



# COVID-19: Response Update

CITY COUNCIL

March 25, 2020

# Context

- COVID-19 has evolved rapidly over the past two weeks
- The City's decisions have been informed by public health experts with the overall objective to help "flatten the curve"
- Announcements are being made daily from other levels of government
- The City has adapted to this global health emergency on a daily basis

# COVID-19 Response Escalation

## January 23

### **Situational Awareness:**

- City supports Ottawa Public Health monitoring global spread of COVID-19

## March 5

### **Enhanced Operations:**

- All City departments engaged to ensure preparedness

## March 11

### **Activated Operations:**

- First confirmed case of COVID-19 in Ottawa (travel-related)
- Emergency Operations Centre stood up (EOC) with Control Group (EOCG)
- City Manager sends first message to all staff



## March 12

- Province announces closure of all publicly-funded schools until at least April 6
- City recommends staff work from home where operationally feasible

## March 13

- City announces pending closure of recreation centres, cultural facilities, community centres, libraries and events with more than 250 people

## March 17

### **Provincial State of Emergency:**

- Closure of child care facilities, theatres, dine-in restaurants and events over 50 people



# COVID-19 Response Escalation *Cont'd*

## March 17 cont'd

- City announces further closures to its counter services and restricts access to essential visitors at long-term care centres
- Essential City services continue
- Prime Minister announces \$82B in aid for families and business amid economic uncertainty

## March 18



- Canada/US announce temporary closure of border to non-essential traffic

## March 23

- Premier of Ontario announces the pending closure of non-essential services on March 25
- Premier of Ontario announces that schools are unlikely to reopen on April 6 - details to follow

