



Legislation Text

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4.1

COVID-19 Update

Presented by: Percy Janke, Director of Emergency Management, Chief Administrative Office

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S)

That the COVID-19 Update be received as information.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide background information regarding the current COVID-19 situation.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A.

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

N/A.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

N/A.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The province of Alberta and residents of St. Albert have experienced shifting public health orders in response to the COVID-19 since March 2020. Following restrictions enacted to reduce the spread of COVID-19 during the third COVID-19 wave Alberta began to experience decreasing active cases of COVID-19. As active cases began to diminish the province announced the "Open for Summer Plan" which commenced June 1, 2021. The plan is based on provincial vaccination rates for those eligible (12+) for first dose vaccination. Stage 1 was at 50%, Stage 2 at 60% and Stage 3 at 70%. The province entered Stage 3 of the plan on July 1, 2021, which eliminated most public health restrictions. The province had announced further loosening of restrictions which was then delayed

due to rising case counts. September 27, 2021 is the current date set for further reduction of provincial restrictions.

Health Measure	Current requirement or provision of service	Effective September 27, 2021
Masking	Required in: • Health care facilities • Public transit, rideshare, taxis	No longer required in: • Public transit, rideshare, taxis
Testing	Testing provided for all Albertans: • Symptomatic testing	Testing changes to: • Testing if required for patient care decisions • Wastewater testing
Isolation or Quarantine	Legally required for COVID-19 symptoms or test positive	Isolation no longer legally required but recommended

The province has signaled that health will shift from a provincial approach or response on COVID-19 to one that targets specific regions.

St. Albert is currently following public health measures and provincial guidance for the public. Council had enacted a face covering bylaw August 2020 which had been amended to be automatically repealed upon reaching Stage 3 of the provinces “open for Summer Plan”. This occurred on July 1, 2021. St. Albert administration currently requires city staff to wear masks when within 2 metres of other individuals.

Since the province began reporting vaccination statistics, St. Albert has ranked with amongst the highest percentage of vaccinated total population for municipalities or regions reported.

Since the reduction of public health measures there has been an increase in COVID-19 positive case counts. Additionally, there has been an increase in number of variant cases found during testing with the majority of positive cases being variants.

Despite reductions in mandatory measures, Public Health continues to recommend certain measures for response to COVID-19, these are:

- Hand Hygiene
- Physical Distancing
- Staying home when sick
- Masking in certain settings
- Vaccination

In an August 20, 2021 survey published by Leger the following question was asked: “Do you think governments should lift all restrictions related to COVID-19 right now?” Canadians responded Yes 19%, No 76% and Don’t Know 5%. Albertans in this survey indicated Yes 31%, No 67% and Don’t Know 2%.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

Comparator actions on masking.

City of Edmonton: Council voted to resume a face covering bylaw commencing September 3, 2021.

Municipal comparators are currently reviewing provincial measures and Edmonton's Face covering bylaw.

Strathcona County: Special Council meeting September 1, 2021, to discuss face coverings bylaw. Council voted to resume a face covering bylaw commencing September 10, 2021. Staff required to wear face coverings when dealing with public.

Sturgeon County. Special Council meeting September 2, 2021, to discuss temporary face coverings bylaw.

City of Calgary: Requires masking by staff and public in city operated and owned facilities.

City of Fort Saskatchewan: Staff required to wear face coverings if moving.

City of Medicine Hat: Currently following performing artists requests for proof of vaccination to attend performances.

City of Lethbridge: Masking resolution for all civic buildings to December 31, 2021 being brought to council.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

None at this time.

Legal / Risk:

None at this time.

Program or Service:

Since the City of Edmonton has implemented a bylaw for masking in public spaces there could be confusion by St. Albert public when riding buses that travel into Edmonton.

Organizational:

None at this time.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Council may also support the following additional motion:

