

Status of COVID-19: Impact and Opportunities Report Recommendations (March 16, 2021)

This document provides a status update on each of the recommendations in the [COVID-19: Impacts and Opportunities](#) report from the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR).

Additional information

- Further details and updates are available in Attachment 3 to the City Manager's March 2021 recovery report at: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-164981.pdf>
- Previous updates from the City Manager's December 2020 recovery report are available at: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-158940.pdf>
- The disposition of each recommendation from the City Manager's October 2020 recovery report, indicating the City official(s) who will lead the review or action, is available at: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-157348.pdf>

Summary of TORR recommendation status updates as of March 16, 2021

Status	Number of recommendations
Implemented – the recommendation has been addressed	26
Partially Complete/ In progress – action is being taken on the recommendation but is not complete	43
Planned – action on the recommendation is expected but has not started	6
Under review – the recommendation being considered, and no decision has been made on next steps	8

Status of each TORR recommendation as of March 16, 2021

#	Recommendation	Status
1	For its part, the City should lead by example and address racism against Black and Indigenous people openly and honestly within the City in its hiring and promotional practices. In addition, the City should set standards for Black and Indigenous representation at the tables where priorities, planning, investments and implementation of City Council decisions are discussed. Moreover, the City should also address the representation of Black, Indigenous and people from other vulnerable populations on Agencies, Boards and Corporations in order to ensure that the decisions made by these City bodies reflect the communities they serve.	Partially Complete/ In progress
2	Complete planning for a resurgence of cases, including scenarios, staffing, case and contact management, (expansion, switch to focused follow-up if cases exceed threshold, technical enhancements), and future adjustments of closures and measures (criteria for dashboard indicators, consultation with Ministry of Health and regional Medical Officers of Health regarding a regional approach).	Implemented
3	Continue to collect data on COVID-19 and to publish it in the COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard.	Implemented
4	Continue to collect data on equity issues in COVID-19 transmission, including detailed case information, particularly socio-demographic and race-based, to the neighbourhood or individual level, for better understanding of the characteristics of those at higher risk as well as possible mechanisms of transmission.	Partially Complete/ In progress
5	Work with others within City government and with Public Health Ontario to ensure that there is coordination of work in knowledge synthesis and jurisdictional scans, with the aim of identifying the priorities for accessing existing evidence reviews, undertaking and commissioning evidence reviews, and identifying priorities for primary research. Primary research might be conducted through the Ontario Health Data Platform. Reviews might be undertaken internally (particularly jurisdictional scans) by Public Health Ontario, the Evidence Synthesis Network or National Collaborating Centres for Public Health. Links should also be established with the new Science Table and the Research, Analysis and Evaluation Branch at the Ministry of Health, and collaboration with universities and colleges, within established Memoranda of Understanding, should be continued.	Implemented

6	Ensure that surveillance data, evidence reviews and intelligence about sectors and activities that are high-risk for COVID-19 are periodically reviewed, in consultation with Public Health Ontario, with a view to amending the mandated and/or recommended preventive measures (or advocating for amendment, if the subject of a provincial order).	Implemented
7	Explore the feasibility of collecting syndromic surveillance data, such as absenteeism in selected sites in workplaces, schools and other settings, or visits at COVID-19 Assessment Centres.	Under review
8	Continue engaging the Ministry of Health, Public Health Division and Public Health Ontario in seeking to reduce the turnaround time for Toronto's laboratory tests and maintaining this timing once achieved.	Implemented
9	Advocate for priority testing in high-needs areas and for the exploration of alternate testing methods in suitable circumstances, such as rapid tests or saliva tests.	Implemented
10	Assist in ensuring that pilot programs to promote testing in high-need areas are continued and expanded to all areas with significantly elevated incidence rates or other indicators of need.	Implemented
11	Prepare the case and contact management capability of Toronto Public Health for continuing work during the balance of the pandemic, including throughout a potential second wave, and planning for some degree of repatriation of staff to their original duties while preparing plans to rapidly ramp up staffing if required; follow up with the Ministry of Health about the suggestion of it providing replacement staff so Toronto Public Health staff can return to essential previous duties.	Implemented
12	In view of the limits to rapidly scaling up the case and contact management system, and of the reduction in effectiveness when volumes of community cases are very high, develop plans for switching to a more focused protocol when indicators reach predetermined values; engage the Ministry of Health, Public Health Division in planning for a replacement of CORES by the CCM-Salesforce program, if that is determined to be advantageous; discuss with the Public Health Branch a possible system of "load-sharing" by transferring cases from high-incidence to low-incidence health units.	Implemented
13	Continue to participate in the Public Health Measures Table and the Rapid Response Table and advocate for a review of terms of reference in order to reduce duplication and ensure a longer-term agenda and as much preparation time as possible.	Implemented
14	Monitor the impact of travel on COVID-19 activity and liaise, through the Ministry of Health, with the Public Health Agency of Canada on related matters such as screening and border management.	Implemented

