

# City of Burlington - Dec. 16, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

## - Mayor Meed Ward

We're gonna get started. Thank you for joining our public COVID 19 town hall. Tonight, we are gonna ask you to keep your questions focused on COVID. If you have questions that are non COVID related, please follow up with myself, [mayor@burlington.ca](mailto:mayor@burlington.ca) or [city@burlington.ca](mailto:city@burlington.ca). And we'll make sure we get those questions answered but we're gonna try and keep our focus on COVID. As we have our last telephone town hall before we head into the holiday break. So I am your host and your mayor, Marianne Meed Ward with me today are your esteemed COVID-19 panelists. We have another great group around the virtual table here today. So we have joining us a member of parliament Pam Damoff from Oakville, North Burlington and Pam will be joining us for the first half hour. So if you do have questions for her, let's tee that up early on. We hope we can coordinate that. Eric Vandewall, the president and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital, Dr. Dale Kalina is he joining us as well. Okay, Dr. Kalina is on the call, Tim Commisso our Burlington city manager, Alan Magi, our executive director of environment, infrastructure and community services. Chris Glenn, our director of recreation services. We have Anita Cassidy here from Burlington. She's our executive director of Burlington Economic Development, Carla Nell the president of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce. There's the doctor, hello there. And I'm just looking to see, if I have forgotten or missed anyone.

I think I've got everyone and our fine moderator for this evening is Victoria Al-Samadi, my chief of staff. She's going to be putting you in the queue to ask your questions. So this is the first time we've tried a Zoom webinar. So hopefully it goes smoothly. We just thought we'd try something a little different. We will continue to do some telephone town halls. They've been extremely successful. So we will continue to do that in the new year but we thought we would just tuck this additional town hall and using a different format. So a couple of instructions for you. And I'll repeat these a couple of times in case we have new folks joining us. So if you are joining by phone only, you are welcome to simply listen in. That's fine. But if you do have a question you'd like to ask you'll need to raise your virtual hand. And the way you do that on your phone is you press star nine and that gives us a signal. We can see you. And then when it is your turn to speak you will hear a prompt to press star six, which unmutes you. And then you can ask your question. So star nine to get in the queue, star six, to unmute. If you're joining us via Zoom, welcome, you can see us, we can't see you but we know there's quite a few of you joining in. So welcome. You can use the raise hand button, which is at the bottom of your screen, and then you will be placed in the queue. And when it's your turn, Victoria will usher you into the the panelists room where you can unmute and ask a question. You do have the option to show yourself on video if you wish to, but you don't have to. So please speak as clearly as you can and do your best to convey your question succinctly we'd like to try and get to as many questions. We just have an hour with you this evening. So, let's get going. And if you do have additional questions that are unrelated to COVID, the phone number at City of Burlington during business hours is 905-335-7777. Or you can email the general email at [serviceburlington@burlington.ca](mailto:serviceburlington@burlington.ca). So I will do my best to... Hello, Heather. You've joined in?

## - Heather

I joined in

## - Mayor Meed Ward

That's okay. If you have a question, I'm gonna come to you in a minute. Just sit tight. If you can mute yourself for half a second Heather. That's great and I just saw Karina Gould has joined, our Member of Parliament for Burlington. So welcome Karina, a final reminder for the guidelines for the participation in this town hall, we do ask people to be respectful of others. Be civil. Use appropriate language. It's okay to have different perspectives

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or ask questions of concern. That's all cool, but we like to be kind and civil to each other and make everyone feel welcome to ask their questions. So the way we do that is we be nice to each other. So our goal this evening is to help provide you with timely information and accurate information as we as a city and a community continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. So with that, we will get started and take our first question. So I'm going to turn it over to you, Victoria to let us know who that is.

### - Victoria

Okay, we have our first question from Michelle and Michelle, I'm going to prompt you to talk, and then once you unmute yourself, you can ask your question.

### - Michelle

Thanks for taking my question. I think this is for you, Dr. Kalina. I heard on the radio on the weekend that I believe it was LifeLabs is taking, is able to do antibody tests for COVID-19. So I'm wondering if that is in fact accurate. And is that covered by OHIP or do we need to pay for that out of pocket? Thank you.

- Go right ahead, doctor.

### - Dr Kalia

Thank you, Ms Ward, I accept that. It is a great question. You're very right actually. So private labs do have the capacity of doing some antigen and antibody testing. To be very clear, the validity of that testing and where we would actually use it is not necessarily clear. If you have a positive antigen or antibody test it doesn't necessarily mean that you're immune from the infection for instance, but it does mean that you've previously been exposed to it. So as far as I'm aware, the test itself is not covered by OHIP. I believe it costs, I want to say \$75 but I just heard that rumor, I could see MP Damoff is nodding. So that's good to know. It is available, it doesn't need to be ordered through your physician and it can help know whether you've been exposed previously but it doesn't unfortunately give a lot of information about what to do from here, back to you Marianne.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

- Thanks very much. And I will turn back to Victoria for our next question.

### - Victoria

Okay, I just want to remind all callers to press star nine. If you have a question so that I can see your raised hand and in the meantime as we are waiting for people to do so, I know we have a lot of people on the call, so don't be shy. Certainly feel free to press star nine. Or if you're calling in online via Zoom, just press the raise hand button on your screen. But in the meantime, mayor, I know there's been a lot of questions on social media about vaccines and the vaccine rollout. So I think that's a good starting point that I know a lot of people have curiosity about.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Absolutely. So maybe the first thing I'll do is turn it over to our two MPs. I'll start with you, Pam, and then Karina if you want to add anything around the federal government strategy which is the they're the acquisition arm and then can certainly share the provincial and then the city response, we're all in it together. So go ahead, Pam.

