency Control Groups have engaged in as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Situational Awareness and Monitoring:

From March 13 to August 31, 2020 the Program monitored several alerts from Environment Canada, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service, Public Works and Alectra Utilities that had the potential to escalate beyond routine responses.

Environment Canada issued alerts of weather threats to the City on 49 days. These threats included:

Alert	Number of Days	Threat to City
Warnings (32 days)	28 heat warning 4 Severe Thunderstorms	Risk to health Risk of heavy rainfall, flooding, high winds, hail and tornadoes causing property damage, injury and potential evacuation
Watches (6 days)	5 Severe Thunderstorm 1 Tornado	Risk of heavy rainfall, high winds and hail causing property damage, flooding, injury and potential evacuation
Special Weather Statement (11 days)	1 Funnel Cloud 1 Air Quality 2 Wind 3 Severe Thunderstorm 4 Heavy Rainfall	Risk of flooding, to health, property damage, injury and potential evacuation

The Program tracked 32 power outage events in which four large areas of the City and between 2,250 to 16,830 customers were affected. The largest outage event occurred in March while the EMT was engaged in managing the early stages of the COVID-19 response.

Other risks monitored included three peaceful demonstrations, nine industrial fires, four hazardous materials incidents and a water supply concern.

Future Action Plans:

- VFRS will monitor and procure PPE on a continuous basis.
- Continue self-assessment activities for those entering the workplace.
- Continue contact tracing logs.
- Expand and utilize a virtual training platform where possible.
- Modify public education and outreach efforts – providing virtual options where possible.
- Follow the Ontario Fire Marshal communique – altering how fire drills are performed.
- The new version the EOC dashboard program, Incident Point is planned to go live in October 2020.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Since the City declared a state of emergency on March 17, 2020, the majority of Corporate Services and Finance staff (OCHRO, OCIO, Office of the CFO, Financial Planning and Development Finance, Financial Services and Procurement Services) have been working remotely, where possible, without disruption to the provision of services.

Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer

The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO), in conjunction with management, CUPE and VPFPA, have focused on key responses related to communications, labour relations, safety, alternative work arrangements, recruitment, and workforce adjustments. In supporting our staff, all people leaders are receiving guidance from the OCHRO on any COVID-19 related staffing issues. The OCHRO also continues to provide bi-weekly communications to all staff and supports focusing on employee wellness.

Future Action Plans:

- Preparing for upcoming collective bargaining, taking into account the impact of COVID-19 as well as bargaining across the Province.
- Developing a workplace wellness program.
- Implementing the Emerging Leaders Program.
- Rolling out an Employee Engagement Action Planning Framework.
- Planning for a Workforce Management System (Time and Attendance Program).

Office of the Chief Information Officer

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) continues to support and enhance remote access capabilities and work with internal departments to digitize their services. The following services and capabilities highlight some of the major COVID-19 accomplishments since the last update:

- Transitioned virtual committee and council meetings from Microsoft Skype to Microsoft Teams platform for a better virtual experience.
- Continued to monitor infrastructure bandwidth and thresholds to support over 1,300 users working from home.
- Updated IT Acceptable Use of Technology policy to address working from home.
- Two resources (Enterprise Data Architect and GIS Systems Analyst/Project Leader) supports the COVID-19 Data Analytics team.
- Additional permit types were added to the City of Vaughan's permitting portal.

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

Procurement Services

The Procurement Services team continues to support the City's service delivery needs by modernizing its business processes and leveraging technology. This includes not only online bid document payments, bids review and download of bid documents, but also on-line bid submissions for the convenience of the vendor community. The Procurement Services department has further innovated its processes to allow online internal procurement approvals, virtual site meetings using skype and sharing site videos. Online proposal evaluations, vendor interviews, consensus meetings, execution of contracts using e-signature, online vendor performance evaluation and debrief sessions have effectively transformed the procurement function into an efficient 'new' normal.

This 'new' normal has minimized the need for paper-based records, reducing paper and copying costs. In total, Procurement Services has successfully awarded 76 contracts worth \$38.3 million in Q2-2020 to ensure delivery of council priority projects and fulfilling urgent operational requirements, including increased demand for PPEs without any business interruption as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Q2-2020 Procurement activity represents 21 additional contract awards with an additional award value of \$15.5 million when compared to the same quarter last year.

Future Action Plans:

- Although, Procurement Services was already on the path to transforming its procurement function, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need to leverage technology to help the City meet its Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan.
- On-line delivery of procurement services is now more effective and efficient with added transparency and value-add for the City and its residents. For example, the introduction of e-signatures benefits the vendor community by minimizing the inconvenience of traveling to the City offices and offers a safer work environment to staff by reducing public interaction.

Financial Planning and Development Finance

Financial Planning and Development Finance (FPDF) continues to work with each City department to estimate the financial impact due to COVID-19, ensuring cash-flow and liquidity projections remain sound. External market impacts (e.g. interest rate reductions) are being closely monitored to assess the impact on City's investment portfolio, executing near-and-mid-term adjustments as required. Staff also continue to

work with City departments on cost savings/deferral measures and spending restrictions to help mitigate known and anticipated revenue shortfalls.

FPDF staff have supported the City's efforts to lobby senior levels of government for financial support, which resulted in \$6.15 million of phase 1 funding under the Federal Government's Safe Restart Agreement.

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

The 2021 Budget cycle is well under-way, with Council approval targeted by Festive closure. The 2021 budget is being approached with a mindset geared towards conservatism, flexibility and sustainability. All initiatives are being 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. Further to this, staff have worked with Alectra regarding late payment charge waivers on utility accounts. As the billing system is tied in with water/wastewater, the City of Vaughan, as their partners agreed to waive the late payment charges for water and wastewater.

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 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 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.

Future Action Plans in Finance:

- Preparation of the 2019 Financial Information Return and financial statements;
- Completion of the independent Audit of the City's financial position for the year ended December 31, 2019;
- Completion of the 2019 Tangible Capital Assets;
- Completion of 2019 Year-End and 2020 Half-Year Fiscal Health Reports to Council;
- Development of the 2021 Operating and Capital Budgets, including guiding principles, strategies and instructions and guidelines;
- In conjunction with Human Resources, a review of the new work arrangements in Finance will be conducted to determine the impacts to the delivery of services and

stakeholders (Council, clients / departments, external parties and Senior Leadership).

- Opportunities for future efficiencies, productivity improvements and savings will also be identified by reviewing the costs and benefits of any service changes, potential modifications required and long-term sustainability under “the new normal.”
- Any financial implications of decisions taken from these reviews will be incorporated into future budgets of the associated Finance departments for Council consideration.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Infrastructure Development portfolio has undertaken numerous actions, measures, tactics and initiatives 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.

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, and fresh air circulation.

Taking full advantage of imposed facility closures, the team managed numerous 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.

The portfolio remained steadfast in its commitment to growth and recovery by advancing a variety of key projects and construction activity that will:

- support the City as a fully connected and integrated community by enhancing the road network, transit and mobility infrastructure;
- drive developments and promote good urban design resulting in public spaces and facilities that foster community well-being and quality of life;
- encompass principles of environmental protection and sustainability as well as inclusivity; and,
- ignite economic activity and prosperity.

Critical projects such as North Maple Regional Park, Carville Community Centre, Library & District Park, Clark Avenue Bike Paths, Vaughan Transportation Plan, Land Acquisition Strategy, LED Streetlight Retrofit Program and Integrated Urban Water Master Plan, were all advanced accordingly.

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 plan. 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.

Future Action Plans:

- Facilities are re-opening with gradual service implementation by Client Department requests and we are extremely vigilant on monitoring the situation on a daily basis.
- We are ready to implement contingency plans quickly to modify or fully close facilities immediately.
- Working with Stakeholders, Public Health, Provincial Agencies and the Industry as a whole to develop a plan for work environments to accommodate the "new normal".
- Taking a fiscally responsible view, we have temporarily put any workspace renewal projects on pause until there is clarity in how the "new normal" will be realized.

PLANNING AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Planning and Growth Management (PGM) continues to move ahead with innovative and digital solutions to deliver its services and develop service specific plans. These creative solutions have changed processes and have provided an opportunity to review new ways of doing business, altering service delivery and to implement innovative and digital solutions that will forever change how we do business.

The PGM Management Team has continued to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business units and service level delivery, with a focus on protecting staff and providing them with the training and tools they need to be successful.

As the face of city building for the City, the PGM team is committed to facilitating the development of complete communities for existing and future citizens. Staff have been working collaboratively with industry partners to ensure planning processes and approvals continue seamlessly through the pandemic to enable "shovel ready" projects.

In total, 142 applications (including VMC) representing more than \$3.78M in development fees were received from January 1 to August 31, including 59 PACs and 83 development applications. There is a 43% increase in development fees collected than the \$2.64M from the same period last year.

In addition, 47 applications for 24 properties, went to Public Hearing from January 1 to August 31, 2020, and 31 additional applications for 16 properties are proceeding in September and October.

To date, the Committee of the Whole approved 3,762 residential units, including 67 singles, 401 Townhouses, and 3,294 Apartments, excluding the VMC. A total of 601 residential units are proceeding for approval in September 2020 and 1,070 residential units in October 2020.

In the VMC, 2,137 new residential units are now completed and occupied representing a population of 4,231. There are 392,929 ft² office area and 114,529 ft² retail space completed and occupied. While considering all VMC applications, there are currently 31,977 residential units, representing a population of 63,314 residents at various stages of approval or construction. This achieves 267% of the 2031 Secondary Plan Targets. Of these applications, 13,593 units are in the pre-application consultation phase and 5,132 units are formally submitted applications in progress to be approved by Council.

New development applications are being received electronically and Pre-Application Consultation (PAC), Heritage Vaughan Committee and Design Review Panel meetings are being held with electronic participation.

In total, 1,835 permits valued at over \$591 million were issued from January 1 to August 31, 2020. In addition, more than 33,470 inspections have also taken place over the past eight months, which well exceeds the number of inspections for 2019, 2018 and 2017 during that same period. For Building Standards, inspections have not been interrupted by COVID-19. Since the state of emergency was declared, the team has performed 22,177 inspections and issued 1,234 permits. Pool permit intake has more than doubled since 2019.

There are several projects underway that will guide development for intensification areas, including the Vaughan Mills Centre and the Yonge Steeles Corridor, with a focus on safety, active transportation and sustainability. Land use studies to guide the development of transit supportive communities continue to engage stakeholders and the community as we work towards emerging land use plans.

The development of places for citizens to relax and explore their local and broader community has been realized with the planning and design of approximately 10KM of new trails, adding to the Vaughan Super Trail 100Km concept within our existing and new communities. In additional, 11 developer build projects that represent approximately 10Ha of active parkland has been secured through the planning and development approval process.

The core services of PGM are driven through the processes of public and stakeholder consultation and engagement. The use of online platforms for the facilitation of fulsome public engagement and consultation remain an important part of our city-building efforts during the global pandemic. The City of Vaughan has responded with innovations and process improvements to allow programs and services to be delivered virtually. New online engagement tools are also being utilized to carryout consultation activities related to the new and ongoing projects across the Portfolio.

A number of online consultations have and continue to take place with respect to the Vaughan Mills Centre Public Realm Streetscape Plan, the Parkland Dedication Guidelines, Local Off-Leash Dog Area Strategy, and the Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) Project.

A new digital permitting portal was launched in April 2020, enabling citizens and building industry professionals to apply, track and pay for permits online. Enhancements were made to the portal in June 2020, providing a “one stop shop” opportunity for citizens and building industry professionals to apply for engineering grading permits online. The permitting portal is just one example of the digital strategies that enhance the customer experience and encourage city-building opportunities.

The PGM team strives to offer diverse and accessible ways for all citizens to access pertinent information and take part in the city building process. Staff are also working to advance a number of important policy and planning studies including, the Block 18 District Park Master Plan, the Greenspace Strategy, the Official Plan Review, and the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law.

Staff have also advanced several projects identified in the City’s Climate Emergency Declaration, including completing the review of the Sustainability Performance Metrics as a multi-municipal collaboration, starting the Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Framework, and obtaining Council endorsement of the operational study looking at the use of the Local Improvement Charges financing tool to enable home energy retrofits as an important greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction effort.

Future Action Plans:

- The shift to a virtual environment has enabled the development of leaner business processes and to offer more services digitally. There are a number of other digital modernization projects underway that will result in future electronic service delivery and efficiencies including: the implementation of an Electronic Application Submission Portal, new cost model and fee structure and electronic circulations of new development applications to third parties.
- Also reviewing electronic public engagement strategies and exploring online platforms to ensure meaningful and inclusive community engagement.

- Maintaining Alternative Work Arrangements for staff and continuing virtual meetings, will need to form the basis of standard business practices when the pandemic subsides, resulting in cost and energy savings related to commuting and will reduce pollution and Greenhouse Gas emissions.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Public Works team has worked diligently to maintain a clean and beautiful City. This includes street sweeping, litter pickup, boulevard maintenance, grass cutting, tree inspections and pruning, pavement marking and water and wastewater services. Adjustments have been made to some regularly scheduled summer public works operations. Services that are delayed or reduced include tree planting and maintenance, weeding and mulching, road and sidewalk repair, replacement or addition of streetlight and traffic signals, implementation of new traffic operations and road safety measures, and water trailer event bookings.

Environmental Services

In the early days of the pandemic response, waste collection services were expanded to assist residents who were generating more garbage as a result of spending more time at home. To further assist, a temporary bin exchange program to replace broken City blue boxes and green bins through home delivery. To date more than 2,900 home deliveries have taken place, including 1,716 blue bins, 1,159 green bins, and 44 kitchen bins. To manage resources for other critical streams (garbage, recycling and organics collection) the weekly yard waste collection in the Spring was moved to bi-weekly, minimizing potential impact to service levels.

Environmental Services staff also took the opportunity to put out multi-year contracts in; catch basin cleaning, pond litter/debris removal and vegetation cutting, CCTV, sanitary sewer flushing and cleaning, the move to longer term contracts for these services will result in significant savings. For example, the development of a longer term contract for catch basin cleaning, allowed the lowest bidder to implement an innovative operational strategy, which required an investment in additional investment, which could be capitalized over the duration of the contract, leading to a much lower bid price than the next lowest bidder.

Future Action Plans:

- Although thought to be a temporary solution during COVID-19, the uptake from the public along with generating operational efficiencies, Environmental Services is likely to implement the bin exchange program permanently.
- Physically distancing and splitting of shifts for critical water and wastewater operators to ensure they were kept safe, provided an added benefit of reducing

overtime costs, while improving on-call operators work-life-balance. Water and Wastewater operations are exploring alternative work arrangements and other shift arrangements to further improve responsiveness.

Transportation and Fleet Management Services

The Transportation and Fleet Management Services team were able to re-purpose existing vacancies to create four (4) positions to focus on small capital and contract delivery. This will enable front line staff to be reassigned to support non-contracted roads work; supervisors to focus on field work and service delivery; and, focused contract management that is expected to result in higher quality vendor services and performance.

To ensure our people are safe, plexiglass partitions were installed at the Fleet Management Services counter, and protocols to limit personnel in the both the office and shop areas was implemented. With the reduction in foot traffic through the area, and more precise vehicle service planning by user departments, section staff are redirected less often to resolve walk ups, and they can focus more of their time on planned shop service and repairs.

Three City-wide street sweeping rotations – more than one additional rotation than has been delivered in the past two years – have resulted in an indirect savings for our Environmental Services team's catch basin maintenance program. In total, more than 10,520 tons of dust, dirt and debris was removed from City roadways, and prevented from entering our storm water system.

Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations

Park amenities including basketball courts; benches; bocce courts; off-leash dog park; outdoor exercise equipment; parking lots; picnic tables and gazebos; playgrounds; premium/artificial fields and diamonds (by permit); skateboard parks; splashpads; sports fields and baseball diamonds; tennis courts; trails; and washrooms have reopened.

The decision to reopen facilities and park amenities is informed by a risk model developed by the City to help determine what amenities should remain closed and when they should reopen - with public safety always being the priority. The risk model uses Vaughan-specific data and reflects guidance issued by York Region Public Health and the provincial government, such as the ongoing extension of province-wide emergency orders and the announcement enabling York Region to enter Stage 2 of the reopening framework effective June 19 and Stage 3 effective July 24, 2020.

Various innovations and improvement initiatives have been undertaken:

- Realized a 1.3-year return on investment (ROI) on the purchase of 520 reservoir planters which has shown a 50% reduction in our watering program, enabling us to focus our efforts on essential services such as litter picking.
- Staff initiated a compost pile, with an anticipated cost avoidance of \$10,000 annually, in tipping / dumping fees and the need to purchase soil amendments. We also put forward a capital request for Water Trailers, which investments will see a cost avoidance of \$35,500+ and 693 hours of labour to be re-directed within the operation.
- Park Operations found efficiencies, cost savings and productivity improvements through the adoption of grow zones, and beyond the \$50,000 in cost avoidance, this initiative also promotes pollination, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and helps manage stormwater.
- Through a deferral of start of season grass trimming by 2 weeks, Parks also realized a cost savings of over \$50,000 that can be carried forward as part of regular start of season operations.
- The team also moved small fence and irrigation repairs internally which allow for a more cost-effective and responsive service.
- Parks staff were able to increase garbage service collection at high use areas to ensure we keep City parks safe, clean and beautiful for our citizens, and are also developing a pilot of QR Code on our park garbage cans to increase responsiveness to litter/dumping concerns.
- COVID-19 safety restrictions inspired Forestry to implement a paperless work order system, that has also significantly improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the inspection program, resulting in enhanced service delivery to our citizens. The whole process can be done remotely, which limits paper transfer, improves real-time communication and tracking, while maintaining a safe, physically distant environment. The new process introduces standardization in templates which promotes consistency, will eliminate printing over 6,000 pieces of paper annually, and the use of spreadsheets for an enhanced ability to sort, track, search, and edit, which results in reduced errors.

Future Action Plans:

- Through an increase focused on perennial plantings which reduce reliance on annuals and lessen the dependence on contractors/greenhouse growers,

Horticulture Operations is developing a more resilient long-term planting strategy.

- Collaborated with internal partners to kick off a horticulture sponsorship program “Grow With Vaughan” to provide support to local businesses with an highly visible and cost-effective partnership opportunity that will also provide a revenue source to reduce the burden on tax.
- In order to maintain a safe working environment Horticulture maintained physical distancing by dispersing staff to satellite locations, the unanticipated benefit was a 7% increase in productivity, as staff were closer to their geographical maintenance zones; this will continue.
- With the field permits delayed, the parks team is exploring the reduction of field lining and grooming for future year savings.

VAUGHAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

To guide Vaughan Public Libraries through the next phase of our pandemic response, a comprehensive 75-page VPL Recovery Strategy has been produced, covering service planning and integration, safety protocols, operational procedures, Frequently Asked Questions and an extensive public occupancy plan. The Recovery strategy has been shared with the entire staff complement of VPL to ensure all are fully informed.

Curbside Pickup continues to be popular and as of September 8, 66,485 items were borrowed by enthusiastic customers. The curbside model has been adapted to allow customers to access existing holds or place new ones that can now be collected appointment-free. This represents a significant shift from the initial model, where staff received requests and curated a package of items for customers, who then had to pick them up at a set time.

Prior to reopening VPL Resource Libraries, an average week 4,738 physical items are borrowed by customers while a further 7,793 digital eBook, eAudio and eVideo items are circulated. These digital circulation numbers have remained relatively steady throughout the pandemic, indicating that the public continues to embrace a mixed delivery model that allows them to borrow items in the format they choose and where they choose. Use of digital databases continues at a much higher rate than pre-pandemic with the most popular databases being TumbleBooks children’s picture books tripling in use and Lynda.com with thousands of online tutorials and Press Display including 4,000 newspapers in 60 languages almost doubling in use.

On Tuesday September 8, Vaughan Public Libraries reopened its three largest branches to the public. Bathurst Clark Resource Library, Civic Centre Resource Library and Pierre Berton Resource Library resumed regular hours of operation, but with significant safety measures and modifications in place. Safety measures implemented include an occupancy limit of 50 customers, one-hour visit limits, compulsory mask wearing and hand sanitization on entry, the installation of plexiglass shields, distancing signage and a one-way system, restricted seating and enhanced cleaning protocols. On the first day of reopening, the three resource libraries

circulated 5,484 items to 1,754 customers! As a safety precaution, physical items are isolated for 72 hours once returned to VPL.

To reduce barriers to access, VPL has adopted the socially responsible decision to eliminate late fees and excused all existing fines on customer accounts but will continue to encourage customers to return items through telephone, email and text notifications.

While all in-person programming remains cancelled for the foreseeable future, VPL continues to offer a wide range of virtual options for all ages as staff continue to demonstrate their amazing creativity and adaptability. In addition to ongoing programs such as virtual storytimes and a speaker series, VPL also offered four major summer initiatives: a songwriting contest, virtual Science Fair, Summer Reading Club, and Teen Challenge which were all very well received by Vaughan citizens.

As VPL extended the scope of its services throughout the Summer, a number of staff have been recalled from layoff. As of the reopening of resource libraries on September 8, 74 staff had returned to their duties within branches. The value of frequent open communication is supported by the coordination of bi-weekly virtual Staff Town Halls augmented by weekly email updates from the CEO – 28 of which have been distributed to date. Communication with staff on layoff has also been frequent as VPL recognizes that corporate success is contingent upon an engaged respected staff team.

As highlighted in the previous RRR Report, the closure of locations and staffing reductions resulted in significant savings in salary and benefit costs \$1.5M to date and anticipated total of \$2.45M by year end. VPL also qualified for Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) funding offered by the federal government, leading to a total of \$1.5M received to date with an additional \$1.9M anticipated to be received by year end totaling \$3.4M federal funding subsidy.

Future Action Plans:

- VPL will continue innovate in order to create an even more robust library system. At the same time, the digital shift and automation required by our COVID-19 response has identified areas where long-lasting improvements can be made.
- The response to digital programming has shown us that we need to continue supplementing in-branch programming with an online component.
- The necessity of having staff work from home has prompted our move from desktops to laptops and will provide greater flexibility in the future. The increased use of VPL's digital products has prompted a reallocation of a portion of collection funding from physical to digital.
- The pandemic safety concerns surrounding cash transactions has led us to go cash-free, while still providing customers with the options of debit, credit or using autoloaders to complete cash transactions by themselves.
- Our pandemic response has also accelerated the transition to digitizing processes, including records management and document approvals.
- Digital staff meetings have proven to be very popular and will remain in place for the foreseeable future.



OUR FINANCES: IMPACT ON FISCAL/BUDGET

COVID-19 has resulted in significant change in the City's service delivery approaches and although essential services remain intact, various services have been impacted. As a result, the City of Vaughan has also responded with measures to support our residents including (but not limited to):

- Closure of all City facilities and park amenities including refunds issued without penalty for all cancelled camps, programs and permits;
- Additional safety measures and protocols in all aspects of the City's operations and service delivery;
- Financial assistance with respect to deferral of property taxes (waived late payment penalty on the Interim billing until July 1st);
- Deferred renewals of Business Licenses for existing businesses by up to 90 days;
- Deferred monthly rent payments for not-for-profit Tenants within City-owned facilities for 3 months (Apr-Jun);
- Suspension of collection of Municipal Accommodation Tax until September 1st;
- Deferral of the annual Stormwater Charge for 60 days;
- Cancellation of the 2020 Water and Wastewater rate increases planned for April 1st;
- Implemented workforce re-balancing measures, including temporary layoffs for nonessential staff who are unable to work from home, re-deployments, deferral of start dates for most of Vaughan's part time, seasonal and student workforce, as well as volunteers, and organizational re-alignments.