15	Work with other Greater Toronto Area health units and the Public Health Division to develop criteria for various stages/types of resurgence, develop pre-set criteria to identify increases in outbreaks and in community cases, and a generalized – possibly province-wide – resurgence; consider adding indicators to the current dashboard of early increases in incidence such as test positivity rate, rate of untraceable cases and syndromic surveillance; plan an outline response to each type of resurgence.	Implemented
16	Continue to plan for, liaising with the Public Health Division and school boards, a possible increase in COVID-19 activity arising from the return of students to schools and to post-secondary institutions in September, expected to be followed by the annual fall season of respiratory viruses including influenza/flu.	Implemented
17	Work with the Public Health Division to ensure that proposals submitted to the Chief Medical Officer of Health for approval under O. Reg 364/20 s4 (3) or s10 (2) are discussed with Toronto's Medical Officer of Health.	Implemented
18	Ensure that adequate resources are confirmed to continue to implement preventive measures and to support the ongoing review and revision of guidance documents. Inquiries and complaints from businesses and the public should be collated and reviewed to identify the common themes and emerging trends including the need for adjustments or for clarification; continue to support City with public health advice.	Implemented
19	Continue to plan for public health services during the remainder of the pandemic, including reinstating some services previously discontinued, including a program of catching up childhood immunizations and records, meeting the requirements of the Immunization of School Pupils Act. This should also include planning with the Province for the distribution of a COVID19 vaccine.	Partially Complete/ In progress
20	Ensure that schools in high-incidence/high-risk areas of the city receive particular attention in planning school-based programs of Toronto Public Health (including the new allocation of nurses).	Implemented
21	Toronto Board of Health and City Council should engage with the Province and with other boards of health to press for a re-examination of previously proposed structural, governance and funding changes for public health in Ontario. The aim should be to secure continued governance through Toronto's Board of Health and a broad mandate extending beyond infectious diseases and services to individuals, together with adequate funding.	Partially Complete/ In progress
22	Measure the extent to which previous transfers of funding and responsibilities to Toronto have not kept pace with, nor been indexed to, inflation pressures.	Planned

