

Eric ([00:00:00](#)):

Hello everyone. And welcome to the city of Burlington's telephone town hall meeting. We're 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 encourage you to get involved and to ask 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've made it a priority to engage and connect with you and fellow residents to update you on the current status of COVID-19, and to share critical information from the city, provincial, and federal governments as we work to safely navigate the reopening of the province.

Eric ([00:00:50](#)):

Our intention is to get to as many questions as possible. You can ask a live question at any time by pressing 3 on your phone's keypad, someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. Now we're still having people 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 just want to remind everyone again that you can ask a live question at any time by pressing 3 on your phone's keypad. At this time, I'm going to introduce mayor Mead Ward so she can open up the town hall. Mayor Meed Ward, please go ahead.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:01:26](#)):

Thank you, moderator and good evening, hello everyone. What a beautiful evening in the city of Burlington and thank you, all of you, thousands of you out there for joining us on our third public telephone town hall, to address the ongoing COVID-19 situation that we're facing together as a community. As we seek to get helpful and timely information out to everyone, and we've found that this is a great platform to do that. For those of you who have joined us before, welcome back. And for those who are new to this platform, welcome for the first time, and thank you again for joining us. I do want to pause before we continue and acknowledge the solidarity march that is happening on our streets right now. They've just landed at city hall for Black Lives Matter and against all racism in anywhere it happens in the world. And we know Burlington certainly is not immune to that, but I want to say on behalf of council and staff, we are an inclusive city.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:02:24](#)):

We are a welcoming city and we reject racism of any kind anywhere. We have had our own experiences in our community, I'm here to listen and to learn from our residents and take steps tonight, and every day to ensure that we stamp it out. I know several counselors and others on the call will be slightly delayed tonight, as they will be participating and witnessing the march. So, to get to our business, we know our summer weather has finally arrived this evening. It's a beautiful night. And with it, brings a lot of questions about what the summer will look like in our city. We're known for our waterfront and our parks and our very active community who love our sports and our activities and especially being outside. At the same time, we are now living in a new normal, and COVID is still a very real health concern.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:03:19](#)):

If you've been watching the news, that Ontario's numbers are not yet going down as much as our health experts would like them to, in terms of new cases. The province has permitted certain businesses and facilities to reopen with new expectations around physical distancing and safety procedures. And there are still some activities that have to wait until the numbers are better. So tonight is about helping to clarify for residents, what's open, what we're still waiting on, what is still closed under the provincial emergency orders, but also how things will look a bit different this summer, so that we can continue to slow the spread of this virus while moving forward together. Our number one priority is the health and wellbeing of everyone in Burlington. And that does include our physical, mental, emotional, and our financial health. And these are not easy times, and it's been a long haul, we're entering month number 4.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:04:18](#)):

And I want you to know that we are all working together to make very thoughtful decisions that try to balance out all of these essential elements of our daily lives as best as we can. I do want to welcome our partners from other levels of government who are on the call here tonight. We've got the Honorable Karina Gould, our Federal MP from Burlington, and our member of Provincial parliament Jane McKenna has also joined us. We're also joined by the president and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital Eric Vanderwall, as well as Dr. Dale Kalina, our medical director of infectious diseases at the hospital. We have Halton Regional Police Service's chief Steve Tanner on the line and our city manager, Tim Commisso. We've also invited some key members of our staff from the city of Burlington, as I'm sure you will have questions about parks and programming, and all things summer in Burlington.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:05:15](#)):

And they're here to speak to some of their departments that are particularly relevant throughout the summer. And that includes Chris Glenn, our director of recreation services and Mary Battaglia, our director of roads, parks, and forestry, Denise Beard, our manager of community development and Nick Anastasopoulos, our director of building and bylaw. So I want to say a huge thank you to all of our panelists for being here. I'll introduce them if they do receive a question and I always welcome their participation, most of the questions actually go to the expert panel that we've assembled. So they're here to give you the information that you're looking for.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:05:58](#)):

I know that we are all working closely together, across many different organizations and levels of government to get our community through this crisis. And tonight's town hall is an important part of making that happen. So I want to get right to business. I know there are a lot of questions we've got about an hour and a half together, and we want to provide as much time for them as possible. So I'm going to turn things back over to tonight's moderator to get us started. Moderator.

Eric ([00:06:25](#)):

Thank you very much, mayor, for opening up the event. I do want to quickly remind everyone joining us that if you have a live question, we do want to hear from you. You can press 3 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 start with our first live question coming up from Stephanie. Stephanie, welcome to joining us live.

Stephanie ([00:06:45](#)):

Hi. I just had a couple of questions on opening of different things, but I'd like to address the Jane McKenna with an overall Ontario look. There are more and more articles that are coming out by doctors, scientists, McMaster University, which is a well known university, Toronto University, and so on. And more and more articles are coming up and saying that a lot of the lockdown is actually now starting to be more detrimental than COVID itself. And that there's psychological and economical issues, but it's not just about economy, it's about the impact on people themselves. So I want to know why none of that actually really being looked at closely. I know our numbers aren't lower than they are, but that also to me is very odd, given that every other country seems to be... Maybe not every other country, but a lot of the western countries have come down dramatically, so I wonder if our earlier numbers were actually understated with the lack of testing.

Stephanie ([00:08:08](#)):

But I'm really wanting to know children, playgrounds, socialization for them. They don't seem to be affected through worldwide studies. Many other governments have open schools. We have not. They feel socially isolated. I have grandchildren they're having tantrums where they never did. It seems to me that they're having a hard time coping. So I want to know why can we not open up playgrounds? Why can't we open up things for the children?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:08:48](#)):

Thanks. Thanks, Stephanie. I think we just lost the connection there. I'm going to... There's a couple of themes in there, and the first is around the government strategy around the closures and the phase reopening. I know Jane can certainly speak to that, our local MPP. There were also some questions around opening playgrounds for children.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:09:09](#)):

And I know Chris Glenn, our director of recreation services, and Denise Beard, our manager of community development can speak to the phase reopening of parks. I know Mary Battaglia can also speak to that. But we can also speak to some of the programming that we have done and the resources that we've provided on the city webpage around mental health. So I'm going to... There's a lot there, but I'm going to start with Jane and then I'm going to turn over to Chris and then others. So Jane, the floor is yours to talk about the government's closure and the reopening strategies.

Jane McKenna ([00:09:46](#)):

Thanks so much for the question. I just want to quickly just jump in and say, I've got four grandchildren and two that are my daughter's children, 10 and 8, so I totally hear what you're saying about kids feeling very frustrated. And obviously we've never been in this situation before, but I have to say, we were here in the office from nine to seven every day. The reason we extended our hours with people like yourself to be able to call, because people are on both sides of the spectrum, right? Some people want things opened up faster, some people think we're going far too slow, but I just want to quickly go back. I was reading an article in the National Post this week, which compares the jurisdiction that imposed a lockdown versus those that haven't and found the economic impact to be the same.

Jane McKenna ([00:10:36](#)):

Our first priority over and over again, is to make sure of the safety and security of Ontarians. So, other provinces canceled the school year as early as March. Our parents expect back open school several weeks ago and saw an increase in the cases of COVID-19. So I totally respect and hear what you're

saying. We say this to people that call all the time, because people are frustrated, whether it's too fast or too slow, but I do know that, when numbers are continuing to go up, we want to make sure that we're doing the right thing because our best interest is to make sure that people are healthy and safe.

Jane McKenna ([00:11:22](#)):

And as you know, Ontario has three phases reopening plan, the province has indicated there will be a two to four week period between each phase. Right now, where phase one was opened up on May 19th. And so it's been three weeks since that. So obviously something will be coming up soon. I did read today that a decision on restaurants and patios is expected within the next week, the premier said. I hope that says your question. I apologize if it hasn't, please call my office at (905) 639-7924, because we're here to help and obviously hear your frustration just like we've heard numerous times from other people. So thank you for the question.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:12:04](#)):

Thanks so much, Jane. And Chris, I ask you to speak to playgrounds and programming that the city might be thinking about for the summer, for all of our kids. Go ahead.

Chris Glenn ([00:12:17](#)):

Certainly thank you, mayor. Certainly we believe that playgrounds and parks are a heart of our community definitely. Unfortunately, the outdoor play structures are closed, as you can see it by caution tape and signage. That indicates that based on our provincial order, however, a passive use of parks is still encouraged and allowed. Certainly following our requirements of five people max, unless you're within one family unit, as well as maintaining physical distancing. So you can go out and use the parks. You can kick a ball, fly a kite, sit on your long chair, read a book etc. So hopefully that encourages people to get outside and connect with each other at a level as well as with nature etc. With respect to other programs and activities that we have planned, as the restrictions are lifted over time as mentioned phase one, phase two, along the way people can. I know you have young children, but certainly our golf course is open and people can participate in that.

Chris Glenn ([00:13:13](#)):

We have a number of types of single activities that are starting to open up for folks such as gymnastics or tennis courts etc. And we also have recently opened up skateboard parks, as well as our basketball hoops, BMX, etc. Those are all physical activities that are starting to come back to our opportunity for people to get in engaged. And I'd also direct you... I think Mary you're hoping I'll speak a bit about our virtual programming, so our at-home type of activity. So if you go to our website at burlington.ca/activeathome, there are a number of activities that we put up there and videos that people can go to stay kind of active and engaged.

Chris Glenn ([00:13:54](#)):

There's a challenge that you can do, do 30 activities over 60 days, since you were speaking to young children, there's a whole section in here that talks about craft programs and things that you can do with your children, and what not with equipment that you have inside your home right now, games, snakes and ladders. If you want to practice your golf, you can, as well as even if you want to do some dry land training for swimming etc. Go to that page and you'll be able to see a number of activities that can be done.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:14:23](#)):

That's great. Thanks, Chris. And I know Denise can speak to as well of some of the virtual programming that the city put in place almost immediately, but has added to. Denise, do you want to talk to that?

Denise Beard ([00:14:34](#)):

All right, thanks, Mayor Meed Ward. I think Chris is covering a little bit about that, but there's some great programs that we've launched on the website like Chris has referred to. And there's all kinds of great activities out there that people can join in. Just go to our website, you will find a wealth of programming out there, as well as I know we're referring to children right now, but I will also like to allude listeners to a great program we have for seniors and especially seniors who are feeling very isolated right now. And the caller had mentioned mental health issues. That was a quick population that we identified as needing some programming.

Denise Beard ([00:15:15](#)):

So we've done some programming called the TelePALS program where we encourage seniors to chat with each other on a conference call, just very similar to this. You don't need technology other than a phone. And we have great conversations and people are thrilled by just having the chance to talk to other people about whatever the topic happens to be. So I encourage you again, go to our website, there is a full calendar for each month. There's three sessions, every day of different topics and you just register with our staff and we'll make sure you get connected and engage and have conversation as you would in a face to face situation.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:15:53](#)):

Thanks, Denise. I think it would be helpful for us to hear as well from Dr. Dale Kalina, our medical director of infectious diseases at Joseph Brant Hospital on... And probably Eric Vanderwall, the president and CEO around the health indicators for reopening and some of the testing that's been done. That was part of the question. But before I turn it over to them, in addition to the resources that have been just mentioned by staff, we have a whole page that you can get to right from the homepage, burlington.ca/covid19. You can find if you're looking for help, if you're looking for mental health support organizations, many of them, there are free resources.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:16:33](#)):

There are virtual counseling, there are a lot of programs and resources there. If you need food, if you have volunteer hours that you want to offer to an organization, if you're looking for grant money, there are many resources that have all been collected there. And a lot of those are directly related to mental health support. So if you're looking for that, please check out that page. So over to you, Dr. Kalina, to talk to us about what sort of indicators you're seeing, what we need to see before we can start even opening up more.

Dr. Kalina ([00:17:12](#)):

Thanks, Mayor Meed Ward. And thanks for having me again today. I'm very happy to be able to answer some questions and to speak with people directly. There's a lot of things to talk about, especially with respect to testing and what is needed to be done before we open up again. But I did want to answer Stephanie as well as to say that, that article that you're referencing in the National Post by a number of my colleagues and friends and mentors really does speak to a very nuanced opening of all facilities around Burlington, around the province as well. And it really does highlight the importance of ensuring

that while we are opening up facilities that appropriate testing and appropriate tracing of people who are infected, is still being done. So you may have seen a loss in the news over the course of the past week, especially about the importance of testing.

Dr. Kalina ([00:18:08](#)):

And I know that's something that I've talked about on these calls, and in a number of other ways as well, about how important it is. And it is very important that by and large, if you do have any concerns about having COVID or whether you have it, or have been exposed to it a hundred percent, that is the time to get tested. And we do have a lot of those facilities to be able to do that right here in Burlington. All you have to do is contact the hospital or contact, of course, Public Health, Telehealth Ontario or your family physicians. But what we need to be able to do is really get to a stage where across Burlington and across the GTA and the province, we have a good idea of who's getting infected, where they are getting infected and how we can continue to control that in a very well managed way.

Dr. Kalina ([00:19:00](#)):

And for all intents and purposes, Burlington is very close to that. We're currently seeing some occasional days where we're actually not having any individuals for testing positive, which is great news. But unfortunately we are surrounded by a few other health regions that are struggling a little bit more with that. So when we look to Pears region, York region, and Toronto, of course, there are frankly very high rates of infection that are still occurring.

Dr. Kalina ([00:19:31](#)):

And it's important to recognize that that's very close, and we're in the same bucket, fortunately or otherwise. And while it might seem that we in Burlington and Oakland, Halton region in general, our lagging or slow, it is important to make sure that people are safe as well. And I can't emphasize enough the importance of yes, mental health, and mental health awareness as well, and getting outside if you're able to, because that helps with.. And it's really one of the things that at Joseph Brant, we've actually been able to ramp up our mental health services. And that's something that I think we're very proud of at Joseph Brant. And it's something that we all need to be able to rely on in our community.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:20:14](#)):

That's great. Thank you. And Eric, did you want to speak to the testing increase that you've seen after the announcement from the province to do additional testing and that people who wanted to be tested can book an appointment and come?

Eric Vanderwall ([00:20:30](#)):

Thank you, mayor Mead Ward. Again, thank you for having me join you this evening. It'd be my pleasure to talk about testing. So at Joseph Brant Hospital, we have an assessment center where anybody can come and be tested. The preferred approach is that you're referred through Public Health or family physician, and then we can schedule an appointment for the individual to be tested. And so since the premier's appeal, related to the people of Ontario to get tested, and not to leave any doubt in their mind, and if you're exhibiting symptoms or not feeling well, really encouraging people to get tested. Because the more we get tested, the better data and evidence we have to understand prevalence in the community and to understand infection transmission, and then also obviously to do tracing.

Eric Vanderwall ([00:21:15](#)):

So we've seen a marked increase in the past week of, the first few days, approximately 70% increase. And we are holding at those same increase levels and we do have capacity to do more testing. So I would certainly encourage members of the community, if you're experiencing symptoms, if you're not feeling well, contact Public Health, there is a screening process and they will then refer you to our assessment center. We can book an appointment for you, and we will get you tested and nobody will be denied or turned away for having a test.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:21:51](#)):

That's great. Thank you. We are ready for our next question, moderator. But just for the folks that are on the line about to ask a question, if we could aim as much as possible to keep it to a one-parter, so we can hear from as many people on the line as possible. That was a lot of great information, but we're also here to hear from you and what's on your mind. So over to you moderator for our next question,

Eric ([00:22:13](#)):

We have our next live question, but first we're actually going to do a survey question for everyone joining us on the line. We want to hear from you, using your touch tone phone. You can indicate your response. We want to know. Do you feel the telephone town halls on COVID-19 have value for you? If yes, please press one. And if not, please press two. So again, do you feel the telephone town halls on COVID-19 have value for you? If yes, please press one. And if no, press two. We have our next live question coming up now from Susie. Susie. Welcome. You're joining us live, please go ahead.

Susie ([00:22:46](#)):

Hi. My question is now that I've noticed a lot of the relaxing on COVID opening up of stores and everything. I have noticed people not simply distancing or physical distancing, and they are just crowding in the stores, especially Walmart.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:23:04]

Susie ([00:23:03](#)):

And they are just crowding in the stores, especially Walmart and other stores. I was wondering why we can't make it mandatory to wear masks.

Mayor ([00:23:10](#)):

Oh, that's a good one. I'm going to turn it to our MP, Jane McKenna, to speak to what to do if you see stores not following social distancing. That's a provincial matter. And then she may want to speak about the masks too. And I have some thoughts around that. So Jane, go ahead. Just waiting for Jane to come on. Okay. We can't seem to be connecting with Jane at the moment, but what I will tell you is that-

Jane McKenna ([00:23:57](#)):

Are you there?

Mayor ([00:23:58](#)):

Oh, there you there. Okay.

Jane McKenna ([00:23:59](#)):

Oh, sorry. I apologize.

Mayor ([00:24:01](#)):

You must've been muted.

Jane McKenna ([00:24:03](#)):

I was trying to get you off mute. Anyway, yeah. So I'm just going to tell you something. We actually were sitting here and had you on mute, [inaudible 00:24:11] and we've just had some calls right away just about people walking right now downtown in Burlington and that not everybody has a mask on. The problem is, is that even when the Premier says that it's important, if you're going out and about, and you cannot social distance, that you need to wear a mask, it's very difficult. Like today, people are very passionate. As the Mayor has said, it's very important that everybody is included and inclusive, and we want to make sure that they're doing that. And we recognize there were lots of people up there today. We saw lots of people with masks on, but it is a very difficult thing to do. I know when I'm in situations... I just went to the grocery store today at lunch. I put a mask on when I'm going into the store, but there were lots of people in the line that did not have one.

Jane McKenna ([00:25:03](#)):

So I hear you. I don't know. It's like anything. How do you get people to do that when we've made that comment numerous, numerous, numerous times. So I can say again, Susie, we encourage people to wear a mask when physical distancing is not possible. But again, I just said, we've had many calls already on what's happening right now and people didn't have masks on. So thank you.

Mayor ([00:25:30](#)):

Thanks a lot, Jane. And I've been asked by residents, can the city mandate mask wearing in all places. And in fact, we can't. We don't have that authority. The province does. Probably the federal government would be able to do that. I'm going to see if our MP, Karina Gould, wants to jump in on this one and the guidance around mask wearing. But certainly the city could look at that for our own facilities. And I know that there are some municipalities looking at making it mandatory for transit ridership. So these are things that we are considering at the city, but we have not made it... We don't have the authority to make it mandatory for anything beyond what we own and operate. Karina, did you want to comment on this one? She may be having some trouble coming off mute now too. Okay. We'll give her a chance to come back to it if she wants. Moderator, I think we are ready for our next question.

Moderator ([00:26:40](#)):

We do have another live question coming up. Again, a reminder, if you would like to ask a live question, you can do so by pressing three on your phone's keypad. Someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. We're going now to Scott who is joining us live. Scott, welcome.

Scott ([00:26:56](#)):

Yes. Good evening. And thank you for taking my call tonight. Dr. Bogoch, an infectious disease specialist was on TV this week stating that aesthetic services are still too risky to perform. Why are doctors, dermatologists and plastic surgeons office able to perform these cosmetic services like fillers, Botox, laser, and plastic surgery during the pandemic? We've received several emails this week stating that they're open for business. My wife has a spa that includes laser electrolysis and is not able to open because she falls under the PSS. She has clients emailing her, asking her why is she not able to open

while other facilities are. Is there a double standard at play here? And is it creating an unfair business advantage, as she has bills to pay too? I guess the question is, will you stop them from opening or continuing to perform these services? Thank you.

Mayor ([00:28:03](#)):

Thank you so much for that. And I know that our MP... I'm not sure if Jane is still on the line. I know she had to check out for another obligation at 6:30. Jane, are you still there? Do you want to speak to this one?

Jane McKenna ([00:28:16](#)):

Yes, I am. Thanks so much. I apologize. I do have to get on a conference call, but I'll answer a few more questions. Yeah. So Scott, thank you so much for the question. I know that College of Physicians obviously have guidelines that they have to adhere to and they're very, very strict. I think it also looks at regulatory professions that they have, if they are regulated or not. And then... I'm not sure if your wife is regulated or not in her profession... various colleges are also outlining guidelines for reopening and I'm aware of some medi-spas where nurses are providing these procedures as well. I have raised this issue.

Jane McKenna ([00:29:05](#)):

We do have a lot of people obviously calling because like you said, Scott, which is very valid point, somebody will phone and say, "Well how come I can go get a massage, but I can't go get my haircut?" It's a very... Obviously that people have valid points of what they're saying. We're just trying to make sure that everybody continues to stay healthy and safe, and so by doing that we're doing the best we can to put out what we need to. But Scott, please get in touch with my office if you have any further questions or you feel that I didn't answer you properly, at (905) 639-7924.

Mayor ([00:29:47](#)):

Thanks so much for that, Jane. And we are ready, moderator, for our next question.

Moderator ([00:29:53](#)):

We have another live question coming up now. Again, a reminder to everyone joining us to press three on your phone's keypad if you'd like to ask a live question. We're going to go now to Amanda. Amanda, welcome. Please go ahead.

Amanda ([00:30:06](#)):

Hi there. I just wondered if you could share the processes in place for contact tracing. It's my understanding that as things open up, it's going to be important for us to swiftly isolate any outbreaks. And I'm just interested in knowing what there is to do that.

Mayor ([00:30:26](#)):

Excellent question, Amanda. And I think that's another one for our Doctor, Dale Kalina, at the Joseph Brant Hospital, the Medical Director of Infectious Diseases. Dale, can you answer that one for us?

Dale Kalina ([00:30:39](#)):

Happy to. Thanks, Amanda. I think it's an excellent question and truth be told, I spent a lot of time describing that to a lot of different professionals these days. So contact tracing is an incredibly complex

feat of masterpiece that is performed largely by public health individuals, especially when in the community. And it is performed by a variety of individuals, including infection, prevention and control, the groups that I lead at our hospital. So contact tracing really looks at trying to ensure that we have a grasp of who has actually been exposed in any sort of an incident. So to give an example, when you have an exposure incident, say somebody who is unwell and sneezed on certain individuals, for instance, then that's a very obvious exposure incident. But we're able to, through timeframes that we know that the disease is infectious and tracing by asking the individual who is sick, where they been, we're able to trace a good number of people who may have been in contact with the disease.

Dale Kalina ([00:31:53](#)):

Now this is a practice that is in place for every infectious disease that is contagious and a practice that we use through public health for a variety of these infections. The [inaudible 00:32:05] and the different points of it are different depending on the infection. And for COVID specifically, it is quite a wide period. We look at people who've been in contact for up to 14 days before they become symptomatic, because that's what we call an incubation period.

Dale Kalina ([00:32:24](#)):

So at the end of the day, contact tracing, especially for COVID, it is a very complex and very difficult piece. And there's a lot of different tools that we use and are hoping to be able to use in the days and months to come to help with contact tracing, be that regular kind of traditional methods of contact tracing like I've discussed or whether there are any things like apps and things like that, that we will have seen in heavy use in countries like Hong Kong and Singapore, for instance, as well. But there's a lot of different ways to do that contact tracing. The importance really is to figure out who has been exposed and who needs to get some more tests and isolate.

Mayor ([00:33:09](#)):

That's great. Thank you. Thank you so much. I think moderator, we are now ready for our next question.

Moderator ([00:33:15](#)):

We have another one ready to go now again. Another quick reminder, press three on your phone keypad if you'd like to ask a live question on the event this evening. We're going to go now to Jessica. Jessica, you're joining us live on the line. Please go ahead.

Jessica ([00:33:29](#)):

Hi there. Good evening everyone. And thank you for taking my call. I'm a mother to two small children and during this lockdown we've been enthusiastically participating with e-learning and Zoom lessons with my child's teachers. I've even enrolled my children in Kumon for additional learning during this time. We're spending lots of quality time, which I'm very grateful for. We're going outside, we're baking, doing arts and crafts, but as we approach the third month of lockdown, they're starting to ask more questions about, you know, will they see their peers again? We're having age appropriate conversations to our children about the situation, but I can tell they terribly miss being around other kids.

Jessica ([00:34:15](#)):

Yesterday, the Los Angeles Times reported that the Southern California Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, they issued a statement pointing to research suggesting that the risks of COVID transmission amongst children are lower than adults, but that keeping children away from in-person

instruction for longer will have negative consequences. And similarly, in the Toronto Star today, there was an article that came out from researchers from the University of Toronto and pediatric doctors from McMaster. They're concerned about the impact of the shutdown on children. Basically, why haven't we opened playgrounds, schoolyards, camps, pools yet? And we know across the world, children are doing okay in school, by and large.

Jessica ([00:34:59](#)):

I know the call mentioned earlier that there was a small outbreak can come back, but I wanted to know what evidence here in the city of Burlington was used in making the decision to keep parks closed, knowing that there's very little evidence suggesting that the transmission of the virus on playground equipment exists. And I also wanted to know, what programs will be available for children, knowing all this information coming out from medical professionals about the impacts of children not being around other children? What programs will be offered that's not on a tablet, not on a TV screen? What will be available? So I'm curious to know. Thank you.

Mayor ([00:35:35](#)):

Great. Thank you so much for that question. So that's a two parter as well, so I'm going to turn it over to Chris Glenn to speak to... He's our Director of Recreation Services... to speak to why certain things remain closed and what the plan is to offer programming this summer. And the evidence... I can speak to that... That we used, is the province. These things are closed under provincial emergency order, and that's based on public health evidence. But I also want to give Dale a chance to talk to the comment and the question around kids being lower risk for infection and what that means. But first we'll go to Chris because the question really was about dealing with the programming, what's closed, why it's closed and what might be coming open and what it will look like. Go ahead, Chris.

Chris Glenn ([00:36:34](#)):

Great. Thank you very much, Mayor. I was anticipating this question. Why are basically all of our summer programs canceled, programs, rentals, events, etc. In the simplest way, everything that we put in place pre pandemic, we could no longer operate based on the current limitations restrictions that we have to make sure we're healthy. With that said, what we did is we hit what we call the reset button and basically said everything as we knew it, we're going to take out of the system. And we're going to look to see what we can do with modified or redesigned programs as restrictions are lifted, and we're able to start to offer different types of programming. They will be different in the short term, and we anticipate in the longterm as well.

Chris Glenn ([00:37:14](#)):

So as example, I think you used the camps as a possibility here to talk about. Our camp program in the past would have seen in the order of magnitude of a hundred children in the gymnasium doing various activities, going on buses to other events, etc. We simply can't do that right now. So recently we just got some guidelines from the province that will help us in redesigning what we're going to be able to do in the world of summer camping. And as we start to get those programs organized and prepared, we'll be ready for when we finally get the green light, when things are healthy and we're able to do it, to be able to start to run those programs. That's an example of what we're doing. And you're going to see that across all of our programs and service areas that we have.

Chris Glenn ([00:37:56](#)):

So we're kind of waiting for things to be lifted, and then we'll be able to start to run more programs. That will be for the summer as well as carrying into the fall. I'll pause there and if there's other areas of that you'd like to explore, happy to explain.

Mayor ([00:38:09](#)):

Sure. We'll leave it at that, Chris, for now, but I do want to give Dr. Kalina an opportunity to speak to the issue. And I've certainly heard it before. Kids have a lower risk of infection, what's the harm in having the kids get together? Can you speak to that medically and what the evidence is and why there might be some need still to keep smaller numbers of kids gathering? Go ahead.

Dale Kalina ([00:38:34](#)):

A hundred percent. Yeah. Thank you. You're very right. Both Jessica and the Mayor. The risk to kids being infected, it is lower and also the risk of severity of infections in children is also lower, which is all very good news. And I think that the important thing to remember here is that although the risk for children is lower, it is still not negligible. And it's also important to remember that really, the goals of a lot of these policies, recognizing that I didn't write them, is that we're trying to reduce large transmission events. And where that's what caused the quick and rapid spread of the disease in Ontario and in Quebec. [inaudible 00:39:21] were large spreading events. And in Quebec it was referenced back to a lot of weddings and things like that. And that's what one is worried... It's what I'm worried about from larger scale events like camps and large gymnasium based events and things like that.

Dale Kalina ([00:39:37](#)):

And I think that where we'll hopefully be able to start to see some more reasonable activities, would be small group activities, things like that. Because you're very right, it's a balance between the infection risk and the risk to severity of infection with kids which is relatively low, balanced with the importance of social interaction. And it goes back to, as I said earlier, mental health and also regular social interaction. And there's a number of ways to do that while balancing really what still remains is yes, it's small, but it's still non-negligible risk for kids to be infected. And that's kind of what we saw with some case studies of an inflammatory like Kawasaki like inflammatory condition with some children that are being infected. And it just highlights the difficulty in finding that balance I think.

Mayor ([00:40:34](#)):

Thank you so much. And I know our member of parliament, Jane McKenna is still with us and wanted to speak to that as well. Go ahead, Jane.

Jane McKenna ([00:40:41](#)):

Thank you so much, Mayor. I first want to say how lucky are they to have you as a mother. I totally respect everything that you're doing. And I know that obviously children are missing to having the interaction, obviously at school and obviously with their peers that they want to be with. I know how much I miss interacting with people. So I can't even imagine what it is like for a youngster to be in that situation, except from calls that we've heard here at the office and obviously from my own grandchildren. But the provincial government is working, I just wanted to throw this out, on guidelines for summer camps. Obviously it was mentioned before that are coming up very soon and plans are underway for the reopening of our schools come fall, as you know.

Jane McKenna ([00:41:26](#)):

But I just want to mention that one week after children went back to school in Quebec, there was a flare up of about 70 COVID-19 cases directly linked to schools. So again, we've had many calls from parents and grandparents that live at home, parents that have their own health issues. My top priority, and the first priority of the federal, provincial and municipal government is to make sure that everybody has health and safety. And I totally get that there isn't a clear line in the sand of what we can and can't do, but really we need to be very mindful, obviously this comes to mind about the Kawasaki syndrome with children. We have to be very mindful that even all that you're reading and that you've read in the Toronto Star, that we still obviously as a mother and a phenomenal mother, that you have the best interests of your children, but we still are not out of the woods yet right now. So we want to make sure that this doesn't... Obviously it's been spiking, but doesn't spike anymore. Thank you.

Mayor ([00:42:30](#)):

Thanks so much. Moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Moderator ([00:42:34](#)):

We 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 now have Sherry joining us. Sherry, welcome.

Sherry ([00:42:47](#)):

Hi, thank you for taking my call. My question is for the Mayor. During COVID, Burlington has relaxed on the overnight parking. Normally we only have 15 overnight to have parkings per year. Has the parking been an issue for overnight parking in Burlington during COVID? And if not, is this something you are considering extending the number of nights that we can park overnight in Burlington?

Mayor ([00:43:11](#)):

Excellent. Well, thank you so much Sherry for that question. And there are some areas where we've done special projects, the Orchard is one of them, Alton is the other, where the community has come forward and asked for extended overnight parking. And the City Council has granted that where there's a community request for that, a neighborhood request for that. But we have relaxed some of our enforcement and we do have Nick Anastasopoulos, our Director of Building and Bylaw on the call and can certainly speak to what we're doing around parking enforcements. Nick, go ahead.

Nick Anastasopoulos ([00:43:51](#)):

Hi. Thank you, Sherry. Yeah, it's exactly what the Mayor said there. So again, we're tasked to deal with the emergency orders, but again, we're being flexible and lenient with the current situation, knowing that the pressures that families and the rest of the residents are going through. So we're cognizant of the issues and we're working with the unique communities around Burlington. So we're asking for that feedback that if certain communities are seeking further assistance, to reach out to the municipalities through your associated counselor or parking@burlington.ca and we can look into any requests. And further to that, so we are proactive in certain situations. Certain areas, initially when the emergency orders came out, there had been some problematic areas for parking, so we've focused on those areas. As facilities have opened up and people are getting back to work, we've noticed a lot of those issues move away. So it's good to see as we get back to our normal [inaudible 00:21:56], things are returning to a more lenient fashion. Thank you.

Mayor ([00:45:02](#)):

Great. Thank you. And Sherry, if there are some specific issues in your neighborhood that you'd like to talk about, please email me at mayor@burlington.ca and we will get some answers for you as well on that. Moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Moderator ([00:45:20](#)):

We have our next live question coming up now, but actually just before that, we're going to do our second survey question. For everyone joining us you can use your touch tone phone to indicate your response on this question. And we want to know, is a telephone town hall an essential way for you to get local COVID-19 information? If yes, please press one. If not, please press two. And if you are unsure, please press three. So again, is a telephone town hall, an essential way for you to get local COVID-19 information. If yes, please press one. If not, please press two. And if you are unsure, please press three. Our next live question now is coming up from Sean. Sean, welcome. You're joining us live.

Sean ([00:46:02](#)):

Hi, how are you?

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:46:04]

Moderator ([00:46:03](#)):

... joining us live.

Sean ([00:46:03](#)):

Hi, how are you? My question is about the... It goes back to the summer camps. We are long time users of the snap camp, absolutely love it. I was just wondering for enrollment. We enrolled very early. I just wondering if camps do open up, how will the enrollment process go?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:46:25](#)):

Awesome question. Thank you so much for that, Sean. And we're delighted to hear that you love the camp. I know our staff and the city love offering it to you and get a lot out of it too. That's a Chris question. I'm going to let our Director of Recreation Services. Chris Glenn, answer that one. Go ahead, Chris.

Chris Glenn ([00:46:42](#)):

Thank you very much. And yes, we know our camps are very popular. At this juncture what we're doing is, we're taking the guidelines that have been given to us and we're manufacturing and preparing a program that we will then be able to advertise and promote to people so that there'll be able to get the opportunity to participate in the program. Perhaps to repeat what I said earlier, we did a clean slate from before because we can't accommodate the numbers of people in the same way as we previously advertised. We'll be having to go back and tell people what the new opportunities are and how they'll be able to access those types of programs. The details of the program itself are being finalized and we'll be communicating as well, the enrollment process, once we have that sorted out and are given a green light to run the program.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:47:28](#)):

If you were enrolled before there's no guarantee, you got to get back in line is the answer there.

Chris Glenn ([00:47:33](#)):

Yes unfortunately.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:47:35](#)):

Okay. I think we're ready for our next question, moderator.

Moderator ([00:47:40](#)):

We do have another live question coming up now. Again, a quick reminder to press three on your phone's keypad if you'd like to ask a question. We now have Joe who's joining us live. Joe, welcome.

Joe ([00:47:51](#)):

Hi, my question is what is the turnaround time for the testing and how are the patients informed of the testing?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:48:01](#)):

Great question. And Dr. Kalina, I am going to turn that over to you. Go ahead.

Dr. Kalina ([00:48:06](#)):

Sure. Happy to help. The turnaround time for testing does vary slightly, depending on what type of test you have done and where it gets sent. Now, the average turnaround time is between 24 and 48 hours. And that is the provisional goal for the majority of tests. And that's what we're meeting right now, which is really exciting. Now the availability of finding your tests is also, there's a few different answers to that, depending on where you get your test done. If it is done specifically by a public health facility, many are hooked up with what we call the OLIS, the Ontario Laboratory Information System, which is what you access through ontario.ca via the find my test results.

Dr. Kalina ([00:48:52](#)):

Now, unfortunately there is a lot of difficulty with getting a lot of the labs onto OLIS. And as a result of that, I know the two main testing providers in Halton region, including Joseph Brant Hospital and also Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, in addition to the other Halton hospitals, aren't able to always provide that data into OLIS. You can't necessarily use that ontario.ca link, but if you do get your test done at Joseph Brant Hospital, what you can use is a program that we subscribe to as well, which is called MyChart. And you'll be given all of the information about that when you get a test done at Joseph Brant Hospital.

Sean ([00:49:35](#)):

That's great. Thank you. And how are patients informed? Are they called back with the results?

Dr. Kalina ([00:49:42](#)):

Sorry. I jumped over that fact. The easiest way, if you're getting your test done at Joseph Brant, really is to check that result yourself. But if you have a positive result, you bet your bottom dollar, that public health will be calling you. And if it's a negative result, you won't get a call from public health. You can always call our assessment center, your family physician, or the other assessment center, wherever you

may get your tests done. But again, the easiest way is to really be able to check that result of yourself through MyChart.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:50:15](#)):

That's great. Thank you. Moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Moderator ([00:50:20](#)):

We have another live question. Ready to go. This one is going to be from Melba. Melba, you're joining us live. Please go ahead.

Melba ([00:50:26](#)):

Yes. I was wondering, please, if you could tell me why it's so difficult to obtain the N95 mask. I'm immune system compromised. And I have several appointments still at the Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, as well as Dr. Fogger. And it's very difficult to get mask and I have difficulty getting around because of my lupus and I'm a-

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:50:55](#)):

Wonderful to have you on the call tonight, Melba. Very sorry to hear about your situation. And I'm going to ask our Member of Parliament, Karina Gould to talk about what the government is doing to obtain and distribute masks. I know our Member of Provincial Parliament, will also want to weigh in and see if there's any local solutions and options. Go ahead, Karina.

Karina Gould ([00:51:20](#)):

Okay. Thank you very much, Marianne and thanks everyone for participating tonight and Melba for sharing your story and I'm sorry to hear of the difficulties you're experiencing. The federal government is undertaking large scale procurement of personal protective equipment that is then being distributed through the provinces. The primary focus, however, is for frontline healthcare workers and essential service workers. And what we do recommend and what public health has recommended is that, if you are not a frontline healthcare worker or a essential worker to wear a non- medical mask. There's a growing base of evidence that the more people wear a non-medical masks, the better they are protected. And it is both for you, from spreading it to someone else, but also from that other person spreading it to you. And that's what the Public Health Agency of Canada is recommending is that for anyone who is not a frontline healthcare worker or an essential service worker to really wear a non-medical grade mask.

Karina Gould ([00:52:35](#)):

However, I would have to defer to Mount Sinai or the hospital in terms of what their protocols are with regards to patients entering the hospital. But I can assure you that to date, we have been able to meet our procurement needs and we've been working very well with all the provinces, including the province of Ontario, to get those essential supplies to the provinces. And then the provinces are doing the distribution on the ground.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:53:06](#)):

And I'll just add for you Melba, if you are looking or anyone on this call looking for non-medical masks, I would again, direct you to the City of Burlington, burlington.ca/COVID-19 resource page, and there are

sources of discounted or free masks that people can acquire. We have an army of Sewers in Burlington and people that are dedicated to donating their time for this good cause. You'll be able to find what you need there for sure, Melba. And I want to just ask Jane, our Member of Provincial Parliament, if she wants to speak to the issue of masks as well.

Jane ([00:53:47](#)):

Thank you so much. Karina has basically said everything I was going to say, but I just want to say one thing to you Melba that, we've had a lot of calls here as well, people saying to us, why was it so difficult, first of all, to get the PPE that we needed, but we did it with SARS. But this is a global epidemic. It's very different. And it's everybody looking for the same thing and the federal government and provincial government have done a phenomenal job at making sure that we're able to do as much as we possibly can to make sure, as Karina was saying, that it does go to the frontline workers. But I just wanted to let you know that, we do have some masks here as well for workplaces, the Ontario government has a PPE supplier directory online. If you wanted to go look at that. We also have some limited masks here. If you want to call us tomorrow at (905) 639-7924 and you are welcome to come and pick up one of our masks that we have here as Well.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:54:56](#)):

That's great. Thank you for that. Good to hear. Moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Moderator ([00:55:02](#)):

We have our next one, ready to go. Another quick reminder to everyone joining us that if you have a live question you would like to ask, you can press three on your phone's keypad. We're going to go now to Mary. Mary, welcome. You're joining us live.

Mary ([00:55:19](#)):

Hi. I'd like to know if we can walk in a park, why can't we walk on a beach if we have a mask on and we socially distance.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:55:30](#)):

That is a great question. And thank you Mary, for being so succinct. It took me a minute for my brain to catch up with your sentence. That's wonderful, I appreciate that. Mary Battaglia, our Director of roads, parks, and forestry, I'm going to give you that one. Talk to why it's closed, why it was fenced and certainly I can speak to why and how it is being reopened after council discussed and voted on this yesterday. But Mary, go ahead and talk to the beach issue.

Mary Battaglia ([00:56:05](#)):

Thank you Marianne and thank you Mary, for your question. I do recognize that there was a lot of concern around the closure of the beach and why we're doing that and it really was a number of issues. There was some concern and trying to clarify exactly what the regulations from the province were in terms of beaches opening and closing. The water level is still quite high in Lake Ontario and the beach is about 50 feet short of the width that it normally would be. Also because we had made a decision early on in the interest of trying to be financially prudent, we did not recall any of our normal student staffing or temporary staffing. That meant we really didn't have the staff to properly maintain the beach. The steps that we have taken since, along with the council decision of last night, is that the beach will reopen next week.

Mary Battaglia ([00:57:05](#)):

We will have staff in there this weekend to clear out all of the wood debris that washes up every winter onto the shoreline there. And we are working with Halton region to see when water testing can resume so that people will know whether the water is safe to use for swimming or not. Hopefully that answers the question and we will be looking forward to having it open again and recognize what a valuable asset it is and how much people in the City of Burlington appreciate being able to use that space.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:57:43](#)):

Thanks Mary and can you speak as well to the pavilion? It's slated for some renewal and upgrades, and then what we're doing for our washroom plan, which council also approved yesterday. Do you want to speak to that?

Mary Battaglia ([00:57:57](#)):

Yes. Certainly I can do that. The pavilion, which is where the washrooms and change rooms are located at the beach is slated for capital work in September. It was hoped that we would be able to keep it open through this summer period. However, after consultation with our capital work staff and reviewing the site conditions as well as, the issue becomes that it's tight in there and not eight people would not be able to physically distance within that space, lining up for the washroom. That will be kept fenced off until the repairs begin in September. We are bringing in portable washroom buildings that we, they do take about three or four weeks before they will be delivered on site. We are trying to at least get some portable washrooms down to the beach way, the portable toilets, which would be the single units until we get the other ones out.

Mary Battaglia ([00:58:58](#)):

But in about three to four weeks, we are looking forward to starting to open, not only the washroom buildings that we bring in at a few of the waterfront locations, but the rest of our park washroom buildings will be open over the next four to six weeks. And that will provide some relief for people who are wanting to spend more time out in the parks as the summer becomes upon us. And as other callers have mentioned wanting to be able to spend more time with their children outside and in the parks. It's difficult to do that if you do not have washroom facilities nearby that you can use.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([00:59:38](#)):

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

Moderator ([00:59:43](#)):

We have another question ready to go. And first, a reminder to everyone joining us that if you have a live question we do want to hear from you, press three on your phone's keypad and someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. We now have Ingrid joining us next. Ingrid welcome. Please go ahead.

Ingrid ([00:59:59](#)):

Thank you very much. I think my question has been answered. I was concerned about municipal pools and indeed apartment pools being closed and then having the lake shore blocked off. My concern was just where are the kids going to swim when they start getting frustrated? But I think that was answered

by everyone present, when they said that the Spencer Smith Park and the beach will be reopening next week.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:00:35](#)):

Thank you so much for that, Ingrid. And Spencer Smith park remains open. We never closed that one down so people can go enjoy and the grass and kick a ball in that park and the beach, once we get it groomed and get it safe for folks next week. We're targeting for people to be able to use that and the fence coming down. But you did ask about pools and those are still closed under the provincial emergency orders. I want to give Chris Glenn, our Director of recreation services, an opportunity to speak to, what thoughts the city might have around opening any of our community pools when if the provincial emergency orders are lifted and allow those to reopen.

Chris Glenn ([01:01:22](#)):

Certainly. Thank you Mayor for that question as well. And thank you, Ingrid. The pools as mentioned, indoor, outdoor, splash pads, are all currently closed based on the provincial order. However, we have been continuing to do our work to make sure that they are prepared in the event that we have the opportunity to reopen them. And the levels of service may certainly be phased in. It may not be back to exactly how it was in the past, an example being 400 people in a recreational swim at Nelson pool. We're prepared to make that move. And next week we are bringing forward information to council with respect to what that might look like. And we are looking at a deadline date, quite honestly, in terms of if the opportunity to open them comes later into the summer process in the June time period. It probably wouldn't be worth our while to take the three to four weeks to get them open and operate them for the whole summer.

Chris Glenn ([01:02:17](#)):

We're hopeful that we'll get an opportunity in the next couple of weeks to get a green light to open pools. And I'll move on to splash pads briefly and go, splash pads are also currently not open for use, but we are also planning to get those prepared to be opened and put into use as soon as we get the green light to be able to do that. As soon as we get some green lights, we'll be able to make decisions on which outdoor aquatic opportunities we can put into the public service.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:02:44](#)):

Okay, great. Thank you. And moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Moderator ([01:02:50](#)):

We're going to go to Diane. Diane welcome, you're joining us live. Please go ahead.

Diane ([01:02:56](#)):

Thank you. Good evening everybody. And my question is when are the dentists going to open. I had a filling that fell out, but now the enamel around the tooth is starting to break away. And I just wondered when dentists would be open.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:03:14](#)):

That is a great question, Diane and our MPP unfortunately had to just leave us for another engagement, but what we're going to do is, we keep a record of all the calls and the questions that are asked live, as

well as the ones that are in the queue that we run out of time to get to. And we will put that answer on the city's webpage. We don't have the answer for you right now. I -

Karina Gould ([01:03:42](#)):

Marianne, can I jump in? Its Karina.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:03:44](#)):

For sure. Karina is going to take that one. Go ahead, Karina.

Karina Gould ([01:03:48](#)):

And I don't have the perfect answer for you, but I know that dentists are available for emergencies. And I think if you go onto the colleges' website that they will have the dentists that are seeing patients for emergencies only. That might be something to consider, especially if it's quite urgent, the care that you require. But dentists are not open right now. And of course, Jane would be best placed to answer that in further detail. But I know that most medical providers that aren't considered essential right now are still providing emergency services on an as needed basis.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:04:32](#)):

That's great. Thank you. Thank you so much. We've just gotten a text from someone out there, my trusted source of information here, that dentists are open and it is more than just for emergencies. We've confirmed that with Jane's staff. That in fact is a very recent change. Good news Diane, you can go to your dentist as you would and get that taken care of. But anyone else experiencing any issues don't wait, don't suffer in pain, that change has been made and you can call up and book an appointment. Thanks for tracking that down. All right. Over to you moderator for our next question.

Moderator ([01:05:22](#)):

We have our next live question coming up, but we also have our next survey question we're going to do right now. You can use your touch tone phone to indicate your response. The question is, have you participated in the previous COVID town halls? If yes, you have attended one press one. If it's yes, you have attended both press two. And if, no, this is my first one, press three. Again, have you participated in the previous COVID town halls? If yes, you have attended one, press one. If yes, you have attended both, press two. And if no, this is my first one, press three. We now have our next live question coming up from Dorothy. Dorothy, welcome. Please go ahead.

Dorothy ([01:06:04](#)):

Thank you and thank you for hosting this a great opportunity. My question tonight was around our education for our young children is essential, and yet it would be nice to see if there was a way that this city could not just give money to families that are in need, but create a tote bag for various age groups of children that could be donated, given out, made available at some area that would allow each child to have access to things to do, age appropriate. And it could be curriculum-based considering curriculum throughout the province of Ontario is the same. And scholastic, even if they're open, may not have the resources or quantities to accommodate that influx of quantity required to fulfill. It's just a way, even if it was made by, not everyone has access to printing or computer, this is just another way that if people need something, they can have access to it. Because most schools do not let you take these textbooks out. Even if you wanted to utilize what was available, you don't have access.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:07:21](#)):

Well, that is a great question, Dorothy, and I can tell you that I have scheduled a number of calls with community organizations in our city over the last two weeks and have just heard about a program exactly like that. I'm going to get the organization's name for you. And we will post that on our City of Burlington resource webpage. I'm going to give Chris or Denise an opportunity if they have heard of anything similar to jump in and comment.

Chris Glenn ([01:07:56](#)):

Mayor, this is Chris. I personally have not but I'll pass it to Denise, in case she has.

