

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

Eric (00:00:01):

Hello everyone. And welcome to the city of Burlington's telephone town hall meeting. We are live this evening with your mayor, Marianne Meed Ward. In addition, we are joined by thousands of residents from across the city listening in. To ask a question live this evening, simply press three on your phone's keypad. Once again, press three to ask a live question at any time. My name is Eric, and I'll be moderating the town hall today. During this live telephone town hall, we do encourage you to get involved and to ask some questions. The mayor, council, and the city of Burlington leadership team chose this format as this is an interactive town hall with you, which means they, and tonight's panelists, all want to hear from you. They have made it a priority to engage and connect with you, and fellow residents, to update you on the current status of COVID-19 and share critical information from the city, provincial, and federal governments as we work to safely navigate the reopening of the province.

Eric (00:00:55):

Our intention is to get as many questions from you as possible. You can ask a live question, at any time, by pressing three on your phone's keypad, someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. Now again, for everyone just joining us. Hello and welcome to the city of Burlington's telephone town hall meeting. We are live this evening with your mayor, Marianne Meed Ward. In addition, we are joined by thousands of residents from across the city listening in. We want to remind everyone joining us that you can ask a live question, at any time, by pressing three on your phone's keypad. Now, at this time, I'm going to introduce Mayor Ward so she can open up the town hall. Mayor Meed Ward, please go ahead.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:01:34):

Thanks so much. And thank you so much to all of you who are tuning in this evening. Welcome. I look forward to a lively discussion and lots of good questions and answers. This is our fourth telephone town hall, and we've found it's a really effective way to connect with our public and hear your thoughts and give you information. So as we continue to navigate a world with COVID-19, of course, the health and safety of our community has to come first. And we have taken many steps in Burlington to get people back to working and playing as much as possible, so that we can all find the physical and mental health that's so important to all of us. And I know we'll be talking about some of those new activities that you can participate in. We do know, at the same time, that this crisis is nowhere near over, and we have watched our friends and neighbors in the United States, in other countries, deal with a rising number of infections this past month.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:02:32):

And so we know, despite the amazing work of all of you following the advice, from our medical officer of health, to keep your physical distance, wear masks, hand-washing. We have the lowest, still, per capita infection rate in all of the Golden Horseshoe, and that is kudos to all of you taking the steps that you have taken since the beginning of this pandemic. But we certainly know we have to remain vigilant. So as frustrated as we still are that there are restrictions in place, you should give yourself a pat on the back that these have been working. We still, of course, have limits on gathering sizes and travel. And we've had to continue to find new ways to connect with each other, to be active and keep our sense of humor and our kindness and compassion through that. The only way through this is together, and it's been just awe-inspiring to see our residents come together.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:03:35):

I know there is probably going to be a lot of questions about our recent mask bylaw. And so I just wanted

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to offer some initial comments to folks, and hopefully answer some of those, so we can deal with a number of questions this evening. So our mask bylaw was unanimously supported at council on Monday, it takes effect this coming Monday the 20th. And it will require everybody to wear a mask in any indoor, public space. And that is groceries, retail stores. If you are working in a restaurant and you're not interacting with the public, or you're in a warehouse area, not interacting with the public, you do not need to wear a mask. So it's really intended for those public facing spaces. There are a number of restrictions, and I won't go through all of them, some of that may arise in the questions, but all of this information is available on the city of Burlington's website at burlington.ca.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:04:33):

But there are exemptions for children, for folks with physical disabilities, for people who need to communicate by lip reading. Anybody with a physical, or their mental health, or emotional wellbeing would be impacted by wearing a mask, these are all exemptions. And you do not need a doctor's note, you do not need to show proof of those exemptions. And we will be providing recommended signage for businesses to place in their windows, so that folks know, exactly, what the rules are and what the exemptions are. And we also implore people to treat each other with kindness and compassion, and not judgment. There will be people who legitimately need to avail themselves of one of the exceptions, and you may see people without a mask. And we simply ask people not to shame or judge, but to understand that they may be using one of the exemptions that we have provided.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:05:41):

If you need a mask, we do have local businesses that have offered free masks, we will be distributing them at city hall. City hall will be open for business, and we can talk more about that in the question and answer section, on the 20th, for some limited services. So there will be some there. But one of our wonderful counselors, they're all wonderful, but Councillor Shawna Stolte, from ward 4, has offered to connect folks who may need a free mask with some of the masks that have been donated. So you can connect with her at ward4@burlington.ca. And finally, we know at some point the city will be moving into phase three reopening. We are not there yet, which we are grateful for, we're not in a rush to move to that. So we are awaiting word from the province about when Halton might be moving into phase three.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:06:38):

We are, however, working on a plan, and I'm sure that there'll be a lot of questions about what that might look like, when that time comes, and we'll be ready as we always are. So with that, I just wanted to introduce our, always outstanding, panel who are here to help me answer your questions this evening. So we have on the line, our local federal member of parliament, the honorable Karina Gould. We've got our local member of provincial parliament, Effie Triantafilopoulos. We've got Dr. Dale Kalina, the head of infectious diseases at Joseph Brant Hospital. We've got the heads of two of our local school boards. So Pat Daly from the Halton Catholic District School Board, and Stuart Miller from the Halton District School Board, I'm sure there might be some questions about what school will look like this fall. We've got Allan Magi, who's our executive director of environment, infrastructure and community services, on the line. And Denise Beard, who's our manager of community development and recreation services here, at the city, so if there are questions around summer programming.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:07:45):

My role, mostly, tonight is to direct questions to the folks and make sure that you get the answers that you

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need. We also have, I neglected to mention, Pam Damoff, our member of parliament for Oakville, North Burlington is also on the line. So that's terrific. So without further ado, I know there's already a lot of questions in the queue, so let's get right to it. I will turn things back over to our moderator for our first question.

Eric (00:08:15):

Thank you, mayor. We do have our first live question ready to go. But first, we're actually going to do a quick survey question. For everyone joining us, you can use your touch tone phone to indicate your response on this question. We want to know, how comfortable are you taking part in virtual and online public meetings? If you are very comfortable, please press one. If you are somewhat comfortable, please press two. And if you are not at all comfortable, please press three. So again, how comfortable are you taking part in virtual or online public meetings? If you are very comfortable, please press one. If you are somewhat comfortable, please press two. If you are not at all comfortable, please press three. We have our first live caller coming up. It's Christine, who's joining us live now. Christine, welcome, please go ahead.

Christine (00:09:01):

Hi. I have a question regarding the GO Transit. I understand that masks are not required on GO Transit and I have a concern with that, because eventually I'm going to have to go back to work in Toronto. And my question is also regarding, at what point do people need to wear a mask and not need to wear a mask? Preferably, I'd be much more comfortable if everyone was wearing a mask in the station in Burlington, on the train, and in Union Station in Toronto. Thank you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:09:39):

Excellent question. Thank you so much. So I will actually jump in about city of Burlington transit. We have required masks on city of Burlington transit buses since July 2nd. But I am going to ask whether Effie or Pam can speak to what the rules are at GO Transit.

Pam Damoff (00:10:06):

Marianne, it's Pam. It's not federal, so I'll let Effie answer that one.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:10:10):

Let Effie deal with it. Yeah. Effie, can you answer what the rules are, or might be, on GO Transit. I know just about every municipally run transit authority, from Hamilton to Toronto, has mandated masks. What about GO Transit?

Effie (00:10:34):

Mayor, can you hear me?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:10:36):

I can, yeah. Go ahead.

Effie (00:10:37):

Oh. Apologies, I wasn't able to hear you clearly at first. Christine, you raised a really important question. And I must admit, I'm quite surprised to hear that, in fact, GO Transit would not mandate wearing masks. So I don't

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have the answer to that today, but I'd be happy to follow up and find out if, in fact, that is the case.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:11:00):

That's great. Excellent. Thank you. And once we get an answer, we can post it in our Q and A. We do post the questions, as well as the broadcast of the town hall, for anyone who missed it or for any question we couldn't get to. So watch for that on the city website, usually it's about a week after the event. Moderator, back to you for the next question.