23	Provide recommendations and enable methods to improve on the various income supports that senior levels of government fund to ensure the City's perspective is considered regarding the most effective combination and funding of those supports to improve Torontonians' overall economic conditions (e.g.: Basic Needs and Shelter components of Social Assistance). Monitor the changes announced by the federal government to the Employment Insurance system so the City can offer recommendations for continuous improvement.	Implemented
24	The City needs to call on the provincial and federal governments to work with the City's deep delivery experience to develop a bold plan that will deliver more affordable child care spaces for all families, which will also address the severe inequities for women that insufficient child care exacerbates.	Implemented
25	During the pandemic, essential workers were provided with additional supports to supplement their income. As these supports are eliminated, continue to consider needs of essential workers in recovery. The City can immediately contribute through such measures as increasing and accelerating installation of priority bus lanes thereby improving reliability and reducing commuting time; and, advocate to other levels of government for enhanced and necessary benefits such as paid sick days.	Partially Complete/ In progress
26	Provide recommendations to other levels of government regarding social and labour force policies that could reduce COVID-19 transmission through incentives to stay home if sick or needing to quarantine.	Implemented
27	The City of Toronto, including Public Health, is already heavily involved in equity issues. It could expand such efforts by evaluating existing programs from an equity perspective; take inventory of needs and services of priority areas; analyze the burden of illness and key needs and responses in priority areas; implement a rolling plan for measurable reduction in selected indicators of inequality in selected areas; and, re-examine the distribution of services and the uptake by area and equity seeking group.	Partially Complete/ In progress
28	Work with community partners to coordinate and support the development of a Neighbourhood Food Hub model that builds food supply chains and distribution methods with vulnerable and racialized communities; creating effective, streamlined emergency food access in community spaces, and establishing sustainable community food resilience into the future.	Planned

29	Identify affordable housing projects with the provincial and federal governments and establish dedicated and appropriate funding to develop more modular housing units and accelerate the supply of additional housing units to assist in moving people from shelters into permanent and affordable housing.	Partially Complete/ In progress
30	Accelerate targeted funding towards identified affordable housing project opportunities for Indigenous people, as approved by Council in December 2019.	Partially Complete/ In progress
31	Explore opportunities to expand the definitions of "Municipal Uses" to include affordable housing, supportive housing, long-term care facilities and public schools, freeing space for additional housing by increasing density above existing and future community infrastructure to realize previously unavailable opportunities, while enhancing green space.	Partially Complete/ In progress
32	Aim to fully deploy the City's assets to develop additional affordable housing units while also improving the conditions of assets, for example, identifying housing opportunities on existing community centre sites.	Partially Complete/ In progress
33	Seek additional funding from the Province for a long-term care home specifically for the Indigenous Community, by providing City-owned property as a contribution.	Planned
34	Present the positive and distinguishing features of the City's delivery of care in long-term care homes to the commission established by the provincial government to examine long-term care and present the need for a more stable and equitable wage structure and working conditions for personal support workers (who are predominantly women and integral to delivering patient focused care), as noted by the Mayor's Task Force on Workers and Labour, chaired by Councillor Mike Layton.	Implemented
35	Continue advocating for public health measures to protect residents and staff of long-term care facilities and retirement homes, including funding for staff training and access to expert advice in infection prevention and control, and ensure Toronto Public Health is a local resource in combating outbreaks and collecting data.	Implemented

36	Make it easier for vulnerable people and community groups in using City-owned spaces in a safe, inclusive manner, including office buildings, parks, Toronto Community Housing facilities, recreation centers and libraries, so that individuals can gain internet access, helping to bridge the digital divide that exists for many households and neighbourhoods, and so that there are spaces for groups to organize and engage communities in recovery. Work with school boards and faith groups to identify opportunities to combine programs and better utilize public assets and to create new opportunities for the accessible, safe and inclusive access to space for not-for profit groups and vulnerable community agencies, not just in the downtown core.	Partially Complete/ In progress
37	Work with the Province to examine the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic on mental health and addictions among residents of the city from a broad cross section of affected communities, so that measurable impact informs meaningful solutions.	Partially Complete/ In progress
38	Work with provincial and federal governments to begin a meaningful and outcomes-based discussion on a Municipal Agenda; one that begins by recognizing the growth and prosperity role of municipalities; and how a “whole of governments” approach will improve incomes and prosperity for all.	Partially Complete/ In progress
39	Establish a process with provincial and federal governments to create the most effective programs for assisting businesses with forming internships, apprenticeships and demand-driven skills training, among other supports, with an emphasis on expanding job opportunities for youth, women and gender-diverse peoples, especially for Black and Indigenous populations and people from other vulnerable populations. This will be critical for those just now entering, re-entering or trying to increase their participation in labour markets, as also noted by the Mayor's Task Force sector table on Child and Youth, chaired by Councillor Shelley Carroll.	Partially Complete/ In progress
40	Encourage the provincial and federal governments to provide support in developing the local innovation ecosystem for emerging technologies, which will be in high demand in the post-pandemic economy, such as continued advances in artificial intelligence, data analytics, the cleantech sector, advanced manufacturing and sensor technologies – thereby also providing upskilling and retraining opportunities for workers.	Partially Complete/ In progress
41	Develop an investment retention strategy and work with the provincial government, and affected unions, to ensure that measures for job retention and future growth and expansion are in place or supports are being developed.	Partially Complete/ In progress

