

# Staff Report



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To	<b>City Council</b>
Service Area	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Date	Wednesday, June 17, 2020
Subject	<b>Managing the Impacts of COVID-19: Update #3</b>

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## Recommendation

1. That report "Managing the impacts of COVID-19: Update #3" dated June 17, 2020 be forwarded to the local MP and MPP, FCM, AMO, LUMCO and the Federal Minister of Finance and the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Minister of Finance for the Province of Ontario.
  2. That Council approve the Principles for post-COVID Stimulus Programs, and that a copy of the principles be forwarded to the local MP and MPP, FCM, AMO, LUMCO and the Federal Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of the Environment, Minister of Transportation and Minister of Finance for the Province of Ontario.
  3. That Council requests that Local Boards and funded agencies take necessary 2020 cost containment actions, similar to those implemented by Council, to mitigate budget overages collectively for the tax and ratepayers of Guelph.
  4. That transit fares and parking fees be reinstated effective on or around July 6, 2020, subject to ServiceGuelph and the parking office safely resuming operations with the public.
  5. That the City of Guelph Sign Bylaw No. (1996)-15245, Table 4, Row 1, be suspended from June 17 to August 31, 2020 to allow for the issuance of more than four, 30-day mobile sign permits to the same business within a calendar year.
  6. That the City of Guelph Bylaw No. (2019)-20460, Table 89, related to mobile sign fees be suspended from June 17 to August 31, 2020 to allow for the issuance of 30-day mobile sign permits without a fee.
  7. That staff be directed to assist the Guelph Family Health Team and the Guelph General Hospital with a transition plan for relocating the COVID-19 Screening Centre to an alternate site, in order to allow for the eventual reopening of Victoria Road Recreation Centre.
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# **Executive Summary**

## **Purpose of Report**

This report provides Council with an update on the work the City has undertaken in response to COVID-19 in the last six weeks. It highlights how the City continues to manage through the uncertainty of the pandemic, while identifying opportunities and laying the groundwork for recovery.

As the organization continues to manage the financial impacts of COVID-19, and support the needs of Guelph's businesses and our community at large, we note the inherent challenges that come with delivering public services across many types of business. At time, bolstering one may have an adverse effect on another. This is an intrinsic challenge for municipalities, and it makes our road to recovery less direct.

Guelph is well served however by our Council-endorsed and community-informed Strategic Plan, and by its alignment with our long-term financial strategy. These plans will guide the City's role in recovery and inform decision-making in our new reality.

## **Key Findings**

The City continues to work with its community partners and as part of the Emergency Operations Control Group, which met daily from mid-March to June 8, and has only recently altered its daily schedule to several times weekly.

Working tables comprised of senior staff and subject matter experts continue to shepherd the extensive work of supporting the City's response and advancing plans for recovery.

## **Financial Implications**

The total cost projections of COVID-19 have increased by approximately \$25 thousand should Council approve the sign bylaw fee waiver recommendation in this report. Staff will be completing a more in-depth update through the second quarter operating variance report, which will incorporate updated projections for recreation program cancellations and other revenue impacts from declining user experience for the remainder of the year.

The City's forecasted 2020 operating deficit continues to be in the range of \$4 to \$8 million (inclusive of tax and non-tax supported businesses). Efforts to reduce these impacts continue; staff recognize the duration of the pandemic, along with its impacts, are not fully known.

In response to the significant financial impacts of COVID-19, the City has taken steps to reduce expenditures. These steps include suspending all discretionary spending; employee layoffs and placement of full-time employees on declared emergency leave; halting non-critical hiring; and prioritizing capital projects.

The City is now asking funded local boards and agencies to take similar actions to mitigate the collective budget shortfalls to the tax and ratepayers of Guelph.

In addition to internal cost containment measures, staff are actively advocating with municipal counterparts to higher levels of government for emergency operating funding to assist with the projected losses rather than depleting the City's reserves in one year.

With a substantial amount of work having already been accomplished, the City is exiting the response stage of crisis response, and has moved into the work of managing through uncertainty (resilience) and identifying new opportunities (recovery).

Planning for the 2021 to 2024 budget is underway, and staff are developing a special Council workshop for July. The workshop will highlight how COVID-19 has altered the timing of the Strategic Plan action priorities, and how the multi-year budget will support Council in making decisions this fall.

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## **Report**

Like other cities around the world, the City of Guelph made a dramatic shift in early March 2020 when the realities of COVID-19 forced people into their homes, businesses to close, and services to adapt almost overnight.

Today, COVID-19 and its aftermath continues to be one of the biggest challenges of our time.

In presenting the work of the past six weeks, we point out that organizational response to crisis is sometimes characterized as occurring in the following sequence: reaction, resilience, recovery, and new reality.

There is, of course, overlap between stages; as an organization, we're executing activities in all four stages simultaneously. However, for the most part, we're exiting the response stage, and have moved into the work of managing through uncertainty (resilience) and identifying new opportunities (recovery).

Among the principles management has held during our response is the importance of weighing future implications of the decisions we make today. We also acknowledge the reality that cities have several lines of business—all of which are in support of improving the quality of life for the residents and businesses of Guelph. Bolstering one may appear to come at a cost to another. This is an inherent challenge for municipalities, and it makes our road to recovery less direct.

An example of this is the reinstatement of transit fares and parking fees. Cities across the country suspended fares and fees to support and protect residents and businesses as part of their early response to COVID-19. Now, after 13 weeks of suspended fares and fees, the City must reinstate those revenue sources in order to be able to continue to fund the services citizens and businesses rely on.

### **Reinstatement of transit fares**

Subject to Council approval of recommendation #4, staff will resume bus pass sales on or around July 6 in a way that protects the health and safety of customers and employees:

- All pass and reloadable card purchases can be made at Guelph Transit and ServiceGuelph, as well as potentially at Sleeman Centre, River Run Centre, and via a mobile vehicle at Guelph Central Station (if customer demand warrants)
- Cash sales will be limited to ServiceGuelph and Guelph Transit
- We will encourage touchless payment by credit or debit card, and encourage riders to load their cards online, though cash fares will still be permitted.

Transit pass holders will be able to trade in their paid March 2020 pass in exchange for a preloaded July pass card, free of charge. This is applicable to both full fare and affordable bus passes.