Eric (00:11:22):

We have another live question coming up. But quickly, we also want to let everyone know that we're taking live questions. If you have a live question, press three on your phone's keypad, at any time, and someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. We're going to go to our next live question, and I believe this is going to be coming up in just a moment. And again, you can press three on your phone's keypad, at any time, to ask a live question. Now we have Ted, who's joining us live now. Ted, welcome. Please go ahead with your question.

Ted (00:11:57):

Thanks for taking my question. My question is to the representant of the hospital. What, currently, is the utilization of the surgical units for a lot of surgeries that have been delayed? And secondly, how much PPE do you have to support that utilization rate going forward, 30 days, 60 days, 180 days? That's my question.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:12:27):

Excellent. Thank you so much for that. Thank you. I will turn that over to Dr. Kalina, from Joseph Brant Hospital. But our elected reps may wish to also talk about how... I know different levels of government are also working to procure PPE. But over to you first, doctor.

Dr. Kalina (00:12:43):

Sure. Thank you very much, Mayor Meed Ward. And thank you, Ted, for your question. Right now, at Joseph Brant Hospital we are, and have been ramping up surgeries from the end of April, actually, when we were given the go ahead from the government to be able to do so. Right now we have entered, I believe, our second phase of ramp ups of surgeries themselves. So things are getting busier and busier at Joseph Brant Hospital. But of course, it's important to recognize that we follow all the guidelines that are issued to us from the Ministry of Health as well, in that we are required to maintain a 90% maximum capacity of the hospital right now. So that involves both surgical services, and all services really, that we have at the hospital as well. So we have been able to ramp up, very significantly, and in a very safe way, to ensure that people are getting the surgical procedures that they need. While recognizing that, throughout the entire pandemic, we've been continuing to offer emergency surgeries, as required, as well.

Dr. Kalina (00:13:53):

With respect to the second part of your question, with respect to PPE. We certainly do have enough PPE to continue with surgical services and all of the services that we're offering at Joseph Brant Hospital, right now, as well. The requirement from the government, currently, is to ensure that we do have at least 15 days of PPE that will allow us to run at the capacity that we have. And we have never had any problems with that, after that mandate had been issued. So although PPE continues to be, I think, somewhat of a challenge nationally, we at Joseph Brant Hospital

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have been working very hard to continue to use PPE in a responsible way, and have not had any problems with appropriate PPE, not only for our frontline staff, but also for patients and visitors, should they need it.

Dr. Kalina (00:14:47):

And maybe, just very briefly, with respect to what Christine said earlier. I recognize that GO Transit are not mandating the use of masks, and I know that there will be some follow up on that. But it is, of course, important to recognize that they are strongly recommending it. And oftentimes, the difference between a mandate and a recommendation is that piece of enforcement. So it's very important to continue to look out for one another, as we have been, in Burlington, throughout this entire pandemic, and have been doing very well. And that really does look like wearing masks and washing your hands. Back to you, mayor.

Dr. Kalina (00:15:23):

Thank you. Effie, would you like to speak to the provincial government's efforts to procure PPE as well?

Effie (00:15:32):

Thank you. Yes. I'd be happy to add to that. Both Premier Ford and the Minister of Economic Development and Job Creation, Vic Fedeli, have been very vocal about the need for us to be able to, in fact, provide support to made in Ontario solutions, so that businesses within our community are able to innovate at this time. Not only does it help the economy locally, but in addition, this helps us deal with the issues around PPE and PPE supply. So there was a fund, a \$50 million Ontario Together Fund, that was launched in support of developing proposals from our local business people that would be able to actually do the kind of retooling that we would need in order to help their own operations move into doing things like preparing the masks, the face shields, and the surgical gowns and those sorts of PPE. So from time to time, the Ontario Together Fund makes an announcement about investments that are being made locally. Now just, I think, this week, there was a \$1.4 million investment to a Cambridge company, called Eclipse Innovations, that are expanding their production of N95 respirators. And so, this has been going on, continuously, through the last few months. Really looking to be able to engage our manufacturing sectors so that never again would Canada, and specifically Ontario, be in a situation where, if we need to have a supply of PPE, that we'll be caught short.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:17:11):

Thank you for that. I'll also ask our member of parliament for Burlington, Karina Gould, yourself or Pam, but I'll go to you first, Karina, about efforts the federal government's also taking on this.

Karina Gould (00:17:24):

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you, Marianne. And thank you for the excellent question with regards to PPE. As you know, from the beginning, the federal government has been coordinating the procurement of personal protective equipment for the entire country, and that continues. Today, the prime minister actually announced our Safe Restart program, which was negotiated with the provinces and represents \$19 billion dollars in assistance to the provinces, 4.5 billion, specifically, for the ongoing purchase of personal protective equipment. We have also, already invested significant amounts of money in retooling for local businesses and businesses right across the country. And we will continue to ensure that Canada, Canadians, and primarily, frontline healthcare workers have access to the PPE that they need. This is a top priority for us and we will make sure that it is available. So thank you.

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Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:18:22):

That's great. Thank you. That was very good news in the announcement today, we just got this afternoon, so, funding for municipalities, which we've certainly been advocating for. So thank you, Karina, and Pam, and Effie, I know you were advocating behind the scenes for Burlington as well. Moderator, over to you for our next question.

Eric (00:18:42):

We do have another live question coming up. A quick reminder, if you have a live question you would like to ask on the town hall, you can press three on your phone's keypad. We're going to go now to John, who's joining us live. John, welcome.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:18:54):

Hi, John.

Eric (00:19:00):

Hi, John. You're joining us live, please go ahead with your question.

John (00:19:04):

My question is, I have cataract, I'm under a doctor's care, and I have to go in again, Dr. McGillivray. And I don't know how long it'll take for me to get a hospital appointment. But I have one more appointment with Dr. McGillivray, I don't know when it will be. And I'm just wondering when I can get that done so I can get my license back. The government cut me off on account of that cataract, so I wish I could get the appointment. I guess my doctor will take care of that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:19:52):

Thank you for that, John. And I certainly think your doctor will be the best person to talk, specifically, about that situation. But perhaps I can ask Dr. Kalina to talk to us about the wait times for some of those procedures, now that they have been restarted. A number of them, of course, were put on hold due to COVID, but they're back. And so, can you just walk us through how things are going with a range of procedures at the hospital, doctor?

Dr. Kalina (00:20:22):

Yes. Thank you, Mayor Meed Ward. And thanks for the question, John. I agree with Mayor Meed Ward, in that I think the best person to reach to your specific situation would be Dr. McGillivray, just to ensure that that's followed up on appropriately. But I think you've highlighted a concern that many people have is that, when are appropriate surgical procedures, and procedures in general, whether they be an appointment or a CAT scan, for instance, when those are going to be done. Over the course of the pandemic, we did have to delay some non-urgent scans, appointments and procedures in an effort to ensure that we did have enough capacity for patients as they were coming through. And fortunately, because of all the hard work that we've been putting in, and that the community has been putting in, we have been able to, of course, open up and allow for procedures to be booked again on a non-urgent basis.

Dr. Kalina (00:21:19):

So there is a bit of a backlog in terms of imaging and procedures specifically. And I would encourage everybody,

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and anybody who did have a procedure booked, to reach out to their clinics, or to the physician who's been ordering these tests, for instance, to look at wait times. There are some delays, but of course, at all times we are revisiting all of our patients' needs and ensuring that, especially as time goes on, some of those non-urgent requests do become more urgent requests. And we recognize that flexibility, and that change is needed. Again, the most important people to reach out to are your healthcare providers, as we continue to really work through our wait lists, which are a little bit longer than we'd like them to be, in the coming weeks.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:22:12):

Thank you so much. Moderator, back to you for the next question.

Eric (00:22:18):

We have another live question ready to go. And it's going to be coming up from Mark. Mark, welcome. You're joining us live. Please go ahead.

Mark (00:22:31):

Yeah. Hi.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:22:33):

Go ahead. Hi Mark.

Mark (00:22:34):

Yeah, The Burlington Seniors' Centre . When can we expect to start to resume some indoor activities there? If we get to phase three, is there a plan there, as far as the Burlington Seniors' Center, to resume some of the indoor? For instance, the snooker and that, at social distancing and mask wearing. Are there any... As for that or-

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:22:57):

That is an awesome question. Thank you. Yes. We have Denise Beard on the line, from our recreation services.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS (00:23:04)

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:23:03):

Denise Beard on the line from our Recreation Services Department. I will turn it over to Denise. I know our staff have been working diligently behind the scenes to see how they might reopen the center. So Denise, what's happening, what will it look like? And when do you think it will happen?

Denise (00:23:21):

Thanks Mayor Meed Ward, and thanks Mark for the question. Everybody's eager to get back to the senior center, which is great, and we're excited to welcome people back. We actually will be starting with some registered programs and registration starts this Monday. So if you go onto the city's website, you'll be able to see a full breadth of what we're offering, and we're limiting registrations during this rephase in time. So I'll be cautious to say we're offering about three classes per day, three classes happening at the same time. So you had indicated Mark that [inaudible 00:23:56] is something that you're interested in. Unfortunately, that won't be available at this time. We're trying to confine use of the center into designated rooms. We are really cautious given the

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population and the vulnerabilities that could be there. We're really limiting the number of registrations and how people are accessing the center.

Denise (00:24:21):

So those who do register with us for some of our upcoming programming, we will be sharing with all of our members how you access the building, who you're going to see the screening process that's required prior to entry into the building and what you can expect once you're in the building. So we're slowly phasing in, which is outstanding. We're offering both indoor and outdoor activities. I would suggest checking the website out for the breadth of opportunities that are coming. Unfortunately, we're not able to offer fitness indoors yet, but we will be offering that outdoors. As I know that our members are very excited to get active and engaged and meet and hookup with everybody else within the membership. So we're excited to welcome you to back and it's sooner than you think.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:25:10):

Thank you so much. We City Council, recently at one of our committee meetings, got an update on some of the programming that has been happening. I believe it was 75 virtual classes. So there still is going to be a virtual programming for those that don't want to yet come back to the center, or their program isn't offered yet. You'll have a whole range of options available to you for programming. Thank you for that question. And back to you moderator for the next question,

Eric (00:25:43):

We have another live question, and again, just a quick reminder to press three on your phone's keypad, if you'd like to ask a live question. We're going to go now to Wayne, who's joining us live. Wayne, welcome to the Town Hall, please go ahead.

Wayne (00:25:56):

Hi. Thank you. My question is for the Halton Catholic School representative. I just want to find out if and when we do get back to school in a physical sense, if the board will be providing PPE for staff members? And second question, in general, when would City Hall be open for regular services, again, such as visits with the planning department and so on? Thank you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:26:26):

Well, I can take the first one. Thank you for that, Wayne. So we are opening City Hall for a select number of services starting Monday. We'll gradually increase that, but things such as making a payment will be available. Our, our planning department is not open yet. However, the good news is that we have now got the ability to receive permit applications, development applications via virtual means. So that'll save you a trip back into City Hall. So we continue to offer that service remotely, and have through the pandemic. But yes, City Hall will start to open with a gradually increasing number of services in coming weeks. But Monday it is at, I believe it's 9:00 in the morning. And over to you, Mr. Daily, to talk about what a fall looks like in the Halton Catholic District School Board.

Mr. Daily (00:27:20):

Thank you, Mayor Meed Ward. Thanks for the question, Wayne. So with regards to PPE, like many organizations, we're in the process now of procuring PPE. We're working with the medical officer of health to determine what our needs

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will be at the school level, whether that's with students or teaching staff or educational assistance. So if we find that it's necessary to ensure everybody's safety and that's really our number one priority, the health and safety of our students, our staff, and our families. In addition to maintaining physical distancing, then we'll be able to do that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:27:59):

That's great. Thank you. And just for folks who are listening, our City of Burlington mandatory mask bylaw actually does not apply to schools, so they will be setting their own policies around that. Mr. Miller, I'm wondering if you would also like to speak to, to the issue of PPE and returned to school in the Halton District School Board.

Mr. Miller (00:28:23):

Sure. Thanks Mayor Meed Ward. And thanks Wayne. I know your question was directed to Halton Catholic, but it's a very similar situation in Halton District. We're in a process of procuring PPE and working with public health to determine how much and who wears it. I would say though, and this would be true of Halton Catholic, we have always had some staff who had PPE. We've always had gloves and some masks and some face shields for some of our staff who work with some of our students who are our most at risk and vulnerable. So we've always had some. Other than that, it's the same as Halton Catholic, in terms of our procurement and acquisition of PPE.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:29:05):

That's great. Thank you. Moderator, back to you for our next question.

Eric (00:29:12):

We have another live question coming up now and it's going to be from Gail. Gail, welcome. You're joining us live. Please, go ahead.

Gail (00:29:20):

Thank you. My question is, I guess, following up from Wayne's about school. I'm concerned about how the classes will be conducted. Will some be taught online and some in-person in the school, or will there be a different schedule for certain students in the morning and others in the afternoon, in order to maintain the physical distancing?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:29:58):

Great question. I will ask you, Mr. Miller, from the Halton District School Board to speak to that first, and then I'll turn it over to Mr. Daily. Go ahead, Stuart.

Mr. Miller (00:30:07):

Yeah. Thanks. Well, it's an excellent question, and at this point, we don't know exactly what we will be doing. The Minister of Education provided three scenarios that we are to prepare for. One is full return to school. One is the current model that we finished off with the distant learning, and how to improve that, enhance it. And one was a hybrid or an adaptive model, in which students would be getting some in-person schooling and some distant learning. We have two different models that we've been working on in the Halton District School Board. We're aligning with Halton Catholic, in terms of timing, because we share buses and so on. So I can't really say, exactly, what we're doing yet.

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Mr. Miller (00:30:54):

We spoke to our own board of trustees last night about the models that elementary, and models that secondary, that are our preferences in which we may land on. In two weeks, we will have an interview with the ministry of education, in which we will present our preferred models. And then at the beginning of August, the Ministry of Education will get back to our board, and all boards in Ontario, and direct us in which way that we should be providing education. So your question is, it's going to be a mix. I would bet that it's going to be a mix of distance learning and in-person learning.

Mr. Daily (00:31:41):

Thanks, Stuart. And thanks for the question, Gail. I don't have too much more to add. We're in the same situation. All the boards in the Province are in the same situation. Stuart and I, we both meet in this kind of format, with the Deputy Minister, weekly, so we can get updates. Certainly, in terms of our medical situation, it's different now than it was at the end of the school year, and maybe different in September. So that's really why we're planning for a couple of different options. And again, we'll take our lead both from the Province and from the medical health officials, in terms of how we proceed. But as Stuart said, we're hoping to firm up our plans within the next two weeks. Then the ministry will make some determination in early August, as to how we'll open.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:32:34):

Great, thank you. Moderator, back to you for our next question.

Eric (00:32:40):

We have another live question coming up, but we still have new people joining us, and I do want to welcome them to the City of Burlington's telephone Town Hall meeting, and let them know how they can ask a live questions. Simply press three on your phone's keypad. You'll have a chance to ask a live question. So again, if you'd like to ask a live question, you can do so by pressing three, and someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. We're going to go now to Marilyn, who's joining us live. Marilyn, welcome.

