



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report To: Council

From: Strategic Management Team

Date: May 11, 2020

Report No: ES-006-20

Subject: COVID-19 Update (May 2020)

Recommendation: THAT report ES-006-20 be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Town of Milton is highly responsive, using a combination of proactive and reactive measures, requiring adaptability and flexibility, and a commitment to business continuity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- The response has been cohesive and deliberate to manage the impacts
- Throughout the pandemic, the Town has continued to deliver core services in alignment with public health directives, instituting health and safety measures, and meeting legislative requirements
- The Town has transitioned to alternative service delivery adaptations. We continue to offer a range of services and programs by phone or online through remote work locations.
- Health and safety measures have been implemented to ensure the safety of our employees conducting work in the community
- The Town continues to address workforce strategies as a result of service disruptions
- While the town remains committed to our continued response, a focus is being placed on the recovery efforts as the Ontario Government and public health officials begin to loosen restrictions
- Milton's recovery efforts will align with the provincial framework of a phased approach and address three areas: operational, economic, and regional coordination



REPORT

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic response remains a priority for the Town of Milton. Through the leadership of the Mayor, Council, and the efforts of staff, the ability to adapt, be responsive and implement alternative service delivery has allowed core business to continue to our community. Our employees have risen to the occasion by following the necessary health and safety measures to keep themselves and the community safe, along with adapting to new ways of doing business.

While the circumstance has been unusual, with many factors outside of Milton's control, the approach used has been cohesive and deliberate to manage the impacts. The following guiding principles have been applied to decision making:

1. Safety of staff and the public is of paramount importance;
2. Continuation in the delivery of essential public services;
3. Responding to the needs of the community as the pandemic evolves;
4. Fair and equitable treatment of the Town's workforce;
5. Fiscal responsibility and appropriate use of taxpayers funding.

Discussion

Throughout the pandemic the Town has been responsive and management of the impacts have been vast. This week marks eight weeks of managing and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This report summarizes:

- The COVID-19 timeline
- Business continuity efforts
- Workforce strategies to date
- Recovery planning
- Financial Considerations

COVID-19 Timeline

The timeline serves to provide an overall depiction of Milton's response to date, along with important provincial and federal milestones that directly impacted service delivery. The overall timeline is attached as Appendix A: Covid-19 Timeline.

The timeline captures the complexity of the pandemic response and the many factors that are outside of Milton's control, but directly impact the Town's business and overall service delivery.

With that said, the actions to date position the Town as highly responsive, using a combination of proactive and reactive measures, requiring adaptability and flexibility, and a commitment to business continuity.

Business Continuity

Municipalities deliver critical and important services to the community. Throughout the pandemic, the Town has continued to deliver many of its services in alignment with public health directives, instituting health and safety measures, and meeting legislative requirements.

The Town has transitioned well to working remotely and adapting to alternative service delivery. We continue to offer a range of services and programs by phone or online through remote locations. Staff continue to leverage relationships, through regional and provincial counterparts or community stakeholders, that are critical as various contingency and business continuity plans are developed, to advocate for funding and adapt and respond to our 'new normal'.

A summary of our services provided during the course of COVID-19 and the adaptive approaches used by the Town to safely operate within the provincial and public health directives is listed below.

Continued services:

- 2020 capital infrastructure projects continue to be advanced through the design and tender processes
- Ensuring projects are shovel-ready once restrictions have been lifted and construction resumes
- Design work, external approvals (Ministry of Transportation, Conservation Halton and Niagara Escarpment Commission), as well as land negotiation and acquisition is ongoing within health and safety parameters
- Work continues on several major land use policy projects including:
 - Agerton, Milton Education Village Innovation Centre and Britannia Secondary Plans
 - Major Transit Station Area Study
 - Trafalgar Secondary Plan
 - Input into Regional Official Plan Review and Integrated Growth Management Strategy
 - Official Plan Review - ongoing and progressing according to schedule
- Building permit applications continue to be received and processed. In April:



- 67 new permit applications were received, representing a construction value of approximately \$38.2 million
- 48 permits were issued, representing a construction value of approximately \$3.07 million
- Applications received result in 46,303 m2 of new industrial gfa with a construction value of just over \$30M
- 1,806 inspections have also been booked
- The total permit application fee revenue for April was \$724,778.
- In addition, the Town has received a number of new major applications under the Planning Act generating to \$886,000 in application fees
- Fees, at the end of Q1 2020:
 - Subdivision application fees received are at 122% of the 2020 budget
 - Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment fees received are at 68% of 2020 budget
 - Site plan fees are at 39% of budget
 - Overall, application fees received to date achieve 2020 budgeted revenue projections
- Transit continues to monitor and adjust services to maintain a minimum level of safe and essential mobility for residents. Modifications were made based on ridership data and maintaining a balance of conventional and specialized services.
 - Conventional service reductions of 40% has been phased as a response to lower demand while maintaining important connections to essential goods/services and related employment
 - Ridership is approximately 15% when compared to 2019 data
 - Specialized service has been reduced by 19%. Note that a minimum amount of service is required to comply with AODA requirements to ensure service parity with conventional.
 - Reallocated existing capacity within the specialized transit service to enhance efficiency, reduce costs and provide support for our vulnerable populations
 - Reduced the subcontracted trans-cab service utilized for employment trip connections and the launch of the seniors grocery service during retail 'senior' hours
- Health and safety measures implemented for transit included:
 - Rear door passenger entry
 - Elimination of fare payment/collection in response to ticket agents being eliminated and enhanced health and safety protocols implemented for transit drivers
 - Enhanced cleaning of buses
 - Specialized transit pre-screening protocol
 - Adjacent seats on buses being taped off - including seats behind the driver and additional supports initiated for operator PPE

- Operations has modified service with a focus on maintaining assets, ensuring legislative requirements are met and managing the town's health and safety responsibilities in the areas of roads and parks.
 - Services that will be provided this spring include:
 - Winter street sweeping program
 - Grass cutting (limited trimming)
 - Litter and debris pick up (as required prior to grass cutting)
 - Emptying of parks garbage cans
 - Legislative and minimum maintenance standard requirements related to roads
 - Health and safety service requests
 - Forestry work (emergency service requests and MMS requirements)
 - Additional service adjustments:
 - Planting of annuals has been cancelled and flower beds will be mulched to suppress weeds
 - Spring Tree Plantings - rescheduled to the fall
 - Sports Fields - playability will take approximately one month from the time they are re-opened and will require the additional work force
- Facility maintenance:
 - Staff have completed detailed cleaning of all facilities, performed mandatory building checks and monitored various systems such as the ice plants while facilities have been closed
 - Building automated systems have been adjusted, pools drained and ice pads removed to minimize energy consumption during facility closures
- In response to facility closures, administrative work related to permit and program cancellations continues
- Construction projects (such as Fire Station 5) scheduled for 2020 will be completed as scheduled provided there are no further work interruptions
- Parking enforcement is focused on health and safety infractions only. The Town recognizes the need for parking regulation flexibility under the current landscape of more residents at home.
- Municipal law staff continue to educate and enforce the emergency orders under the Province, in partnership with Halton Regional Police
- Re-configured and scaled up remote access systems to maintain infrastructure availability in light of sudden surge in remote workers
- Increased focus and operational response on critical hotfixes, security updates, and maintenance affecting security and integrity of remote access tools and technologies
- Initiated internal security awareness communication campaign to educate staff on cyber-safe remote working practices
- Responding to inquiries for site selection and development proposals from ICI brokers and business community

- Support the development of Derry Green Business Park to ensure projects move forward quickly and seamlessly; ensure Derry Green key messages are included in all marketing initiatives where appropriate
- Work closely with Laurier and Conestoga to ensure first phase of campus development in the MEV remains on track and meets all required deadlines
- Fire's response continues at a pre-pandemic state and call volume has been consistent
- Individual training for personnel identified for potential re-deployment to suppression division of Fire to provide depth in the event of significant illness impacts to crew and part time firefighter availability
- Request and complaint fire inspections continue with in-person inspections limited to immediate concerns for safety only
- Permit applications within Fire oversight continue to be processed as received online. Violations have been enforced and implemented a zero tolerance policy in April.

