

## Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

**From:** Lynne Livingstone, City Manager

**Subject:** COVID-19 – City of London Services Update (Winter)

**Date:** December 16, 2020

## Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the City Manager, the report dated December 16, 2020 entitled “Covid-19 – City of London Services Update (Winter)”, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

## Executive Summary

At the end of the 2019 and early into 2020, news of a new strain of coronavirus began to emerge out of Wuhan, China. Within months, this had evolved to become a global pandemic, impacting people and communities around the world.

Since COVID-19 first emerged in the London area at the beginning of the year, there have been significant impacts on City operations and services.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the City of London programs and services that we anticipate will be available to the community between January 1 and March 31, 2021, as well as to identify any additional impacts that COVID-19 will have on services and programs during that time period. Throughout this time, the City of London is guided by Provincial Orders that impact programs, services, and facilities. Changes in Provincial guidance may have an impact on City operations at any given time.

## Analysis

### 1.0 Background Information

#### 1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, meeting on June 23, 2020, Agenda Item 2.1 - COVID-19 - City of London Services.

<https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=73221>

Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, meeting on September 22, 2020, Agenda Item 2.4 – City of London Fall Services

<https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=74819>

### 2.0 Discussion and Considerations

#### 2.1 The City’s Approach

Since COVID-19 first emerged as an issue, the City’s response has been guided by a set of principles. At the forefront has been the mission and values that have been set through the Strategic Plan for the organization.

Mission:

To be a responsive and modern public service partner that fosters change to build a better London for all.

#### Values:

Good governance  
Driven by community  
Acting with compassion  
Moving forward with innovation

#### Guiding Principles:

Based on the mission and values, a number of guiding principles were defined very early in the City's process to respond to COVID-19. These principles have served as the foundation for all that has been done throughout the time the City's operations have been significantly modified. These principles include:

- Health and safety for residents and staff is a priority and is an ongoing commitment.
- Every effort will be made to minimize the harm to people and organizations impacted by decisions.
- Efforts to support economic recovery and those most vulnerable will be prioritized.
- A consistent, enterprise-wide approach will be taken.
- Communicating about service changes will be transparent, frequent and ongoing.

#### Commitment to Health and Safety:

Throughout its response to COVID-19, the City has maintained an ongoing commitment to the health and safety of its employees and residents. This has been a priority through every stage of the COVID-19 response. Throughout all operations, health and safety precautions have been incorporated, including efforts that allow for health screening upon entry of City facilities, physical distancing, frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing, and frequent sanitization of high touch areas. In all cases, ongoing modifications to services are in place in order to ensure adherence to these health and safety precautions.

Further precautions introduced and that will continue through January to March, 2021 include the following:

- Enhanced use of plexiglas to support physical distancing where there is customer contact.
- Extension of existing remote working arrangements to April 2021.
- Elimination of any non-essential, in-person training for staff, with virtual training continuing.
- Elimination of any non-essential, in-person meetings for staff, with virtual meetings continuing.
- Restricted movement between facilities, limited to essential duties only.

#### Alignment with the Province:

All of the actions taken at the municipal level have been aligned with the recovery and restarting activities of the Province of Ontario. Decisions made at the Provincial level have had a direct impact on the City's operations. This has included:

- Lifting of the Provincial orders.
- Lifting of the Provincial Declared Emergency.
- Reopening of programs and services at the Provincial level.
- Guidance provided to support a safe and healthy process of reopening Provincially regulated services.

The full Ontario framework can be found here: [Keeping Ontario Safe and Open](#).

The full list of Provincial emergency orders can be found here: [Ontario Emergency Orders](#).

#### COVID-19 Working Group:

In January, the COVID-19 Working Group was established to monitor the threat of this virus spreading in our community, and in our workplace. As the presence of COVID-19 increased, the Working Group expanded to include representatives of every service area to support the development and ongoing execution of an enterprise-wide response plan. Initially, this group met daily to evaluate community and organizational impacts, and to ensure swift action where required. This team currently meets three times per week, with an ongoing focus on supporting the organization and the community as COVID-19 impacts continue to evolve.

