
For Information

REPORT TITLE: Pandemic Response – Financial Update

FROM: Gary Kent, CPA, CGA, ICD.D, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide an update on and projection of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic response on the Region of Peel's finances and related service levels.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Peel has been one of the hardest hit communities by COVID-19 in Ontario, with almost twice the provincial rate of COVID-19 cases.
- Over the past 18 months, responding to the pandemic, including the implementation of the mass vaccination program (MVP), has been Peel's number one priority.
- While Public Health was the most impacted by COVID-19, services across the Region including Long Term Care, Adult Day Services, Waste Management, TransHelp, Housing Support and Community Investment as well as Enterprise Programs & Services were also significantly disrupted, resulting in a backlog of work still required to be done.
- Peel acted quickly by pausing or curtailing non-critical activities, services and priorities to reduce costs and to allow the redeployment of staff to support the pandemic response.
- In 2020, Peel experienced significant additional costs of \$161.3 million due to COVID-19. However, surpluses from services that were slowed down or paused combined with program specific funding and broader municipal level funding (Safe Restart Agreement) from senior levels of government offset the negative financial impacts of the pandemic.
- In 2021, the Province tasked Public Health to vaccinate its residents to help end the pandemic while still being required to manage the fourth wave of COVID-19 in the community.
- To date, the Province has allocated \$73.6 million of funding to address half of the estimated \$153.9 million in costs for mass vaccination. It is anticipated that costs will be lower than originally estimated due to earlier than planned closures for some clinics. However, there is still a significant financial risk to Peel for the remaining unfunded costs.
- For 2022, with the fourth COVID-19 wave expected to continue, resources to continue the COVID-19 response, provide third vaccination doses and provide for the transition and recovery to normal service delivery will be needed.
- To continue the COVID-19 response in 2022, staff are putting in place the temporary resources required, estimated to cost between \$19 million to \$38.5 million depending on the duration of the pandemic. The costs will be funded by the Province.
- Overall, redeployment of Regional staff and resources resulted in the largest disruption of services in the Region's history creating a large back log of work and large one-time surpluses for service activities that could not be done due to the pandemic

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- Advocacy for the unfunded portion of the mass vaccination costs and other incremental COVID-19 related costs must continue to ensure Peel remains financially healthy.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

Peel Region has been one of the hardest hit communities by COVID-19 in Ontario with the highest case incidence rate in the province representing almost twice the provincial rate. Additional details are provided in the October 28, 2021 companion report to Council titled, “Peel Public Health – Resourcing Public Health Services, COVID-19 Vaccination, and the Ongoing COVID-19 Response”.

While Public Health led the response and was the program most impacted by the pandemic, all services across the Region were also either directly or indirectly impacted. Services such as Long Term Care, Adult Day Services, Waste Management, TransHelp, Housing Support and Community Investment as well as Enterprise Programs and Services were also significantly impacted.

Over the last 18 months, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccinating its residents has been the Region of Peel’s number one priority. With an “all hands-on deck” approach, Peel acted quickly by pausing or curtailing non-critical activities, services and priorities to reduce costs and to allow the redeployment of staff to support the response to the pandemic. Significant COVID-19 related costs have been and continue to be incurred in order to implement the mass vaccination program, manage the cases, and provide the supports needed in the community.

Senior levels of government have provided over \$367 million in incremental program specific and broader municipal level funding since the start of the pandemic (see Appendix I for a listing of the funding received as of October 2, 2021). The funds were provided to help mitigate unbudgeted costs related to COVID-19 (including mass vaccination costs) and to implement new or enhanced services to support the community such as the implementation of the isolation centres, prevention and containment of COVID-19 in the long term care homes and additional support for child care agencies. Overall the COVID-19 related funding received to date from the Provincial and Federal governments have provided much needed support to the community.

2. Findings

As mentioned earlier, over the past 18 months, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted not only Peel Public Health but also all services across the corporation.

a) 2020 COVID-19 Response Impact

In January 2020, Peel Public Health had begun its response to the pandemic with the rest of the organization joining the response after the Province imposed strict public health measures and widespread closures. This required Public Health to investigate cases and contacts, manage exposures and outbreaks, and conduct data surveillance and epidemiological analysis. To enable the quick COVID-19 response, resources were redeployed from within Public Health and across the organization.

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Table 1: 2020 Year End Drivers of Variance for Regionally Controlled Services

	Operational Variance	COVID Related			Year-End Surplus/ (Deficit)	
		Service Level Change	COVID Costs	Program Specific Funding		Safe Restart Funding
Regionally Controlled Tax Services	(\$3.0M)	\$91.8M	(\$154.3M)	\$67.1M	\$14.2M	\$15.8M
Utility Rate Supported	\$6.8M	\$3.1M	(\$7.0M)	-	\$0.2M	\$3.1M
Total	\$3.8M	\$94.9M	(\$161.3M)	\$67.1M	\$14.4M	\$18.9M

As seen in the Table 1 above and as reported to Council through the May 11 report “2020 Operating Financial Triannual Performance Report – Year End (Unaudited)”, Regionally Controlled services incurred \$161.3 million in COVID-19 related costs. These costs were partially offset by savings of \$94.9 million from service level adjustments as staff and resources were redeployed to support the COVID-19 response. Services that were paused or curtailed could not provide planned service levels due to COVID-19 resulting in year end surpluses. Table 2 provides highlights of the services impacted:

Table 2: Highlights of Services with Reduced Service Levels in 2020*

Service	2020 Service Level Adjustment
TransHelp	\$6.7M
Adult Day Service	\$2.8M
Housing Support	\$2.7M
Corporate Services	\$2.4M
Public Health Services	
Chronic Disease Prevention	\$2.7M
Early Growth & Development	\$1.3M
Infectious Disease Prevention	\$1.1M

* As shown in Appendix III of the 2020 Operating Financial Triannual Performance Report – Year End (Unaudited)

Funding from senior levels of government helped to keep Peel financially whole. Program specific funding of \$67.1 million was provided to address COVID-19 related costs in Public Health, Long Term Care, Paramedic Services, Housing Support, and Early Years and Child Care. In addition, broader municipal level funding of \$47.9 million (Safe Restart Agreement) was also allocated to Peel of which \$14.4 million was used to offset remaining COVID-19 related impacts.

Work on the overall 2019 – 2022 Term of Council Priorities (see Table 3 below) was also slowed down or impacted due to the pandemic. While there was some forward movement made on some of the priorities, most priorities had limited or no progress made during the pandemic leaving much work to be done once recovery starts.

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Table 3: 2019 – 2022 Term of Council Priorities

2019 – 2022 Term of Council Priorities	Associated Service
Transform Housing Service Delivery	Housing Support
Enhance Supports for Employment	Income Support, Land Use Planning
Enhance Seniors' Supports and Services	Adult Day, Broad Service Connections
Advance Community Safety and Well-being	Broad Service Connections
Expand Community Mobility	Transportation, TransHelp
Build Environmental Resilience	Corporate Governance, Waste, Asset Management, Transportation
Improve Service and Confidence	Information Technology

Additional details on the progress of the ToCPs are provided in the October 28, 2021 report "Regional Council Strategic Plan and Term of Council Priorities Update".

b) 2021 COVID-19 Response

In 2021, the Province tasked Public Health to vaccinate its residents to help end severe impacts of the pandemic while still being required to manage the fourth wave of COVID-19 in the community. To enable the mass vaccination program, significant additional resources, over and above those currently being used for the COVID-19 response, were required.

With a target of vaccinating 90 per cent of Peel's eligible residents, the mass vaccination program ("MVP") is one of Peel's largest ever undertakings in terms of resources as close to 2,300 temporary staff were required. This was accomplished through the hiring of over 1,800 incremental contract staff and the pausing or slow down of more services as more staff were redeployed to support the MVP.

Table 4: Highlights of Services with Projected Service Level Reductions in 2021

Service	2021 Service Level Reduction (projected)*
TransHelp	\$11.2M
Corporate Services	\$7.8M
Housing Support	\$6.4M
Service Excellence & Innovation	\$3.5M
Adult Day Service	\$1.5M
Public Health Services	
Chronic Disease Prevention	\$21.2M
Early Growth & Development	\$14.5M
Infectious Disease Prevention	\$18.9M

*Excludes the impact of any external funding reductions driven by the lower service level

Similar to 2020, prior to any provincial funding announcements, Peel mitigated the risk of additional costs by slowing down or pausing non-MVP services and priorities. As additional resources across the corporation were redeployed, significant disruptions to service levels occurred generating large one-time surpluses (see Table 4 above) and substantial back logs of work including core operational activities such as staff recruitment, forward planning and the advancement of Term of Council Priorities.

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While many services experienced disruption, Public Health services were the most severely impacted. Critical Public Health programs such as providing immunization services, pregnancy and parenting support, and emergency dental treatments for seniors through the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program were either paused or significantly curtailed. Details of the impact to core Public Health activities are provided in the October 28, 2021 companion report “Peel Public Health – Resourcing Public Health Services, COVID-19 Vaccination, and the Ongoing COVID-19 Response”.

As presented to Council through the October 28, 2021 “Operating Financial Triannual Performance Report – August 31, 2021”, staff estimated a positive year end position of \$29.9 million for Tax Supported Regionally Controlled service. This projected surplus position is highly dependent on the level of funding that Peel ultimately receives from senior levels of government for its COVID-19 related costs and mass vaccination costs.

Staff had initially submitted a total estimated budget (including external partners) of \$153.9 million for the MVP. Staff currently project that total MVP costs will be around \$107.3 million, lower than initially estimated, pending any new direction or mandate from the Province. To date, the Province has allocated \$73.6 million of funding to address roughly half of the \$153.9 million estimated cost for the mass vaccination program leaving a significant financial risk of \$33.7 million to the Region of Peel. No written confirmation has been received yet from the Province for unfunded costs but staff anticipate all MVP costs will be funded.

c) Continuing the COVID-19 Response into 2022

Peel has entered into the fourth COVID-19 wave and still in the middle of its COVID-19 response. With ongoing support of resources from other Regionally Controlled services, Peel Public Health is still managing the spread of the pandemic through case and contact management, outbreak investigation and exposure assessment, and surveillance and data collection.

As mentioned earlier, numerous services and priorities have been paused or slowed down since the beginning of 2020. 1,800 incremental temporary resources were hired and 500 full time regular staff were redeployed from across the corporation in 2021 to support the pandemic response. In order to continue the response, develop plans for transition and recovery, sufficient time and resources will be required as staff are both physically and mentally exhausted. Based on what is known today, it is estimated that 389 of the current staffing resources will be required into 2022 to continue the pandemic response. This estimate excludes the staffing resources that would be required by Peel Public Health to fully deliver their core mandated services.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic response and mass vaccination program have driven significant levels of unbudgeted expenditures that the Region of Peel has had to fund upfront. Senior levels of government have provided funding for COVID-19 related costs. To date, the Province has approved and funded \$73.6 million of the \$153.9 million estimated mass vaccination budget submitted by Peel in April 2021. Excluding any requirements for mandated third vaccination shots, staff project that the total mass vaccination costs will be about \$107.3 million leaving an unfunded gap of \$33.7 million. If the full \$153.9 million of the MVP budget submitted to the Province is required then the funding gap would be \$80.6 million. Ongoing advocacy to senior

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levels of government for incremental COVID-19 related costs are required in order to ensure that Peel remains financially healthy in the long term.

The estimated staffing levels to continue the response into 2022 will evolve as the duration and severity of the pandemic changes. Required resources will also greatly depend on the direction from the Province for the mass vaccination requirements. At the time of the writing of this report, it was not clear yet if mass vaccination will become an ongoing program for Public Health or what levels of funding would be provided along with that program.

In addition, if staffing resources continue to be required, numerous services and priorities will continue to be slowed or paused leaving significant backlog of work that will eventually need to be done in the future once the pandemic is over.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As highlighted in the report, significant staffing resources required to support the ongoing response to COVID-19. Depending on the duration and severity of the pandemic, the cost of the needed resources is estimated to cost between \$19.3 million to \$38.5 million.

While it is the expectation that the Province will fund these COVID-19 driven costs, in the event that the funding doesn't fully materialize, other financial strategies include proposing the use of reserves or increasing property taxes

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic and mass vaccination program required the redeployment of Regional staff and reduction of non-MVP services to enable the quick response from Peel's Public Health unit. This resulted in the largest disruption of services in the Region of Peel's history, creating a significant back log of work and large one-time surpluses. As the pandemic continues into 2022, resources are required to continue the response and enable the transition and recovery to normal service delivery.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – COVID-19 related Funding from the Federal and Provincial Government

Authored By: Norman Lum, Director, Business and Financial Planning

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Funding Programs and Agreements	Use of Funding	Allocated Funding
Federal Reaching Home program	Support homelessness response, including recovery and isolation program, shelter division/hotels, portable showers, PPE, cleaning and grants to the community.	\$918,000 (March 2020) \$4,928,602 (March 30, 2020) \$1,387,165 (July 13, 2020) \$5,891,606 (October 8, 2020)
Temporary COVID Isolation Emergency Support Fund	Support the provision of emergency financial assistance to individuals who are not eligible for social assistance programs	\$200,000 (December 24, 2020) \$200,000 (April 1, 2020) \$250,000 (July 14, 2021)
Provincial Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Flowed through the Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)	For shelter division/hotels and grants to the community to adapt how they deliver their services, so they can be delivered safely during the pandemic.	\$5,988,400 (April 2020) \$9,747,382 (October 2020) \$5,669,000 (December 2020) \$10,703,506 (March 2021) \$12,027,300 (August 2021)
Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)	Isolation Centers	\$21,168,000 (January 2021) \$8,114,400 (April 2021) \$5,846,400 (June 2021) \$4,134,050 (June 2021)
	Mental Health and Addiction Funding - help address the pandemic needs of vulnerable people living with mental health and/or addictions issues.	\$313,338 (January 2021)
Provincial Ministry of Health	Support for implementation of a centralized Incident Management System (IMS)	\$262,461 (March 2021)
Public Health Canada	Safe Voluntary Isolation Sites Program	\$6,510,487
Provincial Long-term Care Funding	For the prevention and containment for COVID-19.	\$7,475,020 (2020) \$12,079,762 (2021)
Provincial One-time funding – Office of the Ministry of Health	Support for Paramedics and dispatch centers	\$6,580,911 (March 2020)
Provincial One-time funding – Ontario Ministry of Health	COVID-19 Extraordinary Costs – Public Health One-time Funding	\$14,081,000 (December 2020) \$13,030,000 (July 2021)
	COVID-19 Vaccine Program	\$73,622,900 (July 2021)
	COVID-19 Public Health Case and Contact Management Solution	\$95,700 (December 2020)
	COVID-19 School-focused Nurses Initiative	\$4,288,000 (December 2020) \$6,400,000 (July 2021) \$2,112,000 (July 2021)
	Temporary Pandemic Pay Initiative - Board of Health Employees	\$2,841,569 (2020) \$53,631 (2021)
2020/21 Funding– Amendment to the Multi-Sector Service Accountability Agreement	Temporary Pandemic Pay Initiative – Community Sector Temporary Pandemic Pay – Phase I & II	\$141,935 (October 2020)
	One-Time Funding to the Community Support Services Sector in 2020/21 to support capacity and one-time expenditures related to COVID-19 - Revised	\$123,500 (November 2020)
	Temporary Wage Enhancement - Personal Support Services Temporary Wage Enhancement in Response to COVID-19–Phase 2 (ADS)	\$133,127 (2020-2021)
Provincial One-time funding – Office of the Ministry of Health	Temporary Wage Enhancement	\$913,196 (2019 – 2020) \$304,399 (2020 – 2021) \$936,601 (2021 – 2022)
Provincial 2021 COVID-19 Recovery Funding for Municipalities program	Support COVID-19 operating costs and pressures.	\$24,618,471 (March 2021)
Federal/Provincial Safe Restart Agreement	Assisting with COVID-19 costs and pressures.	\$27,335,100 Phase I (August 2020) \$20,581,000 Phase II (December 2020)
	Assisting with COVID municipal transit pressures.	\$553,213 (August 2020) \$1,108,086 (December 2020) \$528,099 (March 2021)
	For Child Care and EarlyON	\$17,841,056 (August 2020)
Provincial Childcare and Early Years Funding Re-investment	Support COVID-related pressures that continue to be experienced in the early years and child care sector	\$6,699,780 (February 2021)
Provincial One-time Funding	Funding for enhanced transit cleaning	\$8,999 (June 29, 2020)
Provincial Museums Assistance Program, COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund	Assisting organizations that care for heritage collections.	\$100,000 (December 2020)
Federal/Provincial Investing in Canadian Infrastructure Program (ICIP)	COVID-19 Infrastructure Resiliency Fund Stream	\$18,705,389 (November 2020)
Total Funding		\$367,572,541

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- Region of Peel one of the hardest hit communities by COVID-19 in Ontario
- Over the last 18 months, the pandemic response has been Peel's #1 priority
- Staff and other resources were redeployed to support the response and mass vaccination program



Region of Peel Pandemic Milestones - 2020

MARCH

- Mar. 10** - Regional Emergency Operations Centre
- Mar. 17** - Provincial **Declaration of an Emergency**
- Mar. 18** - Canada – U.S. border closed
 - Region of Peel **Declaration of an Emergency**
- Mar. 27** - Region of Peel announces financial **relief measures**

NOVEMBER

- Nov. 6** - Peel moves into **Red Zone** which implements broader-scale measures and restrictions across multiple sectors
- Nov. 23** - Peel region moved into **Lockdown**

APRIL

- April 11** - Province **extends** emergency orders until April 23

JUNE

- June 2** - Ontario **extends** state of emergency to June 30
- June 6** - Provincial Emergency Orders **extended** to June 19
- June 24** - Peel moves into Stage II framework

DECEMBER

- Dec.** - **Mass Vaccination Planning** begins

Regionally Controlled Programs

- Staffing and resources were redeployed to support a quick response from Public Health
- COVID related funding from senior levels of government kept Peel financially whole
- \$134m received or allocated to 2020
- IMF – “spend what you need but keep the receipts”

Region of Peel Pandemic Milestones - 2021

JANUARY

Jan. 12 - Provincial **Stay-at-Home Order** issued

APRIL

Apr. 1 - Provincial **4-week lockdown** announced

Apr. 5 - Section 22 Order issued by Peel MOH to **close all schools in Peel** until at least April 18 (2 weeks)

JUNE

June 2 - **Stay-at-home order lifted** provincewide

June 11 - Ontario enters Step 1 of reopening (Enters Step 2 on June 30)

JULY

July 16 - Ontario enters Step 3 of reopening plan

MARCH

Mar. 1 - **Mass Vaccination Clinics** opened
10 Peel Centre Drive, 7120 Hurontario

Mar.17 - Toronto and Peel MOHs recommend staying in Lockdown

Mar.19 - Ontarians **75 and older** can book vaccinations effective March 22

Mar. 22 - **Mass Vaccination Plan** hits milestone of 100,000 vaccine doses administered

MAY

May 15/16 - Doses After Dark launched

May 23 - **Children 12+** province wide eligible to book vaccine

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 3 - 75% of eligible population receive **second dose** of vaccination in Peel

Sept. 16 - Peel Region launches **VAX Van**

Sept. 27 - Peel launches **Employee Vaccination Policy**

General Information

- COVID response continued
- Mass Vaccination program required additional redeployment of staffing and resources
- Services and priorities continue to be significantly disrupted
- Result is back logged work in Public Health and across the organization

Regionally Controlled Programs

- Redeployment of staffing and resources to provincially funded COVID response driving large one-time surplus
- Significant surpluses in Infectious Disease Prevention, Chronic Disease Prevention and Early Growth & Development
- Mass Vaccination costs estimated at \$107M, but could be as high as \$154m

- Currently in wave 4 of COVID and pandemic expected to continue into 2022
- Staffing and resources will be needed to continue the response
- Costs estimated at between \$19 to \$38M
- This is now a program

- Most significant risk is funding for the mass vaccination program (MVP)
- First tranche for MVP costs estimated at \$107m while \$74m in funding received to date
- Current unfunded gap of \$33.7m for MVP
- Expectation that the Province will fund all MVP costs and future COVID costs – up to \$38m in 2022

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Funding from Senior Levels of Government

Operating Funding	Amount
Mass Vaccination Program	\$73.6m
Broader Municipal Level	\$72.5m
Program-Specific:	
Housing Support	\$97.4m
Public Health	\$49.8m
Child Care	\$24.5m
Long Term Care	\$21.7m
Other	\$9.1m
Total Operating Funding	\$348.8m

Capital Funding	Amount
Federal/Provincial ICIP	\$18.7m
Total Capital Funding	\$18.7m

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding

- Thank you to the Provincial and Federal Governments for all their financial support
- Total range between \$52m - \$118m of financial exposure
- Assumption is that Province will fund the vaccination program in full regardless of year
- Where work is backlogged, reserve those funds for when they can be used
- Load the financial risk into our balance sheet and do not pass on to taxpayer in 2022 budget
- If Province does not fund, then assess future property taxes or deplete reserves where feasible, with associated impacts.

- Federal/Provincial governments have provided over \$367M in COVID related funding – thank you
- Need to continue to acknowledge but advocate for continued financial support to address future COVID costs and transition to recovery

- That the Province of Ontario continue mitigation funding (COVID vaccination and COVID-19 extraordinary costs) beyond 2021; and
- That mandatory public health program funding is increased to reflect inflation and community needs for 2022 and beyond.

Questions