Denise Beard ([01:08:03](#)):

Thanks, Chris. I will jump in a little bit. The city is entertaining launching, although not curriculum based, a toy lending or play lending system. It was ready to launch prior to COVID. And we're just looking for a way to do a curbside pickup to enable age appropriate play and with equipment that you may not always purchase on your own to come and borrow. We'll clean it, we'll sanitize it and then get it back into circulation. It is an area that we're looking at right now. And that was a great question. Thank you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:08:39](#)):

The other thing I can tell you, Dorothy, is that the Burlington Public Library is getting ready to open for curbside pickup for books that are checked out through the library. Up until now, they've been offering a virtual reads and downloads and such, but now that the provincial orders have changed to allow library curbside pickup, they will be ready to go in about a week. Watch for details there...

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

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:09:03](#)):

... To go in about a week, so watch for details there, and so people can... That's a free resource, of course, but people can go online and check out whatever book they like and pick it up and take it home, so all good news. All right, moderator. We are ready for our next question.

Moderator ([01:09:19](#)):

We have our next live question coming up right now. It's going to be from Jerry. Jerry, welcome. You're joining us live.

Jerry ([01:09:26](#)):

Yes. Thank you very much for taking my call. My concern is looking down the pike for a couple of months. We have the museum is closed. We have the arenas all closed. We have these assets that are there, and we need really to start promoting how we're going to open these facilities. There's a lot of revenue that's going to be lost if this does not happen early, at least September or October.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:09:55](#)):

That is a great question, and I'll take a stab at starting that one, and then I'm going to also ask our city manager to comment on the overall revenue loss expense constraint program that we have at the city to try and contain that. The Burlington Performing Arts Center, art gallery, they're all run independently by boards. We work in close partnership with them, of course, as well. They will make the decision

about their ability to open up, but first we need the provincial orders, and in particular, the gathering rules to change.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:10:32](#)):

Those have not happened, but I know that all of those organizations are making plans for if and when. Well, it won't be "if," it'll be "when," and that's the question of the hour, when will there be an ability for us to gather again in any large number at those venues? We don't know that yet, but I know that they are all making plans, just as a city is for the phased reopening. Just going to turn it over to our city manager, Tim Commisso, to comment on where the city finances are with respect to revenue loss, expenditure restraint program, and what we expect at this point, our variants to be at the end of the year, Tim?

Tim Commisso ([01:11:15](#)):

Thank you, Your Worship, and you can hear me okay?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:11:17](#)):

Yes. Go ahead.

Tim Commisso ([01:11:19](#)):

Great. Okay, so I appreciate the question, and it's definitely something that is another challenge I think related to COVID, something I think that they were managing well, but the longer it goes on, the more tenuous it gets. We started off early, so going back to April, I think we've reported to council twice, and then this Thursday, we'll also report to council on the financial impact. June the 11th at our Community Services Strategy and Risk Committee.

Tim Commisso ([01:11:52](#)):

The last report out to council was somewhere in the range, our sort of best-worst estimate, I guess if you can call it that, [inaudible 01:12:00] \$ 2 million short fall at the end of the year. Obviously, we have to run a balanced budget. Typically, we would have a surplus at the end of the year, say a million dollars. We're definitely not in the situation that we normally are.

Tim Commisso ([01:12:18](#)):

What we're seeing is really that we've lost revenues in transit from day one. We've lost the revenues through the cancellation of all of our recreational programming through the spring, particularly, and also the summer. We've lost revenues in areas like parking, and we've moved to providing parking free. Also in some of the fees that we collect, like building permits, things like that, because we're just not seeing the same type of volumes.

Tim Commisso ([01:12:49](#)):

The bottom line, what we've done is we've tallied up our total loss in revenues, and then we've said, where can we save money? We have put in place very stringent measures on expenditure control. We're not spending on anything that's considered discretionary. We laid off approximately 680 staff, particularly those that were aligned with the recreational revenues, but we also didn't bring back all of our summer students in our Roads, Parks and Forestry Department. I think that was a total of 92 staff that didn't come back, part time casuals.

Tim Commisso ([01:13:25](#)):

Back in April, I think we had identified that if we can get past this relatively soon, we think that perhaps... At that time it was somewhere in the range, I think, about a half a million dollar shortfall, but as it goes on and we continue not to be able to generate revenues, and now we're also in a bit of a double edged sword because we're adding back some services. We're really conscious, I think, of what it looks like projected to year end.

Tim Commisso ([01:13:56](#)):

We will give council another update on Thursday. I don't think the picture, quite frankly, will be better. I think it will be even a little bit worse, but we'll have to redouble our efforts quite frankly, to find funding or find savings. I think we also are hoping, I think, and we can advocate, I think, particularly on the loss of transit funding that perhaps we can get some support federally or provincially as far as [inaudible 01:14:27] We're not the only municipality in that situation.

Tim Commisso ([01:14:29](#)):

I think the reality of it is, is there are other municipalities, particularly with higher order transit, that are even worse impacted. I'll say that we're managing it as well as we can. I think if we have to, we'll take more stringent cost control measures after we report out to council on Thursday, and we have a very close eye on it. We have a great finance team that's really got a good handle on this. Your Worship, I think that more or less covers it, I don't know if you want to add anything from your perspective.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:15:04](#)):

For sure, thanks for that, Tim, and I'll just add that mayors across the country and across the province have been advocating for both federal and provincial funding for municipalities precisely because of what you identified, Jerry. Our revenues, our ability, just like many businesses, our ability to earn our normal revenues has vanished, and yet, we have additional costs for a whole range of things.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:15:31](#)):

As we start to gradually open, those services will be different than they were pre-COVID. They will be a more labor intensive, additional cleaning costs and a number of other measures that we'll have to take, and so, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities have asked for \$10 billion for municipalities across the country, and funding the Larger Urban Mayors Caucus, of which I'm a member as your mayor. We have asked for federal... We've endorsed that position, but we've also asked for provincial funding to match what the federal government is doing to make municipalities a whole.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:16:10](#)):

We can't run a deficit like the other levels of government, and we've actually said very clearly, we don't want to, and that's not even an option. That's not on the table for us to consider. We need relief, and at the moment municipalities get 9 cents on every tax dollar that you pay, and yet, we are on the front lines of delivering many, many services to our community.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:16:34](#)):

We will continue that advocacy effort, and I'm just going to see if [Corina 01:16:40] wants to weigh in there, because I know there's been some recent announcements. I'll just give you an opportunity to speak to funding from the federal government for municipalities.

Karina Gould ([01:16:55](#)):

Sure. Thanks, Marianne. Look, from the federal point of view, we appreciate how important the role of municipality is, which is why on Monday we announced an early access to the federal gas tax fund and an increase in the federal gas tax fund to help with some of the liquidity issues that cities are facing. The prime minister was quite clear that that was the first of our efforts and our response. We also know how important cities are going to be to the recovery, and so making sure that cities and municipalities are able to provide those services, whether it's public transit or any of the other really important services that municipalities provide, we want to be there to support them in partnership.

Karina Gould ([01:17:49](#)):

We are engaging quite frequently with the FCM and the Big City Mayors as well as others. I know that there is a really strong urban caucus, particularly of liberal MPs, that is advocating very strongly on behalf of cities right now. We're just looking at what the additional options are, but as Marianne said, it's also very important that the province comes to the table, because municipalities really are under provincial jurisdiction, for the most part. While the federal government is looking at what tools we have at our disposal to help, we also need to work with the provincial governments as well.

Karina Gould ([01:18:29](#)):

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:18:30](#)):

That's great. Thanks, and just before we move on to our next question, Jerry, you were talking about opening arenas as well, and I wanted to give Eric Vandewall, the CEO of Joseph Brent Hospital, an opportunity to speak to that one. Go ahead, Eric.

Eric Vanderwall ([01:18:47](#)):

Thanks, Marianne. Jerry, a great question, and I think where I would start from is we have all as residents in Halton region, really invested in following the measures that were important to ensure that we flattened the curve. For a large extent, significantly reduce the spread of COVID-19 across Halton region, and so the dilemma we find ourselves in is this conversation around health and wellbeing and limiting the spread of COVID. How do we restart our economy in a way that's effective, while at the same time, keeping people safe? And how do we also then not see risk for lives lost as a result of actions taken?