#### Operational Task Forces:

As an extension of the COVID-19 Working Group, three operational task forces were formed, focusing on People, Technology and Facilities. These task forces ensure an effective approach to the delivery of services for Londoners across the organization, and support employees as they deliver services to the community. Each of these task forces is comprised of individuals from across the organization to help ensure that the City's approach has a strong focus on customer service, is consistent across all service areas, and that employees have the tools, policies and processes in place to work and deliver effectively.

The Technology Task Force was formed to ensure employees who are working remotely have access to technology that allows them to perform the duties of their job and provide consistent customer service. This task force is also working to identify and explore opportunities to use new technology and to use technology differently to enhance service delivery to residents. Standardization of remote working stations is now complete, with efforts moving forward focused primarily on identifying opportunities to enhance service delivery through use of technology.

The Facilities Task Force is ensuring all health and safety precautions are met at all City work sites where programs, services and operations have been permitted, primarily as a result of changes to Provincial orders, to restart. This is to protect the health and safety of the community, residents accessing services and of employees. As COVID-19 continues to pose a significant risk for our community, efforts are focused on ensuring all health protocols are enforced through physical space design, installation of appropriate barriers, and signage.

The People Task Force is focused on ways to sustain employee resilience and engagement, and maintain effective communication to address concerns and support City staff in an environment that has been greatly redefined by COVID-19 and by the health precautions required to prevent the spread of this virus. Early this fall, the task force surveyed employees to assess needs for supports and resources.

#### Culture of Safety:

In addition to safe work procedures and protective equipment, the City has created a task force to support a culture of safety, recognizing that the City's culture also needs to reinforce the importance keeping everyone safe on the job in terms of both physical safety and mental health. The Senior Leadership Team identified employees from throughout the organization to work to examine our current enterprise wide safety culture, develop a renewed and shared vision for safety, and work to implement change within our organization. The focus of this task force extends beyond COVID-19 to enhance safety overall.

### **3.0 Service Impacts – January 1 to March 31, 2021**

#### **3.1 Programs and Services**

Since COVID-19 first began to impact London, there have been a number of necessary changes to the way the City has delivered service to its residents.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 creates restrictions that continue to have impacts for many of the City's services and programs. As a result, modifications that have been made to ensure that all health precautions are in place and all Provincial orders are followed will continue into 2021.

The list below provides a summary of the modifications and service changes for the first part of 2021. This speaks only to those services where current operations are impacted by COVID-19 orders.

- London's winter response program for unsheltered individuals will be implemented.
- Winter road operations will resume.
- The 3 outdoor rinks that opened in December will continue to operate, weather permitting.
- Outdoor neighbourhood managed rinks will be supported by city staff in select neighbourhood locations this winter.
- New outdoor recreation activities including family scavenger hunts, snow soccer, and snow painting will be introduced.
- Additional virtual programming will be added, with examples including fitness classes for seniors and craft programs for children.
- Provincial Offences Administration (POA) will continue to offer as many services as possible virtually, with plans for expanded hours for walk-up services in addition to virtual and in-person trial and Court proceedings in the first part of 2021.
- Resumption of Advisory Committee meetings, virtually.

Appendix A - Overview of City Services Provided During the COVID-19 Pandemic - provides an overview of all services that have been delivered through this time, from vital services to services that have been added as Provincial orders and health guidance has evolved.

## Conclusion

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on City of London programs and services since March, when a State of Emergency was declared by the Province and also declared locally. Throughout this time, the City has provided vital services and has responded quickly to changes to Provincial orders, restarting programs and services where it is safe and possible to do so. Looking ahead, the delivery of programs will continue to be impacted by the Province's progression through its [Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework](#) as well as any financial restrictions facing the corporation.

