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**For Information**

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**REPORT TITLE: Continuous Improvement Program Update**

**FROM: Kathryn Lockyer, Interim Commissioner of Corporate Services**

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**OBJECTIVE**

To provide an update on the service improvements and efficiencies gained through the Region of Peel's Continuous Improvement Program, including those improvements implemented to meet community needs through the Region's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The Region's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement helps deliver improved service outcomes that provide value for tax dollars and contribute to advancing the Region's Strategic Plan and vision of Community for Life.
  - In 2020, a total of 40 Continuous Improvement Initiatives were completed that improved service quality and process efficiencies that contributed to \$2.474M in cost savings and \$3.919M in cost avoidance.
  - The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic required some services to be adapted to enable service delivery to continue in a safe way for clients, residents, businesses and employees.
  - Lessons learned from the COVID-19 response, coupled with the Region's strong foundations in continuous improvement, will support the Region as it responds to the changing needs of the Peel community.
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**DISCUSSION**

**1. Background**

The Region of Peel continues to demonstrate its commitment to delivering services that are effective and efficient and which provide value for tax dollars. A 2020 FocusGTA survey shows that 79 per cent of respondents believe that the Region provides value for tax dollars; an improvement from 74 per cent in 2019. This commitment drives the Region's culture of continuous improvement, advancements to the Region's Strategic Plan and helps ensure that the Region's efforts are aligned and are driving towards the vision of building a Community for Life in Peel.

The Continuous Improvement Program is aligned with the Region's annual planning and budgeting process. Benefits achieved from completed Continuous Improvement Initiatives can include cost savings, cost avoidance, improvements to client experience and staff well-being. Several methods can be applied including Lean, six Sigma, digital self-service, service reviews, program evaluations and alternative service delivery.

## Continuous Improvement Program Update

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged organizations around the globe and the Region of Peel has been no different. This report outlines how Regional employees have embraced this challenge and found ways to adapt and transform service delivery to ensure the health and safety of the community while driving positive outcomes.

### 2. Findings

#### a) Continuous Improvement Program – 2020 Results

In 2020, 40 Continuous Improvement Initiatives were completed with \$2.474M in cost savings and \$3.919M in cost avoidance being achieved, summarized in Tables 1 and 2 below. As outlined in Appendix I, these initiatives yielded additional benefits, such as improved client experience, enhanced staff well-being, and positive community outcomes, which contribute to the Region’s vision to build a Community for Life in Peel.

Notable initiatives include:

- Leveraging existing channels to deliver Peel Infant Parent Program (PIPP) and the Learning in Our Neighborhood (LION) programs through EarlyON service providers resulting in a cost avoidance of \$639K
- Use of Call Back Technology and avoiding the hiring of additional staff to maintain service levels with COVID-19 inquiries resulted in cost avoidance of \$364K
- Shifting to on-line education and outreach to students in the Waste service, saving \$350K annually
- Removing generators in Suite A and using an oversized generator in Suite B to power up both buildings to 100 per cent capacity, resulting in \$700K in capital savings
- Managing external Legal resources roster with \$85K in cost avoidance
- Cost savings of \$360K for the procurement of energy with multiple suppliers vs. single supplier; and estimated cost avoidance of \$170K through the benefit of competitive supplier prices
- Cost avoidance of \$261K for time saved through an improved on-boarding process

**Table 1: 2020 Cost Savings and Cost Avoidance – Utility Rate Supported Services**

	Service	# of CIP Initiatives	Cost Savings (\$1,000's)	Cost Avoidance (\$1,000's)
Thriving	Waste	1	\$350	-
	Wastewater	3	\$841	-
	Water Supply	2	-	\$80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>\$1,191</b>	<b>\$80</b>

## Continuous Improvement Program Update

**Table 2: 2020 Cost Savings and Cost Avoidance – Property Tax Supported Services**

	<b>Service</b>	<b># of CIP Initiatives</b>	<b>Cost Savings (\$1,000's)</b>	<b>Cost Avoidance (\$1,000's)</b>
<b>Living</b>	Early Years and Child Care	3	-	\$2,789
	Housing Support	1	-	-
	Income Support	1	-	-
	Long Term Care	5	-	-
	Paramedics	1	-	\$18
	TransHelp	3	\$40	\$10
<b>Thriving</b>	Infectious Disease Prevention	1	-	-
	Land Use Planning	1	-	-
	PW All Services	1	-	-
	Roads and Transportation	3	-	\$91
<b>Leading</b>	Asset Management	3	\$844	-
	Corporate Governance	2	\$8	\$98
	Financial Management	4	\$360	\$208
	Information and Technology	3	-	\$364
	Workforce	2	\$31	\$261
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>\$1,283</b>	<b>\$3,839</b>

