

City eases restrictions on outdoor spaces and amenities

May 15, 2020 — As the City of St. Catharines cautiously eyes the road forward to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, some restrictions are being lifted allowing residents greater use, and access to, some outdoor spaces today.

Specifically, residents will be able to use parks for more than walk-through uses, with some limitations. Residents must still abide by restrictions limiting groups to no more than five people and maintaining a two-metre physical separation. Passive activities will now be permitted in these areas including:

- Bringing a chair or blanket to relax in parks
- Kicking a ball, playing catch, flying a kite, and other such activities with members of their own households
- Individual activities such as yoga or exercising, provided they are not in a group or class

In addition to easing certain restrictions the City is opening some previously closed amenities for use, effective Tuesday, May 19. These amenities are:

- Leash-free dog parks
- Tennis courts
- Skate parks

Anyone taking advantage of these spaces should be sure to follow the [best practices](#) to limit the spread of COVID-19 as outlined by Niagara Region Public Health. These include frequent washing / sanitization of hands, physical separation, avoiding touching of shared surfaces and staying home if displaying symptoms or having been in close contact with cases of the virus.

Organized sports are still restricted, given their necessity for gathering of groups and close physical contact. At this time park and outdoor amenities such as playground equipment, benches, the Lakeside Park Carousel, and washrooms remain closed to limit the spread of COVID-19 on shared surfaces. With Sunset Beach remaining closed its boat launch will also remain closed as City staff assess its condition and need for repairs. The Garden City Golf Course also remains closed as staff review its operations as part of the City's larger recovery planning.

"We are certainly proud of everyone's efforts in slowing the spread of COVID-19, and happy to be lifting some of the restrictions for our residents," said Chief Administrative Officer Shelley Chemnitz, adding, "it will be great to see people back at some of these amenities, but we have to remain vigilant, we are urging everyone to continue to

exercise caution when they do head outside so we continue to move forward, not backwards, in the fight against this virus.”

The move to lift restrictions comes as the City adjusts its response to COVID-19, in line with yesterday’s announcement from the Province of Ontario. On May 14, the Province announced the opening of certain outdoor amenities — such as golf courses and marinas — this weekend. City staff are continuing ongoing work to map the City’s path forward as the Province prepares to enter its first phase of recovery on Tuesday, May 19, lifting the closures of several non-essential business categories like retail operations and all construction projects.

Bylaw enforcement will continue to enforce gatherings larger than five people, dogs off-leash, and anyone using closed park amenities.

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