



## COUNCILLOR LORELEI NICOLL

DISTRICT 4 ONLINE NEWS

COLE HARBOUR - WESTPHAL

### Dear Residents

This is an unprecedented and challenging time for all of us. The COVID-19 pandemic is having an impact on the health of our loved ones, the businesses we rely upon, the health of the global economy and the way we live our daily lives. As we all continue to navigate through these unique and evolving challenges, we all must do our part to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus so that everything can resume as normal sooner rather than later.

The situation is changing by the hour. Please check the [Canada](#), [Nova Scotia](#), and [Halifax Regional Municipality](#) websites for the most up-to-date and accurate information.

I would also encourage motorists to drive with care, especially during this time, as residents are practicing social distancing and may step out into the street to avoid others. Let's keep our neighbours safe! We will get through this together. Stay safe everyone!

### COVID-19 Update

Dr. Strang shared some good news on March 24<sup>th</sup> that the QE2 microbiology lab can, right now, do 400 tests a day, double their pre-crisis capacity. He also reported that COVID-19 testing is expanding slightly in Nova Scotia and they are looking to expand testing into the community. We are going to have more cases and more hospitalizations but if we maintain social distancing, isolate if we've been travelling, we have the ability now to track and trace contacts and test very aggressively.

I know people are worried, that emotions are high, and we are all desperate for answers. It is very important for everyone to follow the instructions of the Medical Officers of Health.

### Important Numbers to Remember

Here are some telephone numbers you might find helpful:

General medical/health related questions related to COVID-19 in Nova Scotia the Public Health support line is 902-481-5800 (staffed 8am-8pm M-F). Please note that if you are concerned that you may have COVID-19, you should use this online [self-assessment](#) before calling 811.

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To report people not following social distancing rules in the community, please call Police non-emergency line 902-490-5020 or TTY line at 902-490-7252.

To report workplaces not following social distancing rules call 1-800-952-2687 to register a concern with a provincial occupational health and safety inspector.

Government of Canada coronavirus information line – 1-833-784-4397.

### Halifax Transit

- Due to the incredible effort from Halifax Transit maintenance workers, operators, and the operations team, service remains fully operational on a reduced schedule.
- Halifax Transit has been [designated by the Province of Nova Scotia an essential service](#) under the current provincial state of emergency. As per this direction by the province, the municipality will continue delivering the highest level of service that can be reasonably provided – while also continuing to take steps that help minimize the spread of COVID-19 and make buses as safe an environment as possible in the circumstances. Residents are reminded that the level of transit service provided will continue to be adjusted as necessary, based on available operational resources.
- For riders who have purchased a March or April transit pass, please keep your passes until further notice. Halifax Transit will update the status of transit passes in the coming days.
- For all other transit adjustments related to COVID-19, please visit [Halifax.ca/coronavirus](https://Halifax.ca/coronavirus).

### Planning & Development

#### Online Permits and Applications

- An [online form](#) has been created for all permit and sub-division application intakes.
- Applications for Rezoning, Municipal Plan Amendments, Development Agreements, or Downtown Halifax Site Plan Approvals can be submitted via email to Carl Purvis – Planning Applications Program Manager [purvisc@halifax.ca](mailto:purvisc@halifax.ca).
- Revised drawings and/or any amended application information for current files can also be submitted via email, directly to the planner assigned to your file.

### Parks and Trails

As per the provincial State of Emergency Order: all provincial and municipal parks, as well as beaches, playgrounds, sports fields, courts and associated parking lots remain closed. If you enter these areas, you are breaching the order and maybe charged.

- Provincial and municipal trails that are **not** part of a park can be used for exercise purposes, **but** only if you can walk there.
- Residents who have questions about the status of a trail can call 311, however, the municipality is asking residents to:
  - Stay home unless absolutely necessary.
  - Walk/exercise within your neighbourhood only.
  - Practice social distancing. This means staying at least two metres apart from others and do not gather in groups.



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- The municipality's parking enforcement team continues to align with Halifax Regional Police in enforcement efforts related to COVID-19.
- If you park in a parking lot that is part of a provincial or municipal park, you are breaching the order and in addition to being charged may be ticketed and/or towed. Residents can call 311 to report a vehicle that is non-compliant.
- We are still seeing people gathering and participating in activities such as street hockey and basketball games - these do not meet social distancing rules and exceed the maximum of people.

