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Date November 10, 2020 **Report No.** 2020-520

To Chair and Members
Committee of the Whole – Community Development

From Brian Hutchings
Chief Administrative Officer

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item [x]
Item For Consideration []

2.0 Topic CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 11.10.20 [Financial Impact: None]

3.0 Recommendation

THAT Report 2020-520 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 11.10.20 BE RECEIVED.

4.0 Purpose and Overview

Report 2020-520 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 11.10.20 responds to recommendations outlined in Report 2020-219 COVID-19 EOC Actions and Operational Impacts to bring back ongoing updates to Council detailing the COVID-19 emergency. This report outlines:

- Emergency Operations Centre decisions and actions to date;
- Decisions that have been made by the Emergency Group as outlined in the COVID-19 Delegation of Authority By-law;
- Emergency Operations Centre decisions and actions to date;

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- Decisions that have been made by the Emergency Group as outlined in the COVID-19 Delegation of Authority By-law;

5.0 Background

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared coronavirus (COVID-19) a global pandemic. To prevent the future spread of COVID-19, all levels of government have taken immediate emergency action.

The Emergency Management Planning Committee (EMPC) first met on March 12, 2020 to coordinate the Emergency Management Program. On March 15, 2020, community partners were pulled together to launch the Unified Emergency Operations Centre. On March 17, 2020, the Ontario Government declared a state of emergency under s 7.0.1 (1) the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

The City of Brantford followed with a municipal declaration of a state of emergency on March 19, 2020. On March 20, 2020, the City activated its Emergency Operation Centre (EOC).

Due to the ongoing need for emergency coordination and management, Council passed a resolution on April 16, 2020 that approved an extension of the emergency declaration until the Mayor, in consultation with the EOC, determined that the emergency was over.

Several emergency actions have been passed by the EOC and by Council since the declaration of the COVID-19 Emergency. Those actions and decisions are detailed in the following reports:

- Report 2020-216 COVID-19 EOC Actions and Operational Impacts
- Report 2020-234 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 04.28.20
- Report 2020-237 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 05.12.20
- Report 2020-247 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 05.26.20
- Report 2020-273 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 06.09.20
- Report 2020-282 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 06.23.20
- Report 2020-307 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 07.14.20
- Report 2020-337 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 08.04.20
- Report 2020-370 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 08.25.20
- Report 2020-403 CAO COVID-19 Emergency update 09.08.20
- Report 2020-419 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 09.22.20
- Report 2020-447 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 10.13.20

Most recently, Report 2020-483 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 10.27.20 outlined the following recommendations:

- A. THAT Report 2020-483 CAO COVID-19 Emergency Update 10.27.20 BE RECEIVED; and
- B. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to maintain virtual Council operations until April 30 2021 and present an update report for Council's consideration on meeting operations no later than March 2021; and
- C. THAT an amending By-Law to update Municipal Code Chapter 15 – Procedure to address virtual operation language needs BE PRESENTED for Council's consideration which includes language to address the following:
 - a. Meeting location update wording improvements for virtual meetings;
 - b. Clarity to allow participation to be virtual where the meeting is offered in a virtual format; and
 - c. Delegations language update for allowance to attend virtually in the absence in of a declared emergency

6.0 Corporate Policy Context

Emergency Management

7.0 Input From Other Sources

Emergency Operations Centre
Health and Human Services
Public Works

8.0 Analysis

In Ontario, the number of COVID-19 cases has remained high, reaching a record high of 1,050 new infections on November 3; despite recent provincial modelling that has suggested case growth is slowing. On November 2, Ontario's 7-day average of new daily cases reached an all-time high of 919; which is the highest seen throughout the pandemic. Locally, Brantford has seen a recent spike in the number of positive cases. Outbreaks have been declared at local retirement homes, as well as a business operating at Lynden Park Mall. As of

November 3, BCHU reported 233 total cases in Brantford and 61 total cases in the County of Brant, with 62 total active cases, 227 resolved cases and 5 deaths. A total of 34,488 tests had been administered at the Brantford Assessment Centre and 4,069 tests administered at congregate living settings (such as long-term care homes, retirement homes, shelters and group homes), including mass swabbing.

8.1 Operational Decisions of the Emergency Operations Centre

The EOC continues to meet each week to review and discuss ongoing operating of City services and amenities during the COVID-19 pandemic; as well as provincial, federal and public health announcements and guidelines.

