

## **COVID-19 Recovery and Rebuild Update**

**Date:** March 16, 2021  
**To:** Executive Committee  
**From:** City Manager  
**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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This report is the eighth COVID-19 Response and Recovery Update from the City Manager since April 2020. The City Manager's reports have detailed public health responses, emergency operations and services put in place since the beginning of the pandemic to support Toronto's residents, business and communities and set the foundation for longer-term recovery planning.

Over the past year, City divisions, agencies and the Board of Health have provided Council with additional reports, recommendations and information on programs and services that have been modified and introduced or amended by-laws required to respond to the pandemic. Deputy City Managers, the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer and their staff have provided information, reports and presentations to Council's standing committees and the public outlining the impacts of COVID-19 and their division's response actions and recovery strategies.

This report provides information and updates from the first quarter of 2021 on:

#### **Public Health and Emergency Response Actions**

- The status of COVID-19 cases, including information on the variants of concern.
- Continued public health actions since the start of the year, including immunization planning and deployment.
- Emergency actions taken by the City in response to COVID-19 since the start of 2021.
- Information provided in a Board of Health report that will come forward to City Council in the same Council cycle.

#### **Recovery Actions**

- Status of recovery actions since the start of 2021 on a range of matters presented under broad themes, and with reference to recommendations from the *COVID-19: Impact and Opportunities* report, the Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group, and the City Manager's recovery reports, building on information included in previous reports.

- Highlights and links to related Council reports issued during the first quarter of 2021 that provide more detailed updates on specific recovery actions, as well as noting any upcoming reports on specific recovery actions.
- The City's finances related to COVID-19 recovery since the 2021 Budget was adopted by Council on February 18, 2020.

### **Renewed Intergovernmental Strategy**

- Progress on a renewed strategy that will ensure a coordinated, unified approach to engage and advocate to all levels of government to achieve the City's strategic objectives.
- The intergovernmental strategy's foundational pillars update the following:
  - Roles and responsibilities;
  - Priority issues for Toronto and aligning shared outcomes with other governments;
  - Intergovernmental networks, tables and agreements;
  - Intergovernmental partnerships with community/stakeholders ("whole of community"); and
  - Transparency and accountability.

### **Recovery Communications Strategy**

- Information about a communications strategy that includes the development of a Recovery Portal for ongoing updates and information to City Council and the public on recovery actions.

### **Building Back Better**

Aside from these important updates, information is also provided in this report on how the City's senior leadership are looking ahead to how to coordinate all recovery actions in order to build a better City, rather than focus on a return to the normal that we knew before the pandemic. This imperative was illustrated across the issues identified during the Budget Committee and Council discussions on the 2021 budget, and the discussions held by the City's senior leadership team and Division heads on how to implement priorities for the next two years efficiently and effectively.

The focus of the City Manager and his senior leadership team includes how best to coordinate across functions to build capacity in the city's neighbourhoods and communities, strengthen partnerships with local groups and organizations and more effectively respond to evolving issues and advance equity. In future reports, the City Manager will provide additional updates and information on organizational and administrative strategies to support the City as we Build Back Better.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The City Manager recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The City has experienced significant and unprecedented financial impacts, both in the form of added costs and revenue losses as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, as reported in the September 30 Variance Report, it is anticipated that COVID-19 financial impacts on the City of Toronto Operating Budget will total more than \$1.7 billion and will be fully offset through a combination of nearly \$1.2 billion in funding support from the government of Canada and province of Ontario through the Safe Restart Agreement (SRA) and over \$500 million in City-led mitigation strategies that included workforce and spending restraints.

COVID-19 related financial impacts continue into 2021 and future years. As reflected in the Council approved 2021 Operating Budget, it is anticipated that COVID-19 related financial impacts will total \$1.596 billion in 2021 across all City Programs and Agencies.

As reflected in the 2021 Operating Budget, \$947 million in COVID-19 support funding had been confirmed when including Provincial assurances regarding reimbursement of extraordinary Public Health costs, resulting in a remaining funding gap of \$649 million.

- 2021 secured funding is reduced from \$947 million to \$888 million when only including federal and provincial funding commitments (excludes reimbursement of Public Health costs pending firm commitment). The remaining 2021 funding gap increases to \$708 million based on received funding commitments.

With recent provincial funding announcements totalling \$350 million the \$708 million funding gap is reduced to \$358 million. Announcements include:

- Safe Restart Agreement (SRA) Transit Phase 3 – additional \$91 million in funding;
- Safe Restart Agreement (SRA) Municipal Operations – additional \$164 million in funding; and
- Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Phase 3 – additional \$95 million in funding.

These funding commitments reduce the 2021 COVID-19 funding gap to \$358 million, significantly reducing the potential impacts to the Council approved 2021 Capital Budget if adequate funding were not to be received; and reinforces the City's expectations that continued COVID-19 support funding from the federal and provincial governments will be received in 2021 to fully offset COVID-19 financial impacts.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **EQUITY IMPACT**

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Recovering and rebuilding from the COVID-19 pandemic will require actions that acknowledge, consider and address the disproportionate impacts COVID-19 has had on racialized and vulnerable communities. The reports highlighted in the Decision History section of this report, as well as updates on recommendations from previous recovery reports from the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild, and the City Manager

(Attachment 1) outline work that is underway to rebuild a stronger city that is equitable, inclusive and prosperous for all.

This report provides updates on specific strategies with equity objectives including: the City's immunization strategy, the Black Scientists' Task Force on Vaccine Equity, and TO Supports: Targeted Equity Action Plan. The Black Scientists' Task Force, for example, was created in December 2020 in partnership with the TAIBU Community Health Centre to address Black community concerns and issues related to COVID-19 and is one of the approaches being used to communicate, mobilize and engage communities most affected by the pandemic and to address systemic inequities. The Task Force will present a final report of findings and recommendations to the City by April 30, 2021. Additional information on TO Supports is available online at [www.toronto.ca/covid-19-seniors-vulnerable-people](http://www.toronto.ca/covid-19-seniors-vulnerable-people).

The City's vaccination program is focused on populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and includes a strategy to reach vulnerable residents and communities with five mobile teams deployed to locations like shelters, food programs and drop-ins for individuals experiencing homelessness as well as high-risk individuals living in Toronto Community Housing Corporation residential and seniors' buildings. Community mobilization and targeted outreach plans will further support community vaccination efforts. The City is recruiting 280 neighbourhood ambassadors to promote vaccines in their communities, address vaccine hesitancy and help direct community members to where they can be vaccinated. The City has also engaged Indigenous partners to design and deliver culturally-appropriate vaccination programs for Indigenous Torontonians.

This report frequently references the 2021 City budget as well as past budgets and the commitments and programs they support. The City's Equity Responsive Budgeting process began in 2016 and continues to evolve in its aim to support budget decisions that protect Indigenous, Black and equity-seeking groups and advance equity and reconciliation priorities. COVID-19 impacted the implementation of the 2020-2021 Equity Responsive Budgeting process, as described in this Operating Budget Briefing Note (<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/bu/bqrd/backgroundfile-159896.pdf>).

The City acknowledges the view of our partners, like those noted in recent correspondence from the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, that the City budget process should evolve significantly and collaboratively, to go beyond reviewing incremental annual budget changes to a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach that considers the entire City budget and how the existing policies and programs it supports can prioritize Indigenous reconciliation and equity. Opportunities to advance Equity Responsive Budgeting may include embedding the process into the City's larger budget modernization process, which is currently underway, and building relationships through models such as the Meeting in the Middle Strategy ([https://www.tassc.ca/uploads/1/2/1/5/121537952/mitm\\_final.pdf](https://www.tassc.ca/uploads/1/2/1/5/121537952/mitm_final.pdf)).

## DECISION HISTORY

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This report provides updates on recommendations and directions from several reports including from City Council, the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild, advisory bodies, and the City's 2021 budget. A table listing the 2020 recovery reports from the City Manager is provided in Attachment 1.

### 1) City Manager's Recovery Reports to City Council

In October 2020, the City Manager submitted his report "Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto" along with the "COVID-19: Impact and Opportunities" final report from the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild to City Council. City Council received a follow up report from the City Manager, "Update Report to City Council on Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto" in December 2020. Both reports provided information on the City's COVID-19 response, financial and intergovernmental updates, and the status of recovery-related actions.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX17.1>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX19.1>

City Council adopted a number of recommendations as a result of those two reports that are summarized in Attachment 1.

### 2) Report from Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group

In December 2020, City Council also received the report "Building Back Stronger: Report of the City of Toronto's Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group" and forwarded this report to the City Manager for consideration as part of the City of Toronto's ongoing COVID-19 recovery efforts.

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EC18.15>).

The recommendations included supports to main street businesses across the City, recognizing the need to expedite proportional business support to the hardest hit. The recommendations also noted how:

- the Federal and Provincial COVID-19 mitigation programs could be enhanced to support wage subsidies, rents, fixed cost, and liquidity of businesses most impacted by the loss of revenues;
- the City could accelerate and leverage public realm improvements and its own procurement power to buy locally in these target areas; and
- the City could resource safe and inclusive policies and services for the return of staff and visitors to these businesses.