To report violations related to the provincial state of emergency, call the police non-emergency line at [902-490-5020](tel:902-490-5020) community.

### Recreation Programming

- All municipal spring recreation programming has been cancelled and automatic refunds will be processed in the coming days.
- All programs have been removed from the online registration system, and credits for cancelled programs have been applied as a first step.
- All registrants will receive an email outlining this information, and additional questions can be submitted by email to [myrec@halifax.ca](mailto:myrec@halifax.ca). The registration phone line is not active for the time being.

Summer recreation program registration scheduled for April 1 is cancelled. The status of summer recreation programming will be determined later.

### Finance

- The municipality is currently looking at alternative payment options related to property taxes due April 30, 2020. Decisions will be communicated to taxpayers in advance of the deadline and will focus on addressing the needs of businesses and residents. Questions can be sent to [proptax@halifax.ca](mailto:proptax@halifax.ca).
- The application deadline for Community Grants Programs as well as the Tax Relief for Non-Profit Organizations Program has been extended until May 15.
- Payments to vendors and suppliers will continue, as well as procurement tenders.

### Parking

Parking fees at meters have been waived and HotSpot fees will be set to zero until further notice.

- Enforcement of hourly spaces and monthly permit parking is suspended until further notice. Residential permits will still be enforced. If your residential permit has recently expired, you will not receive a ticket. Please note: These steps are an effort to support healthcare workers and residents seeking medical attention. Please be considerate of the duration of your parking.
- In the event normal operations have not resumed by April, monthly parking permits already purchased will be rolled over to the following month.
- Tickets issued on or before March 19 at noon are still valid and can be [paid online](#), by cheque by mail or in person when customer service operations resume.
- Safety-related aspects of the Provincial Motor Vehicle Act will continue to be enforced (e.g. no parking in crosswalks,

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parking distance from fire hydrants, signage indicating no stopping, etc.)

### 2020 Volunteer Awards

- The 2020 Volunteer Awards are postponed until further notice.
- Information regarding a new date will be shared on the website and with recipients once confirmed.

### No Evictions for Three Months

The provincial order states that no tenant can be evicted because their income has been impacted by COVID-19 (effective for the next 3 months). If you have concerns, you should contact the [Residential Tenancy Board](#) at 1-800-670-4357.

### NS Power

For at least the next 90 days, NS Power will not be disconnecting customers for nonpayment. They also committed to being flexible, relaxing payment timelines, waiving penalties and fees on unpaid bills, and providing options for residential and small business customers. NS Power will work with customers on their individual circumstances. More information can be found [here](#).

### Nova Scotia's Healthcare Heroes

Nova Scotia's healthcare heroes are showing extraordinary care and commitment under unprecedented circumstances and many businesses are showing up as 'helpers' with offerings to make life a little easier for them during the COVID-19 pandemic. To amplify these neighbourly and generous offerings, Partners for Care (PFC) is launching a website that lists the various services and products that are convenient, discounted or free for our healthcare workers across Nova Scotia.

Businesses with offerings are asked to email [partnersforcare@nshealth.ca](mailto:partnersforcare@nshealth.ca) with their

business name, contact information (phone and email), a brief description of their offering, and how the healthcare hero can redeem their offer (e.g. website link, code, showing NSHA ID badge, etc.)

Note: *Offers of personal protective equipment* are being managed through a separate process and channel. Companies with offers of personal protective equipment should reach out to [PPEOffer@nshealth.ca](mailto:PPEOffer@nshealth.ca)

### Mental Health Support

If you have been recently laid off, check with your employer's Employee Assistance Program. Most have mental health supports and counsellors available via telephone. Even if laid off, these services are available for up to six months after the job loss. There is a national mental health hotline: 1-833-456-4566 or text "talk" to 686868. For younger residents, the Kid's Help Phone is 1-800-668-6868. The Nova Scotia Mobile Mental Health Crisis line is: 1-888-429-8167. All services are available 24-7.

### NS Registry of Motor Vehicles

- Vehicle registrations with a December 31/2019 expiry and after, are now valid until August 31. This includes all vehicle types, as well as off highway vehicles, motorcycles and trailers.
- All temporary permits with a March 2020 expiry or after, are now valid until August 31.
- All blue permanent Accessible Parking Permits are valid until August 31/2020.
- All foreign licence plates and driver licences operating within the province are now valid until August 31/2020.
- NS Safety Inspections Sticker dates shall remain the same *EXCEPT* where the vehicle is registered in a business/corporate name and in that case, the inspection remains valid until August 2020.

