

## Framework for Measures to Mitigate the Transmission of COVID-19 in Saskatoon Update

### ISSUE

At its September 27, 2021 Regular Business meeting, Saskatoon City Council approved the “Framework for Measures to Mitigate the Transmission of COVID-19 in Saskatoon” (“Framework”) (Appendix 1). This report provides the monthly update to City Council on the current levels and corresponding measures for consideration as outlined in the Framework.

### BACKGROUND

COVID-19 transmission, now driven by the highly infectious Delta Variant of Concern, continues to affect the delivery of City programs and services and thus requires ongoing health and safety measures to limit the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace and community. The Framework assists Administration and City Council in making evidence and scientific-based decisions regarding measures to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in Saskatoon. The Framework was developed using public health and epidemiology expertise to inform how and when to implement and relax various risk mitigation measures.

### CURRENT STATUS

Following the Framework, the indicator analysis conducted for the Thursday prior to the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting shall be the one used to determine the status and potential measures that may be enacted. For the month of November, the indicators from the current analysis reveal an “Orange” or high-risk level (Appendix 2).

The level for October also indicated an “Orange” or high-risk level. With no change in the level there will be no change in the current measures for consideration. The current measures will remain in place for City facilities and City staff.

### DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Following the Framework, administration again consulted this week with the local Saskatchewan Medical Health Officer and with the University of Saskatchewan Computational Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics Laboratory (CEPHIL).

The University of Saskatchewan CEPHIL scientific modelling (Appendix 3) shows that currently COVID-19 spread due to various types of gatherings is probably the single largest driver of the COVID-19 spread that has driven our health system to its current situation. The long-term goal of far higher rates of vaccination, which is not where we are at today, will have the most impact on slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

The COVID-19 models shared with administration have indicated that in the current situation limitations on gathering size are arguably the single most important and actionable lever for lowering the spread of COVID-19 in the province. The scientific modelling from the University of Saskatchewan CEPHIL and the local Medical Health Officer agree that if Saskatoon gathering restrictions had been implemented at the beginning of October or there would have been a more meaningful impact on lowering the transmission of COVID-19 in Saskatoon. It is important to note implementation still has value as it will drive down transmission faster in the community.

Dr. Hasselback states that “Both existing population public health science and recent disease transmission modelling is demonstrating that local restrictions, at this time, would result in a decrease in local transmission, but the scale of that impact would be limited without the same being in place across most, if not all, the province.

Saskatoon is the largest city in the province. The impact of a local gathering restriction would be proportionally profound and will make a difference. The ability to drive down hospital and ICU admissions, to the point where healthcare services can be reassessed, requires everyone in the province reducing their interaction with others; notable those who are not fully vaccinated.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Administration will continue to monitor and report to City Council, City staff and the public on a weekly basis with the updates on the Indicators for Monitoring COVID-19 risk in Saskatoon and current risk and corresponding measures for consideration. This information will be shared on the City website.

### **APPENDICES**

1. Framework for Measures to Mitigate the Transmission of COVID-19 in Saskatoon
2. A Review of COVID-19 Framework Statistics – Week Ending October 20, 2021
3. CEPHIL Modeling (pending)

#### Report Approval

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