

# **CM-15-20 Appendix A**

## **City of Burlington Risks and Opportunities in Strategies**

As of May 11, 2020

**City of Burlington**

# **COVID-19 Emergency Response Strategy**

**For the period  
April 6, 2020 – July 5, 2020**

# Basis for Decision Making

## Principles

City management and staff will always consider:

- Staff health and safety will be paramount in continuing operations.
- We will continue to support our remote work from home program.
- We will build flexibility into our workforce to support redeployment of qualified staff to respond to additional emergency situations and urgent services.
- We will be fiscally responsible in our decisions.
- We will maintain open and transparent communications.
- We will regularly report to Council.
- Services responding to an emergency or urgent situation will be a priority.
- Full-time employees will continue to work in capacities to support our designated categories of service, support the emergency control group, and/or support re-deployment of resources.
- Compliance with changes and amendments to provincial and federal regulations.

## Assumptions

- We expect we will still be operating in a state of emergency, with continued activation of our emergency plan, for the next three months.
- We will maintain critical and essential services and infrastructure.
- We anticipate City staff will be affected by the virus.
- City facilities, parks and amenities, currently closed, will remain closed unless required by Province of Ontario or Halton Region Public Health.
- Trending seasonal extreme weather events will add known, unknown impacts and additional resource needs.
- Regular service delivery will be affected in some areas.
- Some services cannot be delivered from home.
- Work performed from home will contribute to continued productivity and delivery of city services.

# Our Expected Outcomes

During the 3-months between April 6 and July 6, through our strategy and activities, we expect to achieve:

1. Regular committee and Council updates on status and progress of COVID-19 strategies, activities, issues and decisions.
2. Daily updates and information messages to our community and employees.
3. Reduced exposure of our community and our employees to COVID-19.
4. Minimized year-end unfavourable financial position.
5. The implementation of a recovery plan to fully deploy our workforce within 30 days of termination of the emergency declaration.
6. Minimal disruption of city services.

# **City of Burlington Service Re-design Strategy**

As of May 11, 2020

## Our Service Re-design Goal:

Advance the way we deliver services to continue to protect the health and safety of our community and staff and do our part to limit the spread of COVID-19.

### Background

- The decisions and actions taken during the response stage of the pandemic emergency resulted in a number of programming and service delivery changes.
- These changes include: work from home program, virtual programming, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, and physical space changes to support physical distancing.
- A key outcome of the COVID-19 Emergency Response strategy is:
  - The implementation of a recovery plan to fully deploy our workforce within 30 days of termination of the emergency declaration.

### Purpose

This strategy:

- defines the City's decision-making framework to identify resource needs, timing, and changes necessary to re-start/resume service delivery.
- supports the City's efforts to realize the benefits of the opportunities and innovative changes made as result of the pandemic response decisions and actions.

# Service Re-design Objectives

- Documentation of plans to re-start/resume services
- Identification of additional resources and capacities needed to adapt to re-designed service delivery
- Sustain the corporate supplies of pandemic-response equipment and material
- Maintain communication to public and staff
- Leverage identified opportunities to implement during re-start/resumption
- Minimize the psychological impacts and sociological impacts of the changes on staff and the public
- Protect the health and safety of our community and staff and limit the spread of COVID-19
- Minimize the year-end unfavourable financial impacts

# Preparing to Resume Operations

## Principles

City management and staff will always consider:

- Our customer's perspective
- Innovative and new ways to deliver services identified during the pandemic are the starting point for re-starting/resuming processes
- Staff health and safety will be paramount in continuing operations.
- Every employee's commitment to doing their part to deliver re-designed services
- The provincial and public health officials direction and guidance
- The learnings from other regions/areas experiencing resumption of business and activities
- The recovery and rehabilitation procedures of the Municipal Emergency & Continuity Management Program
- The financial opportunities to minimize cost and maximize revenue

## Assumptions

- There will be a degree of change in everything we do.
- Province will gradually release restrictions on business and industrial sectors (the trickle approach)
- Physical distancing, temporal distancing (staggering schedules) and other protective measures will continue until provincial and public health officials provide other guidance
- The stage of the provincial re-opening will influence the decisions we make.
- Slow uptake of programming (e.g. recreation programs) and services (e.g. transit, development applications, etc.)
- Stimulus funding likely to be available relatively quickly
- Part-time staff are reinstated in a timely manner consistent with the release of restrictions on business and industrial sectors



# Summary of Risks and Opportunities

New information is highlighted in yellow



**UPDATED**

# Risks and Opportunities

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised new risks and opened new opportunities as the City works through its response. While operations continue under our COVID-19 Emergency Response Strategy, additional risks and opportunities may arise during our Service Re-design.