The City will extend eligibility for existing affordable bus pass holders through to September 7 without requiring riders to renew.

### **Reinstatement of parking fees**

Subject to Council approval of recommendation #4, daily and monthly parking fees will resume on or around July 6.

Permit holders who paid for the month of March will be able to use their permit in July, free of charge. Monthly permit fees would then be resumed on August 1, 2020.

The City will hold parking availability until September 1, 2020 for existing permit holders who may not be able to use their permits immediately after July 6 because they aren't returning to work or because their businesses remain closed due to COVID19. In this case, permit holders won't be required to pay for permits they aren't using; the City will allow them to place a hold on their spots, and reactivate their permits on September 1, 2020.

### **Reopening yard waste drop-off**

With work underway to put physical distancing measures and other safety protocols in place, the City is preparing to reopen yard waste drop-off to residential customers on or around July 6. This coincides with the end of a temporary residential curbside yard waste pickup program, implemented on April 20 as part of the City's response to COVID-19.

### **Guelph. Future Ready. and our collective recovery from COVID-19**

Though the journey to recovery is a challenging one for cities, the route is more clear for those with Council-endorsed and community-informed strategic plans that are aligned with other plans and financial strategies that drive the organization. In Guelph's case, our strategic plan and our long-term financial strategy can guide the City's role in recovery and inform decision-making in our new reality by helping us:

- prioritize work plans
- focus our advocacy efforts and other policy levers that make it easier for businesses to restart
- shape service continuity that employers rely on like child care programs, parking and transit, and
- prioritize infrastructure and public space assets that are so important for overall recovery

At the same time, the fiscal impacts of COVID-19 are real. Between near-term non-recoverable losses and those that will inevitably surface in the medium-term, cities face unprecedented financial uncertainty.

It is generally agreed that the recession and recovery of the economy will take longer than expected, and we're only beginning to understand the impacts to our organization. This reality requires additional caution and consideration in our decision-making.

The City's long-term financial strategy and the health of its financial standing remains a crucial factor in organizational decision making, and serves as a critical barometer in the organization's capacity to support economic and social recovery efforts.

There's more work to come as we adapt to meet the new normal—both as an employer, and for our community. What follows is a summary of the COVID-19-related work completed in the last six weeks, and that, which is underway.

## **Organizational Recovery**

The City is advancing a substantial amount of work to allow for the gradual recovery of the organization and—just as importantly—the eventual reopening of City facilities.

### **Business Resumption Table**

The goal of the Business Resumption Table is to develop a corporate framework, policies, and procedures to reintegrate employees into City facilities.

The team is focused on preparing our buildings, controlling access, preparing a physical distance plan and reducing high touch points.

We're already modifying physical workplaces to support employee health and safety. We recognize that, as an employer, we will need to provide training, and reinforce updated practices so that employees who are returning to work, and those who never left their 'at work' workplaces, are aware of new practices to help keep everyone safe.

We're also developing new guidelines for instances where City employees are required to visit homes and offices of the public as part of their work.

The work in each of these areas is broad; we're exploring and implementing several updates and changes to ensure the City is doing its part to keep employees and the public safe. Some of the work is short-term in nature, carried out to help City departments prepare for the imminent future. Other work is longer term, as the Business Resumption Table works with departments to modernize the way services are offered. The pandemic is proving to be a catalyst to change the way we work and how we serve our community.

The Business Resumption Table is working closely with all City departments as they develop plans for their unique working environment.

### **Fiscal Recovery Table**

The Fiscal Recovery Table has been focused on two priorities:

1. Mitigation of 2020 budget overages to ensure projected operating deficits are managed within a range that maintains the City's contingency reserves through an extended period of uncertainty. Staff have developed a 2020 Budget Mitigation Guideline for internal use that will guide spending decisions for the remainder of the year. We are focused on balancing our own organizational resilience, social and economic recovery for the community, and building and protecting the City's long-term fiscal health.

After careful consideration, staff recommend that transit and parking fee waivers not extend beyond June 2020. The revenue losses in these two business lines are detrimental to the City's fiscal sustainability, and without

any identified emergency funding options from other levels of government, reinstating fees to protect the continuity of these services is recommended.

In addition, once ServiceGuelph can reopen safely to the public, other services, such as marriage and other licenses, can resume.

2. 2021-2024 budget planning to ensure Council continues to take a long-term outlook on the financial implications of both the opportunities and challenges created from the pandemic. Staff are preparing for a special Council meeting on July 27, 2020 that will be an interactive forum for Council to learn and be engaged with how the Strategic Plan will guide investment decisions through the multi-year budget horizon and how these projects from a timing and affordability perspective are being impacted by the pandemic.

In early June, the Federal government announced it is expediting the payment of the 2020 Federal Gas Tax funding to municipalities. While the City is thankful to have the funding earlier than expected, it does not provide operational financial relief to assist with the impacts of COVID-19. That's because Guelph has already fully budgeted for this funding in 2020 to advance priority bridge and road reconstruction, facility renewal, and playground equipment replacement (in response to the municipal sector's call for sustainable, flexible infrastructure funding, the federal gas tax has been committed to by the government over multiple years so cities can rely on this funding for long-term capital forecasts).

The Financial Recovery Table continues to work in collaboration with the following tables on the following important work:

- Information and Intergovernmental Hub – advocacy efforts to other levels of government related to Guelph's fiscal priorities
- Capital and Construction Table – feasibility of early debenture issuance and appropriate timing considering the upcoming credit rating review and 2021 capital budget planning; assessing fiscal impacts of capital project deferrals on both capital and operating budgets
- Economic Recovery Table – supporting strategy development and costing impacts of extended and new fiscal relief measures and economic stimulus programs
- Business Resumption Table – developing a funding strategy for the emerging priorities identified from COVID-19 including physical space changes and the investment in modernizing our technology and business processes.

### **Human Resources Table**

The Human Resources Table's mandate is to prepare the people-focused practices, policies and procedures for workforce deployment as the City prepares to re-open facilities and resume service to the public.

The health and safety of our employees is one of management's top priorities as we consider how to bring operations back online. We know our employees are counting on us to help them return to City worksites safely.