### 3) 2021 City of Toronto Budget

The City's 2021 budget process also provided an opportunity for City Council to hear from the public on the City's response to COVID-19 and recovery plans. City Officials provided advice through the 2021 Budget process on issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic and recommendations on the allocation of resources to meet public health requirements. Several budget notes provided additional information on the impact of the pandemic, as well as the City's response

[\(https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/budget-finances/city-budget/notes-reports-and-presentations/all-budget-documents/\)](https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/budget-finances/city-budget/notes-reports-and-presentations/all-budget-documents/).

## COMMENTS

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### COVID-19 Context for Response and Recovery

At the time of writing this report, the City of Toronto continues to be dedicated to limiting the spread of COVID-19 including responding to the increase in cases due to new variants. This report should be read against the current, and continuously evolving context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of March 16, 2021:

- Toronto is operating within the restrictions of a Grey-Lockdown Zone as defined by the provincial government. (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200082#BK12>).
- Variants of COVID-19 are anticipated to become the dominant form of the virus.
- Many City programs and by-laws that were initiated last year as short-term measures or pilots, such as CafeTO and mask by-laws, are continuing or being expanded for a second year. (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.HL25.3>).
- It has been almost a year since the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild was established and almost 6 months since it completed its mandate in October 2020 and published the *COVID-19: Impact and Opportunities* report.

### Reporting on Response and Recovery

This report, like previous recovery reports, highlights:

- **Toronto's COVID-19 Response** including public health and emergency measures taken by the City in the past 3 months and identifies the City's work to build towards recovery from the pandemic with our residents, communities, partners and businesses;
- **Toronto's COVID-19 Recovery** including priorities reflected in the 2021 budget, Council directions, and the consideration of findings from the *COVID-19: Impact and Opportunities* report from the Office of Recovery and Rebuild and from the Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group; and
- Long-term COVID-19-related **financial, intergovernmental and reporting** updates. This report includes plans for monitoring and communicating recovery actions to Council and the public on an ongoing basis.

The previous seven City Manager reports on Response and Recovery should be referenced for additional foundational information, including the *COVID-19: Impacts and Opportunities* report. This report does not duplicate that information, nor does it provide a comprehensive reporting on all issues including intergovernmental, community response and supports, financial impact and actions or health guidance and updates, but does provide highlights from the first quarter of 2021, building on previous reports.

A strategy for future reports and communicating with City Council and the public about the City’s response and recovery from COVID-19 is outlined in Section 4: Recovery and Rebuild Next Steps of this report.

### Response and Recovery and the City’s Strategic Plan

Responding to the pandemic remains the City’s primary immediate focus. The staff recommended 2021 budget highlighted the priorities identified by the City’s senior leadership as the focus for operations this year, and the next, to ensure the City successfully recovers over the next five to ten years.

Each phase – immediate response, meeting the 2021/2022 priorities, and recovery - will continue to be guided by the longer-term Corporate Strategic Plan and informed by renewed commitments to address systemic inequities in our City to achieve prosperity for all.

Figure 1 demonstrates how response and recovery priorities are our focus, guided by the longer-term vision and strategic plan.

Figure 1: Response and Recovery timeline



## SECTION 1: COVID-19 ONGOING RESPONSE

A summary of ongoing service response and actions taken by the City in early 2021 is included in Attachment 2, and found on the City’s News Releases and Media Advisories webpage <https://www.toronto.ca/news/>.

### A. COVID-19 Update from Public Health

As of March 15, 2021 there have been a total of 103,002 cases of COVID-19 in the city, an increase of 387 new cases over the previous day. There are 282 people hospitalized and there have been 2,721 COVID-19 deaths in Toronto. In total, 95,746 people have



recovered. Current case status data can be found on the City's reporting platform at [www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-latest-city-of-toronto-news/covid-19-status-of-cases-in-toronto/](http://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-latest-city-of-toronto-news/covid-19-status-of-cases-in-toronto/).

Until March 7, 2021, Toronto was subject to the provincial Stay-at-Home Order and was in the "Shutdown Zone" of the Province's Reopening Ontario Act, Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 82/20. On March 8, 2021, the Province moved Toronto into the Grey-Lockdown level. Although cases in the second wave peaked on January 10, 2021, COVID-19 infection remains a risk to residents as the virus continues to circulate and many residents still do not have immunity.

A growing proportion of the COVID-19 cases are variants of concern. COVID-19 variants of concern are more transmissible and are appearing in settings across Toronto, including long-term care homes, hospitals, schools, shelters and workplaces. Toronto Public Health's focus continues to be mitigating impacts of COVID-19 variants with appropriate public health measures and vaccinating Toronto residents who wish to be vaccinated as supply becomes more available.

Recent Toronto Public Health reports to the Board of Health include additional information:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/decisionBodyProfile.do?function=doPrepare&decisionBodyId=1882#Meeting-2021.HL26>

### *COVID-19 Variants of Concern*

A variant of concern is a mutation of the SARS-CoV-2 genome that has public health significance because of a potential for easier spread between people, more severe illness or reduced efficacy of vaccines. The variant B.1.1.7 strain, which was first identified in the United Kingdom, is known to spread more easily between people and potentially may increase the risk of hospitalization and death in cases. Cases of the variants identified in South Africa (B.1.351) and Brazil (P.1) have also been identified in Toronto.

The risks posed by variants reinforce the need for public health prevention measures such as staying home as much as possible, wearing a mask when out in public, washing hands often and staying home when sick.

## **B. Update on the City's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan**

The City of Toronto is readying nine COVID-19 immunization clinics and 5 mobile clinics. The Immunization Task Force is working to ensure all nine City-operated clinics are ready to open once vaccine supply to the City of Toronto is increased and stable.

Starting Wednesday, March 17, the City will begin vaccinating residents born in 1941 and earlier at three of the City-operated mass immunization clinics: Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto Congress Centre and Scarborough Town Centre. Vaccinations will also begin at the Malvern Community Recreation Centre and Mitchell Field Community Centre clinics on March 29 and at The Hangar clinic site on April 5.



Once fully operational at seven days per week, nine hours per day – it is estimated that more than 120,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses can be administered each week through the network of City-operated immunization clinics. The clinics will be operated by Toronto Public Health, with support from other City staff, and will include qualified nursing staff to administer the vaccinations under appropriate medical oversight.

The clinics are in strategically-located areas of the city and are part of an overall Vaccination Program that includes mobile clinic and response team models to ensure priority neighbourhoods and vulnerable populations have access to immunization. City of Toronto immunization models are part of a wider community plan that involves health sector partners, such as hospitals and other community health organizations, whose plans similarly include mass immunization, mobile clinics and targeted clinic types. Vaccines will also be administered through family doctors and pharmacies, initially within provincial pilot programs, and will increase as vaccine product type and supply are sufficient. City-operated immunization clinics are just one piece of Toronto's immunization plan; there will be many and varied opportunities for vaccination for all residents who wish to have a vaccine, once the supply of vaccine increases and is stable.

More information about vaccination can be found at [www.toronto.ca/covid-19/](http://www.toronto.ca/covid-19/).

### **Staffing, Redeployment and Recruitment for Mass Immunization Clinics**

The City's COVID-19 response required the redeployment of staff to support front line services and ensure the continuation of essential operations across the city. Since the start of 2021, redeployment levels have averaged 726 redeployed staff over the first 5 weeks of the year. As of the end of February, the City had 734 staff on re-assignment and an additional 604 staff available for redeployment. Toronto Public Health immunization sites account for approximately 43 percent (316 staff) of redeployed staff, with Senior Services and Long-term Care (130), Toronto Public Health COVID 19 Response (118), and Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (105) making up a majority of the remaining numbers for approximately 48 percent.

In addition to the redeployment strategy and monitoring staff assignments and availability, People and Equity division has supported Toronto Public Health to staff Mass Immunization Clinics across the City.

### **C. Update from the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)**

The City of Toronto activated the Emergency Operations Centre on March 11, 2020 to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past year, staff from more than 50 City divisions, agencies and corporations have come together with the Emergency Operations Centre to centralize planning and coordinate communications across the organization.

From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Emergency Operations Centre has supported the City's senior leaders to achieve the following strategic priorities:

- save lives and prevent the spread of COVID-19,
- prevent the healthcare system from becoming overwhelmed, and

- protect the social and financial systems in our City to enable as timely and complete a restart and recovery as possible.

