



**COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN
FRAMEWORK**



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TOWN OF LINCOLN COVID-19 RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

Background:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as per Provincial orders, the Town of Lincoln closed all facilities to the public, maintained essential services and restructured other services where possible providing a flexible work environment. The closures have resulted in cancellation of programs and events including recreational, library and cultural activities. Many other municipal services and operations were also impacted.

The emergency management cycle is based on the four pillars of emergency management: Mitigation, Prevention, Preparedness, Response and **Recovery**. Recovery is the last pillar in the cycle; however, it should be initiated as quickly as possible as it outlines the actions taken after an emergency or disaster to re-establish or rebuild conditions and services. The recovery process is an opportunity for the community to build back better and become more resilient.

Information and expanded frameworks have been developed and released by the Province of Ontario ([Reopening Ontario after COVID-19](#)). The easing of public health measures related to COVID-19 restrictions will be phased in over time and will vary by sector. It will be important to balance the need to support the economy while protecting the health of staff and the public. It is unclear how long restrictions resulting from COVID-19 will continue or terminate.

Public Health remains the lead agency during this health crisis and the Town of Lincoln is working closely with Niagara Region Public Health on direction, advice and guidance in dealing with this situation.

Purpose:

To define and develop the Town of Lincoln's recovery strategies to re-open facilities and resume business and programming in a phased and staggered approach as permitted by the Province of Ontario as it relates to COVID-19.

This framework has been developed to guide the recovery planning team in the development of recovery plans and strategies.

Expected Outcomes:

The following outcomes are expected throughout the development and implementation phases of the recovery plan:

- Regular committee and Council updates on status and progress of COVID-19 strategies, activities, issues and decisions.
- Regular updates and information messages to our community and employees.
- Reduced exposure of our community and our employees to COVID-19.
- Minimized year-end unfavourable financial position.

- The implementation of a recovery plan to deploy the required workforce after the termination of the emergency declaration, while maintaining public health orders and recommendations.
- Minimal disruption of Municipal services.
- Bringing services back as quickly and responsibly as possible.
- Supporting Municipal operations and the community to adapt to a "new normal" service delivery.
- Adapting new and creative business practices and processes that comply with Public Health guidelines.

Guiding Principles:

Principles are considered to be the core of the framework. They aim to support the design and implementation of the recovery plan. The plan will need to be responsive and flexible in order to adapt to the unprecedented nature of the pandemic.

The following principles should be considered in the decision-making process and when establishing priorities:

- Recovery services will be prioritized following EOC objectives:
 1. Provide for safety and health of all responders (staff).
 2. Save lives.
 3. Reduce suffering.
 4. Protect public health.
 5. Protect critical infrastructure.
 6. Protect property.
 7. Protect the environment.
 8. Reduce economic and social losses.
- The health and safety of staff and the public is the primary consideration (extra consideration and planning for the health and safety of the vulnerable population)
- Continued focus on maintaining strong hygiene practices and innovative approaches to maintain and enhance physical distancing
- Developed in accordance with regulatory and legal requirements
- Regional coordination should occur on recovery plans that share regional resources, where applicable
- Social and environmental sustainability, incorporating lessons learned from emergency operations, innovation, and new best practices, where feasible and appropriate
- Developed in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Developed to be responsive and flexible to changes i.e. community/staff outbreaks, cycle of lifting and imposing restrictions
- Activities must consider the mental wellbeing of Town employees, community partners and residents
- Staff will be provided with a decision-making framework to enable and empower them to implement their service area recovery plan

Recovery Sectors:

There are four sectors to support and integrate recovery activities:

People and Communities:

- Considers impacts on the physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being of the population
- Primarily concerns, but is not limited to, health and safety, mental health, community psychosocial, emotional, cultural, and spiritual well-being, vulnerable populations, cultural aspects, and interim housing
- A focus on all sectors with a lens on the social determinants of health

Economy:

- Considers direct and indirect impacts on the local economy
- Primarily concerns small, medium, and large enterprises, tourism and cultural livelihood, agriculture, and the broader economy
- While economic recovery both locally, regionally, and provincially will take a combined effort from all levels of government, working together a plan based on research, advocacy, and resilience will set our economy on a path towards recovery

Environment:

- Considers impacts on the environment and steps needed to re-establish a healthy state while mitigating long-term impacts
- Primarily concerns land degradation and contamination, the integration and use of green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecosystem impacts, cultural land use, and natural resource damage/loss
- Our local environment plays a large role in the economic wellbeing of the community, as many of our local businesses rely on the local environment to produce fruit and vegetables such as peaches, apples, and grapes

Infrastructure:

- Considers impacts on private and public physical infrastructure
- Primarily concerns residential and commercial buildings, utilities, and infrastructure planning
- Municipally lead infrastructure projects are included in our economic recovery efforts as it helps keep local firms and citizens employed

Assumptions:

The following assumptions have been made to further assist the development and implementation of the recovery plan:

- The Province will direct actions of municipalities through the state of emergency declaration and orders in council
- Services may need to be phased in and/or altered due to these directives

- We will still be operating in a state of emergency, with continued activation of our emergency plan, for an undefined period of time
- The steps we take to rebuild our economy or restore some degree of normality must recognize the possibility of restrictions being lifted or re-imposed quickly
- Critical and essential services and infrastructure will continue to be maintained
- Physical distancing measures and proper handwashing protocols will be in effect until appropriate precautions or a vaccine is widely available
- Service delivery processes will be amended to minimize the number of customer-staff and staff-staff interactions
- Municipal staff may be impacted by the virus
- Trending seasonal extreme weather events may add known and unknown impacts and considerations for service delivery
- Regular service delivery will continue to be affected in some areas
- Some services cannot be delivered from home; and,
- Work performed from home will contribute to continued productivity and delivery of Municipal services.

Recovery Working Group:

The Town of Lincoln's working group is a subset of our EOC team. It is led by the CAO, and comprised of the following staff:

- Paul Di Ianni, Economic Development Officer
- Cathy McGrath, Emergency Management Coordinator
- Teri Trewolla, Treasurer
- Julie Kirkelos, Town Clerk
- Matt Bruder, Associate Director of Planning and Development
- Sarah Ane, Associate Director of Community Services
- Gillian Harris, Manager of Environmental Services
- Dave Warden, Manager, Public and Open Spaces
- Andrea Chambers, Executive Assistant

This recovery team will also work closely with the Niagara Economic Rapid Recovery Team, of which the Town's representative is Economic Development Officer, Paul Di Ianni, as well as work closely with other municipal and regional counterparts.

The Rapid Recovery Team has laid out an initial framework that includes a recovery plan based on:

- Research – ascertaining and quantifying the economic impact that COVID-19 has had on the business community throughout the region
- Advocacy – identifying key advocacy channels to emphasize the need for economic support for Niagara's businesses
- Resilience – Connecting with and working in conjunction with the private sector and various industry groups in Niagara to develop long-term recovery plans based on Business Retention and Expansion principals

Planning Priorities:

As the length of the economic disruption and recovery is uncertain at this time, Town staff are preparing for all scenarios and focusing on economic sustainability, as well as working rigorously to sustain essential public services.

Recovery Planning priorities are identified as follows:

1. Recovery Framework - developed to guide the recovery planning team in the development of recovery plans and strategies.
2. Recovery Plan Development (short and long term) – develop detailed plans for Municipal Operations, Economic Sustainability, Community Well-Being, Governance & Financial Strategies, & Communications.
3. Plan Execution – implement plans when permitted and as supported by health authorities at all levels of government.

Lincoln Recovery Plans:

The Town of Lincoln Recovery Working Group, together with stakeholders in the community, will develop the following four (4) recovery plans as it relates to COVID-19:

1. Municipal Operations Plan (Internal)

Municipal Operations Plans will ensure the continuity of service delivery while protecting the health and safety of municipal employees and the public.

Corporate level recovery plans will to be developed and used by all departments as it relates to health and safety (facility and staff), return to work requirements, employee culture, health and well-being.

Service specific plans will be developed for each municipal department to support individual department needs and requirements as it relates to the function or service it provides.

2. Governance & Finance Strategies

The Municipality's 2020 and 2021 operating budgets will be impacted by actions taken to continue to protect the health and safety of staff and the community.

The focus of these plans is to ensure that continued effective and efficient governance and financial leadership is restored quickly so that the Municipality can continue to support the community.