Marilyn (00:33:08):

Thank you very much. I have a happier question. A friend of mine, her niece is being married in August. She is going to be married in her mother's backyard here in Burlington, but she and her fiance live in Hamilton, and they are having difficulty obtaining a marriage license. I wonder if you could give me some advice that I could forward to my friend and give them some details.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:33:35):

That is a great question. I will take a stab at answering it. I know Alan Maggie from our Environment Infrastructure Community Services is on the line as well, but we are issuing marriage licenses in Burlington at the moment, just because we didn't know what the volume would be. We know that there are municipalities around us who were not. We are restricting it to Burlington residents. Now I do know that Hamilton is starting to open their City Hall, so there may be an ability now to go get a marriage license there. I'll leave it there. We will, in due course, be opening a broader as well. But right now, it is restricted to Burlington residents. Alan, anything you can add to that conversation?

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Alan (00:34:28):

No Mayor, I think you summed it up accurately. We are issuing currently for Burlington residents and Hamilton is opening up their City Hall, as well, next week. Presumably, they'll be bringing services like marriage licenses online or back on stream with that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:34:51):

Thank you. And a big congratulations, Marilyn. That is wonderful news. That's great that that people are getting married and finding ways to celebrate, even in the midst of everything that we're facing. So a hardy congratulations to you. And I hope it's a wonderful ceremony. Moderator, back to you for our next question.

Eric (00:35:13):

We do have another live question ready to go. Again, a quick reminder to everyone joining us to press three on your phone's keypad, if you'd like to ask a live question. We are now joined by Lee, who is, has a question. Leigh, welcome, please go ahead.

Leigh (00:35:26):

Thank you. My question is around the playground equipment for children in our parks. I'd like to know when children will be able to play on that equipment. And to also let you know that there are children, under the supervision of their parents, playing and Spencer Smith Park all the time.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:35:45):

Thank you so much for that. That's a actually a three-parter, I will say. Playgrounds are closed. So I'm going to look to our MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos for any insights she might have about when those would be open. They are closed under the Provincial Emergency orders to keep everybody healthy and safe. And then I'll look to Denise to talk about a new lending program that we have going, which is very exciting. But Effie, over to you first. Any indication when the Province might be opening playgrounds?

Effie (00:36:23):

Thanks Naomi Ward. Regrettably Lee, at this point in time, I can't really shed any light on how soon that will be the case. As you know, the region of Halton is what we call stage two. I'm hoping that in the coming week or two, that we'll move from stage two to stage three.

Effie (00:36:45):

At this point in time, playgrounds equipment is not supposed to be open, even though from time to time, regrettably, there are people who are bending those rules. But for now I just can't give you a definite answer.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:36:59):

Thank you. And just before we go to Denise to talk about the lending program, we do have bylaw officers that regularly patrol our parks. They're they're not everywhere all the time, of course, but they do advise people what the rules are. We know some people have taken off the caution tape. We do our best to get back out there and put it back up. The vast majority of people are respecting the regulations for their own health and the health of their children. Denise, talk to our audience about the lending program. It's really a neat, neat program.

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Denise (00:37:36):

Thank Mayor Meed Ward. Yeah, it's a great program. As of this week, we've launched a toy lending library, as it were, for the community, offering different activities that people can do. And if you've seen staff out at some of our engagements, our festival events, we often bring something called the imagination playground, which is some of these big foam pieces. They're almost like the Lego sets, but much larger, and kids are so creative of what they make. So we have activities like that, games that maybe aren't as popular now as they happened in the past, like croquet.

Denise (00:38:12):

There's a whole range, a list of toys and activities available online. If people go to burlington.ca and asked about the play library, you'll be able to access the request forms, see all the activities that are available, and put your request in. We lend them out for one week. When they come back in, they're completely disinfected, and then their research related out to the community. So we're putting the safety precautions in place. The uptick in the interest in the library has been outstanding, so far. If you're interested or you have children, or the family wants to try something new, I strongly encouraged trying to say program, and you might pick up a new interest.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:39:03):

I've seen these at barbecues, at community events. These huge pieces of foam. As Denise said, you can build forts with them and slides and all kinds of things. So it really is like a playground in a box. And instead of, you know, taking a risk and going on one of our playgrounds that's not sanitized, I really encourage people to take advantage of that program. It's a really great option while we're waiting for moving into the next phase and having those playgrounds opened. Moderator, next question please.

Eric (00:39:41):

We have another live caller coming up, but we're quickly going to do another survey of everyone joining us. You can use your touch tone phone to indicate your response. We want to know, how likely are you to wear a mask when out in public? If it is very likely, please press one. If it is somewhat likely, please press two. If you are not at all likely, please press three. So again, how likely are you to wear a mask when out in public? If it is very likely, please press one. If it is somewhat likely, please press two. If you are not at all likely, please press three. Our next live caller is Jamie, who's joining us now. Jamie, welcome.

Jamie (00:40:22):

Oh, hi. Thank you. My concern is the wait times at the hospital to get into a COVID test, but also to get the results back. It's been a week and a half, and there's been major delays and difficulties. I'm kind of concerned, going into the fall, or phase two, what this will look like when our numbers may start to increase.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:40:48):

Excellent. And yes, I've certainly heard that concern, and I have reached out to Dr. Cleanon. I know he's got the background on the testing and what's happening. So go ahead, Doctor. Talk about the wait times and how that's being managed, and any speeding up that might be on the horizon.

Dr. Kalina (00:41:09):

Of course. Thank you, Mayor Ward. Jamie, you alluded to a week and a half of waiting. If you've been waiting

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that long, I would encourage you to call back to the assessment center line and we can work on that for you, because we shouldn't be waiting a week and a half for a test right now.

Dr. Kalina (00:41:28):

The average wait time for test should be less than five days at this time, based on what we've been seeing at Joseph Brant Hospital. Now, I think it's important to recognize that we don't do the testing at our own hospital. We don't have the facilities for that. So like most hospitals in our area, we send them to labs to get processed. We were actually fortunate at Joseph Brant hospital to have some of the fastest turnaround times for our tests in the Halton region. So we're very proud of that. And really, that should look like a test results that's being returned to us, anywhere from one day to five days. And that has been something that we've been seeing recently. But again, if you're seeing anything more than that, please do let us know. And we'll see if there's anything that we can do to, to help.

Dr. Kalina (00:42:20):

Some of the things that we've noticed as well, of course, as you've said, is that it's difficult to get into the assessment center itself. And that's a problem that we've been working. Recently some of the testing guidelines have changed. And as a result of that, we've been working very hard to develop other ways for our community to be able to get tests done that may not, for instance, involve that full assessment by the physician, which is what we're doing right now. So hold tight on that one. We are working very hard on developing something, and I expect that will go live and be available within the coming week. But we have been working very hard on that. And I agree with you, with that concern of a second wave in the coming months, that's exactly what we've been concerned about.

Dr. Kalina (00:43:10):

To that end, we've also been working very hard with Ontario Health, both Regions Central and the West Region, which we're a part of, to develop different community-based testing methods, so that we can help everybody who needs the test get one, and everybody who wants to test to get one too. At the end of the day, it's important to be able to test as many people as possible, and to trace any of those positive tests, in an effort to contain any virus, any virus outbreaks, and any sick individuals and make sure that they are given the treatment that they need.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:43:45):

Great. Thank you. Moderator, next question please.

Eric (00:43:49):

Jamie, thank you again for that question. Again, a reminder: press three on your phone's keypad if you'd like to ask a live question. We have our next caller. It's Darlene, who's joining us now. Darlene, welcome.

Darlene (00:44:01):

Hi Mayor Meed. My question is for the Recreation Department. I know you opened up some of the outdoor pools a few weeks back. Is there any plans, halfway through the summer with stage three, would any of the indoor recreational facilities and pools be opened? Is there any plans at this point?

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Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:44:28):

That's a great question. So yes, there are plans and I will turn it over to Denise to talk about the pool, and then more generally, what's happening at our community centers. Go ahead, Denise.

Denise (00:44:40):

Great, thanks, Darlene. Sounds like you're eager to get back to the pools and the community centers, which is great. As you indicated, all of our outdoor pools are open right now, and being very well received. If you get a chance, you can sign in and register prior to your swim. I know our lap swims have been very popular to the point that we're adding more lap swims, because they're more than that capacity. There's great interest with people getting back to the pools and getting their fitness routines together, which we love for our physical resiliency, moving forward.

Denise (00:45:15):

Indoor pools, we're looking at them right now. Our plan is to potentially open up the indoor pools, mid- August, in particular Centennial pool, but for very limited use. We are looking at indoor pools for our leadership programs, which is the training for the lifeguards, so that we can get ready to bring new life guards into the mix, come September, October, as we reopen the indoor pools. It will be gearing up and training those staff, which will be key and important for us towards the end of August into September, so that then we can reopen in a safe manner for everybody to recreate with us again. So the plans are there. We're working on them right now. And once we've got those in place, we will be sharing those with council, ideally in August.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS (00:46:04)

Pam Damoff (00:46:03):

Yes, we've got those in place. We'll be sharing those with Council, ideally in August.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:46:05):

Thank you for that. And moderator, next question please.

Eric (00:46:10):

Darlene, thank you again for that question. We're going to go now to our next live question. It is Audrey who's joining us live. Audrey, welcome.

Audrey (00:46:19):

Hello. I'm sorry. I would like to know where I can go to get tested, and do I have to make an appointment to do such a thing?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:46:33):

That's a great question

Audrey (00:46:36):

I have no idea where to go to have my testing done.

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Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:46:41):

Well, we can help you out with that. So, I'm going to turn it over, our hospital is a testing center, but I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Kleiner to walk you through what you need to do to get that. I'm sure there are others on the call interested in that answer too. Go ahead Doctor.

Dr. Kalina (00:46:55):

Of course, thank Mayor Meed Ward, and thank you Audrey for the question. As I said earlier, it's very important for anybody who needs to get a test or would like to get a test to do exactly that. Now as Mayor Meed Ward has said, Joseph Brant Hospital is, or does have an assessment center where you can get a COVID test performed in addition to an assessment by an emergency physician to ensure that you're doing well. So, that's for both people who are asymptomatic, so don't have any symptoms, and for people who do have symptoms and are concerned about COVID. You can call our main hospital line. And if you've got a pen and a paper, 905-632-3737, and then it's extension 6550 to leave a message with the COVID assessment center, and then they'll get back to you.

Dr. Kalina (00:47:49):

Now, as I alluded to earlier, there is a bit of a delay to get a call back for an appointment. This is something of course we've been working very hard on, as I alluded to earlier, but that is the best pathway to get an assessment center visit. They are scheduled at Joseph Brant Hospital. Now, if you are experiencing symptoms and you're concerned, if you're worried right now, you can also go into the emergency department as well. But I would encourage people who don't have symptoms or who have very mild symptoms to call at extension 6550 number to book an appointment.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:48:28):

That's great. Thank you for that. Could you repeat that phone number one more time for those that may just be grabbing their pen and paper now?

Dr. Kalina (00:48:36):

Of course. Very happy to. So, it's area code 905-632-3737, and its extension 6550.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:48:49):

That's great. Thank you. And I know that phone number is also available on the Joseph Brant website, so you can check it there as well. Moderator, we ready for the next question.

Eric (00:49:02):

Mayor, up next we have a question from Laurie. Laurie, you're joining us live, please go ahead.

Laurie (00:49:07):

Hello. My concern is the U.S. Canada border. Can we keep the border closed indefinitely? They have a lot more, they have way more cases than we do, and I'm concerned about them coming in.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:49:24):

They sure do. And yes, the border's closed, but I'm going to turn that over to our member of parliament, Pam

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Damas, to take the first crack at that and then any followup comments Corrina might have. So, go ahead Pam.

Pam Damoff (00:49:36):

Thanks Marianne. And for sure we look south of the border and they're not doing as good a job as we are here, that's an understatement. And as the Federal Government, the Canadian Federal Government, our first priority is the health and safety of Canadians. So, you've seen the border closure be extended several times. And I think you can take confidence that the government is making sure that Canadians are safe. And since this all started the border has been open for essential travel because we know that trade is imperative to be able to allow that to be passing through the border to keep our supply chains intact. But, in terms of recreational travel and people just coming up for a holiday, it remains closed now until the end of August. And we'll certainly be reviewing it, but I hope you take comfort from knowing that our priority is Canadian's health and safety.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:50:42):

Thanks, Pam. Any additional thoughts you want to add Corrina?

Corrina (00:50:49):

No. Pam summed it up very well. So, no, it just to reiterate that as the government of Canada we will always make decisions that are in the best interest of Canadians.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:51:03):

Just a followup for me and maybe of interest because I've had this question from residents by other means through email and such. When people come across the border if they are visiting family, can they come and are they required to self quarantine? We have heard reports of people coming, doing shopping trips and coming over and somehow getting around the border crossing. What can you tell us about that and what the rules are if people are allowed to get in?

Corrina (00:51:40):

Yeah, sure-

Pam Damoff (00:51:42):

Oh.

Corrina (00:51:42):

Do you want to take it Pam?

Pam Damoff (00:51:43):

No, go ahead. No, go ahead Corrina.

Corrina (00:51:45):

Okay. So, anyone who comes into Canada, whether they're a Canadian citizen or not, from abroad, must self isolate for 14 days. That is the law and it continues to be the law. And as soon as they arrive they have to go straight to their destination where they will be quarantining. They are not to stop and go shopping, they're not to stop to buy a coffee, to go to the grocery store. They need to go straight to their place where they will be self

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isolating. That is the law. And there are spot checks that are being done to ensure that people are following. And if they are not, there are very significant consequences. There can be hefty fines and even jail time if they're found to not be following the law.

Corrina (00:52:34):

And we made a change a few weeks ago to enable immediate family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents to reunite with their families. And that is the main exception for nonessential travel coming into Canada. Reports of anyone who's crossing the border to come shopping, for example, that is not allowed. We had been in discussion with the mayor's office and others, but if that is the case, you can call the local police who who can investigate that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:53:14):

Great. Thank you for that. Moderator, we are ready for the next question.

Eric (00:53:20):

We have our next question ready to go. It's going to be from Gail. Gail, welcome. You're joining us live.

Gail (00:53:26):

Hi, good afternoon everyone, or good evening everyone.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:53:28):

Good evening.

Gail (00:53:33):

I appreciate this opportunity a lot. Wanted to ask, school bus drivers and school buses, we keep hearing about school possibly opening, et cetera, but nobody's ever talked about the school bus issue. For example, I know many of them, including my husband, are 70-ish or older. They're often retired folks who are going to be taking the kids to school. I was just wondering, let alone the safety of the children, the safety of the bus drivers too. Has anybody been considering all of this yet or ... We haven't heard a thing.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:54:08):

That's a great question, and Stuart, perhaps I'll ask you, Stuart Miller from the Halton District School Board to take the first crack at answering that. Go ahead.

Mr. Miller (00:54:18):

Sure. Thank you for the question. There have been lots of considerations brought about around the buses. We are concerned around the safety and health of our bus drivers. As you know we've had bus driver shortages in the past, and we suspect that that will continue for a wee bit yet, but the bus companies that provide the buses for both our board and the Catholic board have been in conversations with our HSTS, which is the management organization consortium that runs the buses for both the Catholic board and our board, and they have talked about those very things. In addition, the provincial government has been talking with all the consortium's around the entire province, HSTS, and I know one of the subjects and one of the priorities for the provincial government has been the health and safety of bus drivers in addition to the students that would

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be riding the buses. As a result, there's discussions around lowering the number of students that can go on the bus at a time and what requirements students will have to do on the buses, if they, and it's not as though they necessarily will have to, but if they will have to wear masks on the buses. But yes, it has been a topic, and I would urge your husband to contact his employer to find out what those conversations have been because they have been going on. Pat?