## Risks:

- Categorized as
  - Human Resources
  - Health & Safety
  - Governance and Legislative
  - Communication
  - Financial
  - Technology
  - Community Confidence/Reputation
  - Legal
- All deemed to be rated as “high” unless otherwise indicated.

## Opportunities:

- Improvements to operations:
  - new approaches
  - process re-design.
  - communication connection, outreach, and engagement

# Committee and Council Services

## Risks

1. Technology supporting virtual committee and council meetings is not stable, reliable or secure.
2. Technology does not support ability to receive large amount of delegations, or the ability to adapt to meet the requirements of a statutory public meeting.
3. Mayor and Councilors are affected by the virus and unable to perform duties.
4. Committee and Council normal governance and legislative responsibilities are significantly disrupted with reports with significant public interest and key decisions delayed or deferred indefinitely.

## Mitigation

1. Work with ITS for a feasible solution to meet minimum requirements to support committee and Council functions.
2. Collaborate with Legal and Community Planning to ensure reasonable parameters are established to ensure public meetings can occur. Establish protocols with ITS to address volume concerns.
3. Burlington Council to delegate all essential service decision making to City Manager for a period of time.
4. City Clerk to work with Burlington Leadership Team to ensure items are brought forward in a timely manner. Monthly projections on upcoming reports provided to Council and the public.

## Opportunities

1. Virtual committee and Council meetings are fully supported by legislation. Minimize Councilor absences from committee and Council meetings through application of virtual meeting technology and set up.
2. Harness mobile/remote work needs to include in functional and technical requirements for corporate projects and process improvements (e.g. no printed agendas, etc.)

**UPDATED**

# Communications

## Risks

1. Information is misinterpreted and/or inconsistent.
2. Public confidence in the City's handling of the pandemic crisis is impacted negatively due to communications not being managed proactively and strategically.
3. City employees do not receive information.
4. Conflicting information form various levels of government and agencies.
5. Boards and agencies policies are inconsistent with city policies.
6. Public has increased/heightened expectation of immediate service resumption under pre-pandemic conditions.
7. The breadth and depth of change required to ensure service delivery continues to protect the health and safety of community and staff and limit the spread of COVID-19 are overwhelming for customers.

## Mitigation

1. Regular communications meetings are established to set message for organization.
2. Communications continues to include: messaging about health and safety of community and staff and need for different operations at this time, adjustments in workforce, and service availability.
3. Increase the frequency and direct delivery of information to staff by leaders.
4. Develop and execute on a daily crisis communications cycle that is responsive to community needs and Council expectations.
5. Ongoing communications with directors of boards and agencies on decisions and policies being implemented at the City.
6. Service re-design strategy is supported by comprehensive communications plan to ensure public and staff are informed of the what and why of necessary changes.
7. Service re-design strategy is supported by a comprehensive change management plan to support awareness and understanding of need for changes.

**UPDATED**

# Communications (continued)

## Opportunities

1. Continue using existing technology in different ways to support internal and external communication (e.g. public and staff townhalls, Get Involved Burlington, etc.).
2. Collaborate with various levels of governments to ensure consistent messaging and include them in community outreach opportunities where possible e.g. public townhalls.
3. Enhancements to community connections, collaboration and outreach.
4. Stronger long term coordination with boards and agencies and opportunities to reach more audiences through amplifying City messaging .

# Human Resources

**UPDATED**

## Risks

1. City work unit stricken by virus and unable to work.
2. Employee burnout/stress/isolation affecting staff morale and may result in diminished productivity.
3. Employee home office setup and work arrangements result in muscular skeleton health issues.
4. Staff unable to work due to child care needs or assisting other family members, mental health, PT staff do not return

## Mitigation

1. Define minimum staffing levels , perform scenario analysis on service delivery, develop re-deployment program to support critical and essential service delivery, reduce numbers of staff required to attend a workplace and distribute PPE for employees who must attend, deep clean workplaces, and enforce isolation where appropriate.
2. Continued connection between people managers and employees to monitor workloads and support work-life balance. Direct employees to Employee Assistance Program for support. Provide information to people leaders to assist them in engaging their employees remotely.
3. Established employee loan program to support furnishing and technology for home offices. Provided diagram for appropriate ergonomic workplace set-up.
4. Provide flexible opportunities for work that can be fit into different schedules, continue to suggest EAP and counselling services provided by benefits carrier, offer on-line support through Our Training Room.