Services offered through alternative or innovative methods:

- Implemented a technology and process for electronic Council meetings including public delegations
- Expanded electronic service options to pre-consultation meetings for Planning Act applications as well as broader application intake and review. Specifically:
 - The use of Blue Beam software has been expanded in order to facilitate the review of engineering submissions as well as building permit drawings
 - Through the use of Zoom, staff continues to hold pre-application meetings to assist developers with finalizing submissions
- Implemented online capabilities for electronic submission of applications for customers in Development Services
- A protocol for paper submissions developed to assist customers who prefer to not submit electronically
- Virtual programming:
 - "Recreation at Home" web page that provides an introductory experience to virtual programming for various audiences including: families, preschool, inclusion, youth, arts, children, older adults and active living
 - ArtSparks Community - includes three, one hour classes or performances each week with content suitable for all ages, and the Youth Task Force remains very active on their social platforms
 - Seniors at Home program has been initiated to ensure social interaction continues while many of our vulnerable population are self-isolating
- Projects requiring public engagement (i.e., Culture Strategy, Park Re-development projects) are being reviewed to ensure residents have the opportunity to provide feedback in alternative channels
- Provisioned remote working capabilities (hardware + software) to all Town of Milton staff requiring access

- Modified all call routing, system programming, and messaging configurations as appropriate to minimize service interruptions and allow continued business operations while working remotely
- Additional hardware devices configured and deployed out to appropriate divisions to enhance service delivery and limit device sharing where applicable
- Built a process for digital document approvals/validation to facilitate continued operations involving key internal business processes
- Virtual corporate call program to ensure Economic Development is maintaining outreach to clients/local business community
- Partnered with Laurier, Haltech, Silicon Halton, Milton Chamber, etc. on initiatives to provide the Milton business community with educational content/webinar, virtual networking with peers, links and resources related to COVID-19 support.
- Expanded career firefighter training methods to include officer training using simulated emergency exercises via Zoom video/audio

Workforce Update

Our people are our greatest assets and have risen to the occasion to adapt to the evolving COVID-19 situation. Staff has been flexible and adapted to workforce changes as required.

Important to note, previous workforce studies have found that Milton has a higher reliance on the part time workforce and lower overall staffing levels than many of its peer municipalities. As such, it can be reasonably expected that the overall response to COVID-19 from a staffing perspective may appear different in Milton as compared to neighbouring municipalities. This context is important as the workforce update is summarized.

As a result of the provincial orders, a number of services have been affected resulting in workforce changes. A fulsome human resources update is being provided in a confidential report to Council on May 11, 2020. Included below is a summary of actions to date:

- Approximately a 56% reduction in the Town's overall workforce
 - Part-time staff supporting work within facilities were placed on a leave as of April 6, 2020
 - Seasonal and student workforce hiring has been deferred until May 31
 - The significant volunteers who support the work of the Seniors Centre and Arts Centre were relieved with thanks
 - The CAO's Position Management Program has continued whereby a number of vacancies remain unfilled and recruitments are on hold
 - Redeployment of staff to essential services

- The wellness of our staff is paramount and significant health and safety measures have been implemented to date including:
 - Changes to business practices, including but not limited to, mail intake and handling procedures, suspension of non-urgent home inspections and changes to face-to-face meetings protocol to ensure physical distancing
 - Providing necessary tools for many staff to work from home where able
 - Shifting schedules and staggered start times to ensure physical distancing can be achieved
 - Providing staff with access to hand sanitizers, gloves and disinfectant wipes in addition to enhanced cleaning protocols of Town facilities, high-touch areas and vehicles
 - Employee communication around effective hygiene, preventing spread, COVID-19 health and safety best practices for staff going onto construction sites, and how to safely work from home
 - Introduced contractor screening protocols
 - Supporting employee wellness through EFAP and additional supports
 - Ensuring employees and volunteers on a temporary leave, as a result of COVID-19 service changes, have access to EFAP
 - Follow public health recommendation surrounding 14 day self-isolation protocols and self-assessment information
 - Development of health and safety protocols specific to Milton Fire Department staff as first responders to protect their safety and public safety

Recovery Efforts

Government of Ontario Framework

On April 27, 2020, the Government of Ontario released [*A Framework for Reopening our Province*](#), that outlines the criteria Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and health experts will use to advise the government on the loosening of emergency measures, as well as guiding principles for the safe, gradual reopening of businesses, services and public spaces. The framework also provides details of an outreach strategy, led by the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee, to help inform the restart of the provincial economy.

Milton Recovery Framework

At the local level, staff continue to monitor and respond to directives and guidelines from other levels of government and will make decisions on business continuity, town facilities, programs and events based on provincial direction and advice from Public Health. These will form the basis of Milton's Recovery Framework which contains three areas.

- Operational
- Economic
- Regional Coordination

The framework outlines the necessary components the Town will need to address to resume to a new normal. This outline is a guide and must be considered fluid in order to respond in a nimble manner.

As such there are considerations that need to be applied when reviewing the framework:

- The Town has continued to function throughout the pandemic
- A large portion of the Town's business is currently being provided using alternative service delivery methods
- The framework is based on using a phased approach to best position the Town to consider all external inputs directly impacting service delivery, policies and protocols
- Many of the inputs are at the provincial and public health official level, and the Town may not have advance notice of restrictions being loosened requiring a period of time for the Town to comply and put a plan or procedures in place, as a result of that new direction. Meaning that once a restriction is loosened, it may not be implemented immediately. The community must be prepared to understand that the Town will require time to address and ensure the health and safety of our community and staff is maintained at all times.

Operational Recovery

This continues to be developed based on the current Provincial Framework and inputs from the Regional Mayors Task Force to ensure the Halton municipalities can "re-open" in a cohesive approach where feasible. As new information becomes available, this plan will continue to evolve in anticipation of the lifting of various restrictions. At this time staff is planning for a phased approach as it will be difficult to return programs and services to their previous levels given the various adjustments required to ensure the health and safety of workers and the public.

The Milton Recovery Team will report to the Strategic Management Team and be led by the Director, Facilities Programs. The team will include a cross-section of staff across all departments to inform the plan, and to provide expertise and input to ensure changes are understood and can be implemented successfully.

Significant efforts will be required in areas such as:

- Supply Chain Management - Product specifications, delivery times, inventory management
- Health and Safety - Risk Assessments, Personal Protective Equipment, Policy Changes
- Facility Operations - Cleaning protocols, facility modifications
- Policy and procedures - Vehicle and equipment cleaning, Access and screening for staff and public

- Communications
- Customer service

The monitoring and managing of provincial directives and public health recommendations, financial considerations and the continued coordination of information and response planning for staff will also be key inputs in the plan.

The first phase will focus on the areas where staff members are required to work in the field and will include a full risk assessment to identify prevention, protection, mitigation and response. Considerations in these areas may include things such as masks, vehicle cab separators, enhanced cleaning of common spaces, etc.

At this time, the first phase will include staff in the following areas:

- By-law Enforcement
- Development Engineering Inspectors
- Facility Maintenance
- Operations
- Construction Project Managers
- Building Inspectors
- Fire

Other phases will include the re-opening of park amenities and open spaces, Town Hall, Civic Facilities, and Recreation and Culture facilities and programs. Considerations in these areas include: workforce capacity and scheduling, online business activity, work station configuration, floor markings and physical distancing requirements, controlled access, etc. An example of factors and decisions required as we plan for these re-openings are listed on Appendix B and use parks as an example to manage expectations.

Economic Recovery

Mayor's Business Leaders Roundtable - COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force

Milton Economic Development will work to mobilize and re-purpose an existing advisory group, the *Mayor's Business Leaders Roundtable*, in order to create a task force to support economic recovery efforts within the local business community - COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force.

The Task Force is mobilizing in May and efforts include:

- Advocate on behalf of Milton's business community for support at all levels of government, including targeted relief measures and stimulus funding for the hardest hit sectors
- Provide expertise and recommendations on the development of longer-term goals and tactics to help guide Milton's local economic recovery efforts

- Maintain sightlines to the Province's three-phased plan for re-opening Ontario's economy in order to ensure Milton's local response is aligned with other levels of government

Regional Coordination

Formal and informal regional coordination is occurring throughout COVID-19. The informal coordination is built on relationships with service delivery sectors, roles/functions across the municipalities, along with key community stakeholders. The goal of these informal connections is to share information related to practices and protocols, identify emerging issues, and coordinate or share resources.

In addition, there are formal networks that include:

Halton Mayors Recovery Coordination Group

- The Mayors of Halton's four municipalities (Milton, Burlington, Oakville and Halton Hills) have joined together to form the Halton Mayors Recovery Coordination Group
- The group is committed to a coordinated recovery in Halton and working together to prepare for a successful transition to a post-COVID-19

Regional Community Emergency Management Coordinators (CEMC) Group

- The four municipal CEMCs, along with first responder and health care stakeholders, meet on twice per week to share critical information valuable to each of the municipal emergency management teams including: current status, emerging issues, and potential solutions
- The group is chaired by Halton Region's CEMC

Community Leadership Action Table

- The Community Safety & Well Being System Leadership group has established a Community Leadership Action Table to coordinate relief efforts and access to essential goods during the pandemic. Representation includes local municipalities, Halton Regional Police, Halton Region Public Health, United Way Halton Hamilton (UWHH), Community Foundation Oakville and Food for Life. The initial focus is to provide essential goods to vulnerable residents in self-isolation and Food for Life is serving as the lead agency.



Financial Impact

Financial Impact Update

A detailed update of the Town's financial considerations in relation to COVID-19 was provided via report [ES-003-20](#) on April 16, 2020. The summary of cash flow, growth projections, return on investment and the financial impacts associated with COVID-19 included in that report continue to reflect the Town's estimates at this point in time.

The Town continues to assess its financial projections and identify potential opportunities to mitigate the pressures resulting from COVID-19. The release of the next comprehensive update to the outlook is expected once further clarity has been received with respect to phasing of the recovery including the implications on the Town's summer and/or fall programs. In the meantime, the following additional mitigation opportunity has been identified for Council's consideration:

- Bid 20-050 recently closed in relation the 2020 Expanded Asphalt Program. The prices received through the competitive bidding process are below the approved project budget. In recent years the Town has generally re-invested savings from road rehabilitation projects in additional paving to respond to the findings of the State of the Road Infrastructure reports
- In recognition of the financial pressures associated with COVID-19, the Town has an opportunity to redeploy these savings to mitigate the expected 2020 operating budget shortfall while still delivering the full scope of the 2020 expanded asphalt program as envisioned.
- Further detail will be provided to Council on May 25 when the recommendation related to the contract award is presented
- **Potential mitigation equals \$600,000**

When added to the existing list of approximately \$1.8 million as identified in [ES-003-20](#), the list of existing mitigation opportunities amounts to approximately \$2.4 million.

Other costs or savings updates that the Town continues to monitor include the final winter control costs, information technology and program updates, staff gapping and potential changes in the Town's grant funding for 2020.

Property Tax Development Charge Collection

On March 30, in conjunction with report [CORS-020-20](#), Town Council approved a property tax relief program in recognition of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to provide a grace period of no penalties and interest on payments until June 30. The second installment date of April 30 was maintained, as well as the pre-authorized payment



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programs. As the Town collects property taxes on behalf of the Region of Halton and the School Boards, those organizations also deferred the date by which the Town must remit their portions of the revenue collected.

The following table provides Council with a summary of the collection that occurred up to the April 30 due date. The Town has received 86.6% of the interim levy which is slightly lower than the collection rate of 91.1% for the same time in 2019. The differential of 4.46% can be attributed (at least in part) to ratepayers participating in the Town’s COVID relief program.

Tax Year	Total Billable Properties	Properties with Arrears as of May 01	Interim Tax Levy*	Current Year Collections as of May 01*	Current Year Past Due *	% of Current Year Collected
2020	39,458	8,520	\$101,923,099	\$ 88,289,229	\$ 13,633,870	86.6%
2019	38,303	6,416	\$ 96,091,620	\$ 87,515,950	\$ 8,575,670	91.1%
2018	37,248	6,267	\$ 91,241,847	\$ 84,518,887	\$ 6,722,960	92.6%

* Includes local, regional and education shares.

The report and by-law related to the collection of the remaining property taxes for 2020 will be presented to Council on May 25, at which time decisions can be made with respect to the timing of the final installments for the year.

On March 30, it was also indicated that the Town would utilize Section 27 agreements in accordance with the Development Charges (DC Act and the Town’s By-laws in order to defer the introduction of the indexed DC rates that would otherwise have become effective on April 1. The utilization of these agreements has since been extended to May 29 in recognition of the Provincial extension of the emergency declaration into the month of May. The following table summarizes the extent to which Section 27 agreements have been utilized up to May 6, 2020.

	SDE / Square Feet	DC Payable (Town Share)	Foregone DCs (at 3.0% indexing)*
Residential (SDE)	33	\$592,153	\$17,759
Non-Residential (sq. ft)	255,362	\$916,692	\$27,520
Total		\$1,508,845	\$45,279

* As outlined in report [CORS-013-20](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Strategic Management Team



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

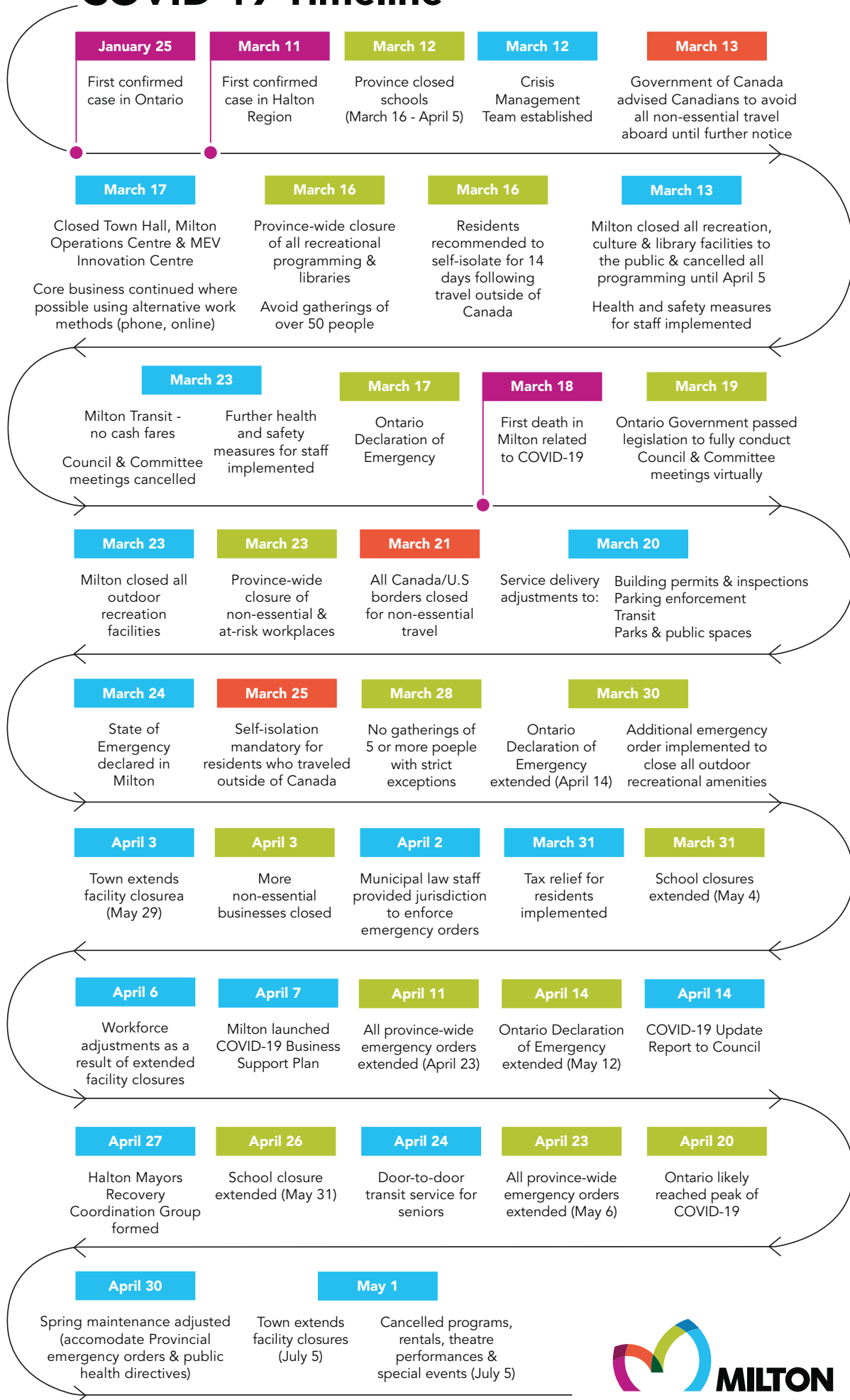
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For questions, please contact: Strategic Management Team

Attachments
Appendix A: Covid-19 Timeline Appendix B: Example of Factors and Decisions for Recovery in the area of Parks

CAO Approval
Andrew M. Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer

COVID-19 Timeline



APPENDIX B - Example of Factors and Decisions for Recovery in the Area of Parks

According to the province, it is expected that parks will be one of the first spaces available to the public once the emergency declaration is lifted. To provide Council with a better sense of what can be expected once this occurs here is a sample of the decisions and changes that need to be taken in to consideration as we open our amenities. It will be important to manage expectations as we ramp back up in a safe and responsive manner.

For illustration purposes the chart below provides a sample of our park amenities, the work required, associated timing and other factors. This was developed based on what is known at the time of this report and may change based on Public Health directives and advice from the sector and other government agencies (i.e.: Ministry of Labour).

Opening of Parks

	Factors/Considerations/Timing
Policy Updates	Policies related to Health and Safety adjustments resulting from COVID19 and particularly physical distancing, Personal Protection Equipment and sanitation/cleaning protocols need to be created/updated. This has been identified in the Milton Recovery Framework and in the data gathering stage. The Ministry of Labour and Public Health Department will provide guidance that will help inform many of these moving forward. It is unclear when this information will be received.
Signage	This need is anticipated based on lessons learned. Staff predict that language will be dictated by the Public Health Department and based on this work being outsourced timing is based receiving the information and contractor availability. Installation can be completed using Operations staff or staff redeployment. It should be noted that each amenity may require different language and therefore multiple signs.
Inspections	
Sports fields	Will be maintained based on permitting requirements and workforce availability. Field playability will take approximately 2-4 weeks from the decision date. Since large gatherings are not permitted in the early phases of the Provincial Framework it remains unclear whether sports leagues will be proceeding this season.

<p>Splash Pads</p>	<p>Most pads are able to be activated in relative short order with the exception of Rotary Park.</p>
<p>Washrooms Buildings and Port-o-lets</p>	<p>Availability of facilities will be based on staffing levels. Cleaning protocols, policy updates and signage need to be updated based on public health guidelines. Port-o-let locations are based on intensity of use and typically associated with the permitting of sports fields.</p>
<p>Garbage Cans</p>	<p>400 additional receptacles are normally placed across the municipality to support the use of parks and trails. Management of this increase requires the seasonal workforce to support it. This work force has been deferred until May 31st to support the physical distancing requirements.</p>
<p>Playgrounds</p>	<p>Playgrounds will require CSA inspections including seasonal surface testing and any associated maintenance. Work will take approximately one week and will be prioritized accordingly to open the various sites.</p>
<p>Multi-Purpose/Tennis Courts</p>	<p>Basketball and tennis nets installed. Anticipated need for signage.</p>
<p>Social Gatherings</p>	<p>Enforcement support may be required if the physical distancing and gathering limitations remains in place.</p>