Mr. Daily (00:55:48):

I don't think I have too much more to add Stuart. Certainly student transportation has been something that both our boards and our bus consortium has been trying to work through to ensure that we can get students to school in the safest way we can in a timely manner, which is really what our HSTS is always charged to do.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:56:11):

Great. Thank you for that. Excellent question. They've all been really great tonight. Moderator, we are ready for our next one.

Eric (00:56:19):

We have another question now coming up from Tim. Tim, welcome, please go ahead.

Tim (00:56:25):

Well, thank you for taking my call tonight. My concern is primarily not with what we're doing locally, because I think locally we're doing a good job, but it pertains to a question should go to our representatives, so the Federal Government, in connection with international travel, immigration inflow for persons entering Canada, whether they are Canadian citizens or whether they are not. And my question specifically here is, who adjudicates the quarantine plan, and who monitors if it's being respected, and is the cost of that downloaded to the region? So, that's a, pardon me, it's a three part, but they're all quick answers.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:57:03):

That's a great one. I'll turn it maybe to you MP Damoff to kick us off on that one.

Pam Damoff (00:57:13):

... Downloaded to the region. Am I still here?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:57:17):

Go ahead. Yep. Yeah. You're on now. Go ahead.

Pam Damoff (00:57:19):

Okay. It is not downloaded to the region. In terms of monitoring it, when you cross the border you give your information. And I was really pleasantly surprised to hear from, not surprised, but I was pleased to hear from Oakville town clerk, Cathy Derrick, who said that she knows two people who had come into Canada, Canadians who were returning and were required to quarantine. And there was followup, and you have to present a plan. I know of seniors who were actually required to stay at a hotel near the airport for two weeks because they didn't have the means to be able to quarantine on their own. And they were extremely pleased with how Canadian border services monitored how they were doing, that they did have an effective plan.

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Pam Damoff (00:58:11):

And there is follow up to make sure people are doing what they're supposed to be doing. And as Corrina said earlier, this is the law and there are fines, very hefty fines involved if you don't quarantine. And it's not immigration. These are Canadians in permanent residents that are coming into Canada right now. And I'm not sure if you were aware of that. The way you started your question, it was about immigration inflow, and I'm hoping that you know that these are Canadians in permanent residents who are returning to Canada or family members, spouse, sons, daughters, who are being reunited with their family.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:58:58):

Thanks for that Pam. We're ready for our next question.

Eric (00:59:02):

We have another question now. This one is coming up. But a quick reminder to everyone joining us to press three on your phone's keypad if you'd like to ask a live question. We have Lisa who is joining us now. Lisa, welcome. Please go ahead with your question.

Lisa (00:59:17):

Hello, everyone. I have three questions. The first is about, is it available and safe to make an appointment for kids' vaccine? The second one is, my friend and I be good at calligraphy. We made some calligraphy to send doctors, nurses, all of them. Want to encourage them and thanks for they're works. But now I cannot find it from the hospital website which email can I send the calligraphy, a photo to them, and then after the pandemic I want to presented the calligraphy. The last question is about virtual class. Because I'm a cultural teacher I would like to teach my residents some Chi culture. I think that you to it's very helpful for us, especially in the January period. So, I don't know how to apply this volunteer class for the residents. Thank you very much.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:00:54):

Great questions. Thank you so much, Lisa. So, we'll break them down. The first one was around kids getting vaccinated before they go back to school. And the question, I'll turn this over to you, Dr. Kleiner, about vaccines and whether they're okay and they're safe to get and should students be getting those vaccines?

Dr. Kalina (01:01:19):

Thanks Mayor Meed Ward. Yeah, I think I can actually answer the first and also the second question about the donation as well.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:01:26):

The calligraphy?

Dr. Kalina (01:01:26):

Yeah. So, Lisa, thank you very much. That's a very kind gesture as well. I really appreciate all the support that we've got from the community and from people just like you. With respect to kids being vaccinated, it's very important to continue to remember that as the pandemic goes on, kids still grow up and so do their immune systems. So, it's very important to get kids vaccinated as much as possible in accordance with the regular vaccine schedule. So, before kids do go back to school I would encourage everybody with children to reach out

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to your family physicians and make sure that there are no further vaccines and to make sure that the kids are up to date.

Dr. Kalina (01:02:13):

I can't speak towards the current vaccine programs in schools right now, but I believe that they would be getting back into a plan when kids are getting back into school in-person as well. But it is important to remember that just because we've got a pandemic doesn't of course mean that other health issues go away. With respect to that kind offer of you for your donation, your calligraphy to the hospital, I can actually give you an email address for donations. So, I'll say it twice, but it's actually coviddonations@josephbranthospital.ca. So, it's C-O-V- I-D-D-O-N-A-T-I-O-N-S, @josephbranthospital.ca. Again, coviddonations@josephbranthospital.ca. And they'd be very happy to speak with you about all of that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:03:17):

That's great. Thank you. Then the final question was about volunteering some time to teach some classes about multiculturalism. So, Pat, I'm going to turn that over to you, the head of the Halton Catholic District School Board to give her any advice or suggestions that you might have on that.

Mr. Daily (01:03:37):

Thanks Mayor Meed Ward. And thanks very much for that offer. We always do encourage volunteers in our schools, and I would typically say to approach the school that's closest to your house to see if there's a volunteer opportunity there. But I would say, at least certainly in the early fall, because we're not sure exactly how schools are open, we will be limiting parents and volunteers and access to the building just to ensure the safety of all of our staff and students. So, I'd suggest you could either go to our website or the public board's website, the contact information is there, and we'd be able to give you some more information.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:04:25):

That's great. Thank you for that. And thank you for your offer, Lisa. Back to you moderator for our next question.

Eric (01:04:35):

We have another question coming up now. Again, a quick reminder to press three on your phone's keypad if you'd like to ask a live question. This question is coming up from Diane who has requested that I ask the question directly. It's regarding elementary schools, and the first two weeks kids usually get sick because of germs. How will we be able to tell if it is COVID or not? Also, what happens if a student tests positive?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:05:01):

Great question. And I think Stuart from the Halton District School Board had to jump off the call. So

Mr. Miller (01:05:10):

I'm still on.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:05:11):

Are you still here? Okay. Awesome. Great. I'll turn it to you to take the first crack before you got to go. Go ahead, Stuart.

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Mr. Miller (01:05:18):

Sure. Thanks for the question Diane. And that's certainly a tricky situation. In terms of the first two weeks of school, really, the best people to determine what a student may be ailing from are their doctors. Therefore I would urge that parents to take their kids to the doctors to find out. If it is COVID then they would need to be tested, and the doctor would recommend that, or follow the protocols that Public Health has put out to get tested for that. If a student tests positive for COVID, at this point the direction we have from Public Health is that the school will remain open, the class would be moved to another location, contact tracing would be done of the students that were in direct contact.

Mr. Miller (01:06:10):

They have low risk and high risk, and perhaps the doctor could explain the difference between low risk and high risk. And just the classroom would be cleaned in all places in which that that student had been who had tested positive. But at this point the advice from Public Health is that the school would remain open, the class would remain open, and the kids would be moved to another class until cleaning had occurred. And of course the student who had tested positive would then be quarantined, and those that were deemed high risk would also not be back in school for the 14 day period. That's the current thinking and that's what Public Health is telling us. So ...

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:06:54):

That's great.

Mr. Miller (01:06:54):

Pat, do you have anything to add?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:06:54):

Go ahead Pat.