The EOC has approved the following actions:

- Request for additional social media posts outlining City Hall service offerings, appointments and hours of service
- Tourism Centre to be closed to the public as of November 1 for the winter season. Staff are still able to book meeting rooms.
- New COVID-19 active screening process implemented November 2
- EOC approved keeping Woodman Park Community Centre open after November 20 for staff CPR and First Aid training only

All other decisions and actions taken by the EOC are recorded and outlined in Appendix A: Emergency Management and Operation Centre COVID-19 Response and Actions

8.2 Emergency Group Decisions

No decisions were made by the Emergency Group by way of the Delegation of Authority By-law.

In future, Council will be informed of decisions made by the Emergency Group by way of resolution. Additionally, the CAO will continue to report on these decisions in regular, on-going reports to Council.

8.3 Decisions before Council

There are no decisions before Council at this time.

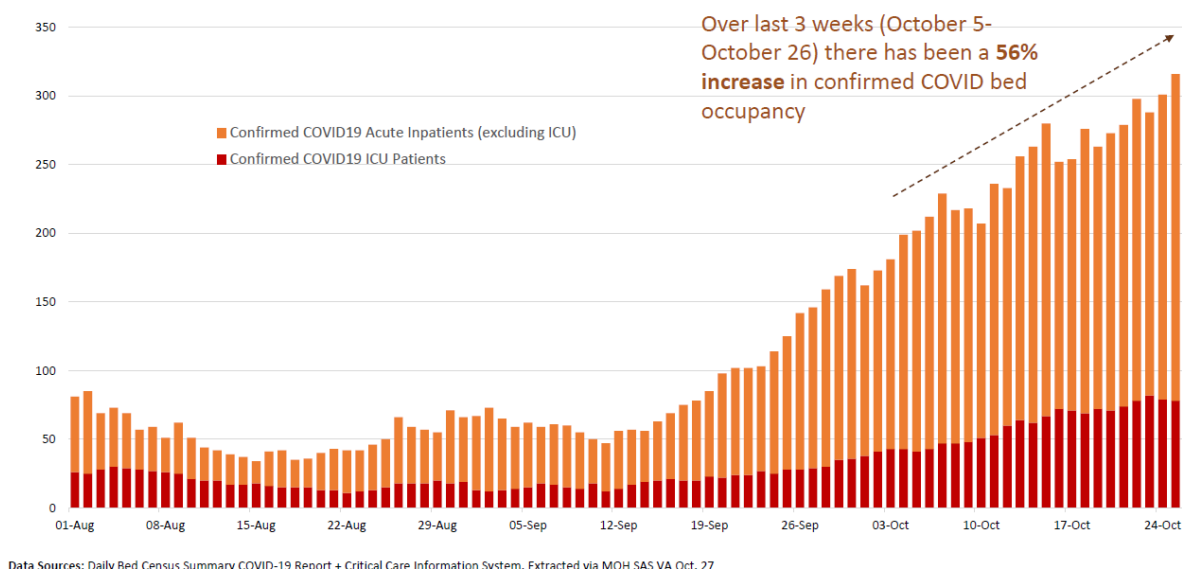
8.4 Provincial Policy Impacts

8.4.1 Updated Provincial Modelling

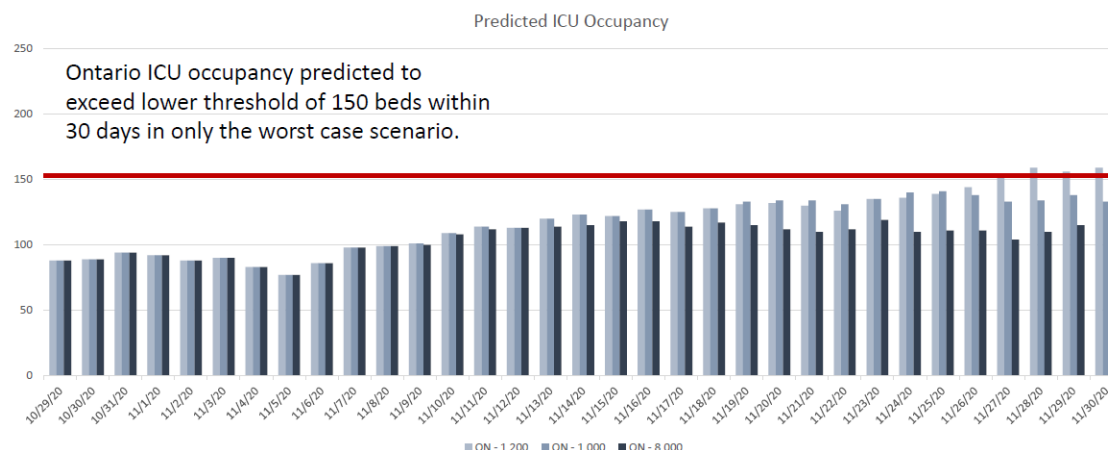
On October 29, the Province released updated COVID-19 projections and modelling, including the most recent trending in Ontario and an update on the Province's efforts to control and mitigate the effects of the pandemic. The Province advises that most indicators are showing that COVID-19 case growth is slowing and projections appear to be moving away from a 'worst case' scenario, however; cases are continuing to climb. The Province stresses that responding to the pandemic on a Public Health Unit by Public Health Unit basis is important because it allows the Province to account for variations in regions. The Province also advises that the health system is able to respond to the pandemic at current levels of growth but stresses that the trajectory of this pandemic can change very quickly.

The modelling highlights that growth in hospitalization is slowing but that spillover risk (risk to non-COVID-19-related medical services), continues to persist. The slower growth suggests that risk to ICU's is lower. The Province predicts Ontario ICU occupancy will not exceed the 150-bed threshold in the next month, unless the situation gets rapidly worse. However, the modelling also demonstrates that cases in Long Term Care are continuing to increase with cumulative mortality up substantially (85 long-term care and retirement home residents have died after contracting COVID-19 since August 15).

Growth in hospitalizations is slowing, but spillover risk persists



Slower growth means that risk to ICUs is lower



Further detail on all of the above Provincial modelling can be found in *Appendix B: COVID-19 Modelling Update: Advice from the Science Advisory and Modelling Consensus Tables*.

8.4.2 Long-Term Care

On November 2, the Province announced plans to increase the number of hours of direct care for residents living in long-term care to an average of four hours per day. This decision was made based on early recommendations from the Province's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission. It will include hands on care provided by nurses or PSW's to support residents individual clinical and personal care needs.

8.4.3 Social Services Relief Funding

This summer, the Province announced a second phase of the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) to support community programs, including housing and homelessness systems. To receive funding, the City was required to submit a business case to the Ministry outlining how the funding would be used. On October 26, the Ministry approved the City's request and approved \$1,919,022 in funding that will be used to support the

operation of an isolation shelter, shelter supplies, food security, eviction prevention and capital upgrades. The City will also receive an additional \$437,460 in Reaching Home funds for outreach and medical support. Further details regarding these funding allocations are outlined in Report #2020-524 'COVID-19 Human Services Response Funding Update'.

8.4.4 COVID-19 Emergency Measures Provincial Report

On November 2, the Province tabled a report in the Legislature summarizing details regarding emergency measures the Province enacted to stop the spread of COVID-19. The report focuses on the 47 emergency orders made between March 17 and July 24, 2020, when the Declaration of Provincial Emergency was in effect under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA). The summary outlines how the Province, with the advice of Public Health, used tools provided under Ontario's emergency legislation to keep Ontarians safe and mitigate the virus' impact, while the declared provincial emergency was in effect. The EMCPA requires the government table a report in the Legislature within 120 days after a provincial emergency ends. This report outlines the rationale for issuing the emergency orders, including:

- Limiting COVID-19 spread
- Supporting continuity of critical services
- Supporting businesses
- Supporting vulnerable sectors
- Providing cost relief to Ontarians

After the declaration was terminated on July 24, the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020 (ROA)* came into effect on July 24 and many of the orders made under the EMPCA continued and remain in effect under the ROA.

8.4.5 COVID-19 Response Framework

On November 3, the Province announced the *Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework*. This framework was developed in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts to ensure going forward that public health

measures are targeted and responsive in helping to limit the spread of COVID-19; while keeping schools and businesses open, maintaining health system capacity and protecting those most vulnerable. The plan takes a more gradual approach to public health measures and will introduce preventative measures earlier on, in the hopes of avoiding more large scale closures and allow measures to be introduced or removed incrementally. Public Health Unit Regions in Ontario will now fall into one of five different categories:

- **Prevent (Green)** – Restrictions reflect those of Stage 3, absent of a widely available vaccine or treatment. There is a focus on education and awareness of public health and workplace safety measures in place. A health unit must have a weekly incidence rate of less than 10 cases per 100,000 people. The test positivity rate must be under 1%.
- **Protect (Yellow)** – Enhanced targeted enforcement, fines and enhanced education to limit further transmission. Additional public health measures are required in high-risk settings. Regions will have a weekly incidence rate between 10 and 39.9 cases per 100,000 people. The test positivity rate must be between 1% and 2.5%.
- **Restrict (Orange)** – Implement enhanced measures, restrictions, and enforcement to slow the spread. The weekly incidence rate must be between 40 and 99.9 cases per 100,000 people. The test positivity rate must be between 2.5% and 9.9% for regions in this category. At this level, hospital and ICU occupancy are increasing.
- **Control (Red)** – Restrictions are most severe before wide-scale business or organizational closure (or a return to modified Stage 2). Regions in this phase will implement broader-scale measures and restrictions. The weekly incident rate is more than 100 cases per 100,000 people and the positivity rate must increase above 10%. At this stage, hospital and ICU capacity are at risk of being overwhelmed.
- **Lockdown (Grey)** – Includes a return to Stage 1 or pre-Stage 1 and closing all non-essential businesses. Wide scale measures and restrictions to be implemented and declaration of emergency to be considered.

The current proposed classification for Brant County Health Unit is 'Yellow-Protect'; based on local data for the week of October 26. Updated data will be used for final review by the Chief Officer of Health and approved by Cabinet on Friday, November 6 and will come into effect on Saturday, November 7. Under the framework, indicators will generally be assessed based on the previous two weeks of information. Movement to apply measures will be considered sooner than two weeks if trends are rapidly worsening.

Each of the five categories will include specific public health and workplace safety measures and provide regions with criteria for determining whether to impose lockdowns and closures. This new tiered system will replace the previous modified Stage 2 restrictions that saw additional public health measures and restrictions put in place for regions experiencing concerning public health trends (Toronto, Peel, Ottawa and York Regions).

To review the full *COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open*, including details on each of the five categories under the new tiered system, refer to the following link: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-covid-19-response-framework-keeping-ontario-safe-and-open-en-2020-11-03-v2b.pdf>

The Province also announced it will expand access to real-time COVID data through the Ontario.ca/coronavirus website. The site will serve as a dashboard for Ontarians and provide up to date COVID-19 information and local data. The Province will update the site as data becomes available with the goal of helping businesses, organizations and local communities access information they need to prepare in advance of changes in their region.

The Province also announced that \$300 million will be made available to businesses required to close or significantly restrict their services in areas subject to modified Stage 2 public health restrictions (Ottawa, Peel, Toronto and York Region), or going forward in areas that are categorized as 'Control' or 'Lockdown'.

Rebates will be offered to businesses for the period of time that a business is required to temporarily close or significantly restrict their services due to modified Stage 2 restrictions or an area

categorized as 'Control' or 'Lockdown'. Property tax rebates will be net of any federal support provided through the new Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) and cover costs incurred beyond those covered under CERS. Starting November 16, businesses that are eligible can apply for temporary property tax and energy cost rebates directly to the Province through an online application portal.

8.4.6 COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream

On October 28, the Province announced Ontario's COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) to support long-term care, education and municipal infrastructure projects. Funding to municipalities will be allocation-based and used to address local infrastructure needs. Staff have identified a number of infrastructure-related projects that would be suitable under the streams identified, however, are waiting for further details from the Province on funding guidelines before proceeding. Further information will be provided to municipalities in the coming weeks and staff will continue to provide updates to Council as more details become available.

9.0 Financial Implications

Financial implications associated with COVID-19 continue to be monitored and tracked by staff, and will be reported on by the City's Finance department.

10.0 Conclusion

The Ontario government recently released updating modelling that suggests that although case growth is slowing down, the number of cases in Ontario is still continuing to climb. The Province also announced a new tiered system for imposing public health measures in regions across the Province; in an effort to ensure measures and restrictions are more targeted and responsive. As of November 3, Brant County Health Unit was categorized as 'Protect-Yellow'; meaning that enhanced targeted enforcement, fines and education are required to limit further transmission. Categories will be further reviewed and approved by the Province on November 6. As the pandemic continues to evolve, the City's EOC will monitor provincial, federal and public health announcements and

direction very carefully. The EOC will continue to lead the City's COVID-19 response with the health and safety of residents at the forefront.



Brian Hutchings
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Appendix A: Emergency Management and Operation Centre COVID-19 Response and Actions

Appendix B: COVID-19 Modelling Update: Advice from the Science Advisory and Modelling Consensus Tables

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required ☐ yes ☒ no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk ☐ yes ☒ no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? ☐ yes ☒ no