Through the Human Resources Table and Business Resumption Table, the City is preparing City workplaces for employees' return and—in other cases—preparing the policies and procedures that will allow other employees to continue to work remotely.

We understand that while all of our employees have experienced this crisis, they haven't all experienced it the same way. Some employees may be reluctant to return to the office. Others are eager to leave remote work behind, but have caregiving responsibilities that make it difficult or impossible for them to do so. As an employer, our goal is to ensure all of our employees feel safe whether they are returning to the workplace or are continuing to work remotely, and that we can all embrace a shared vision for what comes next.

The Human Resources Table is actively exploring and/or developing the following to support employees today, and in the future:

#### Training

- Training for leaders on how best to support staff remotely
- Health and safety training to help all of us acclimatize to our new normal

#### Alternate work arrangements

- Update and broaden our current policy to allow for greater flexibility in light of employees' unique circumstances

#### Supporting employees' mental health

- Ensuring our mental health resources evolve to reflect the needs of our employees

#### Employee engagement

- Ongoing pulse checks with our employees. Understanding what they need and responding

#### Employee leave

- Optional and voluntary leave for employees who may be unable to work in light of caregiving responsibilities
- Job share options

#### Recruitment

- New processes to support recruitment when physical distancing is in effect

### **Corporate Management Team**

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) continues to be focused on looking ahead and thinking about how work plans will adapt as we normalize operations. The City's Strategic Plan, *Guelph. Future Ready*, outlines the organizational vision for the future and is the City's framework to enable decision making, prioritization of resources and efforts related to ongoing and future initiatives.

Given the scale of COVID-19 impacts, CMT has undertaken a review of the Strategic Action Plan and Performance Measurement Framework through the lens of what needs to change as a result of the potential and expected impacts of COVID-19 and the changing environment. This agile approach will ensure the Future Ready Action Plan fully reflects and responds to the current operating and strategic environment while providing a considered view of the longer-term direction for the City.

The Strategic Plan Action Plans and Performance Management Framework will be an important vehicle to establish medium and longer-term activities that support business resumption, and organizational and community recovery. More information

regarding these items will be provided to Council in June via an Information Report and in July at a Council workshop.

Balancing COVID-19 response with the normalization of business is a key focus of work for the Corporate Management Team. Work plans continue to be prioritized based on a number of factors including limited human resources. The Governance Table's report on projects and bodies of work impacted by the pandemic will provide more insight on the status of specific initiatives.

## **Governance Table**

### **2020 and 2021 City Council Scheduling**

The Governance Table has been working with the City's operating departments to ensure that City business continues to move forward following City Council's approval of the revised May – August 2020 meeting schedule. Recommendations for the September – December 2020 meeting schedule, including the 2021 budget cycle, will be based on guidance received from public health officials, the Emergency Operations Control Group and the Business Resumption Table. If required, an amended September – December meeting schedule will be brought to City Council for approval in July or August 2020.

Traditionally, the 2021 City Council meeting schedule would be approved by City Council in July 2020. Given the current uncertainty surrounding public meetings, a draft 2021 meeting schedule may be delayed until the end of Q3, 2020.

### **Projects and Bodies of Work Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Governance Table has begun work to analyze and report on the collective impact that the COVID-19 pandemic and response has had on City projects and bodies of work across all four service areas. The purpose of this reporting is to provide City Council and the public with an analysis of the financial, project timeline and service level impacts that have occurred as a result of COVID-19.

The Governance Table and departmental staff are applying the following criteria to identify which projects/bodies of work have been impacted by COVID-19 and require public reporting. All projects/bodies of work impacted by COVID-19 which meet one of the following criteria will be included:

- A significant financial impact; or,
- A significant change to publicly communicated timelines or outcomes; or,
- A significant impact to multiple City departments and services (both internal and/or external); or,
- A significant change to work previously directed by City Council.

At the July 17, 2020 COVID-19 Response Update Special City Council meeting, the Governance Table will present a fulsome report of the impacts of COVID-19 on City projects/bodies of work based on the above noted criteria.

Not included in this analysis and reporting will be capital and construction projects already prioritized by the Capital and Construction Table or operating losses, such as the loss of parking permit fees or subdivision construction administration fees, which will be reported through traditional operating variance reporting processes.

### **Outstanding Resolutions of City Council**

Public reporting on outstanding resolutions of City Council (resolutions which require that staff report back to City Council) is completed periodically on a service

area basis through the weekly information items. To better align with the ongoing agenda management and forecasting work of the Governance Table during the COVID-19 pandemic, outstanding resolutions will now be reported through the monthly COVID-19 response special meetings of City Council. Once a normal schedule of City Council resumes, outstanding resolutions will again be reported through the weekly information items. Please refer to attachment-1 for a current listing of outstanding resolutions and updated actions by service area.

### **Union Presidents Table**

The COVID-19 pandemic emergency has heightened the need for increased communications and collaboration with the Union Leadership across all the City's bargaining units. To that effect, the Executive Team has initiated regular meetings with the Union Presidents, providing updates and seeking input as events continue to unfold.

On an operational level, as circumstances required redeployment of employees and the repurposing of facilities, the respective union leadership has worked effectively with the managers, supervisors, HR Advisors and health and safety professionals to ensure that our employees were safely taking on and performing in new or modified roles.

Meetings between the Executive Team and the Union Presidents are scheduled weekly for the near future as the City works to modify the workplace and phase staff back to work.

### **Economic Recovery**

There are several working tables advancing important, interconnected work in support of helping Guelph's economy to rebound and recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

#### **Economic Recovery Table**

The Economic Recovery Table explores and implements initiatives that contribute to the recovery of Guelph's economy, through three interconnected work streams: the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery; economic development and tourism activities; and financial considerations.

The economic recovery requests that fall within municipal control raised by the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery members and other community members are given due consideration and those that can be accommodated without substantive financial risk are examined and actioned. The criteria staff use to evaluate viability include:

- Alignment with the City's Strategic Plan and long-term financial strategy
- Legislated parameters
- Impact versus effort in the context of staff capacity

Often, the requests with financial implications conflict with the City's financial recovery and are reviewed case-by-case to determine priority.