Mr. Daily (01:06:55):

Thanks. We're really fortunate here in Halton in both our boards, the good working relationship we've got with our medical officer of health. We've been meeting with Dr. McGeeney or representatives from the board weekly. Actually, I think there's another meeting tomorrow. And I know both Stuart and I want to make sure we open schools in the safest way we possibly can and then keep them open in the safest way we possibly can. So, we'll continue to take that direction from our Public Health officials.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:07:22):

That's great. Thank you. And Dr. Kleiner, did you want to comment on the high risk low risk students?

Dr. Kalina (01:07:33):

Sure. Thank you Mayor Meed Ward, I'm very to do that. At the end of the day all the hard work that is going into the reopening of schools and the hard work that Dr. McGeeney and Dr. Lobo, the medical officer of health and assistant medical officer of health have been putting into this really centers around how to deal with situations like this to ensure that as many people possible stay as safe as possible. So, all of the procedures that were mentioned already are put in place to make sure that everybody stays safe and healthy.

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Dr. Kalina [01:08:06]:

Now, in terms of things like high risk individuals, of course we do still think of children across the board as being very low risk for complications for COVID. In actual fact, it seems that this virus particularly does not tend to give any severe symptoms to a lot of children, but it is so important to recognize that children do get the virus and that it's important not to spread it. That said, it is still important to look out for risk factors and things to watch out for if you do and your children have respiratory illness or otherwise immuno-compromised. Then of course the level of exposure. If kids are close together because they're playing around with each other, sneezing close to each other, things like that, as kids all want to do, then those are higher risk events. And that's exact ...

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:09:04]

Speaker 1 [01:09:03]:

... to do, then those are higher-risk events, and that's exactly what public health is looking into to ensure that, as I said, everybody's staying as safe and healthy as possible.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward [01:09:12]:

Thank you for that, and moderator, we're ready for the next question.

Eric [01:09:18]:

We have our next live question now coming up from Laura. Laura, welcome. You're joining us live. Please go ahead.

Laura [01:09:25]:

Yes. I'm just wondering when schools open, will the before and afterschool programs be in place?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward [01:09:32]:

Another excellent question. I'll turn that over to you, Mr. Daley, Halton Catholic District School Board to start us off and then, Stewart, anything else you want to add. Go ahead, Pat.

Mr. Daily [01:09:42]:

Thank you, mayor. Yes, our plan ... We're hopeful that when we come back to school that the students are able to come back to school and that our before and after school programs will be able to operate in a safe manner. Right now we're creating cohorts of 15 students or less. So, our planning coming back right now are in fairly small numbers. And I would guarantee that the before and after school programs would have similar sort of limitations. But our hope is that all of our students can come back. Certainly I know that's what parents want. That's what our teachers want. So, we're hopeful that we can offer as fulsome a program from the beginning of the day to the end of the day, as safely as possible.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward [01:10:33]:

Anything to add Mr. Miller?

Mr. Miller [01:10:36]:

Yeah, I would just say that we have, as does the Catholic board, we have a superintendent responsible for

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before and after school programs. And they are working with their provincial counterparts, including the government and the Ministry of Education to allow those to hopefully open safely. So there is a protocol that's being put in place, and I think there'll be communication coming around that early to mid-August.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:11:06):

Great, thank you. Moderator, next question, please.

Eric (01:11:11):

We have another live question coming up, but quickly, we're going to do a survey question. So using your touch-tone phone, you can indicate your response. We want to know, once the city of Burlington resumes in-person public meetings, how likely are you to attend in-person public meetings? If it is very likely, please press one. If it is somewhat likely, please press two. And if you are not at all likely please press three. So again, once the city of Burlington resumes in-person public meetings, how likely are you to attend in-person public meetings? If it is very likely, please press one. If it is somewhat likely, please press two. And if you are not at all likely please press three. Now we have our next live question. It's from Danielle. Who's joining us live now. Daniel welcome, please go ahead.

Danielle (01:12:00):

Hello. Thank you for taking my question. I have a disability and the pandemic has had a bit of a financial strain for me. I know that the federal government announced a one-time payment to assist Canadians with disabilities, but I haven't heard anything since that announcement was made in terms of when this will be paid out. Does the federal representative have any updates or are they able to provide me any further information?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:12:31):

Sure. I'll turn that maybe to you, Pam Damoff, our MP for Oakville North Burlington. And then if Karina wants to add anything, go ahead.

Pam Damoff (01:12:41):

Sure. Thanks for the question. And it's something that we were trying to do, and we had brought it to parliament and sadly, in order to pass the legislation it requires unanimous consent. Because the way that the house is sitting now, so we were trying to get unanimous consent and the conservatives refused to provide it. So we were not able to introduce it. I know that the government has been trying to find a way to see if that can be provided to those living with a disability outside of legislation, but I don't believe, and maybe Karina can add to this as well, but I don't believe that we have found a way to do it yet. We still want to, it was \$600 that we know would be really helpful for you. And we know that you need it. So, it is something that we're still working on. And I know that gives you little comfort when you're waiting for money to be able to do things, but we just weren't able to get the legislation passed in the house in order to get it done. Karina, did you want to add anything?

Karina Gould (01:13:55):

No, Pam, you've covered it. As the federal government, we announced it because we were hopeful that all parties would support this kind of initiative. Unfortunately, the conservatives chose not to for their own political reasons. But we are still looking at different options to see how we can get money into the pockets of people with disabilities. Trying to find ways that perhaps do not require legislation, but this is still something that is very much on the table. And I know that Mr. Caltreau is actively working on this on a daily basis to see what

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other options are available or whether we could reintroduce legislation. However, we, as Pam said, have to get the support of all parties to be able to do that right now.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:14:50):

Thank you very much. Back to you, moderator, for our next question.

Eric (01:14:55):

We have another live question coming up now from Kathy. Kathy, welcome. Please go ahead.

Kathy (01:15:01):

Thank you very much. Yes. I'm ... Sorry. My voice is absolutely [inaudible 01:15:07] asthma, and I was hospitalized in August with aspiration pneumonia. So I don't have the COVID, but I've been ... My doctor, we just did ... I decided to self-quarantine for the whole 14 weeks. I live at Admiral's Walk. My father is at Lakeshore Chartwell in retirement home, with prostate and Parkinson's. I've not been able to go in for four months. They require a COVID negative every two weeks. And my doctor has said with blocked tear ducts and my sinuses that it would not be in my best interest to have it. She sent a note saying that I've been quarantined. I can wear a mask and go in, but they won't allow me. So my [inaudible 01:15:54] is that there are other people on the third floor, like my father, they'd been friends of our family since we're 18. They can go in with masks and calls themselves movers and moves your mother's furniture around and visit. And they don't have the test either.

Kathy (01:16:14):

And I know that from firsthand, but for my sister and I, we cannot go in and it just seems ... I don't want something to happen to my father, he's very frail. To get him out is very tricky. So, the thing is if we can't get in to see him with masks, I don't know how long ... This every two weeks is not in my best interest for my health. So, I don't know going forward. Will the retirement home be issuing PPE with masks and letting go of the every two week COVID test, when-

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:16:56):

We just lost you there, Kathy. Sorry about that. You seem to be cutting in, but I think we got the question for some ... I'm just so sorry to hear about your own health situation of course. And it's a terrible loss not to be able to see the members of your family, your sister, your father. So, I'm going to ask our MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos to talk to us about, there was recently a change of regulations to allow people to start visits at long-term care and retirement. But I don't know if this is an area of provincial jurisdiction or whether the retirement homes can set their own additional rules and what assistance might be there for her and this family. Effie, what can you tell us?

