



**City of Burlington
Public Engagement TownHall
Covid 19 & Vaccine Rollout
Update**

TownHall Transcript

Wednesday, May 16, 2021

Moderator Erik
00:00

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the City of Burlington's Telephone TownHall 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 Erik, and I'll be moderating the TownHall this evening. During this live Telephone TownHall, we encourage you to get involved and to ask questions. The Mayor, along with a panel of local leaders are on the line to help answer your questions. They have made it a priority to engage and connect with you and fellow residents with important updates on how the City of Burlington is moving forward with the vaccine rollout and plans to start opening up over the summer. Our intention is to get as many questions as possible from you. 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, we're still having new people join us, and I want to welcome you to the City of Burlington's Telephone TownHall 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. Again, we just want to quickly remind everyone 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 Meed Ward so she can open up the TownHall. Mayor Meed Ward, please go ahead.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 01:22

Thank you so much, moderator, and good evening, Burlington on this wonderful, sunny evening. Thank you so much for joining our public virtual COVID-19 Telephone TownHall tonight. I'm your host, Marianne Meed Ward, and joining me today are our esteemed panelists, as always. We have the Honourable Karina Gould, Member of Parliament for Burlington. Eric Vandewall, President and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital. Dr. Dale Kalina, Medical Director of Infection Prevention and Control at Joseph Brant Hospital. Tim Commisso, Burlington's City Manager. Allan Magi, our Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community services. Enrico Scalera, who is our Director of Roads, Parks, and Forestry. Victor Ljuljdjuraj, the Manager of Facility Operations, Recreation, Community, and Culture. And members of your City Council and many city staff will also be listening in online to your questions and your comments.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 02:20

We are truly nearing the light at the end of the tunnel of this pandemic. And as a friend of mine says, "That light is not a train coming at us anymore." It's good news, and things are starting to reopen again thanks to decreased case numbers, better ICU and hospital capacities, and, of course, higher rates of vaccination. Over 74% of residents, which is amazing. Keep up the good work. Our community has really continued to do an amazing job keeping yourselves and fellow Burlington safe and healthy, and our city council staff, and our community partners have kept businesses and

services in the city running throughout the pandemic, albeit in a different way, but also ensured that everyone in need has been getting help and support. You've been wearing masks, staying at home when possible, maintaining physical distancing with others outside your household. And I know it hasn't been easy. I continue to thank all of you for your diligence, for the many sacrifices I know that you and your families have been making this year. So, thank you so much for everything that you have done. And as a result of all those efforts, summer is looking much brighter for all of us. Things are changing on a daily basis, and I know from week to week it's a lot of information for our community to absorb and stay on top of. It's hard for us here, too, and that's why we host these TownHalls. We want to give you the opportunity to ask questions and hear real-time answers from our local experts.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 03:53

So, let's get started so that we can get to as many questions as possible. Once a question has been asked, I will direct it to the appropriate person on our panel to answer. And if we don't have the right person on the line tonight, we will take away your question and post the answer, along with a recap of tonight's TownHall on the city's website. So, if you know folks who wanted to tune in and missed it, not to worry, that will all be there in a few days after this event. And a final reminder of tonight's guidelines for participation in the TownHall. Please focus on COVID-related questions. Please use productive language. Be respectful of each other, and let's ensure that this is truly a positive and helpful experience for everyone who's on the line. The callers who don't follow these guidelines will be muted, and we'll move on to another question, but I know all of you will do that. So, let's look forward to a great, productive, and positive conversation. Our goal this evening is to help our community with timely and accurate information as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. So, let's get to it. I will turn it over to our moderator now for our first question.

Moderator Erik
05:11

Thank you, Mayor Meed Ward. And we do have our first question. Just a quick reminder for everyone joining us, this is the City of Burlington's Telephone TownHall. We're taking your questions. We do want to hear from you. Press three on your phone's keypad at any time, and someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. So again, press three on your phone's keypad over the course of the TownHall, and you'll have a chance to ask a live question. Up first, we have Kathy, who is now live with us. Kathy, welcome. Please go ahead.

Kathy 05:40

Hello.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 05:42

Hi there, Kathy.

Kathy 05:43

Hi. Hi. I've liked your town council meetings, and they're wonderful, thank you. My question is, when I get my second dose, which will be July 2nd at Brant Hospital, when I get my proof of vaccination paper, will that be my document of proof if I want to travel or go to New

Brunswick when it opens up? Is this my method of proof, or is there another method? Or if there's another document that's going to come out to say that I've been fully vaccinated? And what if I lose it? And if I lost my proof, where would I get another document to say that I've been vaccinated?

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 06:39

That is a great question, Kathy, and my family's from New Brunswick, so it's got a special spot in my heart. I'm going to break this into two parts because I think there's two different folks that need to speak to it. I'm going to first come to Honourable Karina Gould, our MP for Burlington to speak to whether there are travel restrictions that require proof of vaccination. And then you said, I think, that you got your vaccination at Joe Brant Hospital, so I'll look to Eric to talk about what happens if you lose your piece of paper, what kind of records might be available. So over to you first, Karina. Go ahead.

MP of Burlington,
Hon. Karina Gould
07:20

Great. Well, thank you, Marianne, and thank you, Kathy, for the question. So as of right now, you are not required to be vaccinated to enter Canada. However, what we did announce with the government, the federal government is that travelers, Canadians, and permanent residents in Canada will be able to travel to Canada and not have to go into the government-authorized accommodation, so the hotels, if they are fully vaccinated, once we kind of reach that threshold of 75% of Canadians with a first vaccine, and 25% with the second dose. So, 25% of the population that is fully vaccinated. You would have to provide your proof of vaccination, and we are currently working through this. But essentially, the piece of paper that you're going to get when you go get your second vaccine, you will likely be able to upload that through an app through ArriveCAN, and then that documentation will be reviewed by CBSA. And so that will be your proof of vaccination and being fully vaccinated. You would still have to get a pre-departure COVID test 72 hours before you arrive in Canada, and you'd have to do a test upon arrival, but you won't have to go to a GAA, and you'll be able to go straight home to quarantine. And as soon as you get a negative test upon arrival in Canada, then you won't have to quarantine anymore.

MP of Burlington,
Hon. Karina Gould
08:54

And that's kind of the first phase of the reopening with regards to travel and borders. We still don't recommend travel abroad because the pandemic really is still raging in many parts of the world, in fact, most of the world. But those will be the new kind of travel measures once we hit that threshold, which we anticipate hitting probably early in July. And I believe it'll be proof two weeks after you receive that second vaccine is when those measures will come into effect because then you'll have kind of the immunity that that second vaccine confers. And I'll let Eric touch on the second part. But I believe, so long as you're vaccinated at a clinic in Halton Region, they actually retain those records, and they email them to you. So, I think you can probably save that record in your email, but Eric might be able to answer that more fully.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 09:53

And Karina, just before we go to Eric, can you speak to interprovincial travel restrictions? So, she mentioned New Brunswick. So going from Ontario to New Brunswick, do you know what those might be if there's proof of vaccination required?

MP of Burlington,
Hon. Karina Gould
10:10

Well, at this point, I don't because those conversations are very much going on at the First Minister's meetings and between provinces. So different provinces might have different requirements with regards to the quarantine. So, we all know that the Atlantic bubble has very strict quarantine requirements if you're coming from outside of the Atlantic provinces. I know that they are having those conversations, and they'll be putting that information out soon. I think, probably, as we get to those thresholds, we're trying to maintain these standards across Canada, but different jurisdictions are kind of coming forward with that. But certainly, at the federal level, we're trying to work with the provinces and territories to have consistency.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 10:55

Great, thank you. And over to you, President Vandewall with regard to records.

President of
Joseph Brant
Hospital, Eric
Vandewall 11:01

Thanks, Mayor Meed Ward. Yes, Karina was quite correct. If you lose your paper, contact Halton Region, you will also receive an email copy of your dose and vaccination. So, keep that email. And another tip may be, once you print it out, take a picture of it, and then it's always on your phone should you need it, and you should not be able-- if you're not able to access your email. So, I hope that helps.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 11:26

Thanks very much. We are ready for our next question, moderator.

Moderator Erik
11:30

Thank you, Mayor. We have another question coming up. Again, a reminder to everyone joining us to press three on your phone's keypad if you'd like to ask a live question on the TownHall this evening. We're also going to do a few survey questions. We're actually going to do one right now. So, for this, you can use your touchtone phone to indicate your response on the following question. We want to know, have you either had the COVID-19 vaccination or are planning on being vaccinated when it's available to you? If yes, press one. If no, press two. And if you're still unsure, press three. So again, have you either had the COVID-19 vaccination or are planning on being vaccinated when it's available to you? If yes, press one. If no, press two. And if you're still unsure, press three. So up next, we have a live question coming up from Stella, who's joining us now. Stella, welcome. Please go ahead with your question.