#### **New Support for Businesses' Promotional Signs**

The City has heard from businesses that require more marketing than in previous years to communicate to customers a phased reopening, variability in hours, and service changes including curbside pick-up. As businesses struggle financially amid reopening and pursue affordable and quick promotional efforts to attract and inform

customers, the City has received requests from business owners to waive mobile sign permit fees and increase the maximum number of four permits per year. Mobile signs are one of several types regulated through Guelph’s Sign By-law (1996)-15245 and administered by Building Services staff who review and approve the locations for the signs and issue the permits.

In response to these requests for financial relief and an increase in the need for promotion, the City is recommending a temporary suspension of the mobile sign regulations, as outlined below.

<b>By-law Section</b>	<b>Building Services’ Present Practice</b>	<b>Recommended Temporary Suspension</b>
Table 4, Row 1: allowed four (4) separate, 30-day permits per business, each calendar year	Each application is reviewed to ensure space is available and that it does not exceed the maximum number to avoid conflicts	The Chief Building Official has ability to approve more than four (4) signs for the calendar year, provided space is available in an approved location.
Fee is \$85 per permit	Collected for each permit	The Chief Building Official allowed to waive fees. Initially proposed for three (3) months.
30 metre distance between signs with one (1) sign permitted for each 60 metres of frontage to a maximum of four (4).	Each property has approved locations identified by staff to ensure installation of the sign is compliant and in a safe area (no sight line issues).	Continue to be regulated by Building Services to avoid a congestion of signs and installation in non-compliant areas.

Building Services will continue to regulate the maximum number allowed on the entire property in approved locations, to avoid sign clutter and potential safety issues.

The financial impact of temporarily suspending the fees for the next three months may result in a revenue loss of approximately \$25,000 from Building Services’ tax-supported budget.

### **Tourism and Culture Rebuilding and Recovery**

We’re conducting research with local and regional partners to understand the impacts from COVID-19 on the culture, tourism and hospitality sectors and their recovery needs.

The sector is pivoting service and programming delivery where possible, which includes virtual offerings or curbside pick-up. Support for these efforts are available through small, local grants from the local Regional Tourism Office (RTO4) as well as Guelph Tourism promotion, activation projects, funding supports, value planning, and resiliency-building.

The Federal Government recently announced funding in support of Tourism Destination Marketing. Through the FedDev Ontario Regional Relief Recovery Fund, \$30 million will be available across southern Ontario for financial relief to destination marketing organizations that have experienced significant revenue shortfalls. The financial relief will allow dedicated marketing campaigns to drive visitor activity back into communities, while reducing pressure on tourism operators. Staff are exploring eligibility criteria and applying for funding.

### **Repurposing Public Space to Safely Expand Patios**

As announced on June 11, 2020, City staff are already prepared to safely expand patios onto streets and sidewalks to support restaurants across the City. Staff have worked and consulted with the Downtown Guelph Business Association to reflect the needs of restaurants in the downtown. Details are provided in the June 17, 2020 report titled, Guelph's Temporary Seasonal Patio Program.

### **Designated On-Street Parking for Curbside Pick-up**

In response to the Provincial announcement that retail stores with a street entrance can now provide curbside pickup and delivery, the City, in consultation with the Downtown Guelph Business Association, has temporarily designated four, on-street parking spaces along Douglas and Wyndham streets as "loading only zones" (under the Traffic By-law) for downtown businesses' to use for curbside pickup. This change enables businesses to provide their customers with pre-ordered items while maintaining a physical distance of at least two metres during pickups. In the designated spaces, vehicles can park for up to 20 minutes, allowing time for pickups and the maintenance of traffic flow in the area. The loss of parking spaces will not affect the current parking situation in the downtown. Once the Province indicates that all businesses can open, we will reassess the program. Depending on uptake, the City will consider designating more spaces based on demand.

Businesses must continue to follow the City's COVID-19 Emergency Measures By-law and are encouraged to review the Province's workplace safety guidelines at [www.ontario.ca/reopen](http://www.ontario.ca/reopen).

### **Innovation Guelph's Leaders Helping Leaders Webinar Sponsorship**

The City's Business Development and Enterprise (BDE) team helped coordinate and sponsored an Innovation Guelph hosted Leaders Helping Leaders webinar on rebuilding the post-COVID-19 supply chain, earlier this month. This is one example of how BDE program funding is being repurposed to meet the needs of the business community through support agencies' COVID-19 recovery events and programs. Given the success and uptake of this webinar—more than 70 local, small, medium and large businesses registered—the City will continue to work with Innovation Guelph on similar events to support Guelph's economic recovery.

### **Guelph Junction Railway's Role in Economic Recovery**

Guelph Junction Railway continues to operate and provide much needed transport of in-demand industrial products—supporting local economic activity and critical supply chain flow of goods.

### **Guelph Shops—coming soon!**

The City's 'Guelph Shops' campaign and web presence, expected to launch next month, is designed to raise the profile of local businesses and provide one-window-access to support buying local. What makes this campaign unique is the way in

which it was developed. Staff not only collaborated with Guelph business service agencies but also scheduled the campaign to launch following the agencies' workshops and programming for small- and medium-sized businesses to develop their online presence using the platform that makes the most sense for their business type, e.g. restaurant or artist.

### **Launch of Grow Back Better – Ten Point Plan**

Following endorsement by Council on May 11, 2020, the Smart Cities Office, Wellington County and other collaborating organizations have been advancing the elements outlined in our ten point recovery plan, Grow Back Better. The goal of this plan is to refocus \$1.6 million in Smart City funding to support the economic and social recovery of Guelph-Wellington communities.

Actions to date include:

#### **Increasing Access to Affordable, Nutritious Food**

##### **Emergency Food Relief – Launch of Harve\$t Impact Community Donation Platform**

On May 21, Our Food Future and 10C launched the Harve\$t Impact Community Donation Platform, an online funding platform to support the SEED's Emergency Food Home Delivery Program. The portal aims to raise over \$100,000 in cash donations. Our Food Future will match contributions up to \$90,000. Since launch, the platform has raised approximately \$15k. We anticipate donations will increase significantly as we ramp up promotional activities for the new platform.