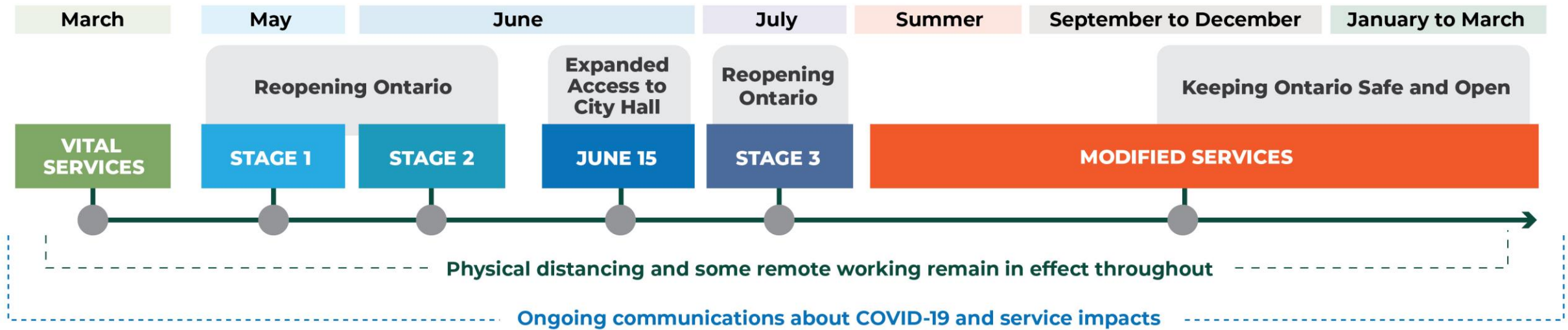
Decisions about how these impacts are reflected at the local level will continue to be guided by the principles developed at the onset of this event, and all health and safety precautions will be followed to help protect the well-being of the community and of staff.

It's important to note that delivery of all City services is dependent on Provincial orders, as well as the need to meet health and safety precautions. The City programs and services identified in this report assume there are no significant changes in the Provincial orders. Should there be a change to Provincial orders as a result of future outbreaks or new health guidance, these will be reflected in City services as required.

**Prepared by:** Patti McKague, Director, Strategic Communications and Government Relations  
**Recommended by:** Lynne Livingstone, City Manager  
**CC:** Senior Leadership Team  
COVID-19 Working Group

## Appendix A: Overview of City Services Provided During the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Service Impacts – Overview:



At all times, all of the actions taken at the municipal level have been aligned with the recovery and restarting activities of the Province of Ontario. Decisions, guidance and restrictions imposed at the Provincial level have had a direct impact on the City's operations, and modifications may be required as a result of changes in Provincial directions.

Services that have been available throughout the pandemic	Services added in the Spring and Summer	Services added June 15	Services added in the Fall	Services that will not resume in 2020	Anticipated service impacts January 1 to March 31, 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clerk's Office</li> <li>• City Clerk's – general phone/email inquiries (661-CITY)</li> <li>• Council Services</li> <li>• Council and Standing Committee Meetings</li> <li>• Burial Permits</li> <li>• MFIPPA requests</li> <li>• Provincial Offences Administration payments and inquiries and early resolution meetings</li> <li>• Fire Services</li> <li>• Emergency Management and Corporate Security</li> <li>• Facilities Operations</li> <li>• Traffic Services</li> <li>• By-law Enforcement</li> <li>• Planning, Building and Development Services</li> <li>• Road Operations</li> <li>• Park Maintenance</li> <li>• Long-term care (Dearness home)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor sports fields and baseball diamonds (for non-programmed community use)</li> <li>• Benches, picnic tables and park shelters</li> <li>• Skate parks</li> <li>• Basketball courts</li> <li>• Tennis and pickleball courts (open until the season finishes)</li> <li>• Disc golf (open until the season finishes)</li> <li>• Golf courses (open until the season finishes)</li> <li>• Indoor and outdoor pools</li> <li>• Off-leash dog parks</li> <li>• Community gardens (open until November 30)</li> <li>• Household Special Waste Depot and Landfill</li> <li>• London Animal Care Centre</li> </ul>	<p>City Hall (in person):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marriage licences</li> <li>• Commissioning documents</li> <li>• Civil Ceremonies (with limits to the number of participants, based on Provincial Orders)</li> <li>• Tree removal permits (by phone or online, with payments accepted online or in person)</li> <li>• Building permit and business licensing inquiries</li> <li>• Tax payments</li> <li>• Payment of invoices</li> <li>• Hearings conducted by the City of London's Hearings Officers</li> </ul> <p>206 Dundas Street (in person, by appointment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage alteration permits</li> <li>• Development application consultations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arenas: the majority of ice pads will gradually reopen, with modifications to limit the number of people accessing the rink at any one time, and limited spectators will be allowed</li> <li>• Recreation and Community Centre Programming: reopening of community and seniors centres for modified, free pre-registered programs, planned on a monthly basis, with the release of the program schedule bi-weekly</li> <li>• South London Pool and The Canada Games Aquatic Centre indoor aquatic facilities will remain open through the fall.</li> <li>• Private indoor rentals at all recreation facilities will not be permitted in September or October,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk side appointments in Social Services</li> <li>• Community hoteling partners (Social Services)</li> <li>• Ontario Works offices at Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre</li> <li>• Desk side appointments in Children's Services</li> <li>• Provincial Offences Administration Office: in-person or trial proceedings have not been authorized by the Ministry of the Attorney General until 2021</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall service levels will be maintained, unless otherwise indicated, or unless changes are required as a result of Provincial orders</li> <li>• London's winter response program for unsheltered individuals will be implemented.</li> <li>• Winter road operations will resume.</li> <li>• The 3 outdoor rinks that opened in December will continue to operate, weather permitting.</li> <li>• The 3 outdoor rinks that opened in December will continue to operate, weather permitting.</li> <li>• Outdoor neighbourhood managed rinks will be supported by city staff in select neighbourhood locations this winter</li> <li>• New outdoor recreation activities including family scavenger hunts, snow</li> </ul>

