

City facilities close in response to COVID-19 concerns

March 13, 2020 – While Niagara Region Public Health has reported the risks surrounding COVID-19 remain low to residents, the City is exercising an abundance of caution, moving forward with closures of all recreational and community facilities to limit spread of the virus.

On Thursday afternoon the City partially activated its Emergency Operations Centre in response to the spread of the virus, moving forward on the best measures to protect the health of the public and staff. As of right now it appears the virus is not circulating locally in the community. As a precautionary measure to ensure continued containment of the virus the City has enacted enhanced disinfection efforts at City facilities, and will enact a series of closures.

Effective at 4:30 p.m. today (March 13, 2020), until April 5, the following City facilities will be closed to the public:

- All Older Adult Centres including Dunlop Drive, West St. Catharines, and Port Dalhousie
- All recreation centres including Russell Avenue and Port Weller
- All arenas including Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre, Garden City Complex and Bill Burgoyne
- All branches of the St. Catharines Public Library
- The St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre
- The St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre
- Sports fields including Kiwanis Field
- The St. Catharines Farmers Market and Market Square
- The Meridian Centre
- The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre

As a result of these closures all City programs – including March Break programming - and third-party events at the above locations will be cancelled. Several City special events will be cancelled or delayed as a result of the closure including the St. Catharines Neighbourhood Forum and World Water Day celebrations.

“We are taking various precautionary measures and adjusting our operations to ensure the health and safety of our employees, residents and the greater community. We will continue to do so as the situation changes,” said Chief Administrative Officer Shelley Chemnitz, adding, “we are making every effort to ensure essential City services residents rely on continue to be available.”

Burials will continue at Victoria Lawn Cemetery however all other services at that facility will be unavailable during the closure period. Civil marriage ceremonies will also be cancelled until further notice. In addition, water meter replacements, repairs and in-house water sampling will be discontinued moving forward.

While the City recognizes the closures will impact a host of users and organizations it is necessary, for the health of the public, to enact these precautionary measures. All individuals impacted by these closures will have their facility rental fees refunded without penalty and staff will work to reschedule events.

For the most up to date information and more on the City's efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19, including further closures, please refer visit www.stcatharines.ca/COVID19. For more information on COVID-19 visit www.niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19/

To stay updated on FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre show and performance postponements or cancellations visit www.firstontariopac.ca

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