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Nova Scotia Driver Licenses, both cards and temporary paper licenses with an expiry date in March, April or May of 2020 will have an effective expiry of August 31/2020.

### Tips to support your mental health

Here are some tips to help manage stress during this time:

- Give yourself permission to acknowledge and experience this as stressful.
- Don't judge yourself for your feelings.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Keep your news local. You're not responsible for managing this crisis. Just get the news you need to keep you and your family safe.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate.
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. However, avoid the stress related to starting a new diet, and trying to break a bad habit. Now is not likely the time for that.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Spend quality time with pets. Pets of all sorts are known to help in reducing anxiety and stress.
- Read the advisories carefully. There are different guidelines and restrictions for people who have symptoms or have known exposure to the virus than for people in general.
- Trying times can test your beliefs and so connecting with them is important during times of crisis. Connect with faith, belief,

things of meaning. We all believe in something.

- We live in perhaps one of the best countries in the world. We have a public health service that keeps us informed and in the event of a real crisis we have institutions that can mobilize to bring us resources to keep us fed and warm if necessary.

So, stay safe. Care for each other and keep your stress manageable. Together we can get through this.



Special thanks to all our health care workers who are

working 24/7 in direct contact with many patients who are suffering from health complications due to the COVID-19 virus.

I would also like to thank everyone who is working during this time. We appreciate everything you are doing to ensure we have what we need to keep our lives as normal as possible.



We must all do our part to ensure that we keep them and our communities safe. I encourage everyone to follow the directive of the Provincial State of Emergency. Continue social distancing, self-isolating for 14 days if you have travelled anywhere and, if you have symptoms, following the information found [here](#).

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### Support for Small Businesses facing Impacts of COVID-19

The Government of Canada is focused on helping Canadians and businesses through this tough economic time. On March 27<sup>th</sup>, Prime Minister Trudeau announced support for small businesses facing impacts of COVID-19. To further support small businesses, the Government of Canada will: announce a 75 per cent wage subsidy for qualifying businesses, for up to 3 months, retroactive to March 15, 2020; allow businesses, including self-employed individuals, to defer all Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax (GST/HST) payments until June, as well as customs duties owed for imports; launch the new Canada Emergency Business Account; and launch the new Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Loan and Guarantee program that will enable up to \$40 billion in lending, supported through Export Development Canada and Business Development Bank, for guaranteed loans when small businesses go to their financial institutions to help weather the impacts of COVID-19.

These additional new measures to support small businesses dealing with the economic impacts of the pandemic will help Canadian businesses protect the jobs that Canadians depend on and pay their workers and bills during these difficult times. More information on Canada's Economic Response plan can be found [here](#).

### Virtual Regional Council Meetings

The Halifax Regional Municipality continues to monitor and respond to the rapidly evolving effects of COVID-19. To continue to practice safe social distancing, there will be three virtual special meetings of Regional Council on April 2, April 14 and April 28, each starting at 1 p.m. The purpose of these special meetings is to deal with matters as determined by the CAO

and Mayor. The regularly scheduled meetings on April 7 and April 21 are cancelled.

Technology for virtual meetings is being tested currently and residents and media may be able to access the meeting while it is underway. According to the provincial order of the state of emergency, Regional Council minutes will be available on [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) within 24 hours of the meeting. An audio recording of the entire meeting proceedings will be available as soon as possible following the meeting. Staff is exploring whether a video of the Regional Council proceedings is feasible. The agenda and reports for the April 2 meeting will be posted on [Halifax.ca](http://Halifax.ca) on Tuesday, March 31 at 1:00 p.m.

### New Playground Equipment coming to Caldwell Road School

Some good news to share with the community! HRM will be issuing a Request for Proposals this spring for new playground equipment at Caldwell Road School, to be used by both the school and the community at large. We are interested in hearing from anyone in the community who have specific concerns or requests regarding the new playground. You can provide feedback directly to the project manager, Gary Young via email at [youngga@halifax.ca](mailto:youngga@halifax.ca) or by calling 902-490-7174.

