Administrative COVID-19 Response & Action Plan

owen sound

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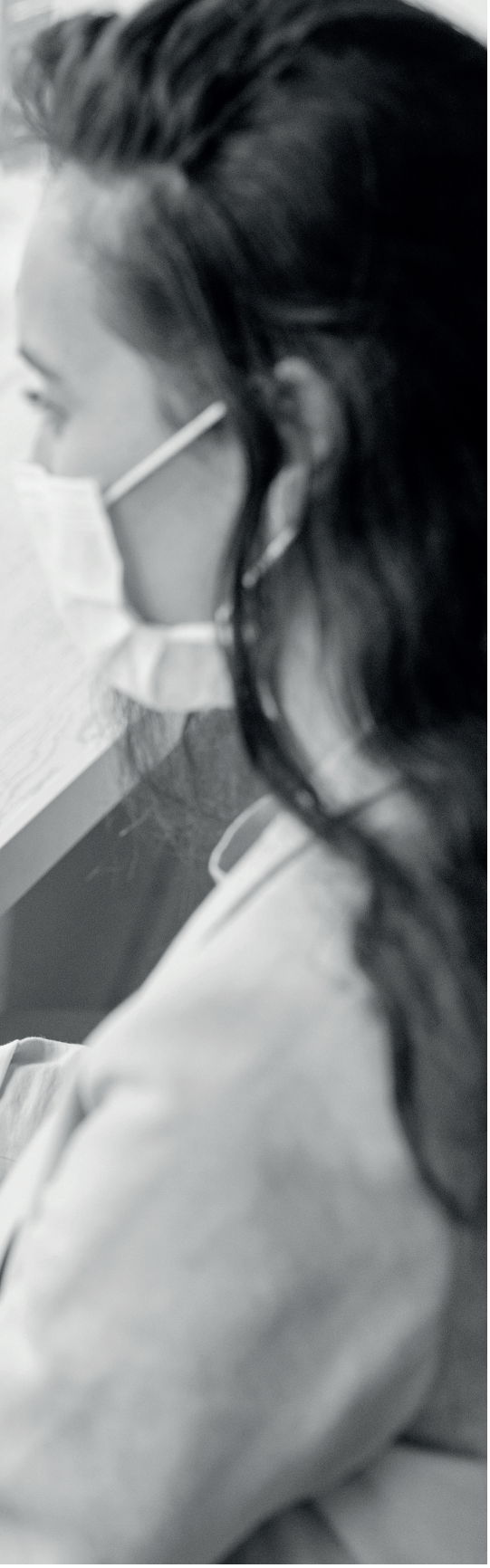

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The City of Owen Sound's Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) was activated March 13, 2020, in response to the World Health Organization declaring the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. This was done to ensure essential City services, such as water and other utilities, police, and fire, were maintained and to work toward phased planning and concise actions. It defines clear roles and actions and has proven effective during our emergency response.

The City's MECG is comprised of:

- Head of Council – Mayor
- Emergency Operations Centre Director – Tim Simmonds
- Emergency Information Officer – Brent Fisher
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) – Heidi Jennen
- Recording Clerk – Briana Bloomfield
- Operations Section Chief –Dennis Kefalas
- Planning Section Chief – Pam Coulter
- Logistics Section Chief – Kate Allan
- Finance and Administration Section Chief – Nelly Morrow
- Police Chief – Chief Ambrose
- Fire Chief – Chief Barfoot

Protecting our citizens' and employees' health during the COVID-19 pandemic is our priority. As such, we have been following the Federal, Provincial, and County Medical Health Officers' advice and monitoring the global response. We have taken swift and effective measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Owen Sound, and we're playing our part within Grey Bruce Counties and the Province at large.

The pandemic ramifications are far-reaching, and as we work to protect the health of our citizens and employees, we must also protect the City's economic interests and operations. This requires leadership and innovative thinking now and into the future. Forecasting various scenarios our City

may face is essential. We are already working on this.

Finally, we are carefully documenting our actions and outcomes to help us learn during these unprecedented times. Although this virus will continue to cause more heartache and loss, the approval of three vaccine candidates and two additional vaccine candidates' potential are the light at the end of this tunnel, and that light is growing. We will recover, and we will ensure that we use this experience to bolster our capacity to manage future challenges.

ABOUT THE ACTION PLAN

The administration has adopted a Multi-Point Action Plan toward proactively mitigating and suppressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and guide the day-to-day emergency response during the pandemic. The planning model uses data from multiple sources to aid future forecasting. The Action Plan addresses both internal responsibilities and external responsibilities both short and long term to guide its day-to-day actions.

The plan will be responsive to the changing conditions and enable the city to continue to monitor the situation in real-time and adapt to government and health organization recommendations. This plan will be updated on an as-needed basis, and key actions adjusted as new information arises and forecasts are revised. The plan is supplemented originally through monthly and now bi-monthly reports to Council. Ultimately the goal is to ensure the greatest possible protection for citizens' and employees' individual health and the stability and economic well-being of businesses and the community during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE ACTION PLAN ADDRESSES BOTH INTERNAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXTERNAL RESPONSIBILITIES BOTH SHORT AND LONG TERM TO GUIDE ITS DAY-TO-DAY ACTIONS.

DECISION MAKING

As part of the Action Plan model, data from global, federal, provincial, and local sources are continually gathered and analyzed to inform the action plan. Key indicators are assessed continually both within the City's operations and public health authorities to support decisions and planning. This insight supports modeling and future decision making for the budget periods during the Maintain, Celebrate and Grow phases, as described below and visually on the next page. Planning includes scenario forecasting (best case, average, and worst-case) to understand the range of impacts and responses that are likely required. Plans are adapted continually as new data emerges.