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### - MP Damoff

Thanks a lot, Marianne. And when I was shaking my head, Dr. Kalina, I had only heard the rumor too so I can't actually verify the cost of that test but I had probably read the same article you had. In terms of the vaccines you're right, the federal government and our colleague in Oakville, Anita Anand who's the minister for procurement has been doing just a terrific job in getting contracts, making sure that Canadians will have enough vaccine. We've actually have contracted for more than any other country in the world. And I'm sure many of the people joining us tonight watched with great hope as this week, we saw the initial vaccines arrive in Canada. We have a hundred, or, 249,000 that have been secured early from Pfizer. That vaccine is much more challenging to handle because it requires extremely cold freezer temperatures, minus 70 minus 80 degrees. So those started to roll out this week. I know I've been watching the first people receiving them and it's pretty emotional because while we still have to be very diligent with our public health measures, it sort of is giving us a little bit of light at the end of the tunnel. And then we've also secured early doses of the Moderna vaccine. That one will be sent to the North, more remote rural communities where they don't have the ability to store the vaccine that requires the minus 70 minus 80 degree temperature. So it's going to be flowing in over the coming months. Moderna is still waiting for Health Canada approval, but the Pfizer when has received approval. And I think it's important for us to note Health Canada did a full review of that vaccine. And as someone said today, I know there's people that are really concerned about vaccines and they compared these, Dr. Kalina could probably explain it better than I could but, that they're not live viruses, but it's like an email being sent into your body with the description of what the virus is like and how to combat it. So it is giving your body the messages that it needs to fight the virus but it's not actually a live virus. And maybe I'll turn it over to Karina if you want to add something to that Karina.

### - MP Gould

Sure. Thanks Pam. I think you did a really good job of laying it out. The only thing that I would add is just to remind people that this is the long game that we're in. You know, we're very excited about the 30,000 doses that we received that have been distributed across the country. Ontario's already rolling some of those out but as Pam said, we're expecting up to 249,000 of the Pfizer vaccine this month but it's gonna take a long time. It's going to take months to really get the whole population vaccinated. And it's again, you know, it's one of those things that we really have to keep practicing public health guidelines in the interim. I know we've had a number of questions from constituents that said like, can I call my family doctor and get a vaccine? We're not quite there yet. You know, the province is determining who's getting the first vaccines. They have a priority list that is worked on in collaboration with NACI, which is, you know, the national task force on immunization as well. And so all of these things are working together and you know, the province is really focusing on, you know healthcare workers and long-term care residents right now. And that strategy will continue to expand and that prioritization list will continue to expand as we get more doses rolling in. So really good news that we have vaccines here in Canada. We're one of the first, it's fantastic. Just hold tight with us because it is gonna take time to roll it out. And we do need to really keep following public health guidelines in the interim.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Thanks for that. I want to just continue this dialogue a little bit cause I know the whole, and I know we have some questions in the queue, so we will come to those, but I just want to finish our conversation around vaccinations, cause I know it's new for folks and I think we can really provide some good information here tonight. So Dr. Kalina I'd like to go to you and just talk to us a little bit about the vaccination. Is it safe? Who

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should get it eventually, you know recognizing as Karina just said, there are some restrictions in the early days about who's going to get it first. Go ahead.

### - Dr. Kalina

Exactly. So it may be just to add on to what's already been said, which I completely agree with. The best way that I've heard the vaccines described so far is the vaccines are kind of like a license plate. So license plate can't drive around. But if you show the police that license plate they'll know who to catch if they've stolen that car, something like that. So it's really exciting to see that these vaccines are technology and it's technology that really is not that new. It's a research has been built on 20 years of studies. And so it is really safe information, safe studies. And as has already been said, everything is also independently verified. So not only in the studies that have been produced which are all peer reviewed but also by every individual country including of course, Health Canada, who's so far approved the Pfizer vaccine with others hopefully hot on their tails. The vaccines that we have so far, all require two shots. So that means you need to get the first one. And then the second one, usually about three or four weeks later. There are side effects of the vaccines. You get a painful arm and some of them give you fevers and chills. And honestly, I think that's a small price to pay for immunity against this virus. What we can see is that it prevents you from having a severe infection with this virus and more information to come on, what it can help do in terms of spread the virus as well. So there's a lot of information about these vaccines, but I can tell you that as they're being rolled out, they're being rolled out to the people that need them most at the beginning. So what we saw in Toronto on Monday is that healthcare workers that were working in long-term care homes are very rightly the first people that got those vaccines. These are some of the people that are working with the most vulnerable populations that we have in this province. And I think we should all be very proud of the fact that these are the people that got the vaccines first. The vaccine that we've got so far as has been already said, it needs to be kept exceptionally cold. And that's really why it doesn't get shipped out to long-term care homes. That's why it's best inside hospitals like you've seen already. So with the new vaccines, that'll come out in the next few weeks, we'll hopefully be able to get those into arms of people in long-term care homes, but just out of at a very high level, the vaccines truly overall are by far the best technology that we as a population have ever developed in the past 100 years. And this vaccine is really no different. It is one of many tools that we have to help fight this virus and this pandemic and something that I cannot express enough how excited I am to get it.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

That's awesome. Thank you. And just a final question over to you, Eric, I know as Dr. Kalina has said, the virus has to be stored at whatever it is, minus 75 degrees. I can't even contemplate what that is. And only hospitals have that kind of freezer capacity. And I believe there were 21 sites, something like that identified for the initial round of distribution. Do we know yet, do you know yet whether Jo Brant and when Jo Brant might be getting some of the next round of vaccinations, or do you have some already?

### - Mr. Vandewall

Thanks for the question, Mayor Marianne Meed Ward. So at this point, Joseph Brant Hospital has not been designated as one of those 21 sites. I believe that the process is one that's gonna be somewhat regional in nature initially. And I think once we see a broader delivery of the number of doses extended that you will see more sites coming online. The other thing to think about, and by no means am I an expert in this, but given the the different logistical requirements for the Pfizer vaccine versus Moderna, you may see a specific designations of sites to deal with only one of the vaccines at a time, given the specific logistical requirements.

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### - Mayor Meed Ward

That's great. Thank you. And actually, I don't think this has been brought up yet but everyone needs, and I think it's both for Pfizer and Moderna, but maybe Dr. Kalina, you can make sure I'm not telling tales here, but you have to get two vaccines within 21 days something like that, is that true for both of them doctor?

### - Dr. Kalina

That's exactly it. So for all of the vaccines that we've got some studies and some information on the Pfizer and Moderna and then there's two other vaccines as well. Every one of them does require two different shots. The Moderna vaccine is one shot at day one and one shot at week four. And then the Pfizer one is a one and three weeks but you need to get the same one both times as well. So it is as Eric has mentioned logistically quite difficult. So a challenge.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Well, and I heard Dr. Hillier, I'm sorry, not Dr. Hillier, general Hillier, talk about the fact that they that the government may be holding back half of the supply. So not doing first round and then running out, but holding some so that until a new shipment arrives and then they're covered for that second shot. So we have to think about that when we think about the number of doses coming that you cut that in half in terms of the number of people that can be served initially. So thanks for that. There is more to talk about on vaccinations, but I know there's some questions, so we'll pause there and turn it over to Victoria to give us the next question.

### - Victoria

Our next question comes from Heather, who is online. Heather, I'm going to prompt you to unmute yourself. You can choose whether to show video or not, up to you and just a reminder for everyone else on the call. If you're calling in by phone you can press star nine to raise your hand and get into the question queue. And if you are on Zoom online, you can click the raise hand button and we'll see you that way. So Heather, please go ahead when you've unmuted yourself

### - Heather

Thank you. I'm thrilled about all the vaccine news. Absolutely wonderful, and truly amazing and impressive. But my question is about what we're going to do, how things are going to be managed here in Burlington in the meantime. We've been hearing lately about requests coming provincially for the hospitals to make more room for COVID treatment. I'd like to know for Mr. Vandewall and so happy you're here, what is the situation regarding capacity both for treating COVID patients as the numbers rise and for addressing other surgeries, emergencies and so on?

### - Mayor Meed Ward

That is a great question, Heather and Eric and I thought that might come up. So he is ready to answer. Go ahead.

### - Mr. Vandewall

Thank you, Heather. That's a terrific question. So, as you'll recall, in the first wave of the pandemic essentially hospitals were asked to ramp down scheduled care clinics, et cetera to the point where at Joseph Brant hospital we were only 50% occupied. And that was an anticipation of it at that time was thought to be potentially a very

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significant surge in COVID patients. As we know that surge did not occur. However, the result was a backlog of scheduled care and surgeries and clinics and diagnostic procedures. So we've been working really hard as a hospital system over the past six months to try and catch up with that backlog and at the same time maintain capacity for COVID-19 care. So I'm pleased to say today, we're continuing to ramp up our scheduled care. However, the hospital now in this second wave as are most hospitals are ranging anywhere between 93% and some days over a 100% occupied, not only caring for COVID positive patients but then regular care as well as then scheduled care and surgeries. So to answer your question very specifically around capacity all hospitals have actually been asked, and certainly hospitals that are categorized in the red zone under the provinces framework have been asked to get to the ready, at least another 10 to 15% occupancy available in 48 hours time in anticipation of an eventual surge of COVID-19 patients. So we certainly are at the ready. As you know, we have the pandemic response unit available as well. And so that is here at the ready and we were able to care for at least 30 patients immediately. And we're looking to phase up that occupancy if needed in the new year. So at this point we do have surge capacity available. We're at the ready and our hope is to maintain scheduled care not only in Burlington, but also support as scheduled care and regional programs from Hamilton as well. So that's why the PRU is such a valuable asset because if let's say the Hamilton Health Sciences Hospitals become overrun and they need to decant in order to continue to schedule for like tertiary care or like cardiac care or neurosciences that that would remain available for Burlington and area residents. So we've got a good plan and we're ready and hopefully we don't see the surge we're expecting, but sadly I don't think the news is good news in that respect based on the number of new cases we're seeing daily.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Absolutely. And can you talk to how many COVID patients you're caring for right now at Jo Brant?

### - Mr. Vandewall

Yes, as of today, we're caring for 14 patients.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Okay, thank you for that. Great question. And I see we have another one on the board, Victoria usher in our next questioner.

### - Victoria

Great. Our next question comes from a Zoom online participant James. So James, I'm gonna prompt you to join and once you've unmuted yourself please go ahead and ask your question.

### - James

Okay, can you hear me?

### - Victoria

- Absolutely, go ahead James.

### - James

Okay so thank you. So listen, I'm gonna be blunt. I'm really concerned at the poor response of the provincial government to preventing infections and deaths. Charitably, they've been unresponsive to alarm bells, taken

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half measures and in a lot of cases, outright refuse to implement proven non-pharmaceutical interventions by some reports they're sitting on over \$9 billion in unspent COVID relief funds. So I'm really hopeful that some of you are in a position to put some pressure on them to take more drastic action. There's good economic research from the U.S. that shows that whatever we spend on suppressing infections will have a huge economic payoff and also internationally, there's middle and upper income people who have money and nowhere to spend it because it's not safe. And other people, including small businesses and their employees are suffering because people are not spending. In Canada the evidence that supports that says that there's \$9 billion in excess savings and Canadian bank accounts right now essentially people who have money, nowhere to spend it. So the big five interventions that I'm really shocked have not really been taken seriously are paid sick leave. This is a no-brainer. We know for sure people are going to work with symptoms and they're spreading infections, adequate testing, you know, the provincial government had a lockdown March through June, bought them time. They did nothing with it over the summer to increase testing capacity. And by September, we were completely overwhelmed. Asymptomatic testing in schools. I really hope that we are advocating in Halton for asymptomatic testing in our schools. We actually have very poor surveillance right now and every school where this has been done, they found far more cases than they knew existed. And they've actually closed the schools in every instance that they've done that in Toronto. Adequate supports for congregating living settings, the response has been poor. And then another possibility is also isolation housing. I know Toronto and Peel, we're begging the provincial government to do this. Ultimately they cut their own deal with the federal government to do it. So I'm really hopeful that we can have some advocacy from the leaders around this table on behalf of our community and the greater GTA and all of Ontario for these obvious interventions, because honestly all they've done is kicked things down the road, talk about how alarmed they are and do relatively little low.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Thank you for that, James. That is a lot to unpack there. So and there's a lot of really good commentary there. So I'm gonna start because there is so much, there's so much partnership going on between the federal and the provincial government and who does what, and even the municipality. So maybe I'll start at the federal level. And again, I'll come to you first, MP Damoff. And then if Karina wants to add and I know that our friends from the hospital will want to jump in on some of that too. So we heard about how the payments are coming from various levels to get to where they need to go. I don't know if you can speak to that, the 9 billion piece we heard, about sick leave and some other matters. And again, I know everyone has a little piece of the pie on those. So can you speak to, can you speak to any of that and any additional advocacy efforts that you're doing with the province. Unfortunately, we do not have we weren't able to make our schedules work to get our provincial partners on the line, but certainly we will make sure that they're aware of this concern that was raised and endeavor to get an answer for you to some of those more specific concerns. But Pam, do you want to jump in there?

### - MP Damoff

Sure. And I think that would be great if you could pass it on to the two provincial representatives because really that's where this lies. I do pass it on to counterpart Effie, Triantafilopoulos when I have constituents reach out to me on this because there are a number of things. I mean, the federal government has provided funding to the province for the Safe Restart, which has not been spent. On sick leave, we have made available federal benefits that people can apply for. But of course, as we know, labor legislation falls under the provincial government. So people have the benefit available to them but they also need the ability to be able to take that time off without risk of being fired. And so, federally we've made the money available. The provincial government has not made

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sick leave available as part of their jurisdiction. So someone takes it off and I've heard from people who are worried that there'll be at risk of losing their jobs. So there are certainly gaps that exist provincially. And I don't want to, I mean, we can't step in, 80 cents out of every dollar that's been spent on COVID relief has come from the federal government. And I think, we've tried to step in where we can particularly, you know, as I said, providing a sickness benefit that is available for people, but we do need our partners at the province to step up on this. And, certainly I pass it on to Effie but I think Marianne, mayor if you can pass it on from this meeting, I think that would be really important for Burlington provincial members to know that this is important to the residents of Burlington.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Absolutely. And we have actually our provincial partners, our MP or MPP and sometimes more than one have been on every other town hall. So they are ready and willing to answer these questions. They've been very very responsive when we've put it forward to them. And it was just simply a scheduling conflict tonight. So we will make sure that they get that. Karina, did you want to jump in at all there as well? And then I'll go to, I know Eric had some comments to make from the hospital perspective. Go ahead.

### - MP Gould

Yeah, sure. Look I think again, Pam covered it really well. I think the difficult thing from us at the federal level is that we can transfer the resources to the provinces but then we have to trust the provinces to actually make those decisions and to actually utilize them. And I can say that as a federal representative, you know, we, we have been so responsive to the requests for support from the provinces. And then to hear something like that \$9.3 billion have gone unspent when those were precisely for support to fight the pandemic, you know, is really quite disappointing. There's not much else I can say about that. We don't have the tools or the levers to force the provinces to do that. It's a cash transfer and we rely on their goodwill to do the right thing. You know, one of the things that we did, late in the summer when we were talking about the safe restart for schools was we said to the provinces we gave, we transferred \$2 billion or we put \$2 billion towards that. And we'll say, we'll send you the first half. And then you need to send us a letter detailing what you did with that first half before you send us a second half. That's actually really novel, the federal government doesn't do that because we don't, these are areas of provincial jurisdiction. And so I think that was one good thing that we've done. And I think we've learned from that moving forward, but certainly these are things that, you know not just as a federal representative, but as a citizen of Burlington, Ontario and Canada are worrisome but something that needs to be taken up with our provincial counterparts.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Thanks for that. We've now got lots of folks who want to jump in and speak to this James. So first I'll go to Eric and I know Dr. Kalina wanted to talk about the asymptomatic testing piece and I know our city manager had some comments as well. So we'll go in that order and over to you first, Eric

### - Mr. Vandewall

Thank you, Mayor Meed Ward. Yes, I just wanted to comment on the piece about, sick pay and this is specific for healthcare workers. And so we are advocating with the provincial government to reinstate sick benefit pay for healthcare workers who are have either tested positive and are isolating at home. Cause currently they're not being reimbursed for that. And they were in the first phase. So that's some act of advocacy we have underway because we want to incent the right behavior obviously. People are torn, people need to be able to continue

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with their lifestyle, to put food on the table, so to speak. But if you're not being paid because of having COVID symptoms and having to self isolate, that doesn't incent the right behavior and keep people safe. So that is something we are actively advocating for as hospitals. That's great. Thank you over to you, Dr. Kalina on asymptomatic testing. What is it? And should we be advocating for it? I think that he said in schools, but even more broadly. Go ahead.

### - Dr. Kalina

Yeah and James, I think that that's a really an excellent point to have made, and I can really hear the passion that you had when you were asking your question. And I really applaud that. With respect to the asymptomatic testing piece, it is very, very complex. It's important to recognize that the test that we have primarily this PCR test can be positive for a very long time after you've actually been infected. So it is important always to have that context around any asymptomatic testing and any testing in general I completely agree that one of the keys to being able to get out of the pandemic is to test, trace and isolate people. And that starts with testing people. Asymptomatic testing is helpful in certain scenarios, but the most important thing that I just want to stress is the importance of ensuring that people who are symptomatic , who have been had exposures and who are high risk have access to very timely testing. And I think sometimes it's important to recognize that there has been a lot of work that's gone into the lab infrastructure and the testing infrastructure. And I agree with you. I think we can always do better. And I know that my colleagues in the lab testing framework are and are doing their best to get on top of it. But when there is a decision that needs to be made between testing, absolutely everybody everywhere including asymptomatic people, recognizing that some of those people will not, some of those tests will not, have the results that will actually be helpful. It is important to prioritize. So I agree with you and it comes in time with further ramp ups, but just know that those on the lab testing side of things, understand that and understand that the path forward for that.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Great, thanks for that over to you, Tim, our city manager.

### - Mr. Commisso

Thank you, Marianne. And I can speak to the financial from the perspective of the city. I don't I can't speak on the broader thing, but I do agree with Minister Gould that, you know, it started with the federal government announcing the Safe Restart funding, I think it was \$19 billion and it flowed down through the provinces to all the different municipalities across Canada in which Ontario has 444 municipalities. So we were certainly hit in 2020 with \$19 million impact, for us that's significant. And we got initial announcement of \$6 million from the province through the Safe Restart back in August. We're actually just unraveling an announcement today and mayor you know that, because we had the discussion about what's called phase two, which is the sort of further allocation of Safe Restart funding. And definitely we are getting another \$2.2 million to offset our impact, the impact on our transit which people will know we're operating at about 30% of what we would normally operate. We did provide free transit for quite a few number of months, but there's a second component we're looking at which looks fairly promising, but we're really trying to determine, we applied in November detailed applications, so I think we've got some optimism, I guess for even further beyond the \$2.2 million. So I do want to acknowledge I think that, it has taken time, but you know, we're going through the steps and hopefully, you know, I think mayor, you can probably make some comments about today's announcement in the next few days. Thank you.

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### - Mayor Meed Ward

For sure. Yes, it was welcome to hear about that for our transit system. And we're hoping for more, we know there's more announcements that are coming. We've applied certainly for additional funding for the general loss of revenue that we've experienced in our recreation programs. Of course, our recreation and culture head, Chris Glenn is here, and knows all about that. We continue to run the city and we did it with revenues, not being there. It was the right decision but it certainly had an impact on our bottom line. So we are expecting additional announcements of funding but certainly the transit infusion helps. So some of that money is starting to flow. That's that's good news. And we certainly would join our voices with others to make sure the rest of it flows in good order. So we don't have any more questions on the board. So I'll just remind folks that if you are on the phone, press star nine, that will signal to you that your hand is up and you want to ask a question. If you, and once it's your turn, you can get to star six to unmute. And if you are on Zoom, you can simply raise your hand and we'll see you, Victoria we'll see you and usher you into the queue to ask questions. Before we go to the the questions that are now on the board, actually. So that's great, that helped prompt folks. I am gonna ask Chris Glenn, who is our director of recreation and culture services at the city. Talk to us about what folks can expect over the winter season. I don't know if programs have rolled up just yet at the city. What are you planning for the new year and recreation for people in the community?

### - Mr. Glenn

Very good. Thank you for the question, mayor. Maybe I'll start with our holiday program. As we're getting ready for the holiday season, We are in the red zone, which means we are operating within the guidelines, but we have some restrictions. So to give you a couple of examples, we're allowed to have 10 people in a room or on a nice pad and those types of things and outdoors, we can add up to 25 people and now in pools we can have up to 25% of the capacity. So we're able to continue to run opportunities for folks. And we are wrapping up what we would have had in terms of our normal fall program the head into the winter or the holiday program. We've got some things that are happening there for us. So a couple of great ones we have and you will see us over the holidays. You'll be able to still do the Tim Skates, will be a program that we've been able to get over the holidays. Assuming we stay in red, if we go to the grey zone, things will change. But right now we'll be able to do those types of activities. We have Rotary Pond is open as well. People can get outside and skate and do those types of things. Do know that you do need to preregister for those, we can't have the open door concept like we used to. So you do go into our website, [burlington.ca](http://burlington.ca) and you can get yourself registered for one hour blocks to be able to come in. That allows us to make sure we're operating a safe program. And people will know that they're guaranteed to have those opportunities when they come. There's still our lap swims and those recreational swims that people can do the same thing for. So we're continuing to operate those programs. I will do a little plug for our new program. We just put in place, it's a household rental program. We just put that in place on Monday. And what that means is and encouraging people to stay within their own household. You can rent one of our facilities, whether an arena, a pool or a gymnasium, to come with your family and to be able to continue to participate, because we really are trying to continue to have people to be physically active. And this will support both physical as well as emotional and mental wellbeing as we hit through this pandemic. But this particular program, which is kind of fun to take up has been great. Since Monday, I think we've had over 75 families that have looked to book space in our facilities over the next number of days. So that's great. People can get out and get active. So that's happening. As we head into the winter, it is colder but we do want to encourage people to be outside and continue to be busy and active. So as I mentioned, the Rotary Pond is open for activities. We also have opportunities for people to use the parks and the trails and do those types of activities, get out and be busy, bundle up and play is kind of the language that we're using. So we encourage

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people to continue to do that. And again, within the rules and guidelines be safe when you're out there. As you head into winter and we'll go back to our regular programming, what we have started to implement more as opposed to a winter program, that would be perhaps a 10 week cycle for folks, we're looking to go in four week increments is more where we're heading. So you'll be able to register and participate in programs that would start in the latter part of January for the 28 days, and then we would have another program. So that allows people to have a little more certainty that the programs will run for one but two, if we do need to make adjustments, it's a little bit easier for us to manage. A component we have added and we'll continue mayor is the virtual programming. We've added a lot in there for folks. You're going to have a virtual programming for fitness programs, children's activities, a number of things that you can do from the comfort of your own home. And we had to transition, So our instructors are now doing their own videotaping of their programs, we're assisting and that's certainly an area in the TelePals program is one that people can do. So there's a lot on the go and we're paying very close attention to what it means in terms of the zones that we're in and as we need to we'll respond. And when we look forward to adding more programs, we'll certainly be communicating that. There's more I can talk about if you want me to go on, please point me the direction and I'll continue. Thank you.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

That's a great overview. And maybe some more will come out in the questions we have. Our board is lit up now. So I will turn it to Victoria to bring our next questioner in.

### - Victoria

Okay, our next question comes from Julie who is joining us online. So Julie, I'm going to prompt you to unmute yourself and you can show yourself on video or not, up to you. And once you've unmuted please go ahead and ask your question

- Julie, we can see that you are, you look to be un-muted but we can't hear you yet.

### - Victoria

I'm gonna try to prompt her again and see if it works. Sorry. Technology is not always perfect.

- Julie, you're back in. We've seen that you're now un-muted, go ahead. We can't hear you.

### - Victoria

We'll try one more time. I don't know why it's not working. Okay, try again, Julie. Okay. I'm going to move on and I'll try Julie again before we're done. I'm not sure why that's not working. Our next question comes from Moselle who is also joining us online, I'll prompt you to unmute and we'll see if we can make that work.

### - Moselle

Can you you hear me?

### - Victoria

- We can go ahead, Moselle

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### - Moselle

Couple of questions. I was just wondering what happens, if somebody passes away in a building, do we call the police or do we call Joseph Brant? And secondly, if you're looking after some seniors, for example, and somebody comes down with COVID, the taxis won't take them to the hospital. So what happens in that kind of a situation? Can somebody come and look after them? Or what do we do? Like people that are looking after kids.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Great question Moselle. And I think that one actually came up on the town hall a couple of weeks back. So I'm going to turn those questions over to you. And I'm going to assume as though when you asked about somebody dying, what the protocol is, I'm assuming you meant if they died because they had COVID and does that create extra complications? So we're clear on that and Dr. Kalina and I'll turn it over to you to answer that. It's a two-parter. Go ahead.

### - Dr. Kalina

Sure. Thanks Moselle, for that question. So for starters, I think I would like to touch on somebody who's been diagnosed with COVID and who needs medical attention. So I think that it's always the most important thing to recognize and that of course there are a few different avenues to approaching that medical attention. If it is something that's urgent, I would just call 911 in all honesty. I think that's the most important thing, because you'll be able to get paramedic services out to wherever you are for urgent medical attention. Beyond that, if we're looking at other avenues as well, you're right, it is important to have private transportation if going to say a clinic or anything like that. But I would reach out to the clinic. I would reach out to any, so oftentimes the local health integration networks, the LHINS, there are a lot of services for patient transport as well. And these are all avenues that I would approach for standard care and non urgent care as well. At the end of the day, of course working with your family physician to ensure that things like that are set up in advance is always important. I know we talked about this in the context of getting a COVID swab or a COVID tests done at Joseph Brant. There are a number of different avenues that we can approach that, but if you can't leave your house that is, I would reach out to public health. So 311, and ask for paramedics to come to the home, to help with swabbing. With respect to somebody who's passed away, truthfully I'm not quite sure how to answer that. I've never been in that situation fortunately but I would contact emergency medical services as potentially as well, or, I mean, in the context you can also call 911 and help them or they'll be able to help you with that problem as well.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

