

Date: 2020-01-22

Subject: **City of Brampton's Comprehensive COVID-19 Response**

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Report Number: CAO's Office-2020-308

Recommendations:

1. That the report from David Barrick, Chief Administrative Officer, dated October 22, 2020, to City Council at its meeting October 28, 2020 entitled **City of Brampton's Comprehensive COVID-19 Response**, be received.

Overview:

- **On January 28, 2020, the City of Brampton activated its Emergency Operations Centre, and Brampton Emergency Management Office assumed the Pandemic incident lead.**
- **As of publication on October 22, 2020, the City of Brampton has been in a State of Emergency for 212 days, since the City's State of Emergency was declared on March 24, 2020.**
- **An overarching approach was established for the City's response to COVID-19 which included a focus on the principles of transparency, collaboration with partners, and a commitment to timely response and communication. This approach has ensured a coordinated and seamless response to COVID-19 in Brampton, together with partners from the community.**
- **Under the IMS structure, all response assets are organized into five functional areas: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Administration/Finance. The IMS structure's flexibility allowed for BEMO to add the Incident Management Team as the sixth functional area in response to COVID-19. Each area or section is responsible for**

implementing decisions for both hazard-generated and response-generated demands relevant to their designation and expertise. One of the advantages of using the IMS structure in a large-scale event is that each division is interconnected through Command.

- **Municipal operations division leads worked together to ensure that staff safety was top priority. Many new policies were developed and implemented to ensure those continuing to work from allocated city locations, such as the EOC and City Hall, had physical restrictions and protective processes in place to limit exposure to COVID-19.**
- **The report outlines responsibilities and actions of IMT, Business Continuity, EOC, Mayor's Support Task Forces, Communications & Community Engagement, and Significant Event/Milestones Timeline, First Wave Lessons Learned, and an Economic Recovery Strategy Update.**
- **The Financial Impacts of the City's COVID-19 response on the City of Brampton's finances are outlined, which include a total projected deficit of \$61,902,000. Details include Major Variances, details on the City's COVID-19 Emergency Measures expenditures of \$10,225,000 (Appendix 2), and City staff securing provincial and federal funding received to offset the related deficits - including \$34,900,000 in Safe Restart funding from the federal and provincial government, and \$602,038 from the provincial Municipal Transit Enhanced Cleaning Fund. "Total Emergency Measures" numbers of Appendix 1 are projected numbers until Dec. 31, 2020, while the numbers in the Appendix are different (less) because they are actuals until Sept. 21, 2020.**
- **On September 23, 2020, the "Relief Measures for Overdue Property Taxes Report" was presented to Council that highlighted an additional lost revenue impact of approximately \$4.2 million to the City from penalty and interest charges being suspended on tax arrears, thus increasing the forecasted year-end operating deficit to \$61.9 million.**

Background:

- **On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) officials identified 44 patients demonstrating pneumonia symptoms of an unknown etiology in Wuhan, China. Within two weeks, scientists identified the virus as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), commonly known as COVID-19. Global data suggested the contagion was spreading through human-to-human contact, and by mid-January, the virus had spread to several countries.**

- Once the virus was confirmed in Ontario, infection rates began increasing exponentially. Data from other countries suggested that seniors and those with pre-existing medical problems were more vulnerable to the virus's effects, including demonstrating higher fatality rates than other demographics. Due to the speed of transmission, decisions had to be swift and effective to try and flatten the curve and reduce the health risks. As such, efforts to contain and control the virus's spread amongst the entire population included quarantine restrictions, self-isolation and personal protective measures, and non-essential business closure. The closures and restrictions created significant social, economic, and health challenges for City of Brampton residents and businesses. For example, self-isolation and mobility restrictions impacted seniors who could not access groceries, medicine, or critical support services.
- During pre-emergency phase preparations, the City of Brampton's Emergency Management Office (BEMO) identified various social and economic challenges that would likely result from public health measures and restrictions. Through extensive preparation and planning, a flexible Incident Management System (IMS) structure, and multi-jurisdictional collaboration, the BEMO team has collaborated with many other City departments and led the way forward through the city's pandemic response and recovery efforts.
- On January 28, 2020, the City of Brampton activated the EOC and Pandemic Plan. BEMO assumed the pandemic incident lead and facilitated meetings held twice weekly. EOC members monitored global and national response strategies to identify best practices and closely followed recommendations of Federal, Provincial, and Regional Public Health Authorities. The EOC leadership's initial focus was to share strategic information, provide incident-specific advice, and garner support for various decisions about employee protection, internal and external communications, visitor and client protection measures, and business continuity. Dedicated BEMO staff performed extensive research and documented multiple topics related to response and recovery planning.
- On March 13, 2020, while the City had not declared an official emergency on COVID-19, Brampton's Emergency Management Office activated the City of Brampton Emergency Response Plan at a Level 2. This decision enabled a more rapid response to dedicating specific resources to prevention and containment. To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, all City facilities including City Hall, Recreation and Community Centres, and Brampton Library branches were closed as of March 16 authorized by the CAO under the City's Emergency By-laws.
- On March 24, 2020, following consultation with City Council and on the recommendation of the City's Emergency Management Team, Mayor Patrick Brown declared a State of Emergency in the City of Brampton in accordance with the City's Emergency Management Plan. The declaration assisted the City's ongoing emergency response efforts by allowing more flexibility and speed.

Current Situation:

- The City has maintained its AAA Credit Rating with a Stable Outlook from Standard & Poors (S&P) on October 15, 2020. According to S&P, the rating reflects the City's robust economy and financial management practices, which will support its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On October 20, the Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, extended most orders currently in force under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020* (ROA). This extension will be in effect until November 21, 2020 to ensure the government continues to have the necessary tools to contain the spread of COVID-19.
- Effective Monday, October 19, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., Peel's public health regions (including Brampton) are in a modified Stage 2, as a result of their trends in public health indicators, including higher than average rates of COVID-19 transmission.
- The City continues to provide ongoing communication to residents online, through Service & Information updates, social media channels, and media campaigns on the current provincial and public health rules impacting City services and programs. The most current information can be found online at www.brampton.ca/covid19
- Staff continue to be nimble and responsive to the emergency and will continue to monitor, report and advise Council on substantive operational and financial impacts of COVID-19. This report is a status update, and a year end COVID-19 report will be provided to Council

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications

No financial implications with the receipt of this report. COVID -19 financial impacts, including funding received from other orders of government are included in the report, attached as Appendix 1, and detailed emergency expenditures are outlined in Appendix 2.

Legal Implications

No legal implications with the receipt of this report.

Term of Council Priorities:

The actions outlined in this report align with the Term of Council Priorities. Fiscally responsible and prudent emergency management response supports a *Well Run City*,

and ensures that our actions related to COVID-19 result in a *Healthy and Safe City*, to ensure actions, programs and Council decisions are informed by Public Health.

Conclusion:

This report outlines the City's COVID-19 Response. This report provides in depth detail for Council and Brampton residents on the City's response to COVID-19. The report includes actions taken to date and outlines the impacts of the pandemic on the City's finances. The report provides important context for consideration during the upcoming 2021 Budget process as well as reflecting on how the pivot in Corporate focus to Emergency response may impact the Term of Council Priorities.

Submitted by:

David Barrick
Chief Administrative Officer

**This report and Appendices have been prepared with input from staff leaders across the Corporation. Special thanks to BEMO, CIMT, HR, Strategic Communications & Finance.*

Attachments:

Appendix 1: Overview of COVID-19 Response

Appendix 2: Detailed financial breakdown of Emergency expenditures