3. External Community Recovery Plans

Within Community Planning there are three key areas to focus on. Some of the activities may be a joint effort with the Region of Niagara and community partners, while others will be specific to an individual Municipality.

- Economic Recovery
 - a. Economic recovery for the Town of Lincoln will take place against the backdrop of both Regional, Provincial, and Federal economic recovery planning. While the legislative toolkit and ability to inject stimulus funding from upper levels of government supersedes our local legislative toolkit, there are several actions the Town can undertake to set our community down a path of economic recovery.
 - b. Lincoln's economy is made-up of several different sectors that revolve around agriculture and value-added agriculture, for the most part. Tourism, being one of our larger segments of the economy, and tender fruit, comprise many of our locally owned family farms, and their economic health and wellbeing is paramount to our local economy.
 - c. Economic recovery planning will focus on tangible actions the Town can undertake to help our local businesses. These include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Community Improvement Plans to assist with recovery and reopening planning
 - ii. Infrastructure spending to help stimulate our local economy
 - iii. Execution of the Tourism Strategy to help set our tourism sector down a path of economic prosperity
 - iv. Support for the hospitality sector as it pertains to flexibility in Planning requirements (i.e. additional licensed patio space for restaurants)
 - v. Continued execution of the Town's Economic Development Strategy
 - d. The Town's economic recovery planning will include the following guiding principles:
 - i. Support for our downtown(s):
 - Community Improvement Plans
 - ii. Sourcing external funding to support recovery
 - This includes lobbying for additional funds for our local/regional economy, while also educating our businesses on the previously announced economic support measures from upper levels of government.

iii. Workforce Development

- Working with Niagara's post-secondary institutions, the Region of Niagara, the Niagara Workforce Planning Board and other employment help centres to assist with getting people back to work
- This includes retraining where needed while connecting jobseekers with in-demand jobs post COVID-19

iv. Business Outreach

- To assist the business community with recovery, we need to know what our local businesses need. While consultation has been ongoing throughout the entire pandemic, continuing with local business engagement is what is needed to help with recovery planning

Community Socio-Cultural and Emotional Recovery

The sociocultural environment encompasses the community's social and cultural diversity. Developing strategies to support our citizens with celebrating their survival, to mourn those we lost and to get back to life in the new norm.

Strategies

- **Social recovery:** actions aiming to return the community to a social state resembling as closely as possible or better than the pre-disaster state. It may include helping restart initiatives that were cancelled or postponed for the duration of the emergency and it may include restoring agencies or associations that were dismantled because of the emergency.
- **Cultural/Diversity recovery:** actions aiming at reinforcing the multi-cultural strengths of the community in order to restart various cultural activities that may have been cancelled because of the emergency, most cultural aspects of the community are not currently eligible for disaster relief funding and as such may be negatively impacted post-disaster. Reviving the arts and culture community will require actions that are different from economic or social recovery actions.
- **Emotional recovery:** disasters cause a lot of trauma on the community and providing ways to recover emotionally as a community is important. This may include memorials and life celebrations, it can also include catching up on missed opportunities to celebrate milestones, anniversaries, and significant holidays that were postponed or cancelled by the emergency. It can even have a spiritual dimension while respecting individual beliefs.
- **Mental Health recovery:** Disasters are upsetting experiences for everyone involved. Children, senior citizens, people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations are especially at risk and are likely to need extra care and help. Mental health strategies may mitigate both the acute and long-term psychological

consequences of disaster. Examples of community mental health recovery might include: Strengthen community self-help and social support; organization of events to facilitate social interaction and prevent isolation; increasing public awareness about mental health (brochures, social media, and speakers).

Community Wellbeing for COVID-19

The Community Wellbeing Strategies (public health measures) encompasses approaches outlining actions required to support Community safety and wellbeing.

Assumptions

- Government and Public Health directives will change

Strategies

- **By- Law Enforcement**
Enforcing public health directives through By-law
- **Human Resources**
Development and implementation of Human Resource standard operating procedures or polices
- **Communications**
Developing social media messaging to support Public Health measures

4. Communication Plan

Communications is a vital component to the response and recovery of an emergency. A communication plan will be developed to ensure everyone is aware of the implemented changes to the service levels provided by the Municipality including procedures and policies to ensure the health and safety of all. Communication plans will include internal to staff and visitors and external to the community.