Eric Vanderwall ([01:19:27](#)):

From a health perspective, I appreciate the revenue and the business perspective, but for me, health and wellbeing and lives saved is where we should keep our lens. I think the government's actions to date, although difficult, are the right ones in terms of ensuring that we gradually move forward with reintroducing services, IE then generating revenues. I think Corina and both the provincial government [inaudible 01:19:53] and the municipal government, are all working together to try and mitigate these losses in revenue. From my perspective, safety first, save lives, let's keep the spread of COVID-19 to an absolute minimum. Thank you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:20:06](#)):

Thanks very much. Yes, the measures have worked, and Halton, as we talked about earlier, is lower than our regional neighbors and lower than the provincial average as well. That's all good news. We are doing what we set out to do, which is keep our community healthy and safe. We do have time for maybe one or two more questions, moderator, so let's have another one.

Moderator ([01:20:29](#)):

Well, up first we have Gord, who's joining us live now. Gord, welcome. Please go ahead.

Gord ([01:20:34](#)):

I actually, I'm going to back out here. I just had all the questions that I had answered.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:20:41](#)):

Awesome.

Gord ([01:20:43](#)):

He's doing what they can do. The provinces is looking at, obviously, going to look at helping out the city. My concern was keeping within the city budget, so thank you, and I appreciate the fact that I can sit here and listen to what's going on and a lot of good questions.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:21:00](#)):

Thank you so much.

Gord ([01:21:01](#)):

I will yield to the next caller.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:21:04](#)):

Thank you so much for joining us, Gord, and for doing that, we really appreciate that, and we're glad you got your questions answered. Moderator, next question.

Moderator ([01:21:14](#)):

We have Vivian, who's joining us now. Vivian, welcome, please go ahead.

Vivian ([01:21:19](#)):

Hi, thank you. Question, how dependable is on Halton.ca for the cases in Burlington, because they see things are opening up, can I start babysitting my granddaughter because the other grandmother's already started, and I feel guilty. I'm just worried. I don't want to give her the multi-inflammatory system disease, and I don't want to get it from her. I don't know, now that things are opening up, can I go back and babysit?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:22:03](#)):

That is a great question. And I'm going to turn that over to Dr. Dale Kolina, and also talk about how a Halton.ca tracks the cases and what's reported and whether there's any delay in what's happening real time, and then the numbers getting updated on the site. Dr. Kolina, can you speak to those two ideas?

Dr. Kalina ([01:22:27](#)):

I'd be happy to. Thanks, Vivian, I think that is a number of great questions, so to speak first to a Halton.ca. The public health information and the number of cases that are reported in Halton.ca are updated every day and they are pretty accurate, and of course they're based on tests that are positive. There's also a lot of interesting epidemiologic data that dates back to when the tests were positive, so that's how that's presented there. It is very accurate and is updated every day. Now to speak to the level of risk taking care of loved ones that really, I think, goes back for a number of different things. Maybe I'll provide a bit of an answer, but I think that maybe some of the other panelists can provide an answer to this as well, is that my understanding is that Ontario has not gone through a process whereby we have bubbling and that sort of thing like we've discussed or like has been discussed at some other provinces. Realistically, what it boils down to from an infection risk perspective is being able to look at what level of risk you have yourself and what your grandchildren and people that you're in contact with have of having contracted the virus. That's what I'd call a personal risk assessment, and that's going to be the type of thing that is useful for all of us, I think, going forward. Although right now we are still trying to, and if I'm not mistaken, really insisting, that you are sticking to gatherings of fewer than five people and really restricting to individuals in the house that you live in as a method to reduce that risk of spread.

Dr. Kalina ([01:24:20](#)):

That's what I think is really important. I think that it's important not to just, as you said, follow what other grandmothers around are doing, but to make sure that you're doing what is best for yourself and for your family.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:24:37](#)):

Thank you, Doctor. Moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Moderator ([01:24:41](#)):

We have Diane, who's joining us live on the line now. Diane, welcome. Please go ahead.

Diane ([01:24:48](#)):

Hello?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:24:48](#)):

Yes, hi Diane. You're on the air.

Diane ([01:24:51](#)):

Hi. My comment is I really appreciate these town halls there. I get a lot of information, but the problem I'm having is I live with a number and work with a number of seniors who don't have email access, and the understanding from most of the responders is that everybody has a computer. Everybody has this and that. My question is, there was information about masks. There was information about a lot of things here, but you had to access the website. You had to access this website. How do seniors, many of us who are still active in the community, not at the senior center, how do we get that information?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:25:45](#)):

Well, this that's a great, a very good question, Diane, and we're doing it right now. That is one of the ways that we're trying to provide answers is most folks still do have a telephone, and so the ability to

connect with us live on the phone right now and hear all of these answers is one of the things that we are trying to do for people who don't have access to a computer.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:26:13](#)):

The other thing that you can do, Halton region will, again, just using a telephone, you can dial 311, and get to Halton region, and they have a wealth of information and folks on the line and on the phone who will answer questions about masks and many of the questions we've heard here tonight. Halton Region Health Department staff will be able to answer. We also have our service, Burlington staff, working remotely.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:26:43](#)):

They're not at city hall, but we've figured out a way to route our telephone number to reach a call center. You can dial the phone number at the city, (905) 335-7777, and between normal business hours, 8:30 to 4:30, Monday to Friday, you will get a live person and can answer questions that way. We've also put ads in the Burlington Post. I know not everybody gets it that way, but we've also worked with our community groups to hand out printed brochures on things like where to get food if you need food, where to find out other resources that are available.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:27:26](#)):

If you have any suggestions for us, Diane, about how we may better reach communities that don't have access to a computer, we are all ears. I also know that each member of council, some of whom are on the line with us and listening intently I know to your questions and answers, have sent out printed, mailed information to their wards with phone numbers, other resources that their residents can access. That was delivered about a month ago, I'm going to say, to just about every household in the city.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:28:05](#)):

We're taking a number of steps, but again, if you have any ideas, we would be happy to hear them. I think we are almost at the end. Moderator, let us know where we're at.

Moderator ([01:28:18](#)):

Well, we're just about reaching the end of the event, and we did have a lot of time to get to a lot of questions, but the last couple of minutes remaining, are there some closing remarks you'd like to share?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:28:29](#)):

I will, but I know there was one guest we had on who wasn't asked a question, and that was our chief of police, Halton Regional Police Services Chief Stephen Tanner. I wanted to give him an opportunity to say a few words before we close. Go ahead, Chief.

Stephen Tanner ([01:28:45](#)):

Well, thank you very much, Mayor, and it's a privilege to join in. I think it's a good problem when the police don't get questions during times like this. We certainly have all had a lot on our plates and add to the COVID, which hopefully we'll see some restaurant openings and things soon. There'll be issues that we'll all address together, but we're also dealing with that terrible and horrendous and tragic incident in Minneapolis and that ripple effect through the world.

Stephen Tanner ([01:29:13](#)):

I want to thank actually the protestors today and both Oakville and Burlington, many of them younger people, teenagers, early 20s, so well behaved, so respectful, professional, law abiding, but they really got a strong message across that there can be no racism allowed in our society and none of us should stand for it. I want to give a special shout out to them and thank the organizers and all of the participants and our officers and other staff that were there, also to you and to the city of Burlington bylaws staff, in particular for the city of Burlington in assisting us with enforcement during the COVID. Most of it's been managed by education and compliance, thankfully, and we'll hope that continues. Thank you very much.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:29:59](#)):

Thank you so much, Chief, and that was a wonderful end to the call. We ended back where we started, which is talking about how we are a welcoming and inclusive community, and there is no room for racism anywhere. I've seen some of the pictures as we've been talking, and it's been a huge event, a huge message of respect for all lives and certainly for black lives in our community and an end to racism, so thank you. Thank you chief for that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward ([01:30:35](#)):

I want to thank all of you for joining the call, for your excellent questions for all the panelists, our outstanding panelists, every time who take time to speak with you. I want to thank you for giving your time to us tonight, and of course, our staff who are on the line to answer the questions as well. Be healthy, be safe, have a great evening and back to you, Moderator.

Moderator ([01:31:00](#)):

Thank you again to everyone for joining us this evening. If you have any questions or feedback on today's telephone town hall, a quick reminder that you can share those with us by emailing them to us at city@burlington.ca. Again, please email questions and feedback to city@burlington.ca. Thank you again and have a good evening.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:31:18]