

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE CONTINUES TO SERVE CITIZENS WITH ESSENTIAL SERVICES DURING COVID-19 CRISIS Well-being of community is “top priority”

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE, ON – As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve globally, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville continues to make the health, safety and well-being of its citizens, businesses and staff its top priority. As many struggle with the health challenges of the virus, the economic hardships are becoming a reality for many citizens in the community.

“The well-being of our community is our top priority,” said Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Iain Lovatt. “We are going through an unprecedented time right now and whether sick or not, people are suffering socially and financially.”

“We will beat this, and times will get back to normal, but in the meantime we need to pull together, help our neighbours, help our friends, and help our families,” he said.

In order to make life as comfortable as possible for our residents, the Town continues to provide the high-quality services our citizens come to expect, and require, during these tough times.

Although our facilities, including Town Hall, remain closed to the public, customer service staff continue to answer residents’ inquiries. They are available by telephone at 905-640-1900 or by email at customer.service@townofws.ca from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Municipal emergency service outside these hours is available by calling 905-640-1900 ext. 0 and following the prompts for the after-hours service.

Customer service at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Leisure Centre continues to operate by telephone from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday to answer citizens’ recreation and culture inquiries. Residents with leisure-related program, event or service questions, may call (905) 642-7529.

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library is currently closed to the public; however, residents may continue to enjoy their offerings. The Library provides a wide array of digital offerings, including e-books for borrowing on their Cloud Library app, courses on Lynda.com, research databases, and access to many other online resources.

The due date for all checked-out circulating materials has been extended to April 21. No late fees will accrue on materials that were originally due during the closure period. For more information about the library's services during the closure, please visit their [COVID-19 update page](#).

All other Town facilities, such as the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and Community Centre, SoccerCity, the Lebovic Centre for the Performing Arts - "19 on the Park" and all community Centres remain closed to the public as per the provincially declared emergency. All Town parks and parkettes also remain closed.

Public Works continues to deliver important services that are relied upon by residents every day, including the distribution of safe drinking water and completion of road works to ensure reliable and safe transportation. Public Works remains available to address late winter storms and emergency repairs to essential infrastructure, and to provide various other services that keep our community safe.

The Town is prioritizing the safety of our staff during this difficult time. To support social distancing, outside contractors are no longer permitted in Town facilities. In addition, staff have been spread out among various facilities to avoid larger gatherings. Wherever possible, Town staff now travel with one person per vehicle. Business processes have been modified to minimize direct staff interaction with residents. The Town has postponed water meter replacement services in resident homes.

Solid waste collection and recycling will continue as usual. Inquiries should be directed to *Green For Life (GFL)* Customer Service at 1-866-421-5625.

Municipal By-Law Enforcement officers continue to address residents' needs and concerns. To promote physical distancing, Town By-Law officers on patrol have been assisting York Regional Police and engaging with groups of residents who are congregating in town parks and encouraging them to go home.

By-Law officers can facilitate tickets by telephone, online or by email. They will be reviewing all complaints and will ascertain whether it is safe to attend a particular property and/or meet with property owners. Parking bylaws are being enforced, and we remind people not to park in a fire route or an accessible parking space without a permit.

Animal Services' calls will be responded to on a case-by-case basis. Our shelter has been shut down to the public therefore we will no longer be able to take in domestic animals. We would like to remind residents to be extra diligent at this time to ensure that their pets are not at large. The Town encourages any dog owners who have not yet purchased their dog tag to do so

immediately in order to ensure staff are able to get any lost pets back to their owners. You may purchase dog tags on the Town's [Dog Tag web page](#).

If any residents have any By-Law questions, they can call 905-640-1910 (ex. 2229) or Customer Service.

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.

In an effort to help our struggling local economy through these times, our Economic Development Department is publishing digital editions of our monthly "On The Road in Whitchurch-Stouffville" magazine. Included in the three editions so far, are business resources and support, economic recovery methods and innovative ideas to grow your business. You can download the latest edition on the Town's [Business Resources page](#).

"Council made the decision to waive tax and water bill penalties and interest until May 29," Mayor Lovatt said. "We hope this will help ease the burden on the many families struggling to make ends meet during this time."

Although public open houses and information sessions have been cancelled or postponed for major projects, regular scheduled Council meetings will proceed by teleconference. To stay up to date on the Town's upcoming meetings, visit our [Council Calendar](#) page.

"These times are like nothing we have experienced before," Lovatt said. "We are developing new and innovative ways to serve our residents, deliver on municipal services and to keep the community informed. When all this is over, we will be a stronger community – all because we rose to the challenge together."

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Media Contact: **Glenn Jackson | Corporate Communications**

Phone: (905) 640-1910 x 2451

Email: glenn.jackson@townofws.ca