Decision-making happens within the context of our operating cycle. Cycles are commonly broken down by quarter based on a fiscal year-end. The quarterly breakdown is useful for financial reporting and meeting legislated guidelines; however, it does not accurately mirror the operating cycles we observe. In fact, more impactful than financial quarters is the weather. The infographic aims to describe our operating cycle in three periods tied to our financial cycles and consider 'seasonal', or weather patterns when we look at a typical operating year.

The first period is aligned with the heaviest winter weather and administratively involves planning and reporting. We focus on maintenance and core services; we are also planning for the second and third periods of the year. In the second period, the season, or weather is on our side. The majority of our events take place, we can get outside and thrive. In the final period, our capital programs ramp up, staff focus on professional development and networking, and we prepare through budgeting for the future years ahead. This is not to suggest that we don't have events in the winter or that our City doesn't shine in all three sections; but highlights the themes and significant activities that occur in each slice.

No matter which slice you are in, decision making depends on the timeframe that you are considering.

When the decision impacts the next four months, we need to commit. This involves the efficient analysis of impacts and ensures that we can community solid plans for the immediate future, allowing staff to work effectively. At the same time that we are committing to short-term decisions, we consider the decisions that will impact the 5-9 month timeframe; soon enough, we have to commit to our direction as those months approach. And finally, we are comparing scenarios and outcomes that impact the future; the decisions we commit to today have impacts on the future, and although we don't necessarily know for certain what the outcome will be, we compare alternative scenarios so that as we move closer to that point in time, we are prepared to consider and ultimately commit to future tasks.

MAINTAIN

Core services - not discretionary.
Prep phase for Celebrate & Grow.

CELEBRATE

Events, beautification, staff vacations.
Discretionary but also essential.

GROW

Capital investment & budget.
Staff training & development.

COMMIT

Looks at four-month window in every period we need to commit to decisions that impact the four months ahead.

COMPARE

Evaluate and analyze scenarios that may arise 10-24 months into the future.

CONSIDER

Consider decisions that are on the five to nine month horizon. Don't need to commit until four months out.

EMPLOY A RACI MATRIX

The City's pandemic Emergency Response Plan's main objective is to ensure the safety and well-being of our citizens and employees. The Administration applies a RACI Matrix to their decision-making process overall.

The RACI Matrix is a responsibility assignment chart that maps out every task, milestone, or key decision involved in completing a project and assigns which roles are Responsible for each action item, which personnel is Accountable, and, where appropriate, who needs to be Consulted or Informed. The acronym RACI stands for the four roles that stakeholders might play in any project.

RESPONSIBLE

People or stakeholders who do the work. They must complete the task or objective or make the decision. Several people can be jointly Responsible.

ACCOUNTABLE

Person or stakeholder who is the "owner" of the work. He or she must sign off or approve when the task, objective, or decision is complete. This person must make sure that responsibilities are assigned in the matrix for all related activities. Success requires that there is only one person Accountable, which means that "the buck stops there."

CONSULTED

People or stakeholders need to give input before the work can be done and signed-off on. These people are "in the loop" and active participants.

INFORMED

People or stakeholders who need to be kept "in the picture." They need updates on progress or decisions, but they do not need to be formally consulted, nor do they contribute directly to the task or decision.

KEY INDICATORS

The Administration has determined key indicators to help guide key decisions and aid the MECG and Senior Leadership in identifying when additional actions or responses are needed.

To support Owen Sound's COVID response, reopening of City facilities, and resumption of services, the MECG has prepared a decision matrix to adjust their service level and resume some form of operation provided that all of the following four criteria are met:

ALL FOUR KEY INDICATORS MUST BE MET BEFORE SERVICE LEVELS ARE ADJUSTED.

KEY INDICATORS

1. ABILITY TO COMPLY WITH NEW PROVINCIAL HEALTH ORDER
2. REASONABLE PUBLIC DEMAND FOR SERVICES
3. FINANCIAL VIABILITY
4. PUBLIC AND EMPLOYEE SAFETY MEASURES ARE IN PLACE

PREPARING FOR COVID-19 ONGOING RESPONSE

In April 2020, jurisdictions worldwide, including Ontario, began evaluating how to safely reopen the economy, assuming that COVID-19 would follow the path of other respiratory illnesses such as influenza and would have a regression in the warmer months. COVID-19 has proven to be more resilient than other respiratory illnesses with its ability to spread even during summer, sparking concerns of a resurgence of infections worldwide and here in Owen Sound.

As a municipality, we need to be prepared for both the immediate resurgence and the future waves of infections, including the variants. To address the subsequent waves' risk, Senior Leadership at the City will continue monitoring the provincial and local situation and will continue to plan accordingly. The four tactics listed below will be employed as part of our resurgence planning.

RESURGENCE PLANNING TACTICS

MONITOR TRIGGERS FOR COVID-19 RESURGENCE IN OTHER AREAS
AID LOCAL BUSINESSES TO BE PREPARED
MONITOR COMPLIANCE ON LOCAL LEVEL
REVISE PUBLIC MESSAGING TO REFLECT SITUATIONAL NEED

THE CANADIAN FEDERAL RESPONSE

• About COVID-19

https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html

• Outbreak Update

https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html

• Canada's response

https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse.html

•Economic response

https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html

THE PROVINCIAL RESPONSE

https://covid-19.ontario.ca/

ADMINISTRATIVE
COVID-19 RESPONSE & ACTION PLAN
VERSION 1.0

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