The Emergency Operations Centre continues to collaborate with City divisions, agencies and corporations to coordinate a wide range of consequence management activities, such as:

- improving access to COVID-19 testing in hotspot neighbourhoods by supporting Parks, Forestry and Recreation to make City recreation facilities available to health care organizations to hold “pop-up” testing clinics; working with Toronto Paramedic Services and the Toronto Transit Commission to provide access to health human resources and buses to provide mobile testing clinics in neighbourhoods with no suitable indoor locations; and working with the Indigenous Affairs Office, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Senior Services and Long-term Care, Social Development, Finance and Administration, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto Public Health and community and health service partners to help address access challenges for vulnerable communities and equity-seeking groups;
- working with Strategic Communications, Toronto Public Health, Social Development, Finance and Administration, Indigenous Affairs Office, Toronto Public Library, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, and the Accessibility Unit to expand public education efforts in targeted neighbourhoods and vulnerable communities, including work to update, simplify and translate key COVID-19 resources ([toronto.ca/covid19posters](https://toronto.ca/covid19posters));
- assisting Divisions, Agencies and Corporations that oversee City facilities (e.g., Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Corporate Real Estate Management, Economic Development and Culture, Toronto Public Library, Toronto Community Housing Corporation) to manage requests by community organizations to use City buildings to operate programs related to COVID-19, such as providing access to buildings to hold food banks and conducting advanced planning for future COVID-19 vaccine clinics;
- supporting Toronto Office of Partnerships to manage offers of assistance from Toronto businesses and residents;
- supporting Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Solid Waste Management Services and the Encampments Team to ensure residents have access to sanitation services such as waste collection, washrooms, hand washing facilities, and showers, particularly in areas of the city with large numbers of people experiencing homelessness and living in encampments;
- supporting the Encampments Team to facilitate needed connections, obtain resources and provide administrative, planning, and other assistance as needed;
- coordinating with Divisions and health care system organizations on advanced planning for potential worst-case scenarios, including updating the Natural Death Surge Strategy to address COVID-specific planning assumptions and realities (e.g., new legislation and guidelines) as well as considering potential roles and responsibilities for the City in the event of hospital surge capacity challenges;
- supporting Purchasing and Materials Management Division to manage and equitably distribute Personal Protective Equipment and other critical supplies across City Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations;

- supporting the continuity of important City services across Divisions in close partnership with People and Equity, Technology Services Division and Corporate Real Estate Management;
- supporting the Immunization Task Force's planning to ensure the City is ready to deliver the vaccine when it is available;
- continuing to support Social Development, Finance and Administration's food access table to help facilitate requests for assistance in order to support equitable food access across the City;
- monitoring hazards to identify other emerging threats, including working with the Medical Officer of Health to issue Extreme Cold Weather Alerts in anticipation of cold weather conditions;
- responding to urgent requests for support from Divisions, Agencies and Corporations to manage the unforeseen impacts of COVID-19; and
- working with the support of 311 Toronto to monitor data, stats and trends to ensure residents and businesses are receiving up to date and timely information about provincial and municipal orders through phone, web, and email inquiries. 311 Toronto also provides relevant data and analysis to EOC and other divisions to address enforcement issues as they arise.

In addition, the Emergency Operations Centre continues to collect, evaluate and distribute information across the organization, such as supporting City Clerk's Office Council Emergency function and Strategic Communications to:

- respond to time-sensitive inquiries from the Mayor's Office, Councillors, residents and the media.
- provide ongoing situation reports and Councillor communication updates.

#### **D. Update from the City Clerk's Office**

The City Clerk's Office has been instrumental in ensuring the continuity of the business of City Council throughout the pandemic.

The City Clerk's Office has:

- operated the Council Liaison function in the Emergency Operations Centre providing a centralized point of contact for Members' offices for constituent inquiries;
- developed and continuously refined the virtual meeting model to ensure decision-making by Council, Standing Committees, Tribunals and other bodies can continue and the public can continue to participate and hold their representatives accountable;
- met the demand for privacy impact assessments and information collection generated by new and digitized services;
- restarted and adjusted services to support City divisions including mail, printing and copying, and records management;
- adjusted the model for delivering ceremonies and recognitions such as flag raisings and Remembrance Day; and
- filled the vacancy on council in Ward 22 through a by-election on January 15.

## SECTION 2: TORONTO'S RECOVERY

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In October 2020, the City Manager submitted his report “Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto” to City Council along with the *COVID-19: Impact and Opportunities* (“*Opportunities*”) report (available at [toronto.ca/RecoveryRebuild](https://toronto.ca/RecoveryRebuild)) from the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild.

The City launched the Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR) early in the pandemic, recognizing that research and consultation on the City's recovery were needed while the City was also responding to the immediate needs of its residents. The Office operated for 6 months between April and October 2020. The final report from the TORR office, along with subsequent City Manager's and other Council reports, are often inaccurately referred to as a single report or set of recommendations (the “TORR report”). This report refers to the final report from the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild by its proper title “*COVID-19: Impact and Opportunities*” or its short form the “*Opportunities*” report to distinguish it from other recovery reports and recommendations including for example from the Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group

The context for the City's recovery continues to evolve as staff and Council learn more each month from population data, other cities, rates of spread and impacts of public health guidelines such as closures and physical distancing. The emerging vaccination strategy and rate and success of implementation will also impact the pace of recovery.

### 2021/2022 Priorities

The City Manager meets regularly with the City's corporate leadership team to triage and prioritize recovery actions based on the findings of the *Opportunities* report, the Economic and Culture Advisory Group, discussions with community, intergovernmental and regional partners and advice of senior staff on the emerging needs of Torontonians. The outcome of these discussions with the Deputy City Managers, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, and Division Heads led to the development of the staff-recommended 2021 budget and will continue to inform the City Manager's advice to City Council on recovery.

In late 2020 and into the first quarter of 2021, City divisions, agencies and corporations included response and recovery-related updates in reports submitted to Council. The use of a recovery lens in most divisional reports and updates is evidence of the City's whole-of-government approach to building back a stronger Toronto. Looking forward, divisional reports with recovery-related themes should be viewed as the collective source of information on Toronto's recovery and rebuild. Additional information on communicating future recovery updates is provided in section 4 of this report.

### Themed Updates on Recovery

Information in this report and future updates is organized by the themes of the City's Corporate Strategic Plan (<https://www.toronto.ca/corporate-strategic-plan>) with a focus on equity and economic recovery to specifically support COVID-19 recovery and communication to the public and City Council. These themes (see Figure 2) align with the findings of the *Opportunities* report, public input, advice from the City's senior leadership and direction from City Council. The following sections reflect these

categories and allow a diverse range of information on recovery to be provided to Council and the public in a consistent manner on an ongoing basis.

Figure 2: One page summary of City of Toronto's Corporate Strategic Plan

**VISION**  
 Toronto is a caring and friendly city  
 Toronto is a clean, green and sustainable city  
 Toronto is a dynamic city  
 Toronto invests in quality of life

**MOTTO**  
 Diversity Our Strength

**MISSION**  
 To serve a great city and its people

**EQUITY**  
 We strive to create and sustain equity in everything we do, and work towards realizing equitable outcomes for our residents

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**TRUST AND CONFIDENCE**  
 We understand that trust must be earned.

**OUR PEOPLE**  
**Our Workplace Culture**

- Being Respected, Empowered and Valued
- Embracing Diversity and Inclusion
- Making a Difference
- Working Together

**OUR PARTNERSHIPS**  
 We work in partnership with other governments, institutions, the private sector, the not-for-profit sector and Indigenous peoples to achieve quality of life results for Torontonians – all residents, businesses, and visitors.

**OUR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

- Service reviews and improvement
- Service-based budgets
- Performance measurement and accountability
- Leadership performance and staff development
- Enterprise risk management

**OUR PRIORITIES**

**CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- Financial sustainability**  
 We will work and partner to ensure value and affordability for taxpayers, adequately fund municipal services and infrastructure, make needed investments in the city, and improve our financial health. We will make informed financial decisions and effectively manage resources for Toronto's future. 
- A well-run City**  
 We will have a committed, engaged and diverse workforce. We will improve the lives of residents, businesses, and visitors by providing simple, reliable and connected services that anticipate changing customer needs. We will build trust and confidence in local government. 
- Maintain and create housing that's affordable**  
 We are committed to a city where families and individuals live in safe, stable and affordable housing with respect and dignity. 
- Keep Toronto moving**  
 We are committed to a city with safe, affordable and accessible transportation choices for people and goods. 

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

- Invest in people and neighbourhoods**  
 We are committed to a city that protects and improves quality of life for all including safety, health, and social and economic well-being and inclusion. 
- Tackle climate change and build resilience**  
 We are committed to fighting climate change and preparing our city government, our economy, our ecosystems, and our communities, especially the most vulnerable communities, for a changing climate. 

## A. Maintain and Create Housing that is Affordable

The City's focus on affordable housing is led by the Housing Secretariat and guided by the *HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan*. Reports in 2021 to Council's Planning and Housing Committee on the *HousingTO Action Plan* have included recommendations that support the City's response and recovery. Additional information on these actions is included in Attachment 3.

Since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, partnership efforts have focused on supporting our most vulnerable and marginalized residents. This has included significant expansion of the emergency shelter system to create spaces for physical distancing and isolation and moving clients from the shelter system into permanent

housing where possible. The City's *COVID-19 Interim Shelter Recovery Strategy* presents immediate priorities to guide the City, United Way of Greater Toronto, community agencies and other partners over the next 12 months. The 24-month *Housing and Homelessness Recovery Response Plan* aims to create 3,000 permanent, affordable homes for vulnerable and marginalized residents.

