



City of Sarnia

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: March 20, 2020 RELEASE DATE: Immediate

FROM: City of Sarnia Primary Control Group

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update and Cancellation of Various Programs – March 20 Update

The Sarnia Primary Control Group met via teleconference on March 20, 2020 at 9:00am regarding COVID-19.

The City is taking preventative measures based on discussions with Lambton Public Health and information received from both the Provincial and Federal Governments. These measures are in place as a result of collaborative discussions between concerned agencies.

New information, not communicated in previous media releases is highlighted in yellow.

Under the advice of the Medical Officer of Health, the City of Sarnia is operating under the premise that the COVID-19 virus is already circulating within the community. For that reason, the City is taking all precautions to protect the public and staff by maintaining closures of all city facilities and City Hall, this includes suspending non-essential services.

Transit and Park Playgrounds

In order to protect the health and safety of our operators and passengers, the City of Sarnia is requesting that transit passengers only use the rear doors of the buses when boarding and exiting. These measures are in line with operational changes implemented at other transit agencies throughout the province.

Passengers requiring mobility assistance can continue to use the front doors when required.

As a result of this change, effective immediately, the City of Sarnia will not be collecting fares from March 20, 2020 until further notice.

Transit has also implemented additional measures including:

- Passengers will not be able to use the seats closest to the operators
- Passengers are requested to practise social distancing with other passengers and transit staff
- An enhanced cleaning and disinfection program has been implemented for all our buses.

Sarnia Transit has seen a significant decline in ridership which has allowed everyone to practice social distancing and all Passengers are encouraged to continue to limit their use of the transit system for only essential trips.

Anyone demonstrating symptoms related to COVID-19, or who had contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, must not use the public transit system.

Passengers will be provided advance notice of any potential service changes through social media and official media releases.

The new Intercommunity Bus Service to Strathroy and London originally scheduled to launch April 1, 2020 has now been delayed until further notice.

In order to protect public health, the City is requesting that members of the public avoid using any of the playground equipment in our local parks because the equipment cannot be properly sanitized at this time. Signage will be posted throughout our parks as a reminder of this requirement.

To listen to a detailed listing of City of Sarnia closures and disruptions, you are encouraged to call our City of Sarnia Services Update Line at 226-778-4611 which will be updated daily.

The City has established a COVID-19 Hotline and enhanced the City's website with up to date messaging pertaining to closures, contact information for public health agencies, and contact information for other essential government services. The COVID-19 Hotline can be reached at 1-877-4-SARNIA (1-877-472-7642).

Please continue to utilize the COVID-19 Hotline and the City's website to keep up to date on any and all information pertaining to the city's current status.

All City facilities including **City Hall** are now closed to the public until further notice. All essential services will be maintained throughout the City of Sarnia including Fire, Police, Transit, and Public Works operations.

City Hall administrative services are being maintained online. For services not offered online, special requests can be made available by appointment only. We encourage the public to utilize our COVID-19 Hotline to address any inquiries regarding our services at this time.

After careful consideration, the City has decided to impose additional cancellations related to meetings and events:

The following meetings and events have been cancelled:

- Sarnia City Council Meeting – March 23, 2020
- Public Hearing for Official Plan Amendment No. 20 (OPA # 20) Zoning By-law Amendment No. 13-2019-85 of 2002 (1249 London Road) – March 23, 2020
- All Meetings for Advisory Boards and Committees (until further notice)
- Licensing and Regulatory Framework for Short Term Accommodations Public Information Session - March 19, 2020 and March 24, 2020
- Recreational Vehicle Parking Public Consultation Meeting – March 26
- City of Sarnia Volunteer Appreciation Reception – April 2, 2020
- City of Sarnia Employee Long Service Awards Reception – April 8, 2020
- Dog Friendly Beach Public Consultation Meeting - April 9, 2020
- City of Sarnia Easter in the Park - April 11, 2020
- Sarnia Fire Mental Health Night – April 14, 2020
- Community Parks Clean-Up Day - April 25, 2020
- Civil Marriage Ceremonies (until further notice)
- All Arenas (including all scheduled recreational and leisure programming), are closed until further notice
- All City Owned and Operated Recreational Facilities (including all scheduled recreational and leisure programming and private bookings), until further notice
- All events scheduled in City Parks are cancelled until further notice
- The Strangway Community Centre is closed until further notice
- The Seaway Kiwanis Children's Animal Farm is closed until further notice. Animals are being properly cared for during the closure
- Lochiel Kiwanis Community Centre is closed until further notice
- The City of Sarnia March Break Day Camp at the Lawrence House.

We recommend that you contact the third party organizers regarding any updates with respect to privately planned events.

Deadlines will be extended until further notice for all public consultations which are currently advertised on the City's Public Consultation website www.speakupsarnia.ca.

The City will continue to monitor the situation and update the citizens of Sarnia as soon as information is available.

Enhanced transit cleaning practices have been implemented which are consistent with other transit agencies.

Sarnia Fire Rescue will be temporarily suspending all non-essential public engagements. Fire Stations will have restricted access to staff only. All station tours, public education talks, etc., will be rescheduled at a future date. The pet food drive is also suspended until further notice.

Please refer to the Sarnia Police website www.sarniapolice.com and social media for further updates regarding Police Service matters.

Lambton Public Health Information:

If you are experiencing symptoms and have traveled internationally, please call your health care provider or Lambton Public Health (519-383-8331) or <https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/> (Please do not call 9-1-1 unless it is an emergency).

The Primary Control Group will continue to meet daily to ensure that all new and relevant information is being taken into consideration going forward. Daily public notifications will be issued. Please visit the City's website www.sarnia.ca, Facebook, and/or Twitter for updates.

- 30 -

For further information, please contact:

City of Sarnia COVID-19 Hotline

1-877-4-SARNIA (1-877-472-7642) or 519-332-0932

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