



Town of East Gwillimbury

MEMORANDUM

To: Council

From: Thomas R. Webster, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: April 21, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Updates

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a summary of activities that have occurred with respect to Town operations and services over the past five weeks as we continue to address COVID-19 pandemic as a Town priority.

The Town of East Gwillimbury remains committed to the health and safety of our residents and has established a COVID-19 Control Group comprised of all members of the Senior Management Team, the Deputy Clerk, and the Health & Safety Coordinator. This group is working daily to respond to the emerging situation and is in communications with all Members of Council, neighbouring municipalities and York Region. The Town also continues to work closely with Provincial and York Region Public Health Officials regarding this public health crisis.

The Town has maintained essential services for residents through front-line essential services in combination with virtual services. This staff deployment has been adjusted to ensure the continued provision of services, while ensuring the health and safety of employees.

Key Frontline Essential Services

Given the state of emergency and impact to staffing, the following key frontline activities and services remain operational:

- Emergency Services
- Waste Collection
- By-law Enforcement
- Roads
- Water
- Park Maintenance
- Building Inspections
- Customer Service

Town Operations – Staffing Impact

To date, the Town has successfully implemented work from home abilities for over 95 staff. With the continued facility/school closures and program cancellations, the Town has temporarily suspended the shifts of part time/casual employees whose work is immediately impacted. These employees have been placed on a temporary Declared Emergency Leave. The Town has committed to working with these staff members to provide support during this difficult time including providing information on how to access federal relief programs to help mitigate the impact of this temporary situation. The Town will work to have the impacted employees rejoin the Town team as soon as it is safe to return to normal operations.

Priority COVID-19 Response Projects

Moving forward, the Town is focused on ensuring that employees can continue to conduct meaningful work when at home or on the front-line. As these closures extend, some employees will be tasked with additional projects and work related to the COVID-19 response. These special projects will include:

- 1. Website Content Redevelopment** – The Town is moving forward with the website content development project. As part of this project internal staff will have the opportunity to work on a Website Redevelopment Team to review and enhance content on the Town's website.
- 2. Business/Community Support** – This opportunity will assist with an urgent need to conduct outreach to the local businesses and community organizations.
- 3. Priority COVID-19 Departmental/Wellness Support** – As we continue to navigate this difficult time specific areas in the organization require additional assistance including Information Technology, Human Resources. Employees who have the applicable skills are being prioritized to support areas that have a high priority during the COVID-19 response.

Alternative Plans & Modernization Activities in Place to Continue Operations

1. Electronic Council Meeting

On March 19, 2020, the Province passed Bill 187 to amend the *Municipal Act, 2001* allowing municipalities to amend their procedure by-law to provide for electronic participation during any period where an emergency has been declared to exist in all or part of the municipality under sections 4 or 7.01 of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

On April 7, 2020, Council held its first electronic council meeting. The move allows Council to continue meeting and making decisions while maintaining physical distance.

2. Electronic Advisory Committee Meetings – Remobilization Strategy

Effective March 17, 2020, all Statutory Committees, Advisory Committees, Working Groups and Community Group meetings have been cancelled.

Staff are currently working on establishing an ability for all advisory committees to conduct meetings remotely, if required.

3. Electronic Building Permit for New Applications

Effective April 6, 2020, the Building Branch is accepting electronic building permit applications. Since staff began working remotely the Branch has received 9 new building permit applications, issued 20 building permits and conducted over 400 building inspections.

4. Electronic Planning Application

Staff are reviewing and circulating applications remotely and have launched the ability to accept new plans and permit applications during the closures. Staff have conducted a number of pre-consultation meetings with applicants and have received new planning applications for projects. In addition, development agreements continue to be finalized and prepared for execution.

Key updates regarding some of the high-profile capital projects

1. Operations Centre

As of April 6, 2020, the General Contractor has given notice that they will not be proceeding with work due to COVID-19 and the worksite will be temporarily shut down. The site is currently at 50% completion and tracking on budget.

The Town will continue to work with the contractor to monitor the situation and determine a date to continue construction. This will require an extension to the schedule, however, no costs will be associated with the shutdown of work due to COVID-19.

2. Major Community Park Re-construction Projects

Mount Albert Park Re-Construction

Work has stopped at the Mount Albert Park Reconstruction project. There is approximately 8 weeks of work remaining with the project. The Town will work with the general contractor to determine a date to continue construction and complete the project. Currently the project is 70% complete and tracking within budget.

Queensville Park Re-Construction

Work has stopped at the Queensville Park Reconstruction project. There is approximately 8 weeks of work remaining with the project. The Town will work with the general contractor to determine a date to continue construction and complete the project. Currently the project is 70% complete and tracking on budget.

3. Health & Active Living Plaza (HALP)

At present, staff have completed the concept design and preliminary site plan. An update report and presentation will be shared at Council May 5, 2020 to move forward with detailed design in 2020 which provides drawings and specifications for tender.

The Town has applied for Infrastructure Canada Grant Funding and the project is an excellent candidate for potential shovel ready economic stimulus grants. The Town will continue with the “Community as a Design Committee” approach with public outreach and input into detailed design into 2020.

Business Support and Recovery Strategy

The Town of East Gwillimbury Economic Development team is working closely with local businesses other stakeholders to provide support including but not limited to the following methods:

- Business Outreach
- Business Assistance
- Community Support Hotline (in development)

Economic Impact

Finance staff are currently working with the COVID-19 Control Group and compiling costs directly attributed to COVID-19 matters and program cost impacts. Staff will further report on mitigation and offset strategies.

Town Operational Recovery Plan & Return to Work Strategy

The Health & Safety Coordinator will be working with Chief McKenzie and Human Resources to initiate the Business Recovery/Return to Work Strategy within the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC). With assistance from Human Resources, General Managers will be tasked with identifying and coordinating a return to work plan for their specific divisions so they may begin to resume normal operations once the declaration of emergency has been lifted. Services provided to the public, the Health and Safety of our employees and best practices regarding COVID-19 will all be considered when discussing the return to work strategy.