



## REPORT

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**TO:** Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

**FROM:** Jonna Ison, HR Business Partner

**DATE:** October 4, 2021

**REPORT NO.:** CORPSERV-2021-0039

**SUBJECT:** Single Source Contract for COVID-19 Employer Rapid Antigen Screening Program

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. CORPSERV-2021-0039, dated October 4, 2021 regarding the Single Source Contract for COVID-19 Employer Rapid Antigen Screening Program, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the Senior Manager of Purchasing & Risk Management be authorized to issue a single source purchase order to Shoppers Drug Mart Inc., 243 Consumer Road, North York, Ontario M2J 4W8 to a limit of \$70,000.00 plus HST.

AND FURTHER THAT Council authorizes the Town Clerk to execute the necessary contract document with Shoppers Drug Mart Inc.

### KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- In accordance with the Town of Halton Hills' vaccination policy (HS-068), Town staff who do not meet the definition of fully vaccinated are required to undergo COVID-19 rapid antigen testing (RT) and produce a negative test result before entering the workplace, to be in effect starting October 18, 2021.
- A review of options for administering the rapid antigen testing was undertaken by staff, and it was determined that Shoppers Drug Mart's RT program was the most advantageous for the Town's testing requirements.
- It is recommended that a single source contract be awarded to Shoppers Drug Mart Inc.

## **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020. Since then, Canada, along with the international community, has battled multiple waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the province of Ontario is experiencing a fourth wave of infections which threaten to strain its public health care system and slow down efforts to fully re-open the economy.

COVID-19 has caused significant economic and societal disruption, loss of human life and unprecedented challenges to public health and workplaces. Workplaces are especially vulnerable to outbreaks as they are spaces that people frequent or gather within. Although measures such as physical distancing, hand-sanitizing, wearing face masks, etc. have helped reduce viral spread, vaccination remains the most effective protection against the effects of COVID-19. Federal and Provincial governments have made great strides in increasing vaccination rates needed to achieve herd immunity, but more needs to be done to boost vaccination rates, especially with the emergence of new and more dangerous variants.

On August 26, 2021, Halton's Medical Officer of Health recommended that local employers address the need for a workplace vaccination policy to protect their workers and the public from COVID-19. In line with other municipalities within the Halton Region and GTHA, the Town of Halton Hills introduced a vaccination policy.

The Declared Health Emergency – Vaccination Policy (HS-068), released on September 27, 2021 recognizes the Town's commitment under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the health and safety of its workers. This includes enacting control measures to protect staff from known hazards, including viruses. The policy includes control methods such as vaccination and ancillary controls including education sessions and mandatory testing for staff who remain unvaccinated to determine their health status as it pertains to the virus/bacteria of concern.

In accordance with Policy HS-068 and the associated procedures as outlined in ERRS-Testing and Education Requirements, effective October 18, 2021, Town staff who do not meet the definition of fully vaccinated, must:

1. Undergo an education session as assigned by the Town regarding the benefits of vaccines and vaccination (unless the individual has an approved accommodation); and
2. Produce a negative COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RT) result dated no more than 72 hours (3 days) prior before entering the workplace.

COVID-19 testing will be required by unvaccinated staff who need to enter a Town facility or worksite and will be paid for by the Town for a period of time. In the meantime, it is hoped that unvaccinated staff will be encouraged, through this process, to become fully vaccinated and not require regular RT testing.

The Town considered several options to administer the COVID-19 testing requirements as outlined by the vaccination policy and procedures, including contracting with a pharmacy chain to provide the administration of the testing, purchasing services through a private nursing firm to provide either onsite and/or offsite testing, and hiring and training staff to administer tests, track and communicate results and outcomes. The COVID-19 Employer Rapid Antigen Screening Program offered by Shoppers Drug Mart was deemed the most suitable and effective choice, providing several value-added features that assist the Town to administer the vaccination policy and testing requirement efficiently, ensure the protection of staff personal and health information, and minimize disruption to the Town's operations.

Schedule J of the Purchasing Policy states that Emergency Purchases may proceed upon receiving a written or verbal request from the Department Head concerned, for the goods or services required. For expenditures in excess of \$25,000, the Manager and the Department Head shall obtain the prior approval of the CAO.

After the emergency is over, any expenditure over \$25,000 shall be reported to Council for information purposes only.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report is administrative in nature and does not have an impact on the Town's Strategic Plan.

**RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:**

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Public Engagement was not needed as this report is administrative in nature.

**INTERNAL CONSULTATION:**

The Senior Manager of Purchasing & Risk Management has been consulted and is in agreement with the recommendation.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

This report will be funded through an existing approved budget source.

The cost of the COVID-19 Employer Rapid Antigen Screening Program will be covered by the Safe Restart Funds.

Reviewed and approved by,

Simone Gourlay, Senior Manager of Purchasing and Risk Management

Laura Lancaster, Acting Commissioner of Corporate Services

Chris Mills, Acting Chief Administrative Officer