42	Facilitate innovations in accessibility by playing a convening role between the technology industry and disability organizations, enabling new partnerships and new sources of funding for the cultural disability community – Toronto has an opportunity to be a global leader in promoting accessibility and the arts in the digital age.	Under review
43	Develop indicators that measure social mobility, distribution of economic gains, per capita income and other measures for measuring growth in equitable prosperity.	Partially Complete/ In progress
44	Significantly expand the culture sector's digital infrastructure and adaptation to enable online and virtual delivery of cultural events and experiences, in doing so, advocate to the provincial and federal governments for major investments in digital infrastructure as stimulus spending – including specific investments to strengthen e-commerce capabilities and data analytics, support efforts to modernize intellectual property protections and facilitate improved connections within the cultural sector.	Partially Complete/ In progress
45	Given the prolonged impact the pandemic has had on cultural industries and operations, work with the federal and provincial governments to provide additional supports for business continuity throughout COVID-19. This includes support to key cultural institutions, creative businesses, arts and heritage organizations, and festivals and events.	Partially Complete/ In progress
46	Streamline and simplify permitting of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) pop-up spaces to facilitate safe cultural performance spaces and simplify permitting for alternative use of municipal spaces.	Under review
47	Continue the work of Economic Development and Culture, with the support of Toronto Public Health, to provide guidance to sectors such as the performing arts with continuing significant constraints upon their activities and to review proposals for events.	Implemented
48	Work with the City of Vancouver on its initiative to encourage local arts organizations to provide information to compile national data to help federal policymakers make informed decisions about how to support Indigenous artists and cultural practitioners in the wake of COVID-19.	Under review
49	Establish, at scale, an emerging women and youth leaders program for people from vulnerable and equity-seeking populations, such as Black and Indigenous communities, which could be done in partnership with school boards, colleges and universities and multi-sector organizations such as CivicAction. In addition, a roster of businesses committed to creating meaningful opportunities for emerging leaders from Black and Indigenous communities should be developed.	Partially Complete/ In progress

50	Accelerate the development of the Tkaranto Indigenous Prosperity Plan, an Indigenous-led Toronto Poverty Reduction Action Plan and ensure provincial and federal government participation to provide balanced and accessible funding to implement the Plan. This should also be linked with Indigenous housing and training initiatives as well.	Partially Complete/ In progress
51	Assess the feasibility and financial implications of creating a rate capping approach or other methods to address volatility impacts of Municipal Property Assessment Corporation tax assessments on small businesses.	Implemented
52	Assess the feasibility and financial implications associated with creating additional tax bands for commercial properties to reduce or prevent additional tax burdens on main street locations.	Implemented
53	The City should convene a table with the federal and provincial governments, major employers, major landlords and Business Improvement Areas to assess the impact and develop solutions for the "ecosystem" of companies that provide support services to these employers and their employees; the impact of a prolonged work from home approach; and, considerations for economic development and a long-term vision for Toronto's downtown.	Partially Complete/ In progress
54	Expedite planning and building processes through all phases for academic institutions, to avoid cost overruns of existing projects and build necessary infrastructure for economic recovery, as identified in the Mayor's Task Force on Higher Education Institutions, Chaired by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie.	Partially Complete/ In progress
55	Formalize the application of a climate lens, alongside equity analysis, in any decisions around infrastructure stimulus funding to ensure climate risks and opportunities are appropriately factored into decision-making in order to meet Toronto's net zero goals.	Partially Complete/ In progress
56	Develop project ideas, with haste, from the City for infrastructure funding support from the federal government in its recently announced COVID-19 Resilience Funding Stream, which should incorporate ideas quickly undertaken in the crisis as they address the mobility limitations for frontline workers and those over-represented in essential services, among other areas. Improving access to mobility solutions enhances ability to participate in the labour force and contributes to growth and prosperity.	Implemented

