



STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9 | www.princegeorge.ca

DATE: November 20, 2020

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

SUBJECT: November 19 Public Health Order: Impacts to City operations

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION the report dated November 20, 2020 titled “November 19 Public Health Order: Impacts to City operations,” from the Acting City Manager.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council an update on the impacts to City operations resulting from the November 19 Public Health Order (PHO) issued on mandatory mask use and other social restrictions. **Information contained in this report is accurate as of November 20, and is subject to change.**

DISCUSSION:

This report will provide an overview of impacts regarding recreational facilities, Public Health Order enforcement, corporate safety, and communications.

Aquatics, arenas and indoor walking program:

In accordance with the PHO, masks are mandatory within all indoor public spaces. Patrons must wear masks while participating in the walking program at CN Centre, and everywhere within civic facilities except for the “field of play” in Arenas and the Aquatic Centre. To clarify, masks are not worn in the pool or pool deck. Masks are generally not worn while playing hockey, ringette or other ice sports while on the ice. Masks must be worn to and from the field of play, and everywhere else within the facilities (this includes entranceways, hallways and change rooms). Patrons must be wearing a mask to enter civic facilities. There are no spectators allowed within the Aquatic Centre or Arenas.

Bylaw Services:

The Public Health Order of November 19 does not include any enforcement mechanism to be exercised by bylaw enforcement officers. However, since August 21, 2020, new measures were enacted under the provincial state of emergency, using the extraordinary powers of the Emergency Program Act (EPA) in ongoing support of the Province’s all-of-society approach to the COVID-19 response and BC’s Restart Plan. The Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General issued order [M314](#) “Gatherings and Events (COVID-19) Order” under the EPA.

Under the Order, police, along with select provincial compliance and enforcement officers (Gaming Investigators, Liquor and Cannabis Inspectors/Investigators, Conservation Officers and Community Safety Unit Officers) were empowered to enforce public health orders and issue violation tickets for infractions related specifically to events and gatherings.

The new ticketing authority was not extended to bylaw enforcement officers. Bylaw enforcement officers shall continue their work supporting efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 within the community by providing information and assistance to the public and health officers on PHO Orders.

Where an information and education approach is unsuccessful and excessive and persistent non-compliance is occurring, Bylaw Services shall continue to contact Northern Health Authority officials or WorkSafeBC. In addition, bylaw enforcement officers shall now contact police agencies for support if further enforcement action such as ticketing is needed (the same as they would on other matters where police support is warranted/required).

In Prince George, residents can call 311 but need to understand the limited role in the process. After an assessment by a Bylaw Officer the complaint may be referred to an agency that is empowered to take enforcement action.

Corporate Safety:

In accordance with the PHO and WorkSafe BC requirements, all employees are required to wear masks in any location where they are in a shared space with other workers or members of the public, any area where physical distancing cannot be maintained, and where workers are not separated by a barrier. This applies to spaces such as lobbies, hallways, stairwells, lunch rooms, washrooms, elevators, meeting rooms, shared work spaces, and common usage areas where photocopiers or filing cabinets are located.

All persons are required to have masks on when entering and exiting Council Chambers. Persons seated in the gallery in Council chambers may not remove their mask. Our current understanding is that once members of Council and staff are seated at their designated work station in Council chambers, they may refrain from wearing a mask during the Council meeting as long as they stay seated and within the protected area provided by the plexiglass barriers. Masks must be used when leaving and returning to the workstation areas in Council chambers. The formal written order from the Provincial Health Officer is expected to be issued early in the week of November 23 with further details about the mask mandate, including enforcement.

Communications:

Shortly after the Provincial Health Officer's update on November 19, the City issued a media release and updated signage at the entrance of all civic facilities. There were also related posts on social media and updates to the City website, including the COVID-19 information page: princegeorge.ca/covid19. The City will continue to issue updated messages as circumstances change.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The Public Health Order of November 19, 2020 mandates masks in all indoor public spaces. This includes all City civic facilities for staff and patrons. The indoor Walking Program at CN Centre, ice use at the CN Centre, Kin Arenas and RMCA, and swimming at the Aquatic Centre remain open for public use. Bylaw Services continue to support NHA in providing education and information to the community. Further updates shall be communicated as the situation continues to change.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Adam Davey, Director of Community Services & Public Safety
Rae-Ann Emery, Director of Human Resources & Corporate Safety
Rob van Adrichem, Director of External Relations

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

Meeting date: November 23, 2020