
Subject: Email - Communication - Angie Howlett - Concerns Regarding Mandatory Masks - File CK 270-7
Attachments: Van Coastal Health 1.pdf; Van Coastal Health 2.pdf

From: Web NoReply
Sent: August 28, 2020 5:32 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - Angie Howlett - Concerns Regarding Mandatory Masks - File CK 270-7

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Friday, August 28, 2020 - 17:32

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Date Friday, August 28, 2020
To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council
First Name Angie
Last Name Howlett
Phone Number [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED] Willis Cres
City Saskatoon
Province Saskatchewan
Postal Code [REDACTED]
Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable)
Subject Concerns regarding mandatory masking
Meeting (if known)
Comments

I am a concerned citizen and a taxpayer on two properties in Saskatoon. I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the consideration of making masks mandatory in public spaces in Saskatoon. This consideration raises four areas of concern for myself as a citizen and for the safety of others. Firstly, there is limited high-quality scientific evidence to support the use of widespread masks. Indeed, a large majority of high-quality science conducted concerning the use of masks has found very little impact on mitigating the transmission of viruses and has even identified some health concerns, particularly in younger people (Huber, 2020; Hickey & Rancourt, 2020; Schaefer, 2020).

In an article dated July 2, 2020, The Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF) indicate that the Government of Canada, Centres for Disease Control (US) and the World Health Organization do not recommend masks for COVID-19 risk mitigation. In addition, the measures taken to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 months after the curve had well been flattened, represent an intervention to personal autonomy vis a vis directly violating the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms, 2020). Furthermore, in an article written in the Post Millennial on July 25, 2020 John Carpay of JCCF cited that not only is there no scientific justification for mandating masks, there is no legal precedence for mask mandates (Carpay, 2020).

The mask mandates currently under consideration challenges human rights and categorically excludes people with disabilities or physical and mental health matters from participating in the economy and belonging to society as a whole. Residents of Saskatoon who are hearing impaired and rely on reading the lips of those around them in order to communicate, those with breathing difficulties, and others with anxiety disorders, claustrophobia and PTSD are all directly impacted and debilitated by making masks mandatory. Children on the Autism spectrum, or with attention or sensory disorders will also be excluded from educational and social development opportunities. Infant's and toddler's emotional development could also be delayed or stunted as a result of the inability to properly recognize the faces of their caregivers, which could lead to confusion and distress (Klass, 2018).

In addition to the developmental delays identified above, mask mandates present safety and security concerns for adults and children alike. As you are likely aware, Saskatoon has been identified as belonging to a human trafficking circle as early as last year (CTV, 2019). Masked adults and children will be less identifiable and, could become an easy target for human traffickers, especially with their mouths muffled and not visible to someone who hears a call for help. Furthermore, there have already been two armed robberies in Saskatoon and the suspects of these robberies were described as wearing blue medical masks (CKOM, 2020). As such, I implore you to as the councillors and Mayor of our city, to review the information provided below, in order to protect the citizens and voters of Saskatoon.

In closing, I would like to leave you with a letter from a BC health officer to a director of transit in New Westminster, after learning of your proposal to mandate masks on Saskatoon City Transit. In it, the health officer explicitly states in no uncertain terms that the epidemiology of COVID-19 does not warrant such a mandate and that it could also further put already marginalized transit users at a greater disadvantage.

As a city of Saskatoon resident, loyal voter and tax payer, I ask you to please reconsider mandating masks on public transit as well as in civic buildings.

I invite you to contact me at the information below to engage in an honest and thoughtful discussion about the negative repercussions that such mandates will have on a number of vulnerable residents of Saskatoon.

With Regards,

Angie Howlett
Ward 7 Resident



<https://www.primarydoctor.org/masks-not-effect?fbclid=IwAR1vyniqBPImZnomLtt02oufnejsFRTkQojs44siET1qK0Auor8C4mWpGk>
<http://ocla.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Rancourt-Masks-dont-work-review-science-re-COVID19-policy.pdf>
<http://independent.academia.edu/ChrisSchaefer9>

<https://thepostmillennial.com/making-face-masks-mandatory-is-not-backed-by-science-or-law?fbclid=IwAR2sFfgsZo83tYkMkLEBt82I5IEhSVN46LiF-VQjPtDwWDJdKCbU5F1-8Wo>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/29/well/family/how-children-learn-to-recognize-faces.html>
<https://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/saskatoon-part-of-human-trafficking-city-triangles-mmiwg-report-finds-1.4449526>
https://www.ckom.com/2020/08/07/man-wearing-surgical-mask-wanted-in-pharmacy-robbery/?fbclid=IwAR2ozL8KX9-rvEkY8MG9hT8fAo9ZC3G7PgebY1c_UJXp-xbsRNJZ3tbmfUI

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

August 22, 2020

Mr. Kevin Desmond
Chief Executive Officer
TransLink
400 - 287 Nelson's Court
New Westminster, BC V3L 0E7

Dear Mr. Desmond,

Re: TransLink Mask Policy

We would like to acknowledge the pressure that TransLink is under to protect the health of the public while maintaining essential public transit services during the pandemic, and commend you for taking a rigorous approach to COVID-19 safety planning. However, we are concerned with the recently announced policy requiring transit riders to wear non-medical masks. Typically, decisions regarding public health measures that impact the population of the Lower Mainland are made in consultation with public health experts responsible for the health of those populations. While our public health staff have consistently provided advice to TransLink since the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic, our offices were not consulted on this new policy and have concerns about its potential unintended consequences.

There is no public health order in place requiring people to wear masks on public transit in our regions, nor does the current epidemiology of COVID-19 transmission warrant such an order. Making mask use mandatory creates barriers to transit ridership and creates stigma for those who cannot afford to purchase masks and for those who have legitimate health reasons for not wearing them. Because public transit is an essential service for accessing work, school, health care, and social services (including food banks) for many people, we are concerned about the impact of the new policy on population health inequities. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that:

- Free masks be made available to riders at all points of transit access, as long as the policy remains in effect. We understand that TransLink is planning promotional distribution of a certain number of masks but it is not clear if this will be ongoing and available at all points of access.
- Riders who cannot wear masks for medical or other reasons are not be required to apply for an exemption card or otherwise provide proof of their exemption. This would require passengers to share confidential health information with a transit authority, which is inappropriate, and could create an additional barrier to transit use by marginalized groups. Other jurisdictions with similar mask policies do not require proof of exemption.
- Implementation of this new policy focus only on education, not enforcement; transit police and TransLink staff can support education efforts by distributing free masks and providing hand sanitizer, and directing riders to credible sources of information on COVID-19. Violence has been associated with police enforcement of mandatory mask policies in other jurisdictions and it would be unfortunate if that were to occur as a result of this policy.

Thank you for your attention to these important concerns, and for your commitment to ensuring that transit remains accessible and free of stigma for all users. Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Patricia Daly MD, FRCPC
Vice-President, Public Health and Chief Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health

Cc: Erinn Pinkerton, President and Chief Executive Officer, BC Transit
Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer
Dr. Reka Gustafson, Deputy Provincial Health Officer
Dr. Elizabeth Brodtkin, Acting Vice President, Population Health and Chief Medical Health Officer, Fraser Health
Drew Dennis, Executive Director, Pivot Legal Society