Effie (01:17:50):

Thank you very much, mayor, for that question. Thank you, Kathy, for your call. I know it's been a tremendous strain on families not being able to visit their loved ones, whether it's in retirement homes or in the long-term care home. So I'm assuming from what Kathy said that this is a retirement home, which does have slightly different parameters around it for long-term care. Very recently, particularly for those homes where there is no COVID outbreak, either in resident care or amongst staff, they have been able to allow limited visits of family members.

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Effie (01:18:32):

Originally, it was one visitor per family member per resident, and now they're allowing two visitors per resident. And it was done in an outdoor setting so that you'd be able to have maybe about 10 minutes to 30 minutes with your loved one in an outdoor setting at a long-term care home. Now in the case of the retirement home, if this is a retirement home, I don't know what in fact has been put in to deal with those homes. I would imagine that there would be a little bit more flexibility in terms of the rules, but it really depends on the frailty of the residents there.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:19:15):

Thanks for that, Effie. And, moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Eric (01:19:22):

We have our next caller. It is Patricia who's joining us now. Patricia, welcome. Please go ahead.

Patricia (01:19:28):

Thank you. I understand that the buses are still on back door only. When will I be able to enter and exit by the front door?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:19:41):

That is a great question. I can probably answer that, but I'm going to ask if Allan Maggie, who's our executive director of Environment Infrastructure Community Services wants to weigh in with the most up-to-date information about what's happening with our transit system. Go ahead, Allan.

Allan Maggie (01:19:58):

Yeah. Thanks, Patricia. The front doors, we're in the process of installing shields for the drivers to allow that boarding. I don't have the exact timing. I know that that is in progress and that there were some delays in order to procure that shielding. But that is in the works and we are hopeful that we'll very soon be able to go back through the front door boarding.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:20:29):

Thank you for that, Allan. And we are ready for our next question, moderator

Eric (01:20:34):

Up next we have a question from Jeremy. Jeremy, you're joining us live, please go ahead.

Jeremy (01:20:41):

Thank you. Please pass my time to somebody else as Stuart, Nora, and Patrick Daley have already answered my question.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:20:50):

Awesome. Thank you, Jeremy. We are ready for our next question and appreciate you joining us.

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Eric (01:20:57):

Up next we have a question it's going to be, I believe, it's going to be from Diane. Diane, welcome. You're joining us live.

Diane (01:21:08):

Hello?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:21:09):

Hi, Diane. You're on the air.

Diane (01:21:11):

Oh, hi. First of all, thank you for doing this. I think it's a wonderful thing. My question was regarding the use of the word masks and face shields. There are a number of people that I have worked with who cannot wear the mask for breathing issues, oxygen, whatever. So, could you please clarify whether or not going into the odd place they have to go into, a face shield is appropriate? And the other question becomes, when you think you need to test, how do you get there if you don't drive? You don't drive, so do you take a taxi? Don't have somebody to drive you, and that becomes an issue in terms of getting over to Joe Brant to get the testing done. Now, I know the doctor did mention in the earlier broadcast that they're looking at some onsite testing, but that's a question that's out there with the senior population.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:22:25):

Thank you so much for those, Diane. I'll take a stab at a couple of those. The first one is, how you can get to the hospital. If you are near a bus stop in Burlington, the bus does run to the hospital. And transit of course, right now is free. So, it doesn't cost you anything. If you are not able to walk to a bus stop for health reasons, you can get accepted onto our Handi-Van transit, which will pick you up and drop you off. And that is also free right now. So those are two options to get to the hospital. I will tell you, in terms of the city's bylaw, we allowed face shields or masks in our indoor spaces, but I will ask Dr. Kalina to speak to the whole issue of face shields versus masks in terms of their ability to protect against the virus. So, go ahead, doctor.

Dr. Kalina (01:23:31):

Thanks mayor. And thanks, Diane, for the question. I appreciate your concern with respect to people who can and cannot wear masks specifically. So there are a lot of reasons when face shields are important as well. And the way that we use space shields at the hospital is certainly to decrease the risk of droplets and that sort of thing, especially getting into our eye. Now at the hospital, we do wear both a face mask and a shield, but I recognize that the bylaw in Burlington does speak to wearing a shield or a face mask. And that certainly gives a little bit of an option to individuals, especially, to be able to see one's mouth moving and to be able to read mouths. Now, there is not a lot of research out there about how well face shields prevent spreading of an infection.

Dr. Kalina (01:24:27):

And that really is one of the major reasons why we all wear face shields, is to protect one another. I think that they certainly do offer some protection. I think that if you're able to wear a mask, it would be beneficial and probably better for those around us than a face shield. But I think a face shield can still help as well. And I

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think when we're keeping in mind that all of these measures and all of these things that we are doing are all to protect one another. That's what we need to keep in mind, is that any incremental benefit that we add by protecting one another really improves the health of our overall community. So really wearing a mask is better, but if you have health conditions that prevent you from being able to wear a mask, I think a face shield is a great alternative as well.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:25:20):

Thank you for that. We are ready for our next, and possibly last, question. We're in our final minutes here. Go ahead, moderator.

Eric (01:25:27):

Well, mayor, we do have another live question. It's from Francis. Francis, welcome. Please go ahead.

Francis (01:25:33):

Thank you, mayor. My question is to Karina Gould. Karina, can you explain or justify why the government of Canada, and cabinet for that matter, is allowing the airlines Air Canada, Transat, and WestJet not to give cash rebates back to those of us who have purchased tickets. We've listened to the doctor and listened to our health folks, they don't travel yet. The government is not forcing the airlines to give cash back. Please [crosstalk 01:26:03] please.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:26:08):

Go ahead, Karina.

Karina Gould (01:26:10):

Sure. Thank you for that question. And look, we know that a lot of people are suffering right now because they paid for airline tickets and they haven't been able to receive a refund. This is a very difficult time for a lot of different sectors, including the airline sector right now. I understand that Air Canada, WestJet, and Air Transat are providing cash vouchers that can be used to purchase flights within the next 12 months and extended depending on what the issue is. But this is something that I have raised with Minister Garneau, our Minister of Transportation. I've relayed these concerns from the people in Burlington, just understanding these difficult times and recognizing that this of course would go a long way right now. So those conversations are ongoing, but it's an issue that I continue to raise with my colleagues in Ottawa. And we'll continue to advocate on behalf of people in Burlington who are affected.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:27:20):

Thank you for that. And back to you, moderator.

Eric (01:27:24):

Thank you, Mayor Meed Ward. Now we actually are just reaching the end of the event with the last couple of minutes. Are there some closing remarks you wanted to share with everyone joining us?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:27:34):

Thank you. Yes. Well, I really would like to thank the public who has joined the call tonight. As always, the

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questions were outstanding and I think of value to all of the listeners on the line. I want to particularly thank our panelists who have provided such excellent information. So we had our member of parliament, Karina Gould, our member of parliament, Pam Damoff, our member of provincial parliament, Effie Triantafilopoulos, Dr. Dale Kalina from the Joseph Brant Hospital, Allan Maggie from the City of Burlington, Denise Beard from City of Burlington Recreation Services, Pat Daly from the Halton Catholic District School Board and Stuart Miller from the Halton District School Board.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:28:16):

Thank you to all of them. Thank you for joining. And we will be posting the transcript, if you will, of the audio of the Town Hall, as well as the questions and answers on the City of Burlington website that usually takes about a week to turn around. But if you missed it or you know folks in your neighborhood who missed it, they can tune in there and at least join in listening to the questions and the answers. Of course, you can always reach me at the city if you have any feedback or questions for my office, mayor@burlington.ca we almost never sleep. So feel free to reach out to us anytime you need something. And we'll make sure that we get an answer for you.

Eric (01:29:04):

Thank you again to everyone for joining us this evening. If you do have any questions or any feedback on today's telephone Town Hall, I want to remind you that you can also share them with us by emailing them to us at city@burlington.ca. Again, please email questions and feedback to city@burlington.ca. Thank you again to everyone for joining us and have a good night.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS (01:29:25)