57	In addition, proactively prepare a comprehensive infrastructure proposal for Toronto – as the largest city in Canada – to the federal and provincial governments, with projects that address resilience and equity, especially considering impacts on Indigenous communities and the Black community. The proposal should partner with labour and trade unions, the development industry, the cultural industry, universities and colleges, City agencies and the TTC, among others. This proposal should also have a retraining and reskilling component.	Planned
58	To be competitive in bandwidth-intensive industries, high speed, VPN infrastructure is needed in Toronto. The City can partner with industry leaders to deliver such infrastructure.	Partially Complete/ In progress
59	Accelerate or make permanent transit initiatives the City undertook quickly to support crisis response and restart, such as instituting priority bus lanes, improved cycling infrastructure, expansion of bike share and weekend recreational street closures, among others.	Partially Complete/ In progress
60	Consider initiating an effective and actionable partnership with all governments that recognizes the interconnected and regional nature of transit in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area and investigates a more regionalized model of transit delivery, with enhanced and dedicated revenue tools.	Partially Complete/ In progress
61	Accelerate efforts and implementation on the City's surface transit network plan to identify transit priority corridors, applying an equity lens as a key siting criterion.	Partially Complete/ In progress
62	Work with the Toronto Transit Commission to accelerate its successful bus electrification program and pursue green infrastructure funding to support continued progress toward a Toronto Transit Commission-wide bus electrification program.	Partially Complete/ In progress
63	Build on Toronto's existing strengths in finance, artificial intelligence, technology and research, cleantech and green industries to attract further foreign direct investment. Opportunities for a green recovery are being exploited by other regions and countries. Canada, Ontario and Toronto have an opportunity to better leverage new investment opportunities in this sector to increase jobs, improve productivity and deliver economic and environmental benefits.	Partially Complete/ In progress
64	As part of the commitment to lead “net-zero retrofits of Toronto-owned buildings”, work with the provincial government to identify building retrofit projects, at scale, that would be candidates for innovative financing methods and to identify specific opportunities for training and upskilling to support the development of jobs and workforce capacity. A similar point was recommended by the Mayor's Task Force Sector Table on Workers and Unions, chaired by Councillor Layton.	Partially Complete/ In progress