The City continues to identify sites for acquisition or the development of rapid housing initiatives, including those funded in partnership with other governments. This includes acquiring hotels for emergency shelter and transitional housing, and the development of additional modular housing units across the City.

Intergovernmental work prioritizes actions to address housing and homelessness, including recent advocacy to the Province for urgent funding for supportive housing. In December 2020, City Council requested an immediate provincial commitment of \$26.24 million in operating funding for 1,098 supportive housing units, recognizing that federal and City resources have been secured for capital construction.

A summary of recommendations being actioned from the *Opportunities* report are provided in Attachment 3.

## **B. Keep Toronto Moving**

The *Opportunities* report contained several recommendations to address the loss of public transit revenue during the pandemic, to enhance the affordability and accessibility of transit, and promote active transportation.

The City continues to engage with the provincial government and regional municipal counterparts on "Safe Restart" transit funding, associated policy objectives, and regional approaches to transit planning and delivery. An update on transit operating funding is provided below in F: Financial Sustainability - "Intergovernmental Funding Commitments."

The federal government recently announced \$14.9 billion over eight years for transit and mobility, including \$2.7 billion over five years for zero-emission fleet and \$400 million over five years for active transportation. Details on these programs are forthcoming.

The City's Cycling Network Plan and prioritizing active transportation through the planning process support the continued provision of safe, protected cycle routes. As part of ActiveTO, cycling network expansion projects are maintained for year-round use, and proposals for cycling and weekend recreational street closures are being advanced for 2021 (*Opportunities* recommendations 59 and 68).

Additional information is included in Attachment 3.

## **C. Invest in People and Neighbourhoods**

The *Opportunities* report identified action on equity, inclusion and the social determinants of health as essential to recovery and rebuild and advocated for a whole-



of-government approach to advance positive change. Recommendations included the need to realign municipal, provincial and federal roles and responsibilities in ways that maximize and enable cross-government investment and delivery in social determinants of health.

### *Child Care*

The child care sector continues to be impacted by COVID-19. At the start of 2021, the City once again provided emergency child care, along with some non-profit operators, for families of essential workers, during the period when provincial stay-at-home orders closed Toronto schools to in-person learning from the beginning of January until mid-February.

City staff continue to advance intergovernmental requests related to child care as a key component of economic recovery. The *Opportunities* report identified child care as a key component of economic recovery. Examples of City decisions and intergovernmental requests in 2020 and 2021 related to child care include:

- deferring provincial policy changes for administrative expenses proposed for child care in 2022 (see 2021 Children's Services Budget Note: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/bu/bgrd/backgroundfile-160356.pdf>);
- continuing to provide stable and ongoing provincial funding for child care centres for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- dedicating new provincial investments in 2021 to increasing compensation for the early years workforce and improve recruitment and retention;
- requesting, in previous years and in the 2021 Budget, that the provincial and federal governments to invest \$1.4 billion in capital funding from 2020-2026 to create 30,000 child care spaces, along with stable, predictable investments (\$70 million) in operating funding; and
- requesting the federal government to partner with the City to fulfill new federal commitments to create additional before and after school spaces, provide additional support for early childhood educators, and lay the groundwork for a pan-Canadian child care system.

### *Long Term Care Homes and Planning for Seniors*

In October 2020, Senior Services and Long-Term Care submitted 12 recommendations to the Ontario Long-Term Care (LTC) COVID-19 Commission (<http://www.ltccommission-commissionsld.ca/>), with a focus on safety and the necessary investments to ensure resiliency in the sector, improve quality of care and life for residents, enhance trust and accountability, and improve working conditions (<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/8e2f-SSLTCCommissionReportOct8.pdf>). The Commission has released two interim reports and its final report is expected in April 2021.

The City's intergovernmental priorities with the Province include securing enhanced funding to support LTC home residents and its workforce now and in the event of future pandemics and advancing recommendations made in the *Opportunities* report such as long-term care for the Indigenous community. Additional updates related to long-term care homes is included in Attachment 3.



## *Food Security*

Food security emerged as an urgent matter early in the COVID-19 pandemic and the City has coordinated its response with community partners through the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and many City divisions and agencies. Previous reports on recovery described the City's response such as the provision of temporary food banks in Toronto Public Library locations and other City buildings. The City's Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) Division plans to report to the Board of Health in June 2021 on the future role and involvement of the City in food security and food systems as we move into recovery. The Board of Health report will include consideration of next steps related to recommendation 73 of the *Opportunities* report (Attachment 2).

## *Supporting Our Communities*

The City has prioritized its response on the communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The City is collaborating with community and health services partners, residents and employers in areas of the City with high rates of COVID-19 to share public health information, improve access to testing, and provide critical supports to individuals who test positive. The City's vaccination program is also focused on these populations and includes a strategy to reach vulnerable residents and communities with five mobile teams deployed to locations like shelters, food programs and drop-ins for individuals experiencing homelessness as well as high-risk individuals living in Toronto Community Housing Corporation residential, and seniors' buildings. Community mobilization and targeted outreach plans with further support community vaccination efforts. The City is recruiting 280 neighbourhood ambassadors to promote vaccines in their communities, address vaccine hesitancy and help direct community members to where they can be vaccinated. The City continues to share information publicly on the vaccination strategy through news releases (see Attachment 2).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Toronto and United Way Greater Toronto created the Community Coordination Plan to ensure there is coordination and communication between City, United Way, and community organizations. The Plan includes a network of over 400 agencies in ten geographic clusters and additional areas of focus. Additional areas include a city-wide agencies cluster, the Black Resilience cluster that engages African, Caribbean and Black serving agencies and ongoing engagement of Indigenous serving organizations with support from the Indigenous Affairs Office.

A large part of this collaboration includes understanding how COVID-19 is affecting residents and mobilizing to address their urgent needs during the pandemic through the creation of Cluster agency tables. Through the Cluster tables, issues are identified to find local solutions or City and United Way supported solutions. Through the Community Coordination Plan, the City has invested \$965,000 since December 2020 into various initiatives that directly address key issues experienced by vulnerable residents and increase the coordination and response capacity of Cluster tables to better serve residents across Toronto. Below are specific examples of funding:

- Community Coordination Plan Grant (\$715,000) - 10 geographic CCP clusters and the Black Resilience Cluster each received \$65,000 to address priority issues experienced by vulnerable residents in their respective clusters.
- Cluster Communication Leads (\$150,000) - Each of the 10 geographic CCP clusters received \$15,000 to continue the work of their Communications Leads who support the administration of the clusters.
- Black Resilience Cluster (\$35,000) – received funding to hire a Communications and Capacity Building Lead.
- Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) – provided \$65k to work with its member agencies to identify at least three Toronto-based grassroots Indigenous groups/collectives that are providing supports to Indigenous people who have been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The funding from this grant will be divided between the identified groups. Each identified group will work with a TASSC member agency that will help them develop a plan, provide mentorship and trustee the funds.
- Vaccine Engagement Teams Grant – S DFA has launched a \$5.5M grant which will select at lead one vaccine engagement team to work in all 10 geographic CCP clusters and to build on the work of the Black Resilience and Newcomer Clusters.

### *Indigenous Prosperity Action Plan*

The *Opportunities* report recommended accelerating the *Tkaronto Indigenous Prosperity Action Plan* (recommendation 50). The Action Plan, including engagement and community connecting, will be led by the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council team, and supported by multiple City of Toronto staff and divisions, with the goal of creating synergy, reducing duplication of engagement, and working with community to support the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project 2.0. There will be a focus in the Action Plan on work to link with other city and community initiatives, including housing, children's services, and COVID-19 response, that creates environments free of discrimination, racism, and structural barriers up to and including three future generations of Indigenous Torontonians.

## **D. Tackle Climate Change**

The City has undertaken actions to adapt and be more resilient to challenges related to climate change, such as extreme weather. The City's approach to resilience, launched prior to the pandemic, identifies goals and actions to help Toronto survive, adapt and thrive in the face of any challenge, particularly climate change and growing inequities.

A summary of climate change and resilience activities is provided in Attachment 3, including those that align with recommendations in the *Opportunities* report and Council directives related to recovery made since October 2020.

As reported through the 2021 budget process, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the existing TransformTO implementation plan to be extended through to the end of 2021, and the next TransformTO Implementation plan will be integrated into the overall Net-Zero Strategy in Q4 2021. Throughout 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, Environment and Energy Division continued to implement the priority activities associated with advancing TransformTO to respond to the Climate

Emergency. One third of Environment and Energy Division staff were redeployed and/or recalled; they supported the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild and provided front-line service to shelter and long-term care clients, among other COVID-19 related emergency services. Timelines and deliverables have been adjusted as a result of Environment and Energy Division's contribution to the COVID-19 pandemic response.