##### **Urban Agriculture – Kids Get Growing Garden Kits**

On May 22, Our Food Future, in partnership with YMCA-YWCA, distributed more than 700 children's gardening kits to families in Guelph and Wellington County. The program proved extremely popular: all 700 kits were claimed within two hours of registration opening. To assist families who were not able to access a kit, Our Food Future is posting Build-Your-Own instructions on our website so families can assemble their own kits and garden along this growing season.

We are grateful to our collaborators and donors on this program, including Big Brothers, Big Sisters, All Treat Farms, Ignatius Jesuit Centre, the Ontario Seed Company, 10C, Innovation Guelph, Hawthorne Farm Organic Seeds, Reroot Farm, The Flower Shed, Ward 1 Brewery, Reds Garden Centre and Hoppy Fields Farm.

The next phase of our Urban Agriculture program will be the launch of a call for proposals in July for Urban Agriculture Activation grants in partnership with 10C. These grants will provide \$100,000 for a range of large and small-scale community agriculture projects.

Our Food Future is also in the process of establishing an online collaboration platform, which will help community members connect, share ideas, and transform the tremendous energy around urban agriculture into an exciting range of community-led actions.

## **Supporting New and Existing Food Businesses**

### **Launch of Seeding Our Food Future Micro Grant Program**

On May 27, Innovation Guelph's Circular Food Economy iHub launched the online application portal for the Seeding Our Food Future Micro Grant program. This program will provide grants of \$5,000 to 40 new and existing businesses to implement practices or technologies that contribute to a circular food economy. In addition to the grants, participating companies will be eligible to receive up to 30 hours of expert advice and potentially up to \$10,000 in interest free loans through the Harve\$t Impact Fund. Applications for the program are due on June 30. iHub will announce initial successful grant recipients on July 15.

### **Business Tools and Services for Food Sector to Reduce Waste**

Provision Coalition will be providing eight enterprises with direct assessments and consulting services for regional food businesses, helping them increase efficiency, circularity and profits while reducing operating costs and waste.

Additionally, Provision Coalition has launched R-Purpose Micro, a 12-week virtual program with weekly 2-hour intensive sessions. This program will be offered three times over the next 18 months. In partnership with Our Food Future, R-Purpose Micro will be offered free of charge over the next 18 months for up to 50 small food and beverage businesses based in Guelph-Wellington.

### **Taking Action to Strengthen Regional Food System Resilience**

#### **Guelph Farmers' Market Online**

Our Food Future is funding the costs for local farmers markets to create an online sales channel for vendors through the Open Food Network for one year. There is a presence for the Guelph Farmers' Market on this site and presently 10 vendors registered on the site are selling a range of produce, meat and prepared foods. At this time, only vendor pick-up and delivery options are available. Our Food Future will officially launch and begin promoting the Market's online channel in June. For vendors not on the Open Food Network site, the City is providing links to their websites through the Farmers' Market page.

#### **Enabling Distribution and Delivery Models for Online Food Delivery**

Our Food Future's is working with local food producers, Annex Market and the Cornerstone, a temporarily closed downtown restaurant, to launch an innovative online food delivery service for locally produced food. The model provides common packing at the Cornerstone and distribution using e-bikes. We will be working with partners to understand the opportunities for scaling the use of ebikes for last mile food distribution to support reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The SEED will also be using an ebikes for some emergency meal delivery.

## **Waste as a Resource – Food Waste Technology Challenge**

Guelph currently operates a leading-edge waste collection system that includes advanced sensors and AI-powered camera systems on collection vehicles and RFID sensors on all collection bins. Under Our Food Future, we are developing an innovation challenge asking for ideas for how these tools and other technologies could be employed to help residents understand and reduce unnecessary food waste. We are aiming to launch the challenge, building on Guelph's Civic Accelerator model, in July.

## **Data and Technology Update**

This month, Our Food Future will launch a new online community engagement and collaboration platform that will help local businesses and community members learn about projects, contribute ideas, respond to challenges and collaborate with other members of the community. This new space will help members of the public connect, share and build their own community-led initiatives and help transform Our Food Future from a city initiative into a movement.

We are also working to launch the first phase of Our Food Future's Data Sharing Hub by July. The initial phase will establish the baseline infrastructure and governance to connect open data across our public sector partners. The launch will publish a range of applications, stories and data maps that will help the public, businesses and entrepreneurs understand the food landscape in Guelph, visualize how events like COVID-19 have increased food insecurity in our community, and inspire action in line with the projects set out in our ten point recovery plan. After the initial start up, we will begin a phase of experimentation and consultation with the public. We are also creating an Advisory Committee to support the creation of the Data Utility model that will include experts in privacy, data security and data innovation.

The Economic Recovery Table continues to work in collaboration with the following tables on the following important work:

- Information and Intergovernmental Hub – advocacy efforts to other levels of government related to issues raised at the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery
- Financial Recovery Table – vetting of economic recovery ideas to identify financial risk and ensure alignment with City's long-term financial strategy
- Capital and Construction Table – opportunities for economic stimulus through the delivery of the prioritized capital program
- Business Resumption Table – operational implications of economic recovery ideas that require the use of City space or resources given COVID-related City staffing levels, public health and safety requirements and service modernization processes

## **Capital and Construction Table**

The mandate for the Capital and Construction Table is to ensure capital and construction projects are prioritized based on considerations such as finances, staffing resources, and other COVID-related matters. In the last month, this team has focused on:

- Refining the prioritization of capital and construction projects
- Providing capital budget planning tools and guidelines corporately
- Supporting funding advocacy efforts and preparing for opportunities
- Monitoring the effectiveness of health and safety procedures for staff
- Informing plans for community engagement

With a prioritized capital plan now in place, many projects are proceeding as originally planned, with some schedule impacts related to COVID-19. However, decisions regarding project prioritization and schedules are also made in light of staff capacity and implications from reduced staffing levels.

Moving forward, the Capital and Construction Table is shifting its focus towards longer-term recovery. To do this, the team will be working on future considerations such as:

- Assessing fiscal impacts of capital project deferrals on both capital and operating budgets
- Ongoing evaluation of project prioritization work
- Reviewing opportunities to fund innovation, modernization and business resumption projects through the ongoing prioritization work and through collaborations with the Fiscal Recovery Table and Business Resumption Table
- Preparing for stimulus opportunities such as the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) grant with the Information and Intergovernmental Hub
- Capital budget planning strategy

Through this work, management will be reviewing the capacity of existing city staff to deliver the capital program over the coming years.

### **Preparing for Stimulus**

The Capital and Construction Table is working with the Information and Intergovernmental Hub to prepare for future stimulus funding opportunities, which are expected as part of federal and provincial governments' efforts to stimulate economic recovery. The team is strategically working on prioritized lists of projects and programs so that the City is ready to respond when funding streams are announced. More information will be shared with Council as it becomes available.

The Capital and Construction Table continues to work in collaboration with the following Tables:

- Information and Intergovernmental Hub – advocacy efforts to other levels of government related to Guelph's fiscal priorities; preparing for the ICIP COVID resilience funding stream
- Financial Recovery Table – assessing fiscal impacts of capital project deferrals on both capital and operating budgets
- Economic Recovery Table – supporting economic stimulus through delivery the prioritized capital program
- Business Resumption Table – review new emerging priorities identified from COVID-19 including physical space changes and the investment in modernizing the City's technology and business processes.
- Governance – coordination of reporting.

## **Information and Intergovernmental Hub**

The Information and Intergovernmental Hub has identified a need to proactively inform economic stimulus programs being created in response to COVID-19. At the crux of these principles is our belief that municipalities are best positioned to know what we need. We have strategic plans, asset management plans, and financial plans, which are all being adapted in response to COVID-19. These plans are community-based and inform our specific municipal needs. The most effective stimulus programs would enable and support these plans, while building our community's resilience, sustainability and connectivity.

The principles articulated below were created in collaboration with the Capital and Construction Table, the Financial Recovery Table, the Economic Recovery Table, the Social and Community Response Table as well as the Our Food Future team. By proactively sharing these principles with other levels of government, our hope is to shape future stimulus programs for maximum community impact.

### **Principles for post-COVID Stimulus Programs:**

1. Recovery and stimulus programs should support the priorities identified in our Strategic Plan
  - Municipalities know what they need as we emerge from the pandemic, and we need flexibility in government programs to help us achieve it
2. Infrastructure programs aimed at stimulating economic recovery should consider the full range of municipal asset needs, as identified through local asset management programs
  - Include a sustainability lens in addition to traditional job creation and growth metrics of infrastructure programs
  - Transportation projects should aim to enhance interregional connectivity
  - Evaluation of infrastructure projects should consider a more robust approach of shovel worthy vs shovel ready with an emphasis on the benefits of encouraging a range of skilled employment opportunities
3. Programs should consider municipal financial pressures, and be designed to make municipalities less dependent on other levels of government over time
4. Further enhance long-term recovery and resilience by encouraging collaboration with businesses, community organizations and other municipalities
  - Focus on mission-oriented innovation vs sector oriented-innovation
  - Consider the COVID-19 learnings from multi-sector collaborative procurement and look to replicate the successes in other areas
5. Invest in enabling municipalities to be "future ready" as we make changes to respond to the new normal
  - Focus on service delivery modernization and digital infrastructure
  - Include needs identification and implementation costs into program design
6. Programs should strive to increase environmental sustainability and community resilience to prepare and protect against future challenges

- Continue to support circular food economy principles
  - Support vulnerable populations by investing in long-term solutions
7. Simplify the application and reporting processes to allow municipalities to focus on recovery, service delivery and program execution
    - Use municipal goals and established city metrics as reporting benchmarks
    - Include flexibility to support non-capital needs
  8. Avoid overlap or duplication of programs between levels of government
    - Ensure governments are funding programs within their mandate/jurisdiction
  9. Programs should encourage capacity building and help scale smaller seed-funded programs that prove successful
    - Agility to scale solutions and respond to rapidly changing environments is more important than ever

In addition to looking ahead at future funding opportunities, the Information and Intergovernmental Hub has also helped to secure project extensions on two Public Transit Infrastructure Fund initiatives that are underway, but delayed because of the Provincial Order to close non-essential businesses earlier this year. These extensions ensure that we maintain access to more than \$1 million of external funds, while allowing city staff and contractors with a reasonable amount of time to resume activities as appropriate and complete ongoing projects.

The next phase of work for the Information and Intergovernmental Hub includes working with the Business Resumption Table and General Managers across the City to identify regulatory and legislative advocacy opportunities to make municipal operations more efficient. The agile, flexible response to COVID-19 has shown that municipalities and the province can do things differently, and this is an ideal time to build on those lessons and continue to find process and operational efficiencies.

## **Social Recovery**

### **Social and Community Response Table**

We continue to stay connected with the community to coordinate and track the work of the City of Guelph with the County of Wellington, social service providers, and other not-for-profit groups who are supporting vulnerable sectors in the community.

### **Supporting vulnerable populations**

The City has been selected as a recipient for the COVID-19 Community Response Fund generously supported by Canadian Medical Association Foundation (CMAF). As a result, the community will receive \$8,500 to provide COVID-19 related support to vulnerable populations—particularly those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. As the Consolidated Municipal Services Manager for Guelph, the County of Wellington will use this funding to continue to support isolation shelters and the use of hotels to ensure physical distancing.

### **Shelter Support**

Staff continue to stay engaged with the County of Wellington and shelter support organizations providing services for those living in homelessness. Organizations

have come together to provide 24/7 hour support at a local hotel that then provides necessary physical distancing as well as a Supported Isolation Centre that offers 24/7 hour supports for individuals that may need 14 day self-isolation for recovery or possible exposure. The collaboration among partners in this sector has always been strong and all have stepped up even more during this crisis.

### **Swab Squad**

A part of the Community Paramedic Program, Guelph-Wellington Paramedic Service created the "Swab Squad" to assist in COVID-19 testing of residents and staff in Guelph and Wellington Long Term Care facilities. The program began on April 23 to service some of the areas hardest hit and with the most vulnerable populations. Staff have been able to test over 3,500 individuals since that time and the program continues on individual requests as well as in community testing of congregate settings.