Stella 12:26

My question is, I live in a condo, and we're waiting to get into the pool to do exercises. I'm a senior and there's a number of us. But we've been told we've got to wait until we get permission from, I think it's the city or the Health Minister, whether the pool can open or not.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 12:55

That is a great question, Stella, and I know with the weather that we've been having, a pool is really nice to have. So, I'm going to ask-- we do have Victor Ljuljdjuraj from our Facility Operations, Recreation, Community, and Culture, and may know what the regulations are. What the requirements are from the health department around opening private pools. Your pool would be considered private, so it's a little different than the city pools, but it might be the same process. So, I'll see if Victor can answer that, and turning it over to you.

Manager of
Facility
Operations,
Recreation,
Community, and
Culture, Victor
Ljuljdjuraj 13:32

Yes, thanks, Mayor, and thanks so much for joining, Stella, and for your question. The Mayor is correct. So, we did actually open our pools this past week, and our outdoor-- that will be Nelson pool and Mountainside pool. We are not doing aquafit classes or any fitness in the pools yet. We do believe this will be in phase two of our reopening plan, although those finalized regulations haven't been formalized yet. So, we will wait to receive those regulations before we proceed with offering that, and that's similar to operating in a private pool as well. So, we're hoping that will be in phase two. If not, it will be in phase three. So, we're hoping at some point in July we'll be able to go back to utilizing aquafit classes in any kind of pool. And I will pass it back over to the mayor and the moderator.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 14:23

Thanks very much, Victor. So, it's still going to be a little bit before the provincial regulations change. And so, sit tight, and you can also reach out to Halton Region or your local Member of Provincial Parliament. Normally, they are very enthusiastically joining us. They are on House duty. But we'll hopefully make sure that you get any additional answers to that question. Back to you, moderator.

Moderator Erik
14:52

Thank you, Mayor. Up next, we have Roman, who's joining us now. Roman, of course, pressed three on his phone's keypad to ask a live question. You can do the same if you'd like to ask a live question. Roman, you're joining us live. Please go ahead.

Roman 15:05

Oh, thank you very much for this opportunity. The question I have is very simple. How do I get a COVID-19 test if I'm asymptomatic, period?

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 15:17

That's a great question. And I am going to ask Dr. Dale Kalina who's our Medical Director of Infection Prevention and Control at Joe Brant Hospital if he can provide that answer. Go ahead, Doctor.

Dr. Dale Kalina
15:29

Thanks, Mayor Meed Ward. And thanks for the question, Roman. So first and foremost, if you're asymptomatic and want to test for COVID-19, I think that there are a number of different places that you can get the test. For right now, you are supposed to be symptomatic or have been identified as part of an outbreak to be tested at the hospital as per our current guideline. But there's also opportunities to be tested at several local pharmacies as well. So, I would just identify those. And at the same time, if you are looking to be tested in an asymptomatic situation to go into, say, long-term care, oftentimes there are resources available to the long-term care

facility to help with testing, and even sometimes access to rapid testing as well for some of that. I hope that helps.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward 16:24 Thanks very much, and moderator, back to you for our next question.

Moderator Erik 16:29 Again, a reminder to everyone joining us, press three on your phone's keypad if you'd like to ask a live question. Up next, we have Laurie, who's joining us now. Laurie, welcome. Please go ahead.

Laurie 16:39 Hi. Thanks for the opportunity to ask a question. My question is regarding people who have received two doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine. I had just read today actually in the news that--

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward 17:00 Laurie, I think we just lost you.

Moderator Erik 17:06 Yes, Laurie did drop off the line.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward 17:10 Okay, sorry about that, Laurie. You were talking about AstraZeneca, but I guess, moderator, let's go to the next question. And perhaps, if she's still listening in, you can connect through my office for your question and where to get you the answer, Mayor@Burlington.ca. Go ahead, moderator, for the next question.

Moderator Erik 17:32 Up next, we have Louise, who's joining us now. Louise, welcome. Please go ahead with your question.

Louise 17:40 Hi, my name's Louise, and I had a question regarding getting a second dose of AstraZeneca. I can't seem to find it anywhere in Halton. So, I just wanted to see if I could get any advice on where to find an AstraZeneca dose number two. Thank you for your help.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward 17:53 Thank you, Louise. I know that is a question on many people's minds. And I'm going to ask, again, Dr. Kalina if you have any insight or advice on that. Go ahead, Doctor.

Dr. Dale Kalina 18:07 I will come back to it just to make sure that I can give the right information as I believe most of the AstraZeneca shots, if not all of them in Halton Region were actually given by a pharmacy. So, number one, I would reach out to the pharmacy that you got your initial dose at. And number two, I will scour the internet quickly and see if I can find another resource for that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward 18:31 We will come back to you on that and take a question in the meantime. But perhaps when we come back to you, Doctor, we can also talk about mixing. If you got AZ first, is it okay to have one of the others? That might be helpful for our listeners. But let's go back to you, moderator, for our next question, and then we'll come back to the doctor to speak to that one. Go ahead.

Moderator Erik 18:58 Understood. Actually, next, we're going to do another survey question. So, again, you can use your touchtone phone to indicate your response on this question. Once the City of Burlington resumes in-person public meetings, how likely are you to attend in-person

public meetings? If you are very likely, press one. If you are somewhat likely, press two. And if you are not at all likely, 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 you are very likely, press one. If you are somewhat likely, press two. And if you are not at all likely, press three. And up next for a live question, we have Liz, who's joining us now. Liz, welcome. Please go ahead.

Liz 19:44

Hello.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 19:46

Hi, Liz, you're on the air. Go ahead.

Liz 19:49

Oh, great. Thank you very much for taking care of Burlington the way you are, first of all, and listening to the people and trying to help them normalize their lives under the conditions. I would really like to know if there is any way you could help. I have been with my mom for two years. We wanted to put her into a home because of her accident, but I have to look after her as a full-time job. Is there any compensation someone like myself would be able to get? Meaning I'm looking after her 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Doing the laundry. Doing everything at her home.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 20:38

Well, you are an amazing person. Thank you for being so compassionate with your mom. That is a question that relates to the continuum of care, I think, including home supports that might be available. So, I'm going to ask the President and CEO of Joe Brant Hospital if he can speak at all to what supports might be available to caregivers who are caring for family members in their home. Thank you for the question, Liz. Go ahead, Eric.

President of
Joseph Brant
Hospital, Eric
Vandewall 21:11

Thanks, Liz, and thanks for taking care of your mom. It must be very trying for you at times. And there are programs available where you could apply for respite and relief through the Home and Community Services Program. So, through the Local Health Integration Network, which is now Ontario Health, you may be able to get some home care support to give you some respite from that as well. And finally, I think you may be able to apply for eligibility for a caregiver benefit that I believe either the provincial or federal governments offer, that as a caregiver you could also receive some benefit as well. So, hope that helps, Liz, and thanks again for your care of your mom.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 21:52

Thank you very much. Since you mentioned federal, I'll turn it to Karina Gould to see if she knows anything about that that might be of use right now, Karina.

MP of Burlington,
Hon. Karina Gould
22:05

Yeah, sure. So, what I would say is perhaps you can contact my office, and my team would be able to help you because I think we'd want to understand your situation, and which supports we can direct you to either at the federal level or within the community. And so, you can just Google me, Karina Gould, and all my office contact information will come up. But if you've got a pen close by, my phone number is 905-639-5757, and my team and I will be really

happy to help you out. And I understand it's been a really difficult time, but you really are wonderful making sure that your mom has good care, and we'll do what we can to support you as well.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward 22:48 Thank you very much for that, and thank you, Liz, for the question. Back to you moderator for our next question.

Moderator Erik 22:57 Up next, we are joined by Karen, who has a question. Karen, welcome to the TownHall. Please go ahead.

Karen 23:04 Thank you. Yeah, hello?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward 23:06 Hi, Karen. You're on the air.

Karen 23:08 Hi. Yeah, I'm really concerned about all of you passing the buck on to seniors who do not know what you mean by app or get on an app. The woman several minutes ago asked you for proof of her documentation, and all you said, Karina Gould, excuse me, is that go to this app or whatever, and you'll get some kind of a proof. That's really not really acceptable, guys, considering what we have all gone through trying to locate a second dose, which has been horrible, horrible, horrible. The portals are terrible to get through. And I think you know this without me going on and on about it.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward 23:56 Thank you for that. Thank you for that feedback, Karen, and we can certainly hear your frustration. We know for many people it's been challenging. I know there's some glitches in the system. I know Halton Region takes both telephone bookings at 311. Easy to remember if for folks who don't have access to a computer. Of course, there is also the computer option. And I will also turn it back to Karina. I'm sure you'll want to speak to this as well. And the app is one option. It's certainly not the only option. And so, back to you, Karina.