### b) Audit and Accountability Fund Related Initiatives

In 2019, the Early Years and Child Care Services Fee Subsidy Program review was successful in receiving \$250K in provincial funding through the Audit and Accountability Fund (AAF). Improvements are being made over several years; those completed or where significant progress has been made are included in Appendix I, as follows:

- An updated Family Composition Policy implemented in April 2019 has resulted in a cost avoidance of \$450K in 2020 by ensuring that families are approved for subsidies based on the correct family status
- A reduction of \$1.7M in overpayments in 2020 has been realized through greater efforts in assessing and managing fee subsidy eligibility. Part of the savings accrue to taxpayers through the Province and a portion directly to the Region.

Based on the success of this improvement initiative, the Region will continue to identify opportunities to submit additional proposals to the Province as soon as the next round of AAF funding is announced.

### c) Service Adaptations as a Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020 required staff to be redeployed to address the impacts of the pandemic on clients, residents and businesses to ensure the health and safety of the community. A number of planned Continuous Improvement Initiatives were paused, while new process adaptations were identified and implemented to address the immediate challenges of the pandemic. Some initiatives specifically related to the Covid-19 response are listed in Appendix 1.

While Council has been kept informed and involved in the Region's response to COVID-19, some noteworthy examples of adaptations and service improvements include:

## Continuous Improvement Program Update

- Mobilized a cross-functional team of doctors, nurses, Peel Paramedics, Peel Housing staff and other agencies to support people in Peel's homeless shelters to receive transportation, testing, primary care, mental health and social support for COVID-19
- Supported frontline staff at highest risk of COVID-19 exposure with temporary isolation housing to enable them to continue working in self-isolation, minimizing risks for transmission to clients and further community spread
- Redeployed Paramedics staff and Dental Hygienists from Public Health to support Long Term Care homes, retirement homes and congregate settings across Peel to increase capacity and conduct COVID-19 testing for staff and residents
- Implemented emergency notification process in Long Term Care and Public Health to send and receive emergency notifications to staff by text and voicemail, reducing time to notify and respond to emergencies
- Leveraged virtual care platforms to connect residents in Long Term Care with specialized hospital supports, as well as connecting Adult Day Service clients and caregivers with staff and volunteers to maintain social connectedness through virtual programming
- Cross-trained staff in functions outside of their role, such as housekeeping and dietary services, to allow for staff cohorts to reduce risks of potential COVID-19 transmission and outbreaks within the home
- Brought together government, community and social services agencies through the Community Response Table to support the coordination of donated food and other supplies, and improve access to funding, housing, mental health services, PPE (personal protective equipment) and medical supplies for those most in need in the community
- Improved virtual communication and collaboration capabilities for staff, Council and other stakeholders by implementing new technologies such as Microsoft Teams, WebEx Council meetings and Avaya softphone
- Conversion of some forms (Swab Request, Client Health Assessment, PPE Donation Request) to allow online access to the community, reduce staff administrative time, and provide data to support service delivery

Lessons learned will continue to be evaluated regarding long-term implications of these adaptations and opportunities for new ways of working with the community.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Cost savings and cost avoidance achieved in the Continuous Improvement Program are reflected in the 2021 budget report to Council. Additional benefits, such as improved client experience and staff well-being, are also reflected in budget stories as they play a significant role in building a Community for Life in Peel.

## Continuous Improvement Program Update

### CONCLUSION

The Region of Peel remains committed to delivering services that provide value to taxpayers. The Continuous Improvement Program, along with lessons learned from the COVID-19 response, contribute to a strong culture of continuous improvement at all levels of the organization and ensures alignment with the Region's annual planning and budgeting process.

### APPENDICES

Appendix I - 2020 Continuous Improvement Program Initiatives

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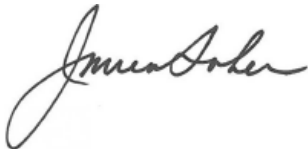
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#### ***Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:***

Department Commissioner, Division Director and Financial Support Unit.

Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.



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J. Baker, Chief Administrative Officer