### **Meals for vulnerable seniors**

The kitchen at Evergreen Senior Community Centre continues to make roughly 1,000 meals a week for vulnerable seniors, youth and others in our community who are suffering from food shortages. This initiative is a collaborative effort with our chefs at Evergreen Seniors Community Centre and Sleeman Centre and with a variety of community agencies including the Community Support Services via Guelph Wellington Seniors Association (GWSA), East Wellington Community Services, United Way and Wyndham House.

### **Supporting farmers, markets and food-related organizations**

Further to the full report within the Economic Recovery Table, a partnership with Our Food Future continues. The shared focus is providing affordable and nutritious food by supporting organizations, farmers and markets who provide or sell local farm-fresh food for all levels of need in the community. Guelph Farmers' Market continues to be able to offer access for vendors to the Open Food Network platform, established in early June.

Staff are pursuing options for in-person and curbside pick-up at City-owned sites with our partners at Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health. Likely opening late June / early July, the focus will be on an outdoor market space with a limited number of vendors and capacity restrictions for number of patrons. Initially we will open for sale of Farm Fresh local foods, before considering whether to expand to other vendors. Pre-orders will be strongly encouraged which can then be prepackaged for pickup, as well as electronic payments and limit cast sales.

### **COVID-19 Screening Centre**

The City was able to offer the Delhi Recreation Centre, and then the Victoria Road Recreation Centre for use by the Guelph General Hospital and Guelph Family Health Team to operate a COVID-19 Screening Centre. This important amenity ensured that people with respiratory symptoms or concerns about COVID-19 were kept out of the hospital's emergency room, as well as out of family practice medical offices.

With the potential for reopening Victoria Road Recreation Centre as a city recreation facility, staff are now working with representatives from the health care sector to assist with their transition to an alternate site for the screening centre that will work for a longer term period of time. Until the screening centre has moved out of the Victoria Road Recreation Centre, the facility will not be used for any other

purpose, including the aquatics facilities. While we recognize there is demand to access the pool at this location, it would not be safe to permit access while it is in use as a screening centre.

### **Aquatics facilities / public washrooms**

With the announcement from the Province permitting the reopening of many public spaces, staff are working quickly to determine which facilities we can open safely and how quickly. One of the important considerations is staffing – we immediately began recalling staff on leave as well as hiring seasonal part-time staff to be able to support these public amenities. We are also evaluating how to ensure safety for residents using these amenities, put proper protocols in place for the staff working onsite, and how to meet the physical distancing guidelines put in place by Public Health.

One of the priorities is the Market Square splash pad, given its large size, location in the downtown core, and usage as a cooling option during heat alerts. In order to be able to meet the guidelines regarding capacity within the water feature, fencing around the perimeter will be temporarily installed for the 2020 season, and time limited access will be provided to ensure as many people as possible can access the amenity.

We are also looking at opening the Lyon Pool for the summer season, as it is already fenced and therefore has an existing method for controlling access. Admission fees for the pool will be waived for 2020, and time limited access will ensure as many people as possible can use the amenity.

There is great demand for public washroom space, and so staff will be opening washrooms in Market Square and many of our parks spaces. Hours will be limited to ensure appropriate cleaning measures can be accommodated, but we recognize that these are important public facilities for the increased number of people who are using our public spaces.

After these priority facilities have been reopened, staff will explore how and when we can open the remaining splash pads and wading pools, before then considering any of our indoor aquatics amenities.

### **Cooling Centres**

Staff recognize a need for cooling centres in our community as the weather gets warmer. With facilities that would normally be used as cooling centres closed, we continue to work with Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health to look for spaces and new protocols in light of COVID19. We will also encourage residents to consider self-care in heat waves including staying hydrated, staying out of the sun and avoiding strenuous activities. We have also partnered with the Royal City Mission who is providing a downtown cooling centre, and we in turn will promote their services through our social media platforms.

As we navigate Guelph's reopening, the formal Social and Community Response Table reporting will cease. Engagement and involvement with social and non-profit organizations is a part of our normal business and that will continue. Any necessary reporting to Council will occur through the regular Council reporting process.

### **Community Resilience Table**

A new COVID-19 working table has been established to coordinate the cross-functional short- and long-term City work to plan and implement physical distancing

measures in public spaces. This work supports overall community resilience as Guelph reopens and becomes re-established.

The Community Resilience Table and the Economic Recovery Table will address the immediate needs of business that need to expand their footprint into public space to allow for physical distancing or related to curbside pickup queuing or parking.

This table will coordinate work across the corporation that allows for physical distancing in public spaces such as new active transportation initiatives and adjusting plans where required, such as for trails, bike lanes, and parks to support physical distancing now and into the future. Through the work of this table and direction from Council, City staff have already implemented temporary road and sidewalk changes at seven locations so people walking and cycling can stay 2 metres apart. We will continue to monitor the areas and to make any adjustments as necessary, and seek additional locations to implement as resources permit.

The City's longer-term approach to enabling physical distancing will be coordinated through this table including a review of master plans, City standards and requirements, future design projects, and other initiatives. The Community Resilience Table will collaborate with the Economic Recovery Table, the Fiscal Recovery Table, and the Capital and Construction Table as work plans are developed.

This table will also report on ongoing progress toward Council's May 11, 2020 motion: "That staff be directed prepare a plan and associated funding sources for physical distancing in outdoor public spaces, where possible, that is informed by public health safety guidelines and advice in order to ready the community for a phased return to pre-COVID-19 activities and that staff report back to Council via the monthly COVID-19 update meetings".

### **Lift our Spirits Table**

We are continuing to lift the spirits in our community by adding positive opportunities to engage with the community and share their caring stories. Recent online content continues through Culture and Tourism social media platforms, led by Visit Guelph and Guelph Museums, to include community engagement through puzzles, challenges to re-enact old photos, photo throw back-stories, virtual highlights from exhibitions, links to virtual tours and more.

For the Victoria Day long weekend, Visit Guelph partnered with Snapd Guelph to share a virtual fireworks display through Snapd's augmented reality (AR). More than fifty Ontario municipalities, including Guelph, participated and almost 39,000 users signed up and watched fireworks from the comfort of their own living room or backyard. The AR program displays fireworks over top of a person's own camera image that makes the experience more real. Plans are underway for a more elaborate virtual fireworks spectacle and community-specific content for Canada Day.