As uncertainty remains with respect to the time horizon and degree to which COVID-19 will continue to impact operations, two financial scenarios are being assessed, including one with 6 months of closures followed by a 3-month recovery period and the other with 9 months of closures followed by a 12-month recovery period. The financial impacts of these scenarios which were presented to the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful Committee of Council at the June 23, 2020 meeting are summarized in the table below:

Scenario	2020 (\$M)					2021 (\$M)			
	Forgone Revenue	Additional Costs	Avoided Costs	Rate Impact	Total Impact	Forgone Revenue	Additional Costs	Avoided Costs	Total Impact
1. COVID-19 Conditions Persist until September 30, Recovery by March 31, 2021	(24.3)	(1.9)	8.4	(1.5)	(19.4)	(8.9)	(0.2)	4.2	(4.9)
2. COVID-19 Conditions Persist until December 31, Recovery by December 31, 2021	(27.7)	(2.1)	10.2	(1.5)	(21.1)	(25.0)	(1.4)	7.7	(18.6)

Update to the Financial Impact of the Two Scenarios

Since the report was tabled at the RRR Committee on June 23rd, a number of events and announcements have impacted the City's financial projections for 2020 and 2021.

- 1) As mentioned earlier in the report, the City reopened additional park facilities, including picnic tables, benches, soccer fields and some ball diamonds, basketball and bocce courts, splashpads and public washrooms in June.
- 2) As of July 24, York Region entered into Stage 3 of re-opening allowing for:
 - Increased gathering limits - indoors (maximum of 50 people) and outdoors (maximum 100 people).
 - Use of personal care services that tend to a customer's face.
 - Enjoyment of outdoor playgrounds and play structures (playgrounds in Vaughan re-opened in July).
 - Participation in recreational courses and instruction such as music and language lessons and tutoring.
 - Resuming indoor recreational activities such as bowling alleys and escape rooms.
 - Enjoyment of indoor dining-in at restaurants and bars.
- 3) On July 27, 2020, the Federal Government and Province announced \$4 billion in financial support as part of the **Safe Restart Agreement (SRA)** for Ontario's municipalities:
 - Up to \$2 billion will be allocated to public transit, shared equally between the province and federal government (not applicable to Vaughan).
 - Up to \$2 billion (\$777 million from the federal government and \$1.22 billion from the province) in support for municipalities to address budget shortfalls related to COVID-19.
 - On August 12, 2020, the City received confirmation of funding from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to be allocated in two phases: 50% allocated in Phase 1 for all municipalities, and 50% allocated in Phase 2 for municipalities that require additional funding.
 - In September, Vaughan is to receive **\$6.15 million** in Phase 1 to support COVID-19 operating costs and pressures in 2020 – any unused amounts can be deposited to a reserve to offset pressures in 2021.
 - In order to access Phase 2 funding, municipalities must apply for the funding by October 30, 2020.
 - The application must demonstrate there is a need for the additional support, provide details of measures the municipality has undertaken to reduce financial pressures and other reporting requirements such as full year forecast and how Phase 1 funding was spent.

- 4) In August, the City announced the continued closure of facilities to the public - including Vaughan City Hall and the Joint Operations Centre - until at least January 4, 2021. Fitness centres and City squash courts reopened on a limited basis.

Based on these events, staff are still considering the 2 potential scenarios, and have updated the projections for both scenarios, which are presented in the table below.

\$ Millions	Scenario 1 - COVID-19 Conditions Persist Until Sep 30, 2020, Recovery by Mar 31, 2021		Scenario 2 - COVID-19 Conditions Persist Until Dec 31, 2020, Recovery by Dec 31, 2021	
	2020 Impact	2021 Impact	2020 Impact	2021 Impact
<u>TAX SUPPORTED:</u>				
FORGONE REVENUES				
Recreation programs & rentals (cancelled)	(13.7)	(7.3)	(14.7)	(11.2)
Development application fees (market slow-down)	(3.9)	(1.8)	(4.5)	(3.9)
Permit fees (market slow-down)				(3.1)
Municipal Accommodation Tax (market slow-down + suspension)	(3.0)	(0.5)	(3.0)	(1.8)
Investment income (interest rate reductions)	(0.9)	(1.5)	(0.9)	(2.0)
Property Tax - foregone interest & penalties (Mar/Apr/May)	(0.7)	0.0	(0.7)	0.0
Parking, permits, licensing fees (reduced/deferred collections)	(1.7)	0.3	(3.3)	(2.2)
Various other impacts	(1.3)	0.0	(2.0)	(1.3)
TOTAL FORGONE REVENUES	(25.2)	(10.7)	(29.1)	(25.4)
ADDITIONAL COSTS				
Incremental COVID-19 related spend (PPE, cleaning, signage, tech)	(1.0)	(0.1)	(1.0)	(0.9)
TOTAL ADDITIONAL COSTS	(1.0)	(0.1)	(1.0)	(0.9)
AVOIDED COSTS				
Workforce re-balancing	7.6	3.1	8.8	5.8
Reduced facility operating costs (Maintenance, VPL)	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
Deferred/cancelled discretionary spend (education, conferences)	0.8	0.1	1.0	0.7
Various other impacts	0.2	(0.1)	0.2	0.1
TOTAL AVOIDED COSTS	8.8	3.1	10.1	6.5
TOTAL EXPENDITURE IMPACT	7.7	3.0	9.1	5.6
NET OPERATING IMPACT - TAX SUPPORTED	(17.5)	(7.8)	(20.0)	(19.7)
<u>RATE SUPPORTED:</u>				
Cancellation of the planned 2020 rate increase for Water / Wastewater	(1.5)		(1.5)	
TOTAL NET OPERATING IMPACT - TAX & RATE SUPPORTED	(19.0)	(7.8)	(21.5)	(19.7)
Safe Re-start Funding - Phase 1	6.2		6.2	
NET OPERATING IMPACT (after Federal /Provincial Relief)	(12.8)	(7.8)	(15.3)	(19.7)

The financial impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic to the City's Tax and Rate Supported Operating Budgets include foregone revenues, incremental costs and avoided expenses from closures and workforce re-balancing.

Tax Supported

Foregone Revenue:

The current forecast estimates a loss of revenue ranging from \$25.2 million to \$29.1 million in 2020, and \$10.7 million to \$25.4 million in 2021. The majority of forecasted foregone revenues are from Recreation, Development Application, Parking, Permits and Licensing Fees (reduced/deferred collections).

Recreation

Lower recreation user fee revenues of \$13.7 million to \$14.7 million in 2020, and \$7.3 million to \$11.2 million in 2021 are due to closure of recreation facilities resulting in the cancellation of programs. These include, but are not limited to, lost revenues from the closure of pools, arenas, fitness centres, camps, general programming and indoor and outdoor rentals.

The City uses a partial cost recovery model for recreation as user fees reduce the burden on the tax base, but user fees do not fund all the fixed and variable costs of delivering the programming.

Development Application Fees (DAF)

As a result of a market slowdown caused by COVID-19, Development Application Fees are expected to decrease by between \$3.9 million and \$4.5 million in 2020, and between \$0.5 million and \$3.9 million in 2021.

Permit Fees

Also, as a result of a market slowdown caused by COVID-19, Building Permit Fees are expected to decrease by \$3.1 million in 2021 under Scenario 2.