**UPDATED**

# Human Resources (continued)

## Risks (continued)

5. Decreased or short supply of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and cleaning/disinfecting supplies
6. Part-time staff layoffs mis-handled and mis-communicated.
7. Increase of work refusal as staff anxiety increases.
8. Part-time staff performing critical and/or essential service lost because government relief programs offer greater benefit.
9. The breadth and depth of change required to ensure service delivery continues to protect the health and safety of community and staff and limit the spread of COVID-19 are overwhelming for staff.

## Mitigation (continued)

5. Control supply manage number of staff returning to the field and who come in the office to reduce usage. Service re-design includes needs for PPE and planned sequencing of service/sub-service resumption to address where supplies not available.
6. Continue practice of care and respect for employees even when delivering difficult messages including open communication, deliver message in person where possible, ensure staff hear messaging prior to being shared with the public.
7. Investigate workplace to ensure safety, engage in conversation about concerns, continuously evaluate health and safety measures, where possible reassign employees to other tasks.
8. Compensate for regular weekly hours at minimum, cross train staff where possible.
9. Service re-design strategy is supported by a comprehensive change management plan to support awareness and understanding of need for changes.



# Human Resources (continued)

## Opportunities

1. Rapid response to address changing situations.
  - Understand how rapid response in changing policy and procedure can be applied on an on-going basis.
2. Apply new behaviours and team dynamics
  - Use learnings to enhance decision making, improve collaboration and use of technology
  - Harness mobile/remote work needs to include in functional and technical requirements for corporate projects and process improvements.
  - Flexible working practices and work from home options may increase employee satisfaction and engagement if continued long term

# Finance

## Risks

1. Reduced revenues from free services, deferrals from development slowdowns, and other payment deferrals.
2. Cash flow impacts requiring bond liquidations.
3. Boards and agencies may need additional support to achieve year end financial position.
4. Year end unfavourable financial position.

## Mitigation

1. Established temporary payment relief and 2020 Expenditure Restraint Program (including review of capital and operating deferrals)
2. Identify required divestiture of investments to maintain cash flow while minimizing impact on investment income.
3. Share Expenditure Restraint Program & engage in analysis of revenue losses/expenditure reductions to minimize year end variances.
4. Utilize Expenditure Restraint Program, review sustainability of reserve funds to support operations and seek senior government funding program support.

## Opportunities

1. Establishment of long-term work from home program to support work-life balance, workplace culture, and continuity of operations.
  - Establish employee loan program to support home office setups including technology and furnishings.
2. Harness mobile/remote work needs to include functional and technical requirements for corporate projects and process improvements.
3. Identify opportunities for additional electronic means of receiving payments related to accounts receivable and sales.
4. Current economic conditions improve ability to obtain favourable pricing for capital projects.

# Strategic Management

## Risks

1. City Manager and senior staff are affected by the virus and unable to perform duties.
2. Unclear roles and communications between staff and members of Council leads to confusion for residents and businesses on decisions and actions taken
3. Actions are not aligned to objectives and become outdated.
4. Duplication of effort or differences in decisions/positions between city, region and other key stakeholders.
5. Uncoordinated service re-design across organization leading to confusion, duplication of effort and frustration.
6. 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of virus occurs requiring sudden closures and work stoppage.
7. Province provides short notice of workplaces and sector openings/resumptions

## Mitigation

1. Succession plans are in place for City Manager/ECG director position and other senior staff.
2. Regular communication between City Manager and Mayor and regular reporting to Council on operations.
3. Regular review and update of actions in light of new information and situational analysis.
4. Regular communication between Region and other city CAOs/City Manager
5. Process established to coordinate service re-design to identify corporate actions and decisions and support sequenced approach to service/program re-start.
6. 3-month work plan process in place and being updated to maintain work effort. Continuity of business plans from first round of closures available for implementation.
7. Service re-design strategy addresses all services/sub-services in advance of Provincial stages announced.



**UPDATED**

# Strategic Management (continued)

## Opportunities

1. City's space accommodation plan positively influenced by work from home (WFH) program. Analyze WFH situations to identify permanent positions where WFH is a viable option and frees up space within City facilities. Establish a robust work from home program to support continued operations.
2. Continuation of 3-month work planning process including deliverables and outcomes to support strategy implementation and operations.
3. Continuation of daily communication with staff to support engagement, connection and inclusivity.
4. Debrief of the pandemic response and the City's ability to respond should result in an even stronger ability to respond to future emergencies – more and clearer delegated authority, gaps in by-laws that can be proactively addressed.

# Legal

## Risk

1. Decisions of ECG and/or senior management are challenged in the aftermath of the pandemic.
2. Build up of adjourned charges due to the Provincial Offences Court closure.
3. City enforcement of non-urgent and non-emergency rights is suspended given the closure of Superior Court the City.

Additional risks deemed confidential are contained in a separate document. ■

## Mitigation

1. Decisions are documented. Retain external counsel (as required) to augment legal resources to handle the legal matters.
2. Currently Halton Court Services is taking steps to work from home to continue with administration and prosecution services, such as rescheduling all appearances that were adjourned, vet offences/prepare disclosures, where possible, to alleviate the backlog when the courts reopen. The 3-month strategy includes combination work from home and scaled back in-office staff to gradually reintroduce essential services, subject to appropriate health and safety measures”.
3. O. Reg. 73/30 – suspending limitation periods and discretion to suspend time requirements in proceedings by decision-makers during the continued emergency retroactive to March 16, 2020. Steps to secure/enforce rights will be taken by Legal when courts reopen

## Opportunities

1. Review delegated authority for routine city business to facilitate nimble decision-making.
2. Ability for staff to take advantage of technology to provide for greater mobility/work from home capacity.
3. Strengthened ties with other departments to provide fast, reliable legal advice

# Information Technology Services

## Risks

1. Employees unable to log in to Virtual Private Network (VPN) and Remote Desktop Services (RDS).
2. Failures in software and hardware.
3. Employees home work-around or phishing scheme results in cyber incident.
4. Employees don't have technology to support productive work from home.
5. Work stops or is significantly delayed in corporate priority projects partnered with ITS Services.
6. Demand for new or enhanced technology to support service re-design overwhelms ability of ITS and organization to supply.

## Mitigation

1. Expanded servers to support VPN and RDS and continue to monitor usage.
2. Follow established protocols for ITS Support Service on-call to identify, assess, and resolve problems.
3. Follow established incident management protocols.
4. Allocate spare equipment to essential service staff to support work from home. Follow Corporate protocol to permit employees to temporarily move city equipment to home offices.
5. Continue efforts on the Corporate priority projects with minimal impact on essential service staff and maintain momentum on project plans and deliverables.
6. Technology a key consideration in service re-design plans and planned sequencing of service/sub-service resumption to address where technology resources are deemed a priority.

**UPDATED**

# Information Technology Services (continued)

## Opportunities

1. Laptops instead of desktops and support for establishing home offices. Computer refresh program to provide laptops only.
2. Harness mobile/remote work needs to include functional and technical requirements for corporate projects and process improvements.
3. Expanding applications to support work from home/mobile work.

**UPDATED**

# Overall City Operations

## Risks

1. Staff must be in city hall to deliver services increasing the number of staff working from city hall.
2. Revenue impacts for services may be longer term as participant behavior evolves and discretionary income is less available resulting in slower uptake of program registrations and permits, transit use upon resumption.
3. Insufficient time devoted to planning for and implementing recovery to new operations
4. Operations staff affected with the virus and crews working in close proximity
5. Slow return of part-time staff.
6. Staff required to support service resumption not available due to redeployment.

## Mitigation

1. Identify employees required to attend to city facilities to conduct business and follow established City protocols for work in city facilities.
2. Services implement through marketing programs (e.g. incentives, availability, etc.) to increase usage/uptake.
3. Provide sufficient staff and lead time to plan for and execute a return to new business as usual
4. Established health and safety protocols for working in teams include safe physical distancing. Deep cleaning workplaces, enforcing isolation if symptoms appear, PPE.
5. Pre-planning for business resumption to enable quick re-entry to recruitment.
6. Corporate redeployment plan and tracking in place and planned sequencing of service/sub-service resumption to address redeployment of staff.



**UPDATED**

# Overall City Operations (continued)

## Opportunities

1. Continuity of operations plans have been fully tested. Update business impact analysis and continuity of operations plans from learnings of pandemic response to provide greater certainty of operations in future emergencies.
2. Harness mobile/remote work needs to include functional and technical requirements for corporate projects and process improvements.