## **E. Economic Recovery**

Economic growth without equity is not prosperity. In addition to supporting the immediate economic needs of residents and businesses, the pandemic has increased focus and attention on economic renewal and increasing broad-based economic participation. While economic outcomes are shared with other governments and sectors, the City has put significant attention into programs and advocacy that advance short- and long-term objectives and that target the sectors and communities that have been most impacted.

The Economic Development and Culture Division has been actively working with the business and culture community to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on these sectors as well as plan for recovery activities to implement once the current lockdown is lifted. Efforts have focused on supporting the implementation of public health guidelines, addressing the liquidity crisis for arts organizations and small business, aiding digital adaptation, and supporting consumer confidence. Some of the initiatives that the Division has been undertaking include, driving business to the CaféTO program, rolling out the Digital Main Street Program, and onboarding businesses to the ShopHere platform. The City made multiple investments totaling \$1.2 million in Toronto's Black arts and culture community and business sector to address the systemic economic, social and cultural exclusion facing Black communities in Toronto. At the end of 2020, the ShowLoveTO program rolled out over \$500,000 in grants to community organizations. The ArtworxTO program has delivered over \$1.0M in partnership grants. Through a partnership with Mitacs and Ryerson University, digital adaptation for creative industries and cultural not-for-profits is being supported. Music venues have been supported by the Creative Co-location Tax Class being made permanent, and efforts are underway to address issues with venue insurance. Film production, with support from the Film Office in establishing and upholding health and safety protocols, is now operating at pre-pandemic levels.

Business and culture recovery efforts in 2021 are informed by the *Opportunities* report, Council direction and the recommendations of the City's Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group, a table of 20 community leaders co-chaired by Deputy Mayor Thompson and Blake Goldring.

The Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group's report, *Building Back Stronger* (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EC18.15>), was adopted by Council in December 2020 and included 18 recommendations grouped into four priority areas for action: economic recovery, anti-racism and inclusion, workforce development and talent, and arts and culture. The Advisory Group reconvened for a special meeting in February 2021 to discuss immediate priorities for supporting Toronto's economy in the next 2-6 months given the continued challenges and

uncertainty facing business and culture. The Advisory Group's report and recent submission are available on [toronto.ca/RecoveryRebuild](https://toronto.ca/RecoveryRebuild).

The group's suggestions are reflected in Economic Development and Culture's priority areas for 2021 and include supporting small business, retail and main streets; enabling e-commerce adaptation and retail innovation; supporting restaurants and hospitality; facilitating a safe reopening and delivering targeted support for vulnerable groups and neighbourhoods.

There is a clear need for additional support for small business and hard-hit sectors. While most forecasts show Toronto's economy experiencing positive growth in 2021, the recovery will be uneven (sometimes described as "K-shaped"), driven by growth in certain sectors and for some types of workers, while other industries, geographies and populations will continue to struggle. Small businesses (<100 employees) make up almost 98% of employer businesses in the city. Roughly 60% of Toronto workers are employed by small businesses. Small businesses are more likely to report a drop in revenue of 40% or more; face liquidity challenges, including difficulty in paying rent; and were less likely to be able to take on debt or have the capital to make required upgrades for new public health standards.

The Division is developing action plans for key sectors including technology, manufacturing, restaurants and retail as well as to support entrepreneurship more generally. The Division is also completing a Community Economic Development strategy that will guide the work at the local level with key City and community partners, and the ShowLoveTO program is well-underway.

Planned actions for 2021 include:

- small business support (aligning program delivery to the needs of the community while providing more proactive services in underrepresented communities);
- supporting and convening community to drive local economic development initiatives;
- incubator planning and calibration;
- supporting workforce development initiatives;
- developing the local innovation ecosystem and leading initiatives to drive growth for emerging industries;
- developing approaches and initiatives to encourage shopping local;
- keeping businesses connected and informed through outreach and communication;
- targeted investment retention outreach; and
- main street revitalization through encouraging innovation and digital adaptation.

The coming months will be critical for the future of Toronto businesses, particularly small, independent retailers, many of which find themselves at a breaking point as the pandemic continues. Similarly, artists and arts organizations are facing the prospect of further lost and challenges, as public health restrictions look likely to result in cancellations during the summer season. Actions by the City of Toronto to support business and culture including intergovernmental requests and discussions, are intended to ensure they not only survive the pandemic but build back stronger.

With respect to the broader arts, culture and heritage sector, Economic Development and Culture will be working to support the economic and cultural recovery of Toronto with an emphasis on equity and inclusion central to all efforts. Moving ultimately from mitigation to recovery, efforts will include support for safe reopening of cultural venues, to include an emphasis on cultural animation of the public realm, efforts to support audience development and consumer confidence, ensuring the sustainability of digital adaptation investments and efforts to accelerate workforce development efforts for segments of the cultural economy, like film, poised to play a key role in economic recovery. In the arts, culture and heritage sector, this will include increased support to Black-led festivals and cultural organizations, increased investment in Indigenous place-making, and a greater emphasis on cultural programming outside the city core. In the creative industries and broader business sectors, programming will include increased support for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, and equity seeking groups in grant and training programs.

Updates on specific supports for business, income and employment and skills and labour market training are included in Attachment 3.

## **F. Financial Sustainability**

### *2021 Budget – Supporting Recovery*

The 2021 budget process included reports, information and action that responded to Council's direction related to the City Manager's Toward Recovery report from October 2021. For example, the 2021 Budget process addressed direction to:

- focus investments in Toronto's equity, opportunity, resilience and health focused on core areas of vulnerability that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic; and
- provide advice to City Council on options to prioritize identified needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and reallocate resources from services that can be modified or reduced to meet public health requirements.

One of the guiding principles of the 2021 operating budget was to preserve existing service levels consistent with public health guidelines. To ensure critical social services were funded based on full need, the 2021 Budget process deviated from the past practice of a uniform budget target across all City programs and agencies and instead directed that budget submissions reflect the full costs to preserve services, while also reflecting anticipated COVID-19 related expenditure and revenue impacts.

The City also applied an equity and reconciliation lens to the 2021 Operating Budget to identify and address barriers that may be experienced by Indigenous, Black and equity-seeking communities. An equity statement was included in budget notes for all new or enhanced requests and service changes to highlight both positive and negative impacts related to the proposal as well as an overall equity impact statement that outlines how City services address impacts to Indigenous, Black and equity-seeking communities.

All 2021 operating budget enhancements and reductions were reviewed by an external review panel. Panelists received presentations from select divisions and agencies whose proposed budget changes have equity impacts. To strengthen and validate the

analyses, panel members provided feedback on the quality of the staff-generated equity impact analyses and commented on the potential equity impacts of proposed budget changes. The process was further supported in 2021, where Finance staff also presented a budget overview to the panel, noting budget challenges with specific emphasis on COVID-19 impacts and highlighting actions taken as part of City-led mitigation efforts.

The 2021 operating budget added investments that continue to support management of the COVID-19 pandemic and new investments that support building back a prosperous Toronto. In total, the 2021 Operating Budget includes \$1.596 billion in anticipated COVID-19 related impacts, including \$796 million to maintain TTC services despite severe revenue losses; \$281 million to add additional shelter sites to enable physical distancing, \$277 million to preserve municipal services despite losses in Corporate Revenues; and \$59 million to support Public Health efforts.

### *Intergovernmental Funding Commitments*

City Council directed the City Manager and the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer to engage with the Federal and Provincial Governments to obtain funding commitments to fully address remaining COVID-19 related financial impacts anticipated in 2021 to avoid reductions to transit service, service levels across all City operations and programs.

In 2020, the federal and provincial governments committed \$1.8 billion to the City through the Safe Restart Agreement, including \$398 million through Phase 2 municipal operating funding and \$776 million committed through Phase 2 transit operating funding. The City continues to be engaged with the province and is waiting on further direction to confirm the receipt of Phase 2 Safe Restart Agreement transit funding committed.

City staff (along with the Mayor's Office), continue to engage with the Federal and Provincial Governments to obtain funding commitments to fully address anticipated 2021 COVID pressures. This includes staff engagement and political advocacy through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Big City Mayors' Caucus (BCMC), Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) and Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) Mayors and Chairs.

In March 2021, the Provincial government committed to an additional \$350 million to the City as part of the Safe Restart Agreement, which included additional funding as follows:

- Safe Restart Agreement (SRA) Transit Phase 3 – additional \$91 million in funding;
- Safe Restart Agreement (SRA) Municipal Operations – additional \$164 million in funding; and
- Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Phase 3 – additional \$95 million in funding.

As reflected in 2021 Budget Briefing Note #45, COVID-19 related financial impacts in 2021 will total \$1.596 billion in 2021 across City Programs and Agencies.

## G. A Well-Run City

The theme of a well-run city is wide ranging and involves a number of initiatives. Some updates are included below, others on the City's digitization of services and supports for remote work, are included in Attachment 3.