MP of Burlington, Hon. Karina Gould 24:39 Great, thanks, Marianne. And thank you, Karen, for the question because I think it's important to clarify that what I was talking about was when someone returns to Canada as a traveler, there will be an option. And it's one that we're recommending is to upload your proof of vaccination to an app. But we will also make sure that there will be a paper option as well because we recognize that there are a variety of different comfort levels with regards to technology. And so certainly, we are absolutely taking seniors, but also people of all ages into account who have different comfort levels with technologies. And when I was responding to the question about proof of vaccination, the first thing that I said, which I'm sure you'll recall, is that it is a piece of paper that you receive from the vaccination clinic. When I got my first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, I got it at Garry Allan, and they printed out a piece of paper for me that had that information. Halton Region also sent an email with that information. And as the Mayor and Eric from the hospital mentioned as well, you can also follow up directly with the Region, either by calling 311 or going on their website either to get that-- either to get that information if you happen to have lost it or to

book a vaccine appointment.

MP of Burlington,
Hon. Karina Gould
26:14

And I'll just say that I know there has been a lot of frustration with the booking system through the province of Ontario. But I have to say that the Halton Region has their own booking system for vaccines, and I think they've done a really tremendous job. And certainly, when I have spoken to constituents who maybe had a bit of difficulty booking it, they've either had success if they just wait a few minutes and try again, or if they call 311, and I know that the Region has been very helpful. But again, if you have any follow-up questions, my office is very happy to help in any of these instances. And we really appreciate the diversity of comfort levels with regards to technology, and so all of those different options are available.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 26:58

Thank you very much for that, and I think that's a key message. If you have a phone, and I assume you all do since you're on the call, that that phone-in option is available to you to get any information that you need. So, I think all of us have tried to make it available by whatever method is most convenient to you. Back to you, moderator for the next question.

Moderator Erik
27:24

Up next, we have Diane, who's joining us now. Diane, welcome. Please go ahead with your question.

Diane 27:30

Oh, thank you. My question is twofold. Can you hear me?

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 27:35

Yes, we can hear you. Go ahead, Diane.

Diane 27:38

Oh, okay. I was wondering when we were going to go back to visiting our relatives and loved ones in long-term care? Not just for half an hour, and not with a mask, but regularly. And the other question is regarding our indoor pool which has been closed for two years. We live in a townhouse complex. And what I'm concerned about is-- and we have called the Mayor and Karina Gould, and we haven't had any results. We've been paying maintenance fees for these two years. And now we fear that come July, there will be another excuse why they won't open.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 28:29

Thank you for that question, Diane, and it must be so frustrating to have that experience with the pool, especially when we're having such beautiful warm weather as we are in the last week or so. And I'm sure more to come this summer. So, I'll take a stab at that answer because you probably have heard this from my office when you reached out that the city has no jurisdiction over private pools on private property, which includes condominium-owned pools. However, given that you are paying fees for that, that may be a landlord-tenant matter that you could take up. But I'm going to see if-- we do have Allan Magi who's our Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services. I don't know if you can offer any insights in addition to that, Allan? But I'll just pause there for a minute, and then we'll come to your next question. Go ahead, Allan.

Public Engagement TownHall COVID-19 Update & Vaccine Rollout Discussion

next [inaudible] for step 5. A lot of activity kind of behind scenes just to make sure that our community can enjoy certain amenities and other amenities that are certainly what make Burlington a great city. Thank you.

Mayor Marianne
Meed Ward 57:50

Thank you. And I also note, I just want to acknowledge that Enrico Scalera, who is on the call tonight. You didn't get a question, Rico, about the state of our roads, parks, or forest. I know people are out and about using our parks more. And great job you and your team keeping them safe. There are a few questions from folks on the call tonight regarding roads, forestry, email RPF@Burlington.ca, or of course, the city main switchboard. I would like to thank the Hon. Karina Gould, Member of Parliament for Burlington. Tom Vandewall, President and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital. Dr. Dale Kalish, Medical Director of Infection Prevention and Control at Joseph Brant Hospital. Of course, Tim Commisso, City Manager. Ann Magi, Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services. Victor Ljulidjuraj, Manager of Facility Operations, Recreation, Community, and Culture. And of course, all of you for your very important and good questions. I, too, always hear something when I tune in to these. Thank you for spending an hour with us this evening. This will be posted online with all the questions including questions that folks weren't able to get in the queue to ask. So not to worry, we will do our best to get those answers and post them online. So back to you, moderator.

Moderator Erik
59:12

Thank you again to everyone for joining us. If you still have any questions, concerns, or feedback on tonight's Telephone TownHall, I want to remind you that you can also share them with us by emailing them to City@Burlington.ca. Again, please email questions, concerns, and feedback to City@Burlington.ca. Thank you again to everyone for joining us. Have a good night.