Parking & Licensing Fees

Lower parking fee revenues as a result of less vehicles using paid parking spaces and deferred / reduced collections of Licensing Fees totaling \$3.0 million are anticipated for 2020, and up to \$2.2 million for 2021.

Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT)

As a result of the suspension of Municipal Accommodation Tax, and market slowdown of the hotel and accommodation industry, MAT revenues are forecast to decrease by \$3.0 million in 2020 and between \$0.5 million and \$1.8 million in 2021.

Investment Income

Investment income is expected to decrease by \$0.09 million in 2020 and between \$1.5 million and \$2.0 million in 2021 due to the Bank of Canada lowering interest rates by 75 basis points.

Other

Other foregone and deferred revenues include tax penalties that were waived to assist taxpayers, estimated at \$0.7 million in 2020, and various other user fees and licenses of \$1.3 million to \$2.0 million in 2020 and up to \$1.3 million in 2021.

Additional Costs:

Additional costs in 2020 are anticipated to be \$1.0 million, and between \$0.1 million and \$0.9 million in 2021 as the City is experiencing significant increases in response to the COVID-19 pandemic related to personal protective equipment (PPE), and cleaning and disinfecting. Technology costs have also increased to accommodate remote work arrangements.

Avoided Costs:

Avoided costs, currently estimated at between \$8.8 million and \$10.1 million for 2020 and between \$3.1 million and \$6.5 million for 2021 are comprised of workforce re-balancing which includes temporary layoffs of approximately 1,100 employees in April 2020 and current staff vacancies, reduced operating costs due to facility closures (e.g. materials, supplies, utilities) and cancelled/deferred discretionary spending such as conferences, training and education and professional fees.

Since the temporary layoffs in April, a significant number of employees have been recalled including:

- 385 employees in Recreation Services (Camps, Fitness, City Playhouse and Aquatics);
- 107 School Crossing Guards have been (re)hired for the 2020-21 school term; and
- 74 staff in Vaughan Public Libraries.

Rate Supported

Water / Wastewater Rate Income:

Forgone revenues of \$1.5 million are expected due to the cancellation of the planned rate increase for Water and Wastewater in 2020. This will result in lower contributions to the water and wastewater reserves.

Collection of Property Taxes and Utilities (Rate):

The waiver of penalty on the Interim Property Tax billing instalments until July 1st temporarily impacted cash flow. Property tax collections to date have been stable and ongoing. Levy payments to the Region and Education payments to the Province have been granted deferrals of up to 90 days which is alleviating some cash flow pressure.

Changes from June 23, 2020 Projections

The following table provides a summary of the changes to the projections for 2020 and 2021 in both scenarios from the June 23rd report, excluding SRA funding:

Scenario		2020 (\$M)				2021 (\$M)			
		Forgone Revenue	Additional Costs	Avoided Costs	Total Impact	Forgone Revenue	Additional Costs	Avoided Costs	Total Impact
1.	COVID-19 Conditions Persist until September 30, Recovery by March 31, 2021	(0.9)	0.9	0.4	0.4	(1.8)	0.1	(1.1)	(2.8)
2.	COVID-19 Conditions Persist until December 31, Recovery by December 31, 2021	(1.4)	1.0	(0.1)	(0.5)	(0.4)	0.5	(1.1)	(1.1)

Forgone Revenues:

Under Scenario 1, projections have been revised to reflect lower DAF (\$0.7 million), Parking and Licensing fees (\$0.2 million) for 2020 and lower DAF (\$1.2 million) and Investment Income (\$1.1 million) for 2021.

Under Scenario 2, projections have been revised to reflect lower DAF (\$0.7 million), Parking, Permits and Licensing fees (\$0.4 million) for 2020 and lower Parking and Licensing fees (\$0.4 million) for 2021

Additional Costs:

Reductions have been identified to the following additional costs:

- Labour - between \$0.6 million and \$0.7 million for 2020 and between \$0.1 million to \$0.5 million for 2021.
- Non-labour (PPE, cleaning, signage, technology) - \$0.3 million in 2020 under both scenarios.

Avoided Costs:

Changes have been identified to the following avoided costs:

- Workforce re-balancing – lower costs of between \$0.7 million to \$1.0 million for 2020, however, these costs are projected to increase in 2021 by \$0.6 million to \$1.0 million as facilities have re-opened and the ramp up to recovery will begin sooner.

- Facility Operating (maintenance) – higher costs of between \$1.0 million and \$1.2 million for 2020 and between \$0.1 million and \$0.9 million for 2021.
- Deferred / Cancelled Discretionary Spending – lower costs of between \$0.3 million and \$0.4 million in 2020 and between \$0.1 million and \$0.2 million in 2021.

Cash Flow Implications and Liquidity

Staff have been carefully monitoring cash flow during this crisis and will continue to analyze the City's position to ensure sufficient liquidity for ongoing operations.

The approved property tax assistance measures were designed to provide temporary relief to taxpayers during the COVID-19 pandemic. As mentioned above, the City's decision to waive the penalty on the Interim billing instalments until July 1 will result in lost revenues of approximately \$0.7 million in 2020, as well as place potential pressure on the City's cash flows and liquidity.

The City has sufficient cash flow to provide for this period; however, if other due dates are extended, additional measures may have to be taken. The City's cash position is healthy due to:

- unrestricted operating cash balance as of July 31, 2020 of \$175 million; and
- low outstanding debt and low debt service ratio as a percentage of own sourced revenues (\$23 million and 2.3% respectively, as of December 31, 2019).
- Uncommitted reserves at June 30, 2020 total \$537 million, including discretionary reserves of \$221 million (\$16.9 million in the Working Capital Reserve and \$3.2 million in the Tax Stabilization Reserve); and
- Temporary borrowing of up to \$80 million to manage short term cash flow needs (the City has never used this in the past).

Options to Mitigate the Financial Pressures in 2020

Potential measures to further offset the forecasted COVID-19 pandemic operating budget deficits in 2020 and 2021 could include:

- Additional workforce re-balancing - temporary layoffs, re-deployments, organization re-alignments;
- Continued spending restrictions – hiring, discretionary spend, non-essential expenditures;
- Manage timing of non-essential capital project delivery;
- Consider operating budget contingencies;
- Maintain strong operating cash balance;
- Review discretionary reserve balances;
- Consider temporary borrowing; and
- Additional funding support from senior levels of government (Phase 2 of SRA).

These options conform to the city's policy of keeping reserve balances at 50% of own-sourced revenues maintained.



OUR ECONOMY: IMPACT ON CITY BUSINESSES

The City of Vaughan remains committed to working with all levels of government to support entrepreneurs and small-business owners, and to maintain the competitiveness of the local economy during the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic. Small business remains the backbone of Vaughan's economy. While the global COVID-19 pandemic persists, the City of Vaughan continues to take action to help local businesses recover from the unintended consequences of the virus. A variety of resources and relief programs continue to be successfully utilized by businesses throughout the community - including frontline services via telephone, teleconference or online.

