

Media Release

April 9, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Whitchurch-Stouffville Creates *Business Continuity & Economic Recovery Plan* to Deal with COVID-19 Challenges

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE, ON – The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has created a new *Business Continuity & Economic Recovery Plan* to help deal with the challenges presented by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Plan*, created to address the continuing need for the Town to operate at the high level expected by residents and businesses, outlines how Town services are currently being conducted and what economic measures need to be implemented to avoid serious financial hardships.

“We are continuing to make the health, safety and well-being of our citizens and businesses a top priority” said Mayor Iain Lovatt. “This plan outlines how we are moving forward and what needs to be done to minimize the effects on Stouffville’s residents and business.”

The *Plan* calls for the Town to extend the closure of facilities and all outdoor recreation amenities until the province’s directive is lifted. Also, as a result of these closures, it is the Town’s intension to redeploy staff wherever possible to avoid layoffs.

Because of the facility closures, all spring programs are being cancelled as well as all special events being held throughout the months of May and June. Trails and green spaces are open for families who respect the 2-meter distancing requirements. The Town continues to urge residents to stay home and recreate in the safety of their own backyards.

“This is a difficult time for a lot of people for many different reasons,” Mayor Lovatt said. “We are doing everything we can for the benefit of the physical, mental and financial health of the community.”

It is extremely important that we maintain momentum on regular business, Lovatt says. The Town’s corporate priorities include projects that assist the local economy.

“For a lot of projects, this is a perfect time to work on them,” he says. “Certain capital infrastructure projects, such as road repair and paving, would benefit greatly from reduced traffic and public interactions. This Plan addresses situations like that to the benefit of all involved,

including our staff and contractors who would practice physical distancing and maintain safe working conditions.”

The Town continues to accept building and planning applications and customers can drop non-confidential plans and relevant information in the drop-box at Town Hall. The Town will continue to schedule and conduct building and engineering inspections on unoccupied buildings and inspections that are outside only.

Council made the decision to waive tax and water bill penalties and interest until May 29 in hopes to help ease the burden on the many families struggling to make ends meet during this time.

“We certainly recognize the financial hardships experienced by everyone,” Lovatt says. “However, we do ask if you can pay your taxes on time, please do. You will be encouraging civic responsibility!”

The *Business Continuity & Economic Recovery Plan* also outlines plans for moving forward with the Town’s new Economic Strategy and to update Council on Downtown Stouffville business grants which will take COVID-19 concerns into account.

The Town has partnered with Newmarket, Aurora, Georgina, East Gwillimbury, King Township and the York Region Economic Strategy Office to assist local businesses through the crisis. By signing up at bit.ly/2Rmq61w, businesses can stay up-to-date with changing business funding opportunities and resources.

The Town is also preparing a multi-year business campaign with local partners to help post-COVID-19.

“We all can’t wait until things get back to normal – and when they do, Stouffville will have a party!” Lovatt says. “We have already started planning it.”

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is collaboratively working with York Region Public Health, provincial, and national health agencies to monitor COVID-19 and to share information and resources. Further information about Town-related COVID-19 concerns, can be found at townofws.ca/COVID19. Further information about the virus can be found at york.ca/COVID19. Customer Service can be reached at (905) 640-1900 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for any Town inquiries.

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