

## **December 2021 Update Framework for Measures to Mitigate the Transmission of COVID-19 in Saskatoon**

### **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 December, the indicators from the current analysis reveal a “Yellow” or caution level (Appendix 2). The level for November was an “Orange” or high-risk level.

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

Administration consulted with the Saskatchewan Health Authority Saskatoon Medical Health Officer regarding the current level and measures. Following the guidance of the Saskatoon Medical Health Officer, the Public Health Orders currently in place and the considerations for measures in the framework, adjustments have been made in the areas below. The health, safety and well-being of employees and facility patrons are top priorities for the City of Saskatoon.

#### **Recreation and Community Development**

In accordance with the Public Health Order that came into effect October 1, 2021 proof of vaccination or negative test is required for public access to a list of establishments, businesses and event venues that bring groups of people together including indoor fitness centres and gyms. Individuals over the age of 12 must show proof of full vaccination or negative COVID-19 test for public access. Effective October 15, by resolution of City Council, the requirement for proof of vaccination or negative test was expanded to include all areas within Leisure Centres and indoor arenas.

As per the current Provincial Public Health Order, individuals 18 years of age and older and on-ice/on-court officials do not require masks while participating in sports activities, for the duration of the sport or activity only, so long as they provide proof of vaccination or negative test. Individuals who are under the age of 18 years while participating in sports, for the duration of the sport only, are exempt from wearing masks.

To ensure the City continues to be aligned with the most current public health orders, recent consultations with the Provincial Business Response Team, has resulted in a change to masking policies at the Leisure Centres. Effective November 17 patrons who are 18 & older utilizing weight rooms, fitness classes and the walking tracks are permitted to remove their masks for the duration of the activity. All patrons must wear masks when moving to and from activity spaces.

### **Public Engagement Events and Activities**

Communications & Public Engagement tabled an Information Report to Governance & Priorities Committee on May 19, 2020 titled "[Modifying Public Engagement in Saskatoon During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)". Using the five phased approach outlined in the 2020 report, and recognizing the risk for transmission is low, the Administration will continue to offer public and stakeholder engagement online as outlined in Phase 3 (Online Engagement). In some situations, where deemed necessary, engagement may be offered in-person as outlined in Phase 4 (In-Person Engagement with Measures). The Public Engagement Section will begin developing comprehensive plans to more fully activate Phase 4 beginning in January 2022, pending no significant changes in the risk level. Measures may include health and safety protocols including the use of non-medical face masks, exposure plans, and the requirement that participants will require proof of vaccination or a negative test within 72 hours with proof of identification for ages 12 or over, for all in-person events. During Phase 4, in-person public engagement will continue to be supplemented with online/virtual engagement to provide as many opportunities for stakeholders and the public to participate."

### **Facilities**

As a result of increased covid activity in the fall, cleaning standards were increased in September from a Level 2 to Level 3 cleaning for all civic sites in accordance with the Facilities Cleaning Standards, dated June 25, 2020. In alignment with the intent of Level 3 cleaning standards, adjustments have been made in some facilities to ensure coordination with operational needs.

### **Return to the Workplace**

The Framework indicates that in the "yellow-caution" level there should be consideration for "staff who can effectively work from home will work from home" and "meetings to occur virtually when possible." These considerations have been reviewed with the Saskatchewan Health Authority Saskatoon Medical Health Officer and with the additional layer of protection provided by the Employee Mandatory COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination or Proof of Negative Administration has determined that starting on December 1 staff who have been working from home may begin returning to the workplace with all staff being required to be back in the workplace by February 1, 2022.

## **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 November 17, 2021
3. Public Engagement Approach using the Framework for Measures to Mitigate Risk

## **Report Approval**

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