



## COUNCILLOR LORELEI NICOLL

DISTRICT 4 ONLINE NEWS

COLE HARBOUR - WESTPHAL

### Dear Residents

I hope everyone is staying safe during these challenging times.

Thank you to the residents who are abiding by the rules set out in the Provincial State of Emergency. For those of you who are not, remember we all must do our part to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus so that life can return to normal sooner.

For up-to-date and accurate information, please check the [Canada](#), [Nova Scotia](#), and [Halifax Regional Municipality](#) websites.

Stay safe, stay well and stay home!

### COVID-19 Update

Please **DO NOT** call 9-1-1 for non-emergency purposes. Residents can call 3-1-1 and police non-emergency line at **902-490-5020**.

Access **211** to find non-municipal community and social services available in your area. This service is available 24/7 in 140 languages.

Nova Scotians should not leave the province and **only leave home for essential items and services**. If possible, one person per family should be designated to do these tasks.

Nova Scotia will now offer COVID-19 testing to anyone who develops a fever, or a new or worsening cough. People must still call **811** to arrange a testing time.

A temporary assessment centre has been opened in North Preston to serve the communities of North Preston, East Preston, Lake Loon and Cherrybrook. People must still call **811** to arrange a testing time.

Stay informed about emergencies and operations - register for [hfxALERT](#). You'll

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receive notifications by phone, email, and/or text message.

### Key Activities Underway

- All Nova Scotia public schools will remain closed until at least May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- There is a **Province wide** burn ban in place.
- There are virtual special meetings of Regional Council on April 9<sup>th</sup>, April 14<sup>th</sup> and April 28<sup>th</sup>, each starting at 1:00 p.m. The purpose of these special meetings is to deal with matters as determined by the CAO and Mayor. Residents can click the video link on [Halifax.ca](https://www.halifax.ca) to “watch on web” and enter the webcast by selecting ‘join anonymously’.
- All customer service centres and Planning & Development counter services are closed to the public. Services continue to be available online.
- Legal documents and appeals will no longer be accepted in person at City Hall. Residents are asked to fax these documents to 902-490-4208 or send by email to [clerks@halifax.ca](mailto:clerks@halifax.ca).
- All Halifax Public Library branches are closed until further notice.
- On weekdays, a 30 percent reduction in bus service is being targeted. Regular weekday schedules will continue on some routes, while other routes are operating on their Saturday schedules during weekdays. Three routes have no service. Weekend service will not be impacted. Details regarding route changes can be found [here](#).
- Safety-related aspects of the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act continue to be enforced.

- Parking fees at meters have been waived and HotSpot fees will be set to zero until further notice.
- All municipal parks, beaches, playgrounds, sports fields/courts, and many trails are closed until further notice.
- All municipally owned recreation facilities, community centres and arenas are closed.
- 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).
- An [online form](#) has been created for all permit and sub-division application intakes.
- Halifax Water will maintain critical services.
- Halifax Water Customers facing economic impacts due to the COVID-19 situation that will cause them to struggle with paying their accounts are asked to please contact Halifax Water’s Customer Care Centre at [customercare@halifaxwater.ca](mailto:customercare@halifaxwater.ca) or 902-420-9287 to discuss payment arrangements.

### Emerging Issues and Next Steps

- The application deadline for Community Grants Programs as well as the Tax Relief for Non-Profit Organizations Program have been extended until May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 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

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will focus on addressing the needs of businesses and residents. Questions can be sent to [proptax@halifax.ca](mailto:proptax@halifax.ca).

- The 2020 Volunteer Awards are postponed until further notice.
- The Youth Live Enviro Depot at 947 Mitchell Street is closed until further notice.
- The application deadline for Grants to Professional Arts Organization program has been extended until April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The collection of residential refrigerant gas removal (CFCs) service has been suspended until further notice.
- Otter Lake Waste Facility is not accepting cash as a payment method at this time.
- Halifax Regional Police will proactively release updates each Monday and Friday to the public and media in relation to violations under the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Act and Health Protection Act related to COVID-19.

### Under the State of Emergency

Nova Scotia borders will tighten to travellers and all entry points (land, sea, air) will be closely managed. Anyone entering the province will be stopped, questioned, and told to self-isolate for 14 days. Exemptions for cross-border travel include healthy workers in trades and transportations sectors who move goods and people (e.g. truck drivers); healthy people going to work (e.g. health-care workers); and people travelling into the province for essential health services (e.g. chemotherapy treatment).

All municipal and provincial parks, beaches, and tourist attractions are closed.

If Nova Scotians and businesses do not practice social distancing and self-isolation, they will face

finest of \$1,000 for individuals and \$7,500 for businesses. Multiple fines can be given each day an individual or business fails to comply. Police can also enforce offences under the Emergency Management Act. For example, fines for charging higher than fair market prices for goods and services.

Landlords are not permitted to change locks or seize property of businesses who cannot pay rent, if the business closed directly because of COVID public health orders.

There are several groups who are essential and exempt from gathering limits but must still maintain social distancing and other public health protocols.

Law enforcement enforce orders under the Emergency Management Act and Health Protection Act. If you are aware of someone not following provincial direction, have a conversation with them first – they may need help.

**To report violations related to the provincial state of emergency, call the police non-emergency line at 902-490-5020.**

### April 8<sup>th</sup> Municipal Update

#### Municipal Budget

- A number of measures the municipality has taken to protect our staff and the public, as well as support businesses, has resulted in a decrease to revenue. Bus fares from Halifax Transit alone are around \$3 million per month. By adding forgone parking revenue and rent



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deferrals we are seeing material changes to the budget.

