

Temporary COVID-19 Face Coverings Bylaw Update

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Give three readings to Bylaw 59M2021 (Attachment 1) to repeal the Temporary COVID-19 Face Coverings Bylaw 26M2020; and,
2. Direct the City Manager to develop a face coverings policy for publicly accessible City-owned and operated facilities.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Administration has drafted two options for Council's consideration. The proposed recommendation aligns with Stage 3 of the Government of Alberta's *Open for Summer Plan* while maintaining measures for City-owned and operated facilities. Options for repealing the Temporary COVID-19 Face Coverings Bylaw are included in Attachment 2.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? Calgarians will no longer be required to wear face coverings other than in those spaces required by the Government of Alberta. Face covering requirements for publicly accessible City-operated facilities and programs will be managed through policy. Privately owned businesses may still require face coverings under their own policies.
- Why does it matter? Local metrics including vaccine uptake, and decreasing infection rates, hospitalizations and COVID-19 positivity rates support the continued lifting of restrictions.
- On 2021 June 21 Council directed Administration to return on 2021 July 5 to repeal the Temporary COVID-19 Face Coverings Bylaw as soon as possible if pandemic measures continue trending in the right direction.
- On 2021 June 22 the Government of Alberta announced that face coverings would continue to be required on transit and in public vehicles as part of the Stage 3 of the provincial *Open for Summer Plan*.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 3.

DISCUSSION

Administration was directed to consider several metrics in the repealing of the Temporary COVID-19 Face Coverings Bylaw including whether:

- Local second doses are high on a comparative scale
- Infection rates are stable or declining
- Hospitalization and Intensive Care Unit rates are stable or declining
- COVID-19 positivity rates are stable or declining

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At the time of writing this report, all identified metrics continue their positive trends which support the repealing of the Face Coverings Bylaw. Charts summarizing the trending of the metrics can be found in Attachment 4.

Based on the continued decline of infection, hospitalization and positivity rates as well as the continued increase in uptake of second-dose vaccinations, Administration is recommending that the Temporary COVID-19 Face Coverings Bylaw be repealed and that the City Manager develop a face coverings policy for publicly accessible City properties.

On 2021 June 22 the Government of Alberta announced it will maintain the requirement for face coverings in some spaces where risk of transmission is higher. This step, which will include transit and vehicles-for-hire, will help address some remaining concerns about transmission of COVID-19.

Administration has also outlined one additional option for Council's consideration: Option 2 reduces the scope of the Face Coverings Bylaw to public spaces operated by The City or in public vehicles. Repeal timing aligns with the provincial rescinding of face covering requirements in spaces where risk of transmission is higher. This option would allow municipal peace officers to enforce face covering restrictions in locations identified in the bylaw.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

Not Applicable.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

The Face Coverings Bylaw was intended as one of several measures designed to limit the transmission of COVID-19 and to protect those most vulnerable to the virus. The provincial plan maintains this measure on transit and in public vehicles where there is greater opportunity for transmission.

Environmental

Not Applicable

Economic

Not Applicable

Service and Financial Implications

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No anticipated financial impact

Not Applicable

RISK

A summary of the risks associated with the options can be found in Attachment 2.

There is a risk that, without a municipal bylaw, there will be no municipal control for violations related to failure to wearing a face covering in public spaces operated by The City or in public vehicles. There is also a risk that municipal peace officers may not be granted the authority to enforce violations of the provincial Public Health Act. To address these risks, Administration continues to work collaboratively with representatives from Alberta Health Services and the Government of Alberta. The Government of Alberta has previously been responsive to concerns over the authority of municipal peace officers and extended authorities for municipal peace officers to be able to enforce public health orders.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Bylaw 59M2021
2. Options for Repealing the Temporary COVID-19 Face Coverings Bylaw
3. Previous Council Direction, Background
4. Summary of COVID-19 Trends
5. **Public Submissions**

Department Circulation

| General Manager/Director | Department | Approve/Consult/Inform |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Katie Black | Community Services | Approve |
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