To help our economy during the pandemic, Economic and Cultural Development (ECD), inclusive of the Tourism Vaughan Corporation (TVC), has been proactive in assisting Vaughan's business community, reaching thousands of businesses with programs, marketing, and advisory support.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, ECD has three objectives and to achieve these objectives, has undertaken a series of actions with significant operational results:

Objective 1: To provide our business community with the most up-to-date, relevant, and reliable information possible concerning the pandemic and the economy	
<u>Action</u>	<u>Action</u>
Pivot department website landing page to a one-stop information center for all relevant business programs and announcements regarding COVID	27,252 page views on our websites from March to the end of August
Launch segment focused e-newsletters with targeted relevant information for: small businesses; arts and culture; tourism and hospitality; business development	206 newsletters delivered with a roughly thirty percent open rate
Objective 2: To help our business community navigate the various programs provided and decisions taken by other levels of government and business support agencies	
<u>Action</u>	<u>Action</u>
Maintain and enhance business inquiry service to provide business with quick and effective access to information	1,898 inquires handled from March 14 to August 31
Maintain and enhance business consultation service for support on strategy, relevant connections, and adjusting business models	513 consultations delivered from March 14 to August 31
Conduct corporate calling to ensure that businesses were aware of available opportunities like Ontario Together or York Region's PPE supply requests	More than 200 companies contacted from March 14 to August 31

Objective 3: To understand the impact of the crisis on the business community	
Action	Action
Conduct business impact survey in partnership with York Region’s municipalities and Chambers of Commerce	Survey launched on May 27 and concluded in June with more than 350 responses, with Vaughan respondents representing the largest group of respondents in York Region
Conduct economic impact assessment in partnership with York Region	Conference Board of Canada delivered preliminary phase one results (discussed below) of a two-phased assessment: an economic impact projection in September 2020; and, an economic impact assessment after the World Health Organization (WHO) lifts the pandemic

The demand for these business support programs continues at an increased rate as the pandemic evolves.

- Compared to 2019, Vaughan Small Business and Entrepreneurship (SBE) saw an increase of 90% in business consultations in the month of March, and a 20% increase overall in consultations from March – May from the previous year. June and July saw a 150% increase in repeat consultations from previous months, which indicates businesses are getting good value from our services and coming back for further support and advice.
- SBE has seen an increase in new consultations with existing businesses since the pandemic began, with 163 from March – Aug 2020, compared to 35 in 2019 during that same time period. Start-ups are often frequent users of our services, but data indicates that the pandemic has introduced us to new existing businesses that have never accessed our services in the past.

ECD, inclusive of the TVC, has launched or supported a series of programs to help businesses maintain commerce to the extent possible under public health regulations, and to build resilience into our economy for the long term.

In supplementing response to COVID-19, ECD has used its business advisory and research resources to be proactive and achieve four objectives and from the declaration of the pandemic to the end of May, ECD, inclusive of the TVC, has launched or supported a series of programs to achieve these objectives:

Objective 1: To provide training and hands-on support to local businesses in pivoting operations to adapt to the new-normal	
Action	Action
Developed and launched Digital Boost to help main street businesses adopt digital tools	Completed the first cohort of Digital Boost and trained 213 registrants. A second cohort launched in September.

Launched the visitvaughan.ca website to help local attractions and accommodations maintain visibility	Secured support from Central Counties Tourism (CCT) and launched with all major Vaughan attractions and accommodations. More than 1,000 page views to date.
Supported the Open For Business online directory lead by Licensing and Permit Services	More than 200 businesses featured on the platform
Launched the Activate!Vaughan Health Innovation Challenge	Secured participation from ventureLAB, Mackenzie Health, Sterling Industries, and other stakeholders to support entrepreneurs who are innovating to support the healthcare system
Supported the Safe Travel program	Shared opportunity with local tourism businesses to apply for the Safe Travels Program. The World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC) in cooperation with the Government of Ontario created a self-certified Safe Travel Stamp based on worldwide tourism industry protocols. The stamp will allow travelers to recognize businesses around the world which have adopted the health and hygiene global standardized protocols – so consumers can experience ‘Safe Travels’.
Objective 2: To educate businesses on the challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19	
Action	Action
Partnered with local institutions like the Vaughan Public Libraries, the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, and NiagaraU to deliver webinars and town halls	76 webinars to 3,690 viewers from March 14 to August 31
Supported the #ShopVaughanLocal Campaign lead by Corporate and Strategic Communications (CSC)	More than one thousand three hundred Instagram and twitter uses
Developed Interim Tourism Meetings and Events Strategy to secure future opportunities in consultation with industry partners	To support and collaborate with partners to recuperate, maintain and grow meetings and events when safe within the City by marketing Vaughan as a destination host city with an expected outcome of event lead generation. Over 22 individual partner consultations conducted to date.
Objective 3: To ease, wherever possible, extraordinary regulatory burdens on business	
Action	Action
Launched the Vaughan Business Action Plan	Eased noise restrictions bylaws to support movement of goods; supported hospitality industry by suspending the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) to September 1, 2020
Supported the extension of the deadline for payment of interim and final installments of property taxes	Deadline extended twice to July 1
Supported the extension of the business license grace period by Licensing and Permit Services	Businesses granted an extra ninety days to renew expiring business licenses

Objective 4: To maintain community arts and cultural connections	
Action	Action
Digitized various art exhibitions to a virtual platform	Five digitized fine art galleries fostered unique online placemaking experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic through four virtual art exhibitions and the City's corporate art collection, welcoming 1,146 digital visitors and over 20,000 gallery viewer impressions to date.
Delivered the Vaughan InSpirit Festival digitally	Hosted more than 600 participants with more than 24,000 social media impressions
Developed the Vaughan Culture Days 2020 Festival and expanded programming to run from September 25 - October 25	Over 100 activations both digital and on location, where safe, lead by local cultural organizations, businesses and partners across the City will be featured. Vaughan has been chosen by the Ontario Culture Days provincial office as the featured City-Community in Ontario on closing day.

New key activities within the existing ECD Business Plan, 2020-23 make up the Vaughan Business Resilience Plan.

To serve the business community, ECD will continue to achieve our business plan's objectives, with the following additional key activities making up the Vaughan Business Resilience Plan:

New Key Activity: Secure Vaughan as the Region's largest employment center through programs that will help our business owners build resilience into their businesses and adapt to the new normal	
Action	Action
Review and support Vaughan's municipal policy regime to allow for businesses to succeed while protecting public safety	Worked with Bylaw and Licensing to expand patios for restaurants and other eating establishments
Deliver business development and entrepreneurship programs to help local businesses understand the opportunities available to them in Vaughan in a post-COVID context	Completed the first cohort of Digital Boost and trained 213 registrants. A second cohort launched in September. Launched the Activate!Vaughan Health Innovation Challenge. Providing a Food Business Accelerator Program with YorkU - YSpace; a five-month program helping scale high growth food and beverage ventures through customized workshops, expert mentorship and peer-to-peer circles.

Support marketing initiatives that promote local commercial activities	More than one thousand three hundred uses of #ShopVaughanLocal in social media More than 1,000 visits to visitvaughan.ca
Understand and share trends that were changing how business was conducted that have been accelerated by COVID-19 like alternative work arrangements, e-commerce, etc. through ongoing research and communications	Launched the Vaughan Rising Podcast Season 2 and blog series in early September to highlight business resilience strategies used in the Vaughan Community
New Key Activity: Build resilience into Vaughan’s key strategic sectors (health, tourism, supply-chain and logistics, and manufacturing) to ensure that economic opportunities continue in Vaughan in a post-COVID world	
Action	Action
Understand the impact of COVID-19 on Vaughan’s economy through formal stakeholder engagement via existing partnerships and boards to identify partnership opportunities in a post-COVID world to strengthen respective sectors	Launched the Economic Prosperity Task Force to identify economic opportunities in the community In partnership with York Region and Supply Chain Canada, scoped a supply-chain impact and resilience study to support local manufacturers
With government partners, assess, report on, and implement wherever possible available municipal financial tools to support business	Secured \$110,000 through the York Region Recovery fund to provide additional grants through Starter Company Plus
Prepare emergency regulatory, program, and marketing packages to quickly support key industries in future crises	Catalogued bylaw work complete to date during the pandemic
Work inclusive of the TVC to engage with Vaughan’s tourism sector to attract and host safe multi-day cultural festivals, sports events and meetings and conventions in a post-COVID context	Worked with colleagues across the City to explore a bid opportunity for Canada’s National Youth Soccer Championships in 2022, 23, or 24
Work inclusive of the TVC to partner with regional, provincial and federal tourism marketing groups to promote Vaughan as a safe destination for domestic leisure and business travel, staycations and industry investment.	Worked with TIAO to deploy the Safe Travels Program: The World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC) in cooperation with the Government of Ontario created a self-certified Safe Travel Stamp based on worldwide tourism industry protocols
Ensure that the Vaughan Mackenzie Healthcare Precinct economic opportunity study is completed and considers the opportunities presented by the COVID pandemic in future-facing healthcare paradigms	Phase 1 of the Vaughan Healthcare Precinct Study has been delivered with Phase 2 incorporating lessons from COVID-19 in health innovation
Evaluate the next steps in the Vaughan performing arts center project to consider the potential impacts of COVID, ensuring that future work reflects how social distancing is changing how we consume the arts.	Working with Planning and Growth Management to explore next steps in this key strategic initiative

New Key Activity: Share Vaughan’s reimaged 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	
Action	Action
Support local culture and heritage events and creative amenities through digital public engagement to maintain a sense of community and recognize Vaughan’s culture during times of social distancing, and support the safe transition back to in-person engagements when permitted	2020 Culture Days - over 100 activations both digital and on location lead by local cultural organizations, businesses and partners across the city will be featured. Vaughan has been chosen by the Ontario Culture Days provincial office as the featured City-Community in Ontario on closing day.
Leverage public art on digital channels to inspire a sense of place-making and convey Vaughan’s unique identity with the community and welcome people to experience Vaughan’s public spaces when social distancing is lifted.	Digitized five exhibitions with 1,146 digital visitors and 20,000 impressions.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the local, provincial, and national economies. Early analysis forecasts a V-Shaped recovery if the situation remains relatively stable.

In Canada, the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell more than 11% in the second quarter of 2020.¹ The Conference Board of Canada, in collaboration with York Region Economic Development and Planning have forecast a 5.9% decline in Vaughan’s GDP for 2020. However, Vaughan’s GDP is anticipated to recover in 2021.²

COVID-19 Impact on Vaughan’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP): Prior to 2020, Vaughan’s real GDP average annual growth rate (AAGR) was 4.2%. Moving into 2020, the 5.9% decline from 2019 to 2020, will reduce the 10-year AAGR to 2.9%. In 2021, Vaughan’s 10-year AAGR will rise to 3.1%. In comparison, York Region’s GDP is expected to fall 5.6% in 2020 and rise at a slightly slower rate than Vaughan.³

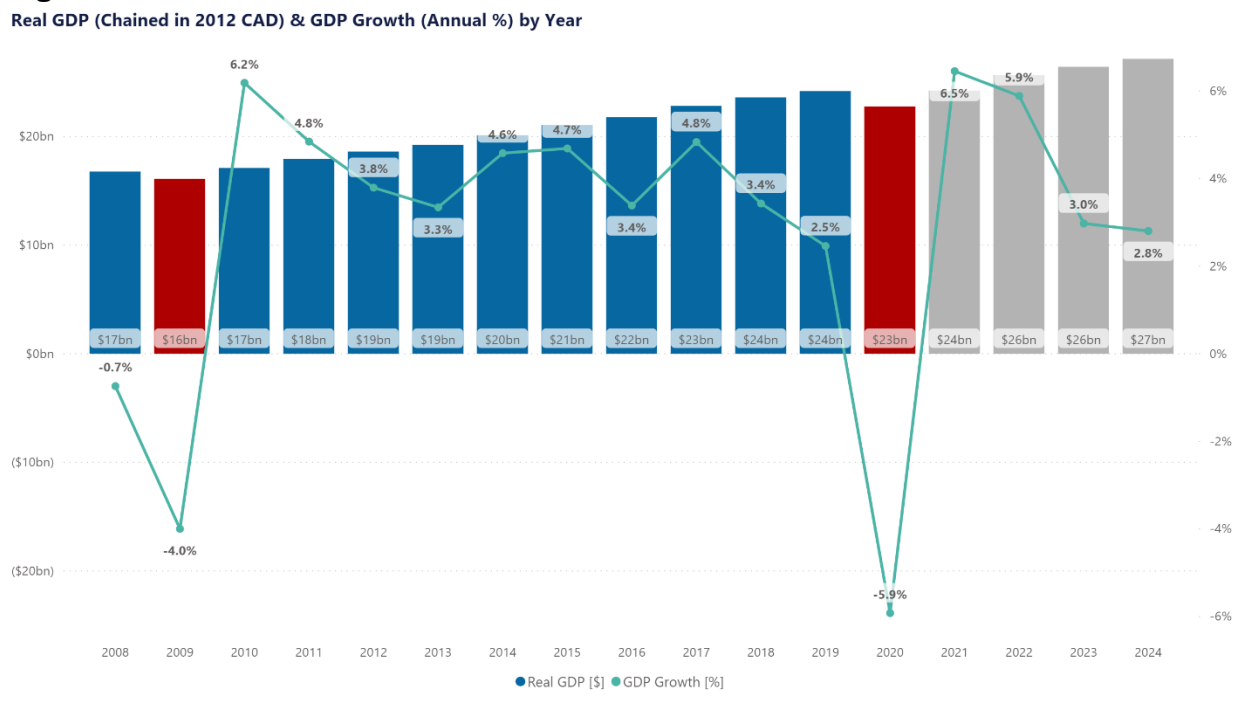
¹ “Gross domestic product, income and expenditure, second quarter 2020”, Statistics Canada, Released August 28, 2020. (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200828/dq200828a-eng.htm?HPA=1&indid=3278-1&indgeo=0> – accessed August 31, 2020).

² The Conference Board of Canada, in collaboration with York Region Economic Development and Planning.

³ The Conference Board of Canada, in collaboration with York Region Economic Development and Planning.

Figure 1.

Real GDP (Chained in 2012 CAD) & GDP Growth (Annual %) by Year



*Grey-coloured bars indicate forecasted years; red-coloured bars indicated major, negative economic events i.e. the global financial crisis and the global COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 1 illustrates Vaughan’s real GDP performance from 2008 to 2020, as well as forecasting up to 2024. The line graph represents percentage change between years. Both red-coloured bars mark the recent, major economic events that have had a negative impact on Vaughan’s economic performance.

ECD is continuously assessing its services and adapting to the Global COVID-19 pandemic to best serve the Vaughan Business Community.

The global pandemic is reshaping and reinforcing local economic development’s value proposition. The City of Vaughan’s Economic Development Department must continue to provide and enhance service based on three value propositions:

1. Continued close strategic alignment with partner departments like Bylaw and Finance that allows ECD to not only provide timely and accurate information, but also enact regulatory changes to support businesses
2. That Business Advisory services, including education and outreach, are key in providing local businesses with the information, connections, and strategies they need to succeed.

That local economic intelligence can help businesses, governments, and support organizations to make decisions on operations to help them pivot by identifying trends and opportunities.



OUR COMMUNICATIONS

As the global COVID-19 pandemic persists, the City of Vaughan continues to keep citizens informed about reopenings, closures and precautionary measures in place. The Corporate and Strategic Communications (CSC) department employs a variety of communications methods including Public Service Announcements, eNewsletters, social media, website content, mailers, links to various provincial and federal websites and resources, and much more. That is in addition to extensive internal communications efforts to ensure staff are well informed.

CSC also works closely with all levels of government to respond to COVID-19 and assists in providing information on the different roles of municipal, regional, provincial and federal governments during an emergency.

Here is a snapshot of the types and quantity of products distributed throughout the pandemic, from March 13 to August 30, 2020:

- CSC has issued approximately 1,450 COVID-19-related products to date, including 186 public service announcements, 24 news releases and 27 communications from the Mayor (statements and keynote addresses).
- More than 2,200 social media posts have been shared across the City's corporate Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts.
- Communicating with staff has been an integral component of the department's COVID-19 efforts. A total of 46 staff communications to all staff and People Leaders have been issued. These include all-staff emails from CSC and the City Manager's office and a dedicated internal COVID-19 webpage with up-to-date information for staff.
- Up-to-date information for residents has been an important aspect of COVID-19 communications, and a total of 227 City Update eNewsletters have been issued. A City Hall Connects hard-copy newsletter was also mailed to all Vaughan residents in April.
- The dedicated vaughan.ca/COVID19 webpage has received more than 79,200-page visits, while the vaughan.ca/news page has garnered more than 5,900. The vaughan.ca/ReopeningVaughan page has received more than 5,200 page visits since it was created in July.
- A large amount of graphic design, photography and videography collateral has been generated by the CSC team to support all of the ongoing COVID-19 communication efforts. A total of 2,143 different marketing and creative pieces have been produced. These include special signage and displays, City of

Vaughan digital signs, digital billboards (RCC), web graphics, social media graphics, advertising pieces and videos.

- More than 360 communications have been provided to Mayor and Members of Council, ensuring relevant, accurate and up-to-date content and messaging is available to share with constituents. These Council communications consist of 280 Council Communication Packages, in addition to Communication Update emails and Council Constituent responses.
- 110 Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) communications, including memos and letters to provincial Ministry offices on behalf of the Mayor, have been issued. This includes a daily IGR update to Council.

CSC's efforts have generated approximately 315 COVID-19-related (Vaughan focused) media products generated from news outlets (news articles, radio and television interviews). As well, the department's social media outreach has averaged approximately 1.3-million impressions. The City's corporate sites have been popular places for residents to get information, resulting in a significant increase in followers. In March 2020, the City had approximately 43,000 followers on its four platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn). As of Sept. 9, 2020, that number had risen to 51,750 – an increase of 8,750. Feedback from the community on social media has included the following:

- *“Hi, just wanted to let you all know what a fantastic job you all did for the reopening. Felt safe and secure and really enjoyed my workout.”*
- *“Slow and steady wins the race ... Thanks for taking a measured approach City of Vaughan.”*

The area of focus of external outreach has been broad, ranging from facility closings/gradual reopenings and proper disposal of personal protective equipment (PPE), to support programs implemented for residents and business and new online services.

CSC's efforts are consistent with the 2018 Citizen Satisfaction Survey results, which says that the public would like the information in the form of hard-copy and digital communications. The preferred ways of contact are: newsletters and brochures sent through the mail (58 per cent); eNewsletters sent via email from the City (58 per cent); the City website (53 per cent); and signage, such as digital signs or road-side signs (51 per cent).

As the pandemic evolves, communications at the City of Vaughan will continue to evolve with it. CSC remains focused on providing Service Excellence to all stakeholders – both external and internal – by ensuring they are equipped with the information they need, when they need it.

Additional Communications Channels

The City's Recreation Services and Economic and Cultural Development departments, as well as Vaughan Public Libraries, also do extensive outreach to their stakeholders. Throughout the pandemic, they have actively connected with audiences to proactively share updates.

Recreation Services

Recreation Services webpage:

- regular updates to banners on homepage, featuring timely information (e.g., program cancellations, virtual programming, on-site summer camps)

Social media (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube):

- multiple posts daily of general recreation content, including 200+ videos created by staff
- unique videos highlighting re-opening of fitness centres and pools, and new precautionary measures
- several Instagram contests to generate awareness of initiatives and encourage participation (e.g., colouring for kids, May fitness challenge for adults, June is Recreation & Parks Month and Canada Day Cook-off for all ages)
- coverage of all news updates, timed with media releases

Recreation Services eNewsletter:

- regular updates sent to 10,000+ subscribers featuring timely information

Fitness Members:

- cold calls: generate awareness of the free fitness pack loans, and encourage participation in free, virtual workouts on social media
- targeted mailout: advising of re-opening and new precautionary procedures
- social media virtual tours: each Fitness Coordinator welcomed back members and discussed new health and safety protocols
- eNewsletters: regular updates on virtual classes, indoor/outdoor classes, and re-opening

Summer Camp Participants:

- emails to parents before the start of every session; survey emailed at end of session for feedback

- social media: behind the scenes coverage (photos/videos) throughout summer highlighting each week's theme

Corporate Sponsors:

- events team have contacted our **Corporate Sponsors** of the Vaughan Celebrates Program to check in on them and keep them apprised of status of City-led events and in particular Canada Day and Concerts in the Park.

Permit holders:

- calls/Emails sent to CSOs regarding permit cancellations and updates
- maintaining dialogue with Community Service Organization regarding permit cancellation along with ensuring that all return protocols and guidelines are understood and adhered to.

Vaughan Public Libraries

VPL Website:

- the VPL website has surpassed 550,000 page views since the closure of branches in March.
- the curbside pickup page leads the way with 51,780 views since its launch.
- the heavy use of digital downloads is reflected in the 40,600 views of the page that collates them all in one spot.
- the third most visited page is the VPL at Home web portal, which houses links to digital resources as well as online programs for all ages.
- pages that did not exist when branches closed in March now combine for more than 92,000 page views.
- Membership has also seen significant interest throughout the duration of the closure due to the promotion of temporary digital library cards. Visits to this page are up 20%.

VPL Newsletter:

- Twice weekly eNewsletters are sent to 15,083 recipients

Social Media:

- 12,125 follow VPL on social media across three different platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- A focus on growing these numbers remains a key part of VPL's strategy and will enable rapid customer communication throughout the remainder of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Financial Impact

The financial impact of the two scenarios discussed in this report to the City's Operating Budget in 2020 and Forecast in 2021 is summarized in the following table:

	Scenario	2020 (\$M)						2021 (\$M)			
		Forgone Revenue	Additional Costs	Avoided Costs	Rate Impact	SRA Funding	Total Impact	Forgone Revenue	Additional Costs	Avoided Costs	Total Impact
1.	COVID-19 Conditions Persist until September 30, Recovery by March 31, 2021	(25.2)	(1.0)	8.8	(1.5)	6.2	(12.8)	(10.7)	(0.1)	3.1	(7.8)
2.	COVID-19 Conditions Persist until December 31, Recovery by December 31, 2021	(29.1)	(1.0)	10.1	(1.5)	6.2	(15.3)	(25.4)	(0.9)	6.5	(19.7)

Confirmed Phase 1 funding of \$6.15 million from senior levels of government as part of the Safe Restart Agreement will partially mitigate pressures in 2020. The City will consider all potential options to mitigate the remaining financial pressures including additional workforce re-balancing, the continuation of spending restrictions and capital project deferrals and apply for Phase 2 SRA funding, if required, by October 30, 2020.

Staff will continue to monitor the pandemic closely as it evolves and will provide regular updates to Council. Staff will also consult with Council prior to developing and during the development of the 2021 Operating Budget to reflect the most recent information of the pandemic and incorporate mitigation measures accordingly.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

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

Conclusion

This report has provided the Ready, Resilient, Resourceful (RRR) Committee with updated information regarding the City's response to COVID-19. Information provided includes actions in support of our areas of focus including: Our People, Our Places, Our Services, Our Finances, Our Economy, Our Communications. In addition, an update is provided regarding the activities of the Emergency Planning program and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

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

For more information, please contact:

- Jim Harnum, City Manager and Acting Deputy City Manager Planning and Growth Management
- Sunny Bains, Acting Deputy City Manager, Community Services
- Michael Coroneos, Deputy City Manager Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer
- Wendy Law, Deputy City Manager Administrative Services and City Solicitor
- Zoran Postic, Deputy City Manager Public Works
- Nick Spensieri, Deputy City Manager Infrastructure Development
- Margie Singleton, Chief Executive Officer Vaughan Public Libraries

Attachments

1. The Next 90 Days: COVID-19 Second Interim Action Report
2. Innovations and Process Improvements - Update
3. Business Integration Plan in Response to COVID-19

Prepared by

Deryn Rizzi, Fire Chief, Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service. ext 6301

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

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Harnum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jim Harnum, City Manager