- Finance staff are assessing the operating and capital budget to see what can be delivered this year, and what can be deferred. We are also continuing to have conversations with the province about infrastructure spending and the possibility of stimulus programs. It is anticipated that staff will be back with a recast budget in late May, but as with all things COVID-19 related, that timeline is subject to change.

### Tax Deferral

- The municipality continues to work the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities and the Association of Municipal Administrators on options for a tax deferral program to help businesses and individuals that have been impacted by COVID-19. Finance staff will present a report to Regional Council for consideration on April 14.
- It is critical that those who can pay their taxes continue to do so in a timely fashion. Tax revenue makes up 82% of the municipality's revenue. Operating expenses total approximately \$100 million per month and, while the municipality is financially sound, a significant amount of cashflow is required to provide services, pay vendors and suppliers and continue with capital projects that support the economy.

### Domestic Violence

- The municipal Public Safety Office is advising residents that help is available for those experiencing or at risk of domestic violence. Following public health direction to stay home is crucial,

but we know, that home is not always safe for everyone.

- Available help for women and their children takes many forms, from supportive connections and outreach over the phone, information about safety planning and resources, to provision of emergency shelter and second-stage housing. In Halifax, organizations serving women continue to offer a wide range of support, guidance, and shelter to women and their children during this time.
- If you are experiencing domestic abuse, know that you are not alone. There's help available to you.
  - If you're in immediate danger, call 911.
  - If you need help or information, you can call Bryony House's distress line at 902.422.7650.
  - To connect with community resources in Halifax, call 211 or [visit their website](#).

### Payment Options During COVID-19

For customers who can pay their bill on time, we encourage them to please do so. Payments can be made to HRM via the following methods:

- **Telephone and Online Banking** – Contact your financial institution. To register, please quote your assessment number.
- **Interac ABM** – Pay at any Interac ABM or most financial institutions; fees may be applicable.
- **Send by mail** – Mail payment to the address on the remittance stub.
- **Credit Card** – Property Tax accounts may be paid online by major credit card using a third-party service provider.



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Halifax Regional Municipality (the municipality) uses a third-party provider, PlastiQ, that charges a fee for this service. Please visit [plastiQ.com](http://plastiQ.com) for more information.

- **Pre-authorized Payment, Due date option** – On the due date, the municipality will debit your bank account for the balance due on this bill. For more information call 311 or visit our [website](#).
- **In person at your local bank branch** – many bank branches are still open, operating at reduced hours. Tax payments can be processed at bank branches, provided you already have a bank account with that financial institution.
- **Drop Box Locations:**
  - 636 Sackville Drive – Acadia Centre
  - Scotia Square Customer Service Centre
  - 1st Floor, 7071 Bayers Road
  - 60 Alderney Drive – Customer Service Centre (**only available until 6pm Mon/Wed/Fri 8pm on Tues and Thurs and not on weekends**)

Please include your remittance stub from your tax bill with your cheque, money order or bank draft payable to HRM.

**Important:** Please do not include cash in the drop off box for payment.



## Municipal Services on Easter Long Weekend

The Halifax Regional Municipality is advising residents of the following municipal service level adjustments over the upcoming Easter long weekend:

### Solid Waste Collection and Facility Hours

No municipal solid waste collection services will take place on Good Friday, April 10. Curbside collection of garbage, organics or recyclables normally scheduled for Friday, April 10, will occur instead the next day, Saturday, April 11. Residents are reminded that collection services can begin as early as 7 a.m.; to ensure pick-up,

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residents may place materials curbside the evening prior to collection day.

Regular curbside collection services will occur on Easter Monday, April 13.

The Otter Lake Waste Management Facility, the municipal recycling plant and municipal composting facilities will be closed on Good Friday, April 10 and Easter Sunday, April 12, but will be open for regular operating hours on Saturday, April 11 and Easter Monday, April 13.

The Household Special Waste Depot in Bayers Lake is closed until further notice.

### Halifax Transit Bus and Ferry Services

Halifax Transit buses will be operating on holiday service on Good Friday, April 10, as well as Easter Sunday, April 12. Please note there will be no ferry service in operation on Good Friday, however, holiday ferry service will be provided on Easter Sunday. Halifax Transit will operate on its current, reduced weekday service on Monday, April 13. For detailed holiday schedules by individual bus and ferry route, visit <https://www.halifax.ca/transportation/halifax-transit/routes-schedules>.



We all have a stake in the health and safety of our communities. In these times, it is even more apparent that we need to work together to protect residents

while we do our best to live and work in new and challenging ways.

### We urgently need your help.

Diabetes Canada donation bins are overflowing, and some are becoming a dumping ground for well-meaning citizens who want to support our work. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and crucial physical distancing orders that non-essential services be stopped, the pick-up of all textile donations by Diabetes Canada from homes and donation bins across Canada stopped on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**The current donations at the donation bins and, in some unfortunate instances, the *dumping of garbage* at donation bins is posing a serious health and safety issue.**

Diabetes Canada is urging the public to hold off on their bin donations until business resumes.

Diabetes Canada relies on generous charitable clothing donations as a crucial source of revenue to support the 11 million Canadians living with diabetes or prediabetes. Efforts include innovative diabetes research, supporting children and youth living with type 1 diabetes, and developing evidence-based policy recommendations to improve the lives of those living with the disease. Additionally, thanks to the donation bin business, more than 100 million pounds of textiles are diverted from landfill annually. Thank you in advance for your immediate attention to this urgent support.



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