Great, thanks for that. We're gonna try one more time to see if Julie has figured out her technological, whatever is stopping us from hearing you when you unmute. So Julie, go ahead and try to unmute. We're showing you as muted on our screen. We can see that you're there. Try unmuting. Okay, it looks like you're unmuted. Go ahead and now you're muted again. Try to unmute. Go ahead. We're still not hearing you. That is very odd. All right, we have about 12 minutes left. So we're going to go back to one of our other questioners for second time. But before we do that, we do have two folks from our business community on the line Carla Nell and Anita Cassidy. And so I thought it might be an opportune time to just take a moment to hear from both of you about the supports to businesses, what might be available and anything that's sort of happened in the recent few days. It seems sometimes things seem to change every 24 hours. So I'll start with you Carla. Carla of course, is from our Burlington Chamber of Commerce. Also part of our Team Burlington, which includes our chamber our two BIAs our Ec Devs and tourism, and also part of BERN, the Burlington Economic Recovery Network includes another

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fine group of folks and myself and Councillor Galbraith, sit on that as well. So Carla over to you and actually we had a resolution passed today, so maybe we start there. That was that's the newest, freshest news We can give you, regional council. Go ahead.

**- Ms. Nell**

Yes, thank you, mayor. And it's really a pleasure to be here this evening. And, you know, I think as James pointed out earlier there are some very significant economic impacts that our local economy, our local residents, employees, employers have experienced throughout COVID. And it's been an extremely challenging year and we are certainly grateful to all levels of government for the support and the assistance, the relief programs that have been made available to support businesses and their employees during these very difficult times. And for those who may be looking for additional information about the myriad of relief programs that are available I would encourage anyone listening in to visit our Team Burlington landing page which is hosted on the Burlington Chamber's website that does contain a significant amount of information about support and resources and programming. That being said today was a really important day for Burlington businesses and beyond, our regional council passed a resolution that was brought forward by our City Council who have been extremely progressive as a municipal government and working with the business community and trying to tailor and target relief. And we've thus far had our Safe Restart grant program that was designed by the city in partnership with Team Burlington, very successfully implemented which has provided grants and funding to a large number of local businesses to offset some of the hardship they've experienced. But the resolution today was really important particularly given that Burlington has been allocated into the red or controlled zone based on the provinces reopening framework. As we know there are in many cases, significant public health and safety guidelines that businesses have to adhere to. And one of the concerns that was surfacing quite strongly was the apparent inequity between retail that is small versus larger big box stores. And the limitations on the number of occupants that a restaurant tours could host for indoor dining. And for the benefit of those on the line across the region of Halton, there is currently a limit of no more than 10 occupants being placed on every restaurant in the city regardless of the size or capacity of that business. So today's resolution was really about trying to ensure that the province understands that there appear to be some arbitrary limits being placed on certain types of businesses that are really disadvantaged those hardest hit sectors, our small retail as well as our restaurant. So we're calling for with the support of our local governments, for the province to look at changing that hard cap approach and re-establishing occupancy limits for all businesses that are based on square footage and a maximum number of consumers at any given time determined on that basis with strict enforcement in place to ensure, that businesses are being responsible and compliant with that. So very very important in terms of the work that our local governments are doing to work constructively with the province, as well as the federal government and Team Burlington has been playing a key role in that advocacy strategy and trying to be a constructive partner to bring forward solutions that we think are going to serve our economy well, as we look towards recovery, again there's still a lot of uncertainty on the horizon. The vaccine has caused for great hope, but at the same time our local business community is truly struggling. We know that this is going to be a long haul. We're in the midst of a second wave. We need to each and every one of us support our local businesses to the greatest extent possible. So we can't say shop and love local enough but I think, you know, we're very well positioned here and that there's a responsiveness on the part of local government and we're seeing that manifested each and every day.

- Great, thanks Carla. Anita anything you wanted to add there.

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### - Ms. Cassidy

Absolutely. So, you know I can't say enough how proud I am to be a part of Team Burlington and the Burlington Business Community because we've truly come together in a way that most other areas haven't to create this coordinated relationship. And I'll highlight a few programs that, you know, our residency either maybe small business owners or know people who are small business owners but want to be aware of, and you know you can reach out to us at anytime. You can reach out to Carla at the chamber you can reach out to tourism. We truly are like one team here. So, you know, reach out wherever you need to and we'll get you the information that you need. One that I do want to highlight is our Digital Main Street Service Squad. So if you're a small business owner or you know someone who is, we've got a squad too, we'll work with you directly to look at what you need to do to implement a digital strategy including a website and Google My Business, which is vitally important, because the first thing somebody does when they look for business is Google it and what are those reviews? And they can help you both implement that strategy and also access a \$2,500 grant from the province to help put that strategy into action and get your website going or bring in some sort of curbside pickup and delivery system, if you need to or appointment booking, whatever it is that need to do, that our team can help you with that, and you can contact [digitalmainstreet@burlington.ca](mailto:digitalmainstreet@burlington.ca) for that. And then the other piece they'll highlight as well is we've got a couple of programs that we're rolling out of our partners at Haltech. One is All Checked In, so again, if you want to reach out to us, that's basically a free system that we can help small businesses implement for doing contact tracing that is completely secure. So you don't have to worry about your information being taken. And then another piece that I'll point out to residents that we've been doing as a partnership trip piece through our safe restart program is our partnership with the POST promise, which is a really easy promise for businesses to take. It's four simple steps and you should look for that POST promise logo everywhere. We're encouraging our business community to adopt that and adopt these safe practices as well. But as you're out there shopping, you can look for this kind of turquoise P for POST promise. And that means that sustain of as a place that's really taking COVID 19 seriously and is looking to do everything they can for both you as their customer and also for their employees as well.