### *City of Toronto's first Environmental, Social and Governance Report*

The City of Toronto's first Environmental, Social and Governance Report was considered by Executive Committee on January 27, 2021 and adopted without amendment. This report outlined how the City is focused on Environment, Social and Governance-related opportunities and risks across strategic priorities, sustainable finance and socioeconomic outcomes.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EX20.3>

Toronto is the first government in Canada to issue an annual Environment, Social and Governance report to reflect its commitment and performance in each of three areas: environment, social well-being and governance. The City strives to be a leader in making positive impacts across key Environment, Social and Governance priorities, with responsible practices embedded across the organization to build a sustainable and resilient foundation for the delivery of quality services and value over the long term. The City is working to coordinate multiple strategies to achieve these outcomes such as the *TransformTO climate action strategy*, the *HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan* and innovative financing programs for projects that enhance Environment Social and Governance-related outcomes.

### *Digital Infrastructure*

Digital infrastructure and internet access has emerged as essential needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Opportunities* report included a number of recommendations to the City to address the digital divide, including recommendation 36 related to supporting vulnerable communities and recommendation 76 to ensure more digitally capable customer service. Several initiatives underway demonstrate how the City continues to manage and update service delivery to meet the needs of residents during and post-pandemic:

- Toronto Employment and Social Services, in partnership with Community and Social Services divisions and Technology Services, is leading the Virtual Caseworker Pilot Project that is testing the ability to enable access to Webex technology to support enhanced virtual service interactions between residents/clients and City staff/caseworkers. This project aims to enhance the customer service experience, expand technology access in City spaces and improve equitable access to digital services. Post-pilot implementation goals include informing safe restart of City counters, "in-person" services and a broader Virtual City Services application beyond CSS divisions and services.
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation will use capital funding, approved in the 2021 budget, to implement free public WiFi at all community centres. This project will begin by prioritizing the implementation of free WiFi at the City's 39 free centres.
- ConnectTO, approved by City Council in February 2021, is a collaborative program to centralize stewardship of municipal resources and assets to support the City's



goals on equity and connectivity, including creation of a City of Toronto broadband network.

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EX20.8>)

- Through Finance & Treasury Services, the City is in the process of piloting Automated Income Verification Services offered through the Canada Revenue Agency where existing processes associated with income-assisted programs are being re-imagined to provide a more efficient, digital customer experience. The City is also exploring the use of Blockchain technology to streamline and digitize existing manual financial processes.
- The City's Customer Experience Program is focused on digitizing services and improving customer channels to interact with the City over the medium and longer term including for payments, taxes, utilities, refunds, rebates; general inquiries, service requests; licenses, permits; complaints etc. In the immediate COVID-19 response phase, as previously reported, this has already included rapid digitization of services for business continuity such as issuance of business licenses and permits, film permits and burial permits and virtual/remote case management.

### *Review of Pre-Pandemic Council Directives*

The City Manager's *Towards Recovery* report adopted by Council in October 2020 outlined that with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an unprecedented shift in focus for City Council and staff to respond to evolving emergency. With the rapid deployment of staff to COVID-19 response activities, many previously planned activities were paused. In addition, City Council's meetings through Q2 and Q3 of 2020, primarily focused on COVID-19 response and restart activities and reports and items that had been scheduled for that timeframe did not come forward.

The *Towards Recovery* report identified that there were over 600 outstanding directives from Committees and City Council from the start of this Council term, and that the City Manager would work with operating areas to review these directives to provide updated advice to Council on the status and next steps to address this backlog. Given that these directives could not have accounted for the impact of COVID-19 when they were adopted, this review and updated advice is key to ensuring the City is focused on response and recovery and accounting for the significant fiscal and staffing impact of COVID-19.

The review so far has determined that:

- some items have been completed and are no longer outstanding;
- many items were delayed in 2020 but are planned to come forward in 2021 and delays have been communicated through the 2021 budget process;
- some items were accelerated to support COVID-19 response and recovery, such as directions related to affordable housing so no outstanding directives were identified for some service areas;
- some items intended for 2020 have been superseded by recovery action; for example, outstanding direction on a nighttime economy is paused while related economic activity is suspended due to public health measures; the City has pivoted its attention to focus on the urgent economic recovery actions and support that are described earlier in this report; and

- items that can be considered through related COVID-19 recovery direction such as under a renewed intergovernmental strategy and renewed engagement strategy, will be considered in this way to ensure a COVID lens is applied to previously directed items.

Updates and information on relevant outstanding directives will come forward to Council standing committees and Executive Committee during the April 2021 cycle, with reports going to committees only if required. It is not anticipated that there will be a report to all five standing committees if there are no relevant updates to provide.

### *Data, Insights and Engagement*

The October 2020 reports from the Office of Recovery and Rebuild and the City Manager identified public engagement as key to the success of the City's pandemic response and recovery. It also identified the importance of evidence-based decision making to guide decisions and enable better outcomes.

Engagement describes all the ways the City builds relationships with the public and invites participation in its governance and decision-making processes and structures. The City engages through consultations, surveys, deputations, service delivery, public appointments and a range of other methods. Engagement in turn provides perspectives and data that the City and the public can use to generate insights to guide the development and review of policies, programs and services.

In the 2021 Budget, Council approved temporary staffing to the Governance and Corporate Strategy Division in the City Manager's Office to review the City's engagement strategies and identify ways to increase public participation in decision making and better use data to inform research and insights. Council also directed that this work prioritize engagement with Black, Indigenous and equity-seeking communities. This work is referenced in a City Manager's Office Budget Briefing Note (<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/bu/bgrd/backgroundfile-163339.pdf>).

The City Manager's Office has begun work to prepare a staff team and work plan, in consultation with the Indigenous Affairs Office, Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit and key City divisions and agencies. The City Manager's Office has also begun work develop a renewed research and data coordination strategy to prioritize better access, sharing and coordination of research and data to inform policy development, engagement and advice to Council. Additional information on data, engagement and insights strategies are included in Attachment 3.

## **SECTION 3: RENEWED INTERGOVERNMENTAL STRATEGY**

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Intergovernmental relations are critical to advance and secure the City's funding, policy and legislative priorities, particularly during this period of recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. Following City Council's directions related to the City Manager's Towards Recovery report in October 2020, the City Manager's Office initiated work to renew the City's intergovernmental strategy.

Work on a renewed strategy is focussed not on delivering a single action or one product that can serve all of the City's complex intergovernmental needs including those outlined by City Council, the Corporate Strategic Plan and recovery. Rather it is an opportunity to renew the City's intergovernmental approach, regardless of issue area or request, so that we can plan for and are prepared to have the right conversation, with the right people, at the right time.

The goal of a renewed strategy is a coordinated, unified approach to engage and advocate to all levels of government to achieve the City's strategic objectives. A renewed approach has a new vision and principles, and requires several key components or foundational pillars to be in place to lay the groundwork for coordinated and unified intergovernmental engagement, including:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Priority Issues for Toronto and Aligning Shared Outcomes with Other Governments
- Intergovernmental Networks, Tables and Agreements
- Intergovernmental Partnerships with Community/Stakeholders ("Whole of Community")
- Transparency and Accountability

Summarized below and detailed in Attachment 4 is the work undertaken to date to inform the development of the pillars and identifies areas where further work is needed to refine our approach going forward.

#### *Vision and Principles of a Renewed Intergovernmental Strategy*

The City Manager's October 2020 report introduced the vision of a renewed intergovernmental strategy to support recovery, namely the need to work towards outcomes shared with other governments, collaborate with and across all governments and community, and be regionally sensitive.

The recovery priorities identified by City Council, and the successful way we have engaged in intergovernmental relations through the pandemic, have helped to set new principles to guide a renewed approach. These principles (see Figure 3) overlay on the current model where everyone has a role to play.

#### *Development of a Renewed Intergovernmental Strategy*

The development of a renewed intergovernmental strategy provided the opportunity to examine the City's approach to intergovernmental relations from top to bottom, which has previously not been undertaken on a regular basis. This work included taking stock of existing practices, inventorying requests, tables, intergovernmental relationships and partnerships, conducting a jurisdictional review of structures and approaches in other cities and federal and provincial governments and identifying how best to ensure coordination and alignment across a strategy and future actions. A summary of this work is included in Attachment 4.

Effective intergovernmental relations require co-operation and collaboration across and between the City and its officials, including Council and staff. Within the City's model everyone has a role to play. City Council determines the City's requests of other

governments through its directions. As Head of Council, the Mayor leads intergovernmental relations and issues on behalf of City Council. Individual City Councillors also engage intergovernmentally including representing the City on strategic bodies such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Within the administration, intergovernmental relations are led corporately by the City Manager and senior leadership which also ensure horizontal alignment while Divisions also build program related intergovernmental partnerships and whose activities support the leadership. This approach is largely decentralized by design as it encourages active participation from across the organization and allows for flexibility and responsiveness as issues arise. However, the approach also requires deliberate attention and resources that help work towards alignment and coordination.