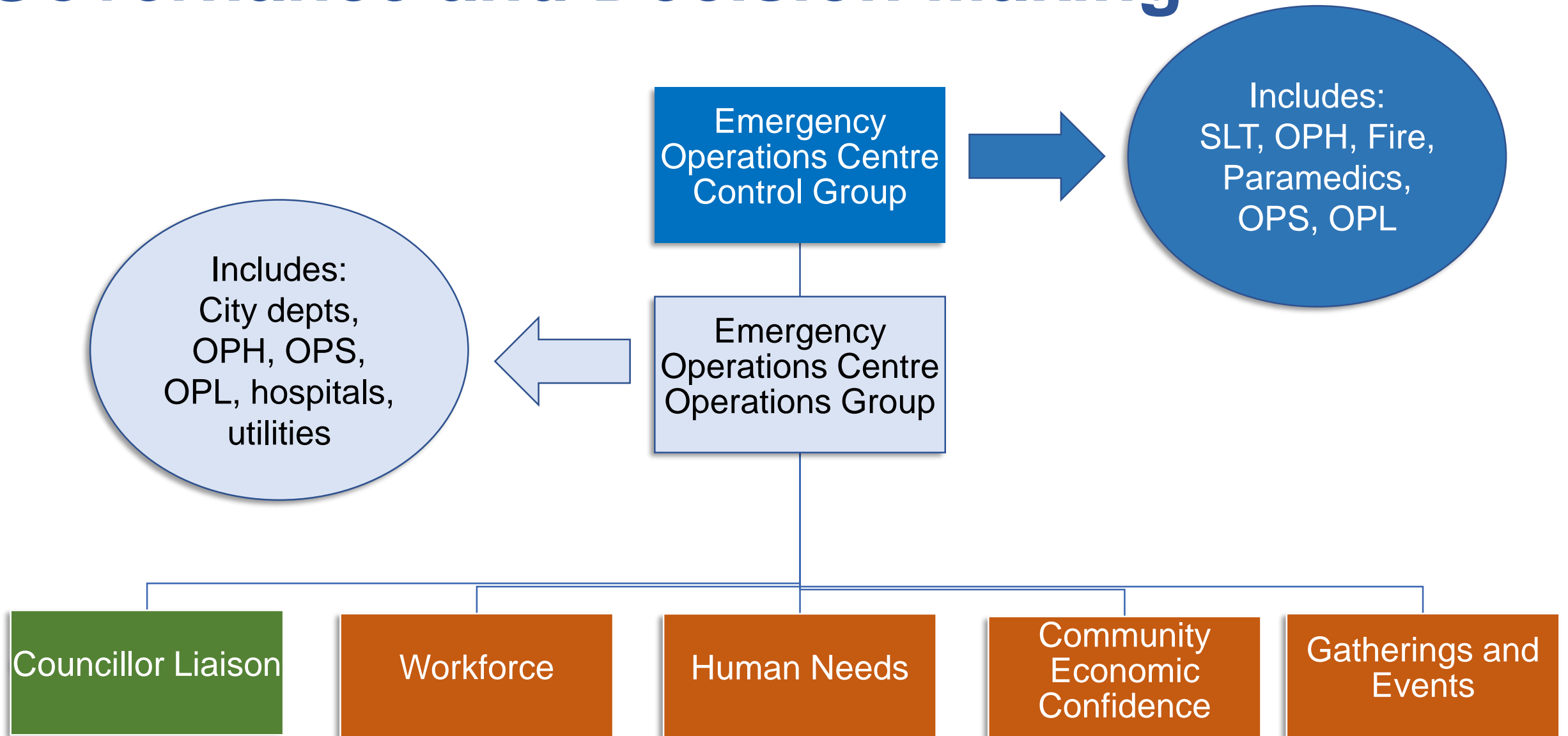
## March 25

- Declaration of a State of Emergency in Ottawa

# State of Emergency

- Today, Mayor Watson declared a state of emergency for Ottawa due to COVID-19
- **The declaration was made:**
  - In recognition of the fact that the City could potentially be responding to two emergencies - Covid-19 and seasonal flooding
  - To enable nimble procurement of essential goods (e.g. personal protection equipment, sand bags etc.) outside of our regular procurement rules
  - To expedite decision making given the requirement for rapid responses in a changing and fluid environment

# Governance and Decision Making



# Key Actions Taken

- Our Council
- Our Service
- Our Community
- Our People

# Our Council: Dedicated Councillor Liaison



- Enhanced Councillor Liaison function activated on **March 13** to directly support Council **seven days a week**
- Dedicated email and phone number to assist with inquiries
- Total number of inquiries to date: **241**
- Total number of inquiries closed: **162**
- Top three themes: **closure of non-essential businesses, social distancing and self-isolation guidelines, City bills and property tax**
- Ongoing check-in phone calls with individual Councillors



# Our Service: Essential and Emergency Services Continue



- Emergency first responders including fire, paramedics and public health staff
- Front-line communications for 9-1-1 emergency services, Ottawa Public Health, Revenue and 3-1-1 call centres
- Online services
- Social assistance services
- Key assets, public works and operations such as water services, road and traffic services and snow clearing
- Front-line workers who serve the most vulnerable including long-term care
- Transit services
- Garbage and recycling collection
- By-law services
- Fire investigations and inspections for complaints and licenses
- Community Paramedic program

# Our Community: Human Needs Taskforce

- The City is working closely with community partners to align services and coordinate information around urgent community needs
- Mobilizing and supporting existing organizations to address urgent community needs within new health and safety constraints
- Identifying and prioritizing solutions for urgent service gaps in the community including:
  - Volunteers
  - Isolated seniors
  - Food distribution
  - Transportation
  - Homelessness and shelter needs
- Addressing community gaps and needs through collaboration with United Way of Eastern Ontario and Community Foundation
- To date \$1.65M in new federal funding for homelessness and shelters to be distributed by March 31, 2020
- New provincial funding announced for broader social sector needs

# Our Community: Human Needs Taskforce

- All ward specific and community needs to be forwarded to the Human Needs Taskforce
- Needs will be prioritized and actioned, and updates will be provided to Council
- Regular community response key contacts will be provided to Councillors and posted on [ottawa.ca](http://ottawa.ca) this week
- Fact sheets to be provided to Council on how to access essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic

# Our Community: Emergency Child Care

## **Provincial direction and guidelines:**

- Some licensed child care centres will be permitted to open to provide child care services for healthcare and other frontline workers free of charge
- Initial request sent to child care providers to solicit interest and capacity to run 24/7 service
- Working with OPH on guidelines for operators

## **Communication and implementation timeline:**

- Local plan currently in development that will identify potential location and process for registering children
- Plan to be submitted to the Province by March 25, 2020
- Implementation timelines dependent upon Provincial exemptions, approvals and guidelines

# Our Community: Ontario Works

- Province has announced an expanded Emergency Assistance Program and expanded discretionary benefits for individuals facing hardship during the COVID-19 situation and those awaiting Employment Assistance
- A new online emergency application process is in development by the Province, but until that is operational residents should call 3-1-1, or their existing case worker
- All applications will be done over the phone

# Our Community: Housing Supports for Vulnerable Residents

## **Isolation centres for homeless**

- Routhier Community Centre has opened for single men and women with supports being provided by Ottawa Inner City Health and Ottawa Public Health
- Currently five individuals using this service
- Currently no cases of COVID-19 in the City's family shelter
- Identified spaces for families requiring isolation
- This site will be operational in early April

## **Supports for families**

- Currently have secured some hotel rooms with cooking facilities for homeless families
- Moving families on a voluntary basis into these hotel rooms from existing motels (that do not have cooking facilities)
- Food distribution to motels is currently being explored for homeless families