65	Work in collaboration with Toronto Hydro to accelerate efforts toward electrification and other activities required to support improvements in energy efficiency.	Partially Complete/ In progress
66	Look for opportunities to enhance future access for those least able to access greenspace.	Partially Complete/ In progress
67	Consider developing a Winter City Plan to expand winter use of public parks, expand the CaféTO plan and pursue winter solutions for ActiveTO to increase resilience on a year-round basis.	Partially Complete/ In progress
68	<p>Build upon initiatives put in place during COVID-19 to accelerate progress toward a modern, green and less car dependent City, which is a network of connected complete communities, and includes a more extensive, integrated public transit system supporting complete streets – for all uses, all ages, all abilities – and public spaces with quality materials, shade, public art and green space.</p> <p>a. Apply a wellness lens to transportation planning, as both a preventive health measure and to ensure equitable access to green space, social opportunity and other contributors to well-being, emphasizing public transit and active transportation, including building on the additional cycling routes opened in the pandemic to accelerate progress toward increased provision of safe, protected cycle routes.</p> <p>b. Apply the principle of “build back better” to land-use planning and seek to improve the city's overall built form by prioritizing gentle density that places greater emphasis on a mix of building types and uses – including low-rise residential, retail and services – and that supports transit use.</p> <p>c. Improve and refine the use of curb lanes and other spaces for restaurant patios, the success of which has indicated a public appetite for a more European urban form in some parts of the city, with much more pedestrian space, good transit and fewer cars, but taking care to apply a broader equity lens, including impacts on access.</p>	Partially Complete/ In progress
69	Continue to closely monitor the implications on development charges and other growth funding tools, given the recent legislative changes introduced by the provincial government but not yet proclaimed into effect, and work to balance the revenue implications with the growth opportunities that additional development may bring during recovery and rebuild.	Partially Complete/ In progress

70	Prioritize affordable housing appeals by requesting the provincial government and the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal to identify a process to fast track appeals that contain a significant portion of affordable ownership or rental units.	Implemented
71	Specify a base density/height without affordable rental housing from which increases may be permitted if affordable rental housing is provided.	Under review
72	Implement different development charges across the city, with emphasis on a reduction in areas experiencing slow growth, to seed revitalization.	Partially Complete/ In progress
73	The City of Toronto should consider expanding supports for students through alternative summer job and experiential (co-op/training) opportunities, food security initiatives and supports for international students and racialized and vulnerable youth.	Planned
74	Develop partnerships between higher education institutions and the City to support local businesses and organizations, leveraging faculty expertise and student placements to develop small business supports, training and transition to online services; and form a faculty working group to develop methods to support small businesses and arts and culture organizations.	Planned
75	Continue to monitor the success of programs implemented in response to the crisis, such as the Ritual app, as well as pre-pandemic digital main street initiatives, and continuously improve on their utility for small businesses.	Partially Complete/ In progress
76	Continue with the significant business process redesign efforts in making City services more digitally capable and streamline the City's customer interface.	Partially Complete/ In progress
77	Continue with the modernization of the procurement system and continue to explore new programs and incentives for procurement solutions from Toronto-based companies.	Partially Complete/ In progress
78	Reduce regulatory burden for businesses, develop small business initiatives and continue with revitalizing main streets while applying a small-business-first lens.	Under review
79	Support businesses by using the City's purchasing power to competitively select companies that can provide end-to-end solutions, from procuring through to distribution of PPE, to businesses and not-for-profit agencies at lower prices.	Under review
80	Take an enterprise wide, horizontal approach to capital planning and budgeting, thereby identifying "highest and best use" capital priorities. In addition, undertake an extensive asset-condition assessment of City owned assets and ensure that the resulting information is kept up to date.	Partially Complete/ In progress

81	Work with the provincial government to continue to develop an app, piloted in Toronto, for seniors, people with disabilities and all vulnerable populations. It could provide a single source for information on services related to wellness, food insecurity and meal delivery, clothing provision, volunteerism and other assistance. This app could also convey consistent public health guidance.	Under review
82	Improve coordination of research and data across City divisions, agencies and corporations.	Partially Complete/ In progress
83	<p>Establish a more formal engagement strategy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying roles and responsibilities across the organization, including a lead practitioner who would support divisional engagement with City-wide guidelines and processes for engagement, including procurement, data management, technology capacity, equity and accessibility, and staff training; • Establishing organizational capacity for ongoing and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, Black Torontonians and equity-seeking and vulnerable communities; • Piloting innovative methods, increased evaluation and partnerships across divisions and agencies and other jurisdictions; and • Supporting secure and effective collection and management of engagement data in a transparent manner through accessible communications and participant resources; and leveraging feedback across divisions and agencies to gain insights for decision making and continuous improvement. 	Partially Complete/ In progress