Figure 3: Principles for a Renewed Intergovernmental Strategy

<h1>Principles</h1>	
<b>One Voice</b>	Speak with one aligned voice on a common position, developed through robust collaboration and dialogue across Mayor, Council and the Toronto Public Service.
<b>Outcome Focus</b>	Primarily and proactively focus on long-term positive outcomes for residents/businesses and take a 'whole of governments' approach when seeking out areas for joint-collaboration.
<b>Collaborative</b>	Engage, seek input, identify allies and build coalitions with the community, external partners, peer cities and strategic alliances.
<b>Regionally sensitive</b>	Consider and integrate as appropriate a regional lens (its perspectives and desired outcomes) as part of any advocacy.
<b>Open, Transparent and forthcoming</b>	Including undertaking proactive consultation on planned City policies and programs.
<b>Mutual respect</b>	Be sensitive to the mandates, jurisdiction, authority, interests and decision making processes of other governments, while seeking to influence positive changes for Toronto.

An overarching focus of the renewed intergovernmental strategy is to drive greater alignment and to guide the City's intergovernmental conversations related to recovery and support its effectiveness.

To achieve greater alignment and focus, the framework for the strategy includes five independent yet integrated pillars that build on the existing context.

Pillar	Importance to Unified Approach
<p><b>Pillar 1</b> – Intergovernmental Roles &amp; Responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective intergovernmental relations require the City to leverage every actor and opportunity and to speak with 'one voice'.</li> <li>• Building on and reinforcing existing political and bureaucratic roles/responsibilities, we can establish optimal ways to work together.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pillar 2</b> – Priority Issues for Toronto and Aligning Shared Outcomes with Other Governments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City priority areas aligned with the Corporate Strategic Plan focusses energies and advocacy.</li> <li>• While issues change over time and a large amount of intergovernmental work is responding to actions of other governments, how the City makes intergovernmental decisions is important to ensure direction remains focussed.</li> <li>• Broadly, the City's current priority issues include (in no particular order): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to COVID-19</li> <li>• Public Transit and Mobility</li> <li>• Housing and Homelessness</li> <li>• Equity</li> <li>• Climate Change and Resilience</li> <li>• Reconciliation</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Mental Health and Addictions</li> <li>• Long-Term Care and Seniors</li> <li>• Early Learning and Child Care</li> <li>• Poverty Reduction, including Income and Social Supports</li> <li>• Police Reform and Community Safety</li> <li>• Newcomers and Refugees</li> <li>• Economic Development and Recovery</li> <li>• Digital Government and Services</li> <li>• Financial Sustainability</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Pillar 3</b> – Intergovernmental Networks, Tables and Agreements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergovernmental networks, tables and agreements provide opportunities to inform the City's intergovernmental requests and for advocacy.</li> <li>• Work is ongoing to examine existing relationships across the City and how best to leverage them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pillar 4</b> – Intergovernmental Partnerships with Community/Stakeholders ("Whole of Community")</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divisions, as part of their work, have robust partnerships with community and stakeholders that can inform intergovernmental relationships and requests, and support advocacy.</li> </ul>

Pillar	Importance to Unified Approach
<p><b>Pillar 5 – Transparency and Accountability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved transparency can:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help ensure that all City actors have access to key information and are coordinated;</li> <li>• provide community and stakeholders with increased visibility of the City's intergovernmental work and needs; and</li> <li>• ensure that other governments are recognised if and when they fulfil the needs of the City and ultimately the public.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ongoing reporting through existing channels including staff reports will be continued. The work will focus on the value add of centralized, coordinated reporting on a regular basis.</li> </ul>

While additional work will continue to further refine our approach based on the pillars, staff are supporting ongoing advocacy and advancing conversations with other governments, cities, regional counterparts, and stakeholders to build the networks and relationships to support recovery.

Over the last three months, staff have worked with officials from other governments to incrementally but quickly build the case for collaboration and identify shared objectives. This evolving dialogue has led to a number of separate but interrelated conversations that together are meant to advance the City and region's recovery. This includes staff level dialogue with federal and provincial governments, conversations between the big six cities in Canada and a regional recovery table.

Concurrently, there are ongoing political conversations including through bodies like the Big City Mayors Caucus/Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Ontario Big City Mayors, and Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area Mayors and Chairs. Further details and the status of these discussions are outlined in Attachment 4.

The issues being discussed with other governments, big cities, and across the region, politically and at the staff level, echo many of the themes identified in the COVID-19: Impacts and *Opportunities* report. The focus at this time among staff at the big cities and regional recovery table has been placed in areas where there is emerging consensus. Work is also underway across the City on other intergovernmental priorities, in line with recovery themes, the Corporate Strategic Plan and Council Direction. Updates on this work is provided in the recovery section of this report. The City's work is also aligned with many emerging national conversations.

The renewed strategy recognizes that a solid foundation will support all of the City's intergovernmental conversations but that each issue area and/or request will require a different tactical approach. Ultimately, ongoing work in all pillars is an opportunity to identify these measures proactively to prepare the City for the right conversation with the right people at the right time.

City Council will continue to receive updates on the progress and outcomes of intergovernmental discussions through staff reports and other mechanisms.

## **SECTION 4: RECOVERY AND REBUILD NEXT STEPS**

### **Evolving Decision-Making, Reporting and Communications during the Pandemic**

The City's reporting on its response and actions to address COVID-19 has evolved since the initial state of emergency was declared in March 2020 by the Province of Ontario and then by the City of Toronto. For example:

<b>Start of COVID-19 Pandemic</b>	<b>Evolving responses, current and future</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduled Committee and Council meetings were suspended in March 2020 and emergency virtual meetings of City Council only resumed in April. By June 2020, Committee and other meetings were held virtually as a full schedule was gradually reinstated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City Clerk's Office has now supported online meetings including for boards (once changes to provincial legislation provided for virtual meetings) and successfully administered the 2021 Budget process including public deputations virtually.</li> <li>Most Council and Committee agenda items and reports include recommendations, divisional responses and actions, and financial impacts against a COVID-19 lens.</li> <li>Staff will identify future reports that include response and recovery recommendations, content and updates.</li> <li>Future City Manager recovery updates will include information on related recovery reports to City Council or posted publicly.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City Manager's reports, such as this one, were one of the few ways members of Council were updated about the City's response to COVID-19</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Manager's reports are now just one of many ways members of Council and the public are updated about the City's response and recovery actions during the pandemic. Including regular reports through Standing Committees, Media Releases, and a robust website <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/">https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In March 2020 all updates to the City's website and public information channels such as social media and public engagements were suspended and only messaging related to the emergency was posted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Divisions have been using online meetings, surveys, training, and program-delivery to engage with stakeholders, residents and partners on planning, recreation and economic development (e.g., YongeTOMorrow)</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Health information was initially only available through media briefings and releases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial channels continue, and are now supplemented with regularly updated dashboards with increasingly detailed information with more measures (<a href="https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-latest-city-of-toronto-news/covid-19-status-of-cases-in-toronto/">https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-latest-city-of-toronto-news/covid-19-status-of-cases-in-toronto/</a>), including locations with active outbreaks.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City of Toronto, like cities in Canada and around the world, reached out to each other to learn more about their experiences and management of the pandemic at the municipal level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City Clerk's office now regularly issues updates on this work to City divisions.</li> <li>A coordinated research strategy was developed across city divisions and agencies, with regular weekly alerts and shared resources.</li> <li>The City has also leveraged its partnerships with Toronto's universities and colleges to take on COVID-19 focussed research. <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/post-secondary-partnerships">https://www.toronto.ca/post-secondary-partnerships</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governments around the world issued early high-level recovery strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jurisdictions have updated and evolved their strategies to inform longer-term recovery as more information about the impact of the pandemic is learned.</li> <li>The City of Toronto's Office of Recovery and Rebuild's <i>COVID-19: Impact and Opportunities</i> report provides a similar base from which additional directions and decisions have been formulated.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many initial plans focused on a limited set of actions or priorities,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many jurisdictions now recognize that few government services, policies and programs are unaffected by the pandemic, requiring more complex and longer-term strategies to be implemented.</li> <li>From the initial recommendations in the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild's <i>Opportunities</i> report (most of which are complete or underway), City Council has adopted a whole-of government and whole-of-community approach to its next stage of recovery planning. <a href="http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX19.1">http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX19.1</a></li> </ul>

**Recovery Communications and Data Strategy**

In the coming months a new dashboard (see Figure 4) will provide information on a number of recovery measures including community supports, economic and infrastructure development, and city services such as transportation, childcare and

recreation for Council, institutional stakeholders, community partners and others to monitor and apply the data about Toronto’s recovery progress to their work.