# Our Community: Housing Supports to Vulnerable Residents

## **Rooming Houses**

- Rooming House Services (RHS) is conducting visits to each licensed rooming house address to deliver OPH materials on COVID-19 protocols
- RHS is working with the Parkdale Food market to deliver 100 frozen meals and bread to vulnerable rooming house tenants on March 25, 2020
- Staff will continue to coordinate with restaurants and rooming house owners where available/possible to address food insecurity

## **Shelter Providers and Homelessness Programs**

- Staff are assessing information received related to anticipated extraordinary expenses related to responding to COVID-19 over the next six to eight weeks
- Allocation of funding to be prioritized and provided by March 31, 2020



# Our Community: Community Economic Confidence Taskforce

- Marketing strategy developed to support local business in the short term and as part of economic recovery effort; promotional video campaign launching online to encourage residents to support small businesses
- Business economic support and recovery page added to [ottawa.ca](http://ottawa.ca); will provide area businesses with information and links to important City, Provincial and Federal resources
- Engaging with key local business organizations through Economic Partners Task Force co-chaired by Mayor Watson and Councillor El-Chantiry; purpose is to identify emerging issues and opportunities to align objectives, coordinate response, amplify messages and speak with a unified business voice to move faster capitalize on momentum during the recovery phase
- Task force partners disseminating important information from OPH, BLRS, OPS, etc. to their memberships to maximize reach
- Next steps include preparing strategy for economic recovery phase





# Our People: Health, Safety and Well-being

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- Closures of recreation centres, cultural facilities, community centres, libraries, daycares, counter services and public consultations
- Increased cleaning of all high-traffic areas and touch points at City-owned buildings, buses, trains, stations and Para Transpo vehicles
- Screening at long-term care facilities and access restricted to essential visitors
- Rear-door boarding on all OC Transpo buses and trains
- Personal protective equipment for essential and emergency services
- Limiting access to Public Works and Environmental Services facilities to staff that are essential to the delivery of services
- Working from home where operationally feasible
- Employee and Family Assistance Program



# Our People: Workforce Taskforce

## Developed and released to all staff:

- FAQ on COVID-19 including information on self-isolation, emergency leave processes
- Sick leave self-declaration form to replace doctors' notes
- 'Working Remotely Resources' located on a SharePoint site providing tips and tools

## Developed and released for management:

- Comprehensive guide for management providing new processes and information
- Tool to assist managers in determining when to apply various leave codes

## Additional supports for staff:

- Alternate work arrangements and flexible hours to accommodate child care needs
- Creation of a new emergency leave process
- Ongoing union and labour relations
- Creation of ottawa.ca page with information for non-networked staff



# Planning Ahead

- Our Finances
- Business Continuity Task Force
- 2020 Spring Freshet and Flood Preparedness
- Staying Informed

# Our Finances



- Process implemented to capture total costs associated with this event
- Tax billing deferrals
- Water billing deferrals
- Refunds for cancelled programs
- Financial forecast modelling—expenditure and revenue projections
- Exploration of cost pressures and potential areas of savings and expenditure deferrals



# Business Continuity Taskforce

- City Managers and Chief Financial Officers from **Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver** and **Calgary** are working collaboratively with EY on recovery plans for their municipalities using the most current data to run forecast modeling
- **A business continuity taskforce has been established that includes an internal team of key senior leaders to address:**
  - Financial forecast modelling - expenditure and revenue projections and mitigation measures
  - Staff, services and community
  - Refined support requirements (Human Resources, PPE etc.) and work rotation schedules for provision of City services
  - Redeployment to support essential community services and to emergency needs



# 2020 Spring Freshet and Flood Preparedness

- 2020 Spring Freshet EOC will be standing up on Monday, March 30
- Planning for pre-flood preparations are underway (consideration for reduction in staff availability and no access to volunteers due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation)
- Communication plan has been developed and public messaging has begun
- Community outreach plans are being developed
- Regular updates received from the Conservation Authorities and the Ottawa River Regulation Board





# 2020 Spring Freshet and Flood Preparedness *cont'd*

- **Current conditions:**

- Snowpack conditions are normal to lower than normal for this time of year
- Principle reservoirs have capacity to manage spring runoff
- Slight rise in water flows due to the slow and ongoing melt
- Two week outlook on weather forecast is favourable

- **Current Inventory:**

- Over 200,000 filled sandbags
- 387,000 unfilled sandbags
- 21,000 tons of reclaimed sand from 2019 Flood event



# Staying Informed

## Keeping you informed:

- We are committed to keeping City Council informed during this time of uncertainty
- Council will continue to receive regular updates from the Council Liaison
- Council will continue to receive memos from the City departments on ongoing changes and impacts

## The best way to stay up-to-date on COVID-19:

- The City's website: [ottawa.ca](https://ottawa.ca)
- Ottawa Public Health's website: [ottawapublichealth.ca](https://ottawapublichealth.ca)
- City of Ottawa's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts
- Ottawa Public Health's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts