
Memorandum

CL-C 21-2020

Subject: Business Continuity Planning and Staff Redeployment Update #2
Date: May 21, 2020
To: Regional Council
From: Franco Meffe, Director, Human Resources

Regional Council continues to receive weekly Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC) updates that contain information on changes resulting from managing the pandemic; such as the Region's service delivery and costs associated to the Region's COVID-19 measures. Additionally, you are receiving Report CSD 35-2020 COVID-19 Financial Impacts Update dated May 21, 2020, which provides an update to CSD 30-2020 received on April 23, 2020 on the potential financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Niagara Region, including labour related costs.

Regional Council also previously received Report CAO 10-2020 COVID-19 Response and Departmental Updates on April 23, 2020 that provided updates on Departmental Business Continuity, including the Memorandum titled Business Continuity Planning and Staff Redeployment Update from Human Resources (Appendix 7 to that Report) attached herein as Appendix 1. The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide Regional Council with a further update on Business Continuity Planning and Staff Redeployment.

Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) continue to be reviewed on a regular basis and are being formally updated on a weekly basis. BCPs help to ensure that the Region is able to continue providing essential and key services, and maintain critical activities during an emergency. All Regional Departments continue to use their respective BCPs to identify essential and key services delivery, what services must be maintained, and what staffing levels are required to support these services.

The Region, through their respective BCPs, continues to take into account the shifting landscape with increased demand for staff resources in various areas of our operations. This is due to increased COVID-19 absenteeism as a direct result of illness, or self-isolation due to things like travel, illness, or contact with another ill individual. Additionally, the Region has had to manage additional absenteeism due to leaves of absence for staff child or eldercare responsibilities, and restrictions in Long Term Care (LTC) permitting work with only one employer, details of which are shared further below.

Each Department has developed a BCP by Division for all essential and key services within their Department. It is important to note that BCPs also include an assessment of the potential increase in demand for any activity of work during an outbreak or pandemic that takes into account will demand for this critical function/service increase with less staff to deliver it.

Redeployment of staff has continued within Departments where staff have moved within their normal Division of work and those staff who have crossed Divisions. In addition, staff redeployment is increasing cross-departmentally to areas that have been identified as requiring a greater need of staff resources, some more notable examples include: Seniors Services LTC Homes, Public Health, and Homelessness. Staff continue to be redeployed to services deemed as Priority 1- Essential as outlined in respective BCPs, including in accordance with applicable collective agreement and/or terms and conditions of employment provisions. The Region has continued to have excellent collaboration between unions as witnessed by the cross functional placement between union roles across the organization.

In addition to Human Resources staff conducting at a minimum weekly workforce planning with each Department, People Leaders are able to submit requests for additional redeployable staff that is reviewed against the Priority level in the BCP. The requests for additional staffing needs has notably increased in Seniors Services within our LTC Homes. The primary areas of need have been for Screeners to perform active screening of staff and visitors and additional resources in Dietary, Housekeeping and Laundry services within our Homes for the Aged. These requests continue to be coordinated through a Redeployment Advisor who prioritizes requests for additional people resources based on where the need is greatest, compared to the qualified resources available.

There have been a number of staff redeployments to date; the following Table 1 provides a summary of staff redeployment information as at May 15, 2020:

Table 1 – Staff Redeployment Activity

Number of Staff Identified as Redeployable*	449.83
% of NR Staff Available for Redeployment	13.76%

** Data includes staff already redeployed, staff who have redeployment restrictions, and staff supporting EOCs.*

Number of Staff Redeployed	270.87
% of Staff Redeployed to Date:	8.29%

Staff Supporting Regional EOC	26
Staff Supporting PH EOC	25
Staff Supporting EMS EOC	15
Total:	66

Notes:

1. Active staff count totals 3269 for this period, excludes staff on leave of absence.
2. Staff Supporting EOCs includes Full-time and Part-time support.

The Region continues to focus on redeployment to assist in the areas of our business where a greater need currently exists, namely Seniors LTC Homes for the Aged. The Region continues to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of our employees, including managing any anxiety staff may have with redeployment to work areas they are not necessarily familiar with.

Employees who have been identified as redeployable, who are not matched to a suitable redeployment opportunity, whether it is due to a lack of skill sets, qualifications, or certifications required, and/or the availability of a redeployable assignment, may be approved for a leave of absence or will be issued a layoff notice. Should this occur, these employees are issued a Record of Employment to enable them to access options for income benefits from the federal government.

We also continue to take steps concerning recruitment of new staff. The following Table 2 shows new employee recruitment starts that we have experienced in the past, along with what is anticipated to be new employees starting during the period of this pandemic in 2020:

Table 2: Recruitment Activity

Year (March to June)	2018	2019	2020
Total Number of Recruits	323	347	152

Note:

1. For 2020, we have 209 open positions that have not been filled as at this time; 190 (91%) of are front line workers both permanent and temporary in the areas of LTC Support Workers and Nurses; Public Health Nurses, EMS, and Skilled workers i.e. W/WW.

2. *The activity does not include student hires.*
3. *There are currently 50+ positions that have not been filled; they are currently being gapped, remain vacant, and have been captured as mitigation towards cost savings.*

The effect of this pandemic on our service delivery and to staff is unprecedented. The Region's operations have changed considerably where the sole focus has been on dealing with the impacts of COVID-19, including being completely dedicated to dealing with this crisis. In addition to employee's being redeployed to other services, employee's work environments have been modified, including a number of employees continue to working remotely from home, or remain at home due to specific circumstances.

For the period of March 8 to May 2, 2020 inclusive, the following are major factors related to staff attendance that have had an impact on service delivery, particularly in the higher priority areas noted:

- We have had 266 employees who have required being in self-isolation whether due to travel, or being symptomatic, or contact tracing, etc...; of which approximately 52 employees were able to continue working from home.
- In addition, we currently have 450 employees that are on leave of absence (88% of these staff are in Community Services and Public Health/EMS); this represents approximately 12% of all Region employees.
- Lastly, there has been 1150 staff who have experienced sick time.

We continue to monitor what the duration of the COVID-19 response will be; we anticipate current conditions will continue to persist at least throughout the second quarter. Staff will continue monitoring BCPs, redeployment, and recruitment activity against staff resourcing requirements to continue essential and key service delivery. Accordingly, similar updates will continue to be provided as required.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Franco Meffe
Director, Human Resources

Appendices

Appendix 1 Business Continuity Planning and Redeployment Update – CAO 10- 2020
Appendix 7