Services that have been available throughout the pandemic	Services added in the Spring and Summer	Services added June 15	Services added in the Fall	Services that will not resume in 2020	Anticipated service impacts January 1 to March 31, 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garbage Collection, Recycling, and Envirodepots</li> <li>• Children’s Services (Emergency Child Care)</li> <li>• Social Services (Ontario Works)</li> <li>• Housing Services, Housing Access Centre (HAC)</li> <li>• Homeless Prevention and Supports</li> <li>• Water and Wastewater Services</li> <li>• Property tax (online and by phone)</li> <li>• Service London</li> <li>• Internal support and corporate services such as Finance, Human Resources, Legal, Information Technology Services, and Communications</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-application consultation meetings</li> <li>• Application review meetings</li> <li>• Engineering review meetings</li> </ul> <p>Public Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Participation Meetings</li> <li>• Public hearings</li> <li>• Committee of Adjustment meetings</li> <li>• Advisory Committee meetings, as legislatively required</li> </ul>	<p>but will be evaluated monthly after that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special events: only walks and runs will be permitted</li> <li>• Road Operations: Delivery of seasonal road maintenance in accordance with Provincial Standards</li> <li>• Provincial Offences Administration Office: Staff will be working onsite and conducting non-trial proceedings remotely in court rooms as per the direction of the Ministry of the Attorney General in addition to providing walk-up services with modified hours</li> <li>• Social Services: All Ontario Works locations will reopen to the public for front counter services including cheque pick up, cheque encashment, emergency services and</li> </ul>		<p>soccer, and snow painting will be introduced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional virtual programming will be added, with examples including fitness classes for seniors and craft programs for children</li> <li>• Provincial Offences Administration (POA) will continue to offer as many services as possible virtually, with plans for expanded hours for walk-up services in addition to virtual and in-person trial and Court proceedings in the first part of 2021</li> <li>• Advisory Committee meetings resume, virtually</li> <li>• Services that were not resumed in 2020 will not resume between January 1 and March 31, 2021.</li> </ul>

Services that have been available throughout the pandemic	Services added in the Spring and Summer	Services added June 15	Services added in the Fall	Services that will not resume in 2020	Anticipated service impacts January 1 to March 31, 2021
			<p>drop-in support as of September 21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s Services: Front counter service at Citi Plaza will resume for pick up and drop off of Child Care Fee Subsidy Application and supplemental forms</li> <li>• Skills Advance Ontario referral program</li> <li>• Housing Services: Front counter services gradually come back online by appointment only for application support and issue management throughout September and October.</li> <li>• By-law: Interior inspections of occupied buildings for licensing and complaints, with a phased return to full parking services</li> <li>• Catty Shack will reopen</li> </ul>		

At all City facilities, a number of health and safety precautions are in place to stop the spread of COVID-19, and to protect the public and employees. These include health assessments upon entry, limiting the number of people in the building, a requirement to wear a mask under the by-law, and efforts to ensure a



minimum of 2 metres of physical distance. Hand sanitizer is also available at all locations to allow for frequent hand sanitization, and rigorous cleaning practices have been established.

The City has maintained up-to-date information about facilities, programs and services on a dedicated web site, [www.london.ca/covid-19](http://www.london.ca/covid-19).