We also share and support the work still happening in our community by highlighting the curbside pick-up by restaurants and retail. We emphasize our community's passion by sharing successes of other businesses that have stepped up to adjust manufacturing for new product development, e.g. making meals, hand sanitizer, shields, masks and more. We are proud to highlight and engage with others through various hashtags like #visitguelphlater, #guelphcares and #industryup.

As we navigate Guelph's reopening, the formal Lift our Spirits Table reporting will cease. Engaging our community via social media is a part of normal business for the Culture, Tourism and Community Investment team, and will continue. Any necessary reporting to Council will occur through the regular Council reporting process.

## **Financial Implications**

The total cost projections of COVID-19 have increased by approximately \$25 thousand dollars should Council approve the sign bylaw fee waiver recommendation in this report. This brings the current total to \$11.85 million. Staff will be completing a more in-depth update through the second quarter operating variance report, which will incorporate updated projections for the announced recreation program cancellation to early September, 2020 as well as other revenue impacts from declining user experience for remainder of the year.

In response to the significant financial impacts of COVID-19, the City has taken steps to reduce expenditures. These steps include halting all discretionary spending; employee layoffs and placement of full-time employees on declared emergency leave; halting non-critical hiring; and prioritizing capital projects.

The City is now requesting that funded local boards and agencies take similar actions to mitigate the collective budget overages to the tax and ratepayers of Guelph. The City needs the Guelph Public Library, Guelph Police Services, The Elliott, Grand River Conservation Authority, The County of Wellington and the Downtown Guelph Business Association to do everything within their power to also contain costs, as much of the City's budget is not within Council's direct control.

The City's forecasted operating deficit for 2020 continues to be in the range of \$4 to \$8 million (inclusive of tax and non-tax supported businesses). Efforts to reduce these impacts are ongoing, especially as the length of the pandemic period and the indirect impacts are not yet fully known.

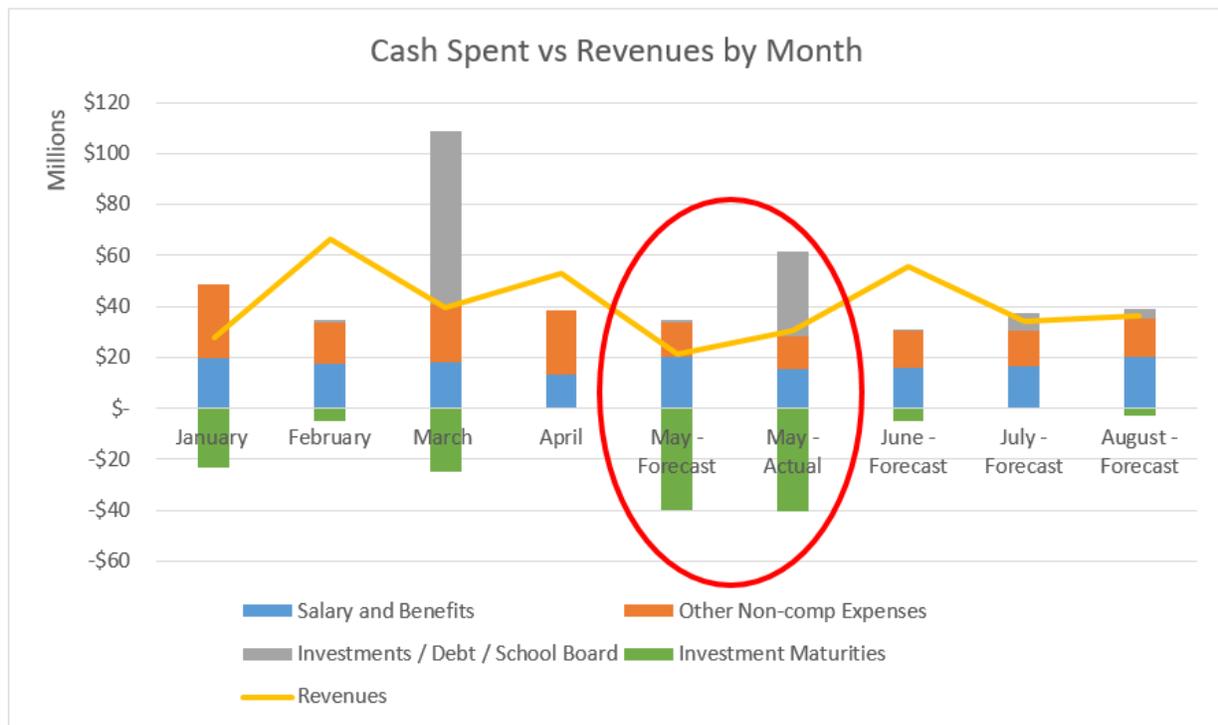
## **Cash flow**

The culmination of all the financial impacts projected to August 31 is illustrated in the chart below. Highlighted in the red circle is the difference between May forecasted and actual cash activity. Cash flow remains healthy, as the City has successfully matched cash outflow with revenues collected in May.

In addition to temporary layoffs, placement of City employees on declared emergency leave and suspension of most recruitment, compensation and benefits costs are trending lower than forecasted because of a delay in onboarding seasonal summer employees and lower extended health and dental costs. This will likely result in a positive variance for these costs in 2020, as capacity within the medical system isn't expected to be able to accommodate normal resumption of appointments right away.

Revenues were higher than forecasted, as property tax collection remains strong and there has been limited impact to water and wastewater rate collections to date. Staff are monitoring outstanding receivables closely and will begin collection activities in some limited situations where it is deemed necessary to minimize financial bad debt risk.

Due to the healthy cash flow position, staff were able to reinvest \$30 million of regularly scheduled investment maturities in May, which will help mitigate significant declines in investment income.



## Consultations

This report was written in consultation with working table leads and the Executive Team.

## Strategic Plan Alignment

These recommendations align with the Strategic Plan, Guelph. Future Ready. As a whole, the City's response and ongoing work towards preparing for economic, social and organizational recover are aligned with each of the priority areas of the Strategic Plan. That work is in support of our community and our employees during the pandemic and through recovery, while not losing sight of long-term sustainability.

## Attachments

Attachment-1 Outstanding Resolutions of City Council

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