### - Mayor Meed Ward

That's great. Thank you. And the miracle of modern technology has meant that we got Julie's question in that came through in the chat. So it's a two-parter. So we're gonna get Julie's question and just in our closing minutes here, which is great. So the first one, which I will turn over to Dr. Kalina, that Julie wanted to know about was the safety of vaccinations for people with allergies. Should they bring an EpiPen just in case to an appointment? Go ahead and speak to that one.

### - Dr. Kalina

Sure, thanks mayor. And thank you, Julie. I'm so happy we got your question. So to be very clear, if you have an allergy to any of the components of the vaccine I would not recommend that you get it. There are multiple vaccines, so there will be another vaccine that hopefully you are not allergic to some of the components. Now I recognize in vaccines, there are a number of allergies, or, a number of ingredients, and so what I can always encourage you to go to is to go to [covid-vaccine.canada.ca](https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca). And that's where you can find all the information about the vaccines and their specific ingredients. Again, just to say, if you do have an allergy, to a component of the vaccine, I would not get it. There are risks associated with anaphylactic allergies and I would not advise that you get them.

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### - Mayor Meed Ward

Great, thank you so much for that. And Julie's second question I'll take and anyone who wants to jump in can, and it's the question of the hour of the day and of the week that we always ask - are we heading into lockdown? So as of now, our best information is no. Normally we do get a bit of a heads up, the mayors and our medical officer of health. There is a dialogue, these are collaborative decisions that are made. They do reach out to us. They ask for our thoughts. Typically they certainly speak to Dr. Maghani at Halton region, who is in charge of our health response for all of Halton region. And that hasn't happened. So that means, and usually they announce it on a Friday to go into Monday. So, you know, stay tuned for Wednesday, but it doesn't look like it will happen. The the bad news though, is that our numbers are still going in the wrong direction. So we are continuing to see increases in our new infection rates. The good news is that we are seeing our active cases start to go down. So several days in a row now and I put the daily counts on, on all of my social feeds, just find it for you to make it easier but you can look at all the data and lots more and graphs and numbers and demographics and [outbreaks@halton.ca](mailto:outbreaks@halton.ca), right from their homepage. You can click on COVID case counts. So if you want even more information then please go there. But if you just are looking for the sort of a snapshot of the numbers, we put that out every day. And that came out as a suggestion from one of our callers at our last telephone town hall. So that was a good one. So, as I've been doing that, our active case rates are going down which means people are getting better faster than new infections are coming in. It's a good sign, but we're not out of the woods yet. And you know, the other pieces that that is also good news, but still don't we have to be vigilant is that our infection rates are nowhere near what the lockdown regions are at. And it's interesting on we had regional council earlier today, and I asked Dr. Meghani, do lockdowns work? Is that gonna work to stop the infection? Because we've seen the numbers continue to spiral upwards in those regions that are under lockdown. And certainly our business community has said we can keep people safe. Some of our safest places in the city in fact are in some of our businesses, precisely because of some of the measures that they've taken. I shared earlier that I get a temperature check, a COVID screen, you know, the whole wearing mask, the whole nine yards, sanitizer when I walk in just to get my nails done. So I feel very safe when I go in to a lot of our businesses here in Burlington. And as Anita said, you can look for that POST promise a sticker in the window and you will know that that business takes your safety and health seriously, and that of all of their employees. So the response was it can work and some of the numbers that they've seen in certain areas of Toronto has helped but the biggest thing that you can do, the biggest thing that you can do is stay apart over the holiday season with anybody that you don't live with. And that is a tough message. I know that's a tough message for folks but that is the best decision you can make for you and your loved ones. Show your love by staying apart, if you don't live together. And also if you live alone, the provincial rules and the medical advice is that you can choose a family to adopt you and partner with in a very closed bubble, so that you can have someone to share the holidays with. And as Chris mentioned earlier, there's lots of opportunities for virtual engagement and other ways to connect. But stay apart, don't socialize, ultimately that is how we are going to end this and kick this to the curb sooner rather than later. So I know we are just about, we are out of time. So I want to say a huge thanks to our fine panelists. And again, they, so Karina had to jump off for a cabinet meeting. I think it was at seven o'clock at night. So our MP Karina Gould was here, had to go, also our MP, Pam Damoff was with us earlier. I want to thank her for joining in. Eric Vanderwall, the president and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital, of course is here. Dr. Dale Kalina medical director of infection prevention and control at Joseph Brant Hospital, always glad to have you around the virtual table here to answer those questions. Tim Commisso our city manager, Alan Magi, our executive director of environment, infrastructure and community services who miraculously avoided the hot seat tonight. So Alan, take the rest of the night off. Chris Glenn, our director of recreation and culture at the

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city. Carla Nell of course from the chamber, our executive, sorry, the president of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, Anita Cassidy, our executive director of Burlington Economic Development, and myself, your mayor. So thanks to all of you for joining in. We really appreciate you taking time out of your evening to join in with us. Great questions. If you didn't get to ask your question then please email us [serviceburlington@burlington.ca](mailto:serviceburlington@burlington.ca). You can send it to me at [mayor@burlington.ca](mailto:mayor@burlington.ca) or you can call the Service Burlington phone number which is 905-335-7777. And watch for updates on the city of Burlington webpages about what the next couple of weeks are going to look like as we head into holiday season, stay safe, stay healthy, stay happy and enjoy the next few weeks as we head into 2021. A year that will undoubtedly be better than 2020 and full of hope and promise. So thanks everyone for joining us and have a great evening.

- Thank you. Happy holidays.