

A message from the Chief Administrative Officer

In early 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic started, very few people imagined that it would still be impacting their daily lives as we reach the end of 2021, under the fourth wave of COVID, and as we start looking towards 2022.

This time has been very difficult for the community. Our health care professionals and frontline staff have kept our community operating safely under extremely challenging circumstances. The business community has looked to our elected officials for assistance and guidance through the economic uncertainty, and residents were asked to take extraordinary measures and continually adjust to new circumstances.



The Region of Peel started its COVID-19 response in 2020 and has continued its response into 2021. 2021 brought a new challenge with the Province's mandate to vaccinate eligible residents. Led by Peel Public Health and the Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC), the Region planned and implemented the mass vaccination program, one of the largest undertakings in Peel's history.

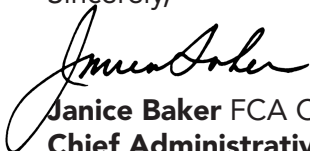
Approximately 1,800 temporary staff were hired and 500 staff were redeployed from services across the organization to enable the mass vaccination program. By the end of September 2021, 75% of Peel's eligible population had received second doses with a goal of vaccinating 90% of eligible residents.

While the COVID response and mass vaccination program required significant expenditures by the Region, the federal and provincial governments have provided much needed and much appreciated relief through COVID related funding. However, these financial costs only tell part of the story.

The redeployment of staff and resources have required that non-critical services, priorities and activities be curtailed or paused for almost two years resulting in a significant backlog of work. We are developing a transition plan as staff and services start to move towards a post-pandemic world. With Council's support, staff and resources have been approved to address the backlogged work while continuing the COVID response. We expect that this planning will help ease current budget pressures, to protect taxpayers for years to come.

Looking ahead to 2022, the COVID response will remain the Region's top priority even as we start our recovery journey. The Region is very mindful of the economic challenges that both the residents and businesses are facing which is why cost containment measures were put in place that resulted in savings of over \$9 million ensuring that taxpayers continue to get value for their money. The 2022 Budget ensures core services can be maintained, with additional investments in key areas such as housing and seniors' services where the community needs additional support right now. At the same time, the Regional budget is forward-thinking, with focus on corporate social responsibility, advancing diversity, equity and inclusion and climate change adaptation. I'm optimistic that with Council's support, our great dedicated team of staff and with the help of the community, we'll continue our journey in building a strong *Community for Life*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janice Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Janice Baker FCA CA, ICD.D (she/her)
Chief Administrative Officer