Figure 4: Proposed Recovery Dashboard

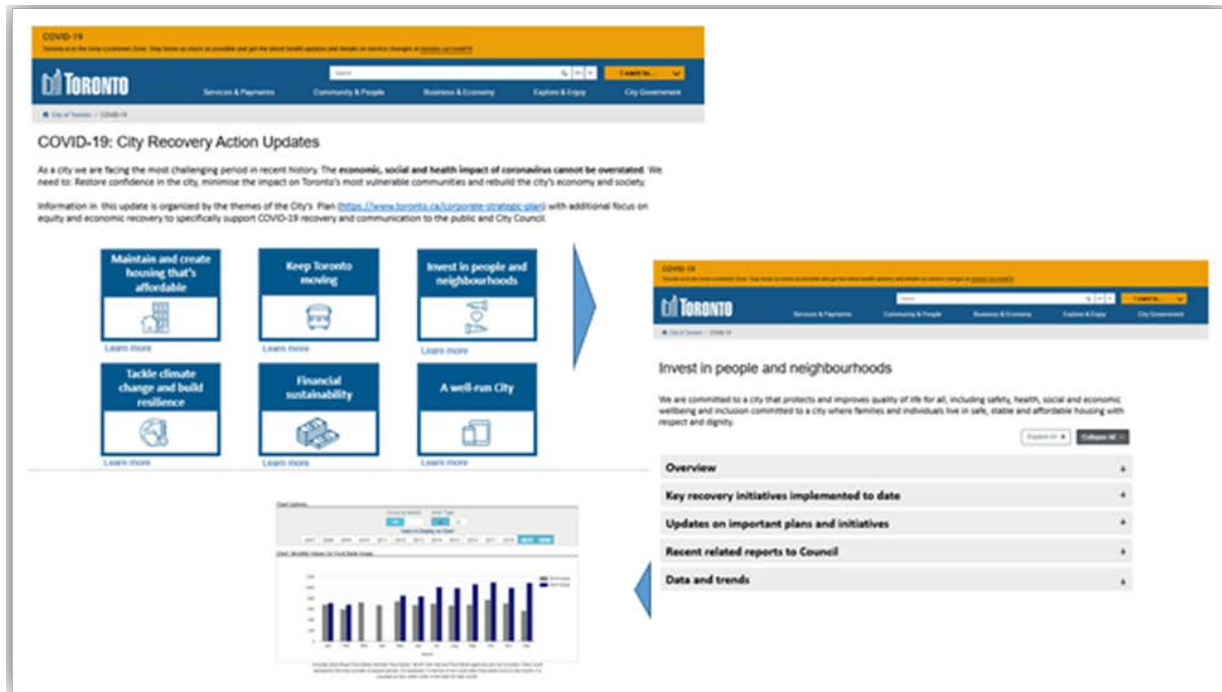
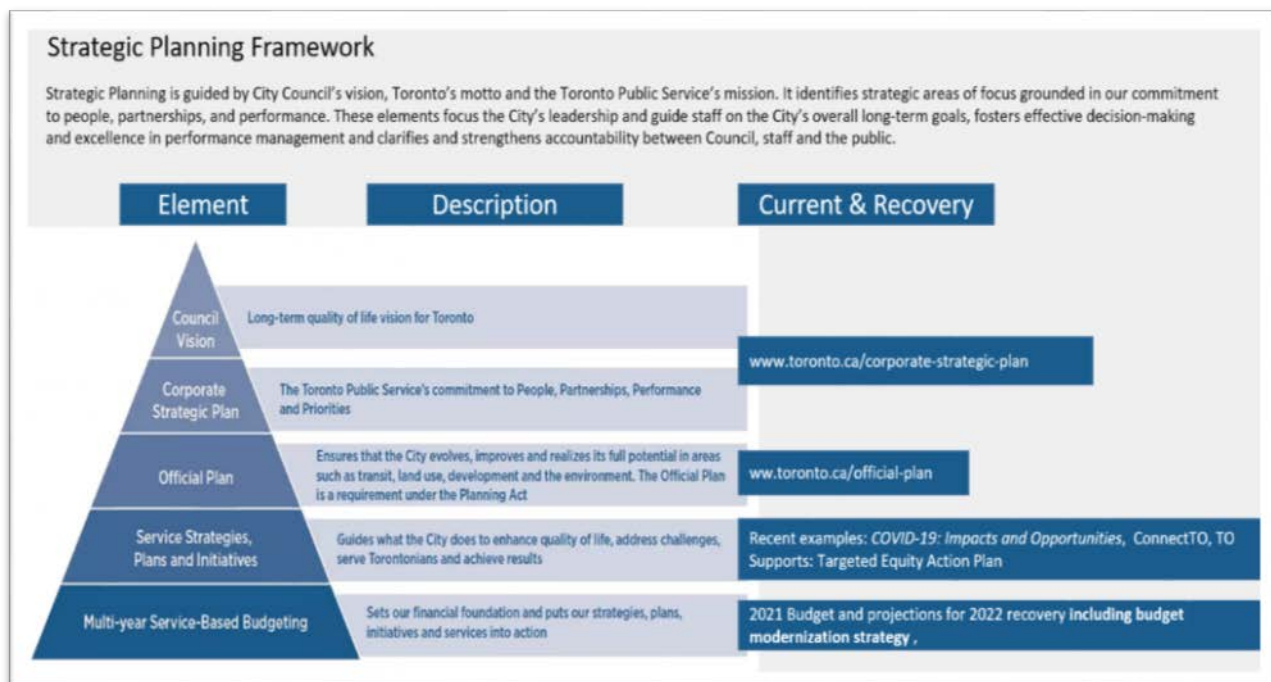


Figure 5: City of Toronto Strategic Planning Framework with Recovery Lens



Status updates on recovery recommendations will also be provided on a dedicated webpage with links to the dashboard, media releases, public health information, Council reports, intergovernmental announcements and other research and findings that will support recovery action by all sectors across the city.

The data and information the City releases is important to our partners including educational institutions, the business sector, and non-profit organizations, among other stakeholders. Recovery for Toronto will be a whole of community approach, and as part of the City's leadership on recovery, a coordinated communication and data strategy will be an important undertaking and commitment (see Figure 5).

## **Building Back Better**

There is a growing acknowledgement of the need for our City, like so many others around the world, to build back better rather than to only aim to return to the normal that we knew before the pandemic.

The imperative to not "step back to normal" is reflected in the input the City received from residents, businesses, institutions, stakeholders and from Council over the past year.

This imperative was a lens across the issues identified during the Budget Committee and Council discussions on the 2021 budget, and the discussions held by the City's senior leadership team and Division heads on the organization's priorities for the next two years.

The recommendations from the *COVID-19: Impact and Opportunities* report reinforced this and the language of "Building Back Better" is expressed in each element of the Corporate Strategic Plan and underlined by the corporate priority of building "A Well-Run City."

*A well-run City: "We will have a committed, engaged and diverse workforce. We will improve the lives of residents, businesses, and visitors by providing simple, reliable and connected services that anticipate changing customer needs. We will build trust and confidence in local government." Corporate Strategic Plan*

Advancing a municipal government to meets the needs of its current constituents and future populations, as well as rectifying historic harm to communities who have placed their trust in the City to serve them well, points to a priority to align our services in the best possible way to match these expectations.

A number of City services, programs and initiatives have recently been, are being, or will be reviewed in the near future including housing, planning, the City Manager's Office, parks and forestry, transportation, cyber and technology, People and Equity and Strategic Communications.

The 2021 Operating Budget was guided by four key principles, as follows:

- Manage COVID-19 impact and recovery;
- Preserve existing services (consistent with health guidelines);
- Keeping property taxes affordable; and
- Building a prosperous Toronto with a focus on equity" *Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, 2021 Operating & 2021-2030 Capital Budgets*

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer provided information during the budget process on actions underway to modernize the City's finance and budget systems. A recent report reviewed the City's state of emergency management readiness, response and emergency activation, operations, processes, resourcing and deployment and staff are planning to undertake Council directed reviews of city agencies such as CreateTO, now marking its third year of operation.

In addition to the individual divisions and units which are being reviewed for greater alignment and efficiency, the senior leadership will review how divisions are organized under each Deputy City Manager and the Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer to ensure they are best aligned to effectively plan, operate and coordinate across related divisions to achieve recovery and other identified priorities. For example, greater alignment between related community safety functions, such as police, fire, paramedics, and emergency operations will be explored as will functions that support the City's health and well-being goals.

"In recovery and rebuild, the City must continue to innovate and apply lessons learned in the crisis to keep up a brisk pace of modernizing services and improving convenience for residents and businesses. Toronto's public servants must continue their increased level of collaborating across the organization and with external partners to deliver results that make a meaningful difference in making it easier to do business with the City and in the city."

*COVID-19: Impacts and Opportunities  
Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild*

The focus of the City Manager and his senior leadership team will be on how best to coordinate across functions to build capacity in the city's neighbourhoods and communities, strengthen partnerships with local groups and organizations and more effectively respond to evolving issues and advance equity.

In future recovery reports, the City Manager will provide updates on these discussions and information on organizational and administrative strategies to support the City as we Build Back Better.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Chris Murray  
City Manager

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: 2020 COVID-19 Response and Recovery Reports

Attachment 2: COVID-19 Response and Recovery 2021 Accomplishments

Attachment 3: Recovery Updates by Theme

Attachment 4: Renewed Intergovernmental Strategy