

# Return to the Workplace Plan and Resumption of In-Person Meetings

## ISSUE

Administration is providing an update on the timeline and procedures for City of Saskatoon staff working from home during the pandemic to return to the workplace, protocols for staff that have continued to work on site and requesting feedback on a date for City Council and Committee meetings, currently being held remotely, to return to an in-person setting.

## BACKGROUND

Since March of 2020, in response to the Covid-19 public health orders all staff that are able to effectively work from home have been doing so and staff unable to work from home have been subject to masking and physical distancing protocols, among other measures.

Effective March 16, 2020 a resolution was passed at the Governance and Priorities Committee for City Council and Committee meetings to be held remotely, suspending provisions of the Procedural Bylaw to do so. All meetings are currently being held remotely, via the Microsoft Teams platform.

In July of 2021 a return to the workplace for City staff was planned for September 1, 2021, along with in-person Council/Committee meetings to resume on the same timeline. As that date approached, however, an increase in Covid-19 cases in the Saskatoon region occurred, and a decision was made to defer the return to the workplace plan and in-person meetings, with consideration to occur again prior to January 2022.

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.” At its November 22, 2021 Regular Business meeting, Saskatoon City Council received an information report [“December 2021 Update Framework for Measures to Mitigate the Transmission of COVID-19 in Saskatoon.”](#) This report provided information on the current Framework level and corresponding measures for consideration. The return to the workplace plan was initially shared with City Council in this report.

## CURRENT STATUS

Average weekly cases, positivity rate, and effective reproduction rate (Framework data measures) have returned to a level where it has been determined that it is safe return to the workplace. This is in addition to the implementation of the Mandatory COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination or Proof of Negative Test Program, which combined with health and safety protocols to reduce transmission works to ensure safety of

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staff. The City continues to exceed the minimum requirements set out by the Saskatchewan Employment Act and Occupational Health & Safety Regulations (e.g. medical grade masks, Exposure Control Plans, etc.). The return to the workplace plan has been determined in consultation with local SHA Medical Health Officers, who are in support of the plan.

All staff, excepting those approved to permanently work from home will be returning to the workplace no later than February 1, 2022. Between December 15, 2021 and then a transition period is in effect, where staff are encouraged to return to the office either full-time, for partial days or for in-person meetings following the updated Exposure Control Plans.

The City continues to follow the direction of the Provincial Government, as well as the Covid-19 Framework adopted by Council.

In keeping with our values of “people matter” and “safety in all we do” there will continue to be safety protocols in place. There will also continue to be task-based hazard assessments completed to ensure staff and public safety and Exposure Control plans based on the hazard assessment. It is acknowledged that this is an evolving situation, and the City must be prepared to adjust as required based on the Framework.

Exposure Control plans include: Employee Mandatory Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Proof of Negative COVID-19 test, fit for duty forms, masking, physical distancing, enhanced cleaning, and physical barriers.

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

It is proposed that in-person Council and Committee meetings resume February 1, 2021 to align with full return of staff, however support will be in place for meetings to resume as early as the January 10, 2022 Standing Policy Committee meetings should Council so choose. Full public attendance would be allowed, in-person, in the Council Chamber, subject to guidelines below:

- Masks are required to be worn by all attendees, including Council, at all times.
- All attendees, including Council, must submit proof of full COVID-19 vaccination, or proof of an acceptable COVID-19 negative test within 72 hours of attendance at the meeting
  - This is the same standard as all City owned facilities.
- All attendees must attest prior to entering the Council Chamber that they are not currently showing any signs of Covid-19, and have not been ordered to quarantine or self-isolate for any reason.
  - This will be managed by security prior to entering the Chamber for members of the public, and by electronic fit-for-duty form for staff and members of Council.

## **Return to the Workplace Plan and Resumption of In-Person Meetings**

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To ensure full accessibility for all, the City will continue to livestream all meetings and provide options for staff, Council, and the public to attend and participate remotely in a way that does not hamper effective operation of meetings.

Feedback on the proposed return to in-person Council/Committee meetings is requested from Council to ensure that the plan proposed by Administration is acceptable and any additional considerations can be taken.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Limited costs related to upgrades to the Council Chamber and meeting rooms to support hybrid meetings have been absorbed through existing project budgets.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Administration will continue to monitor operations for effectiveness as it relates to Covid and adjust as needed.

### **Report Approval**

Written and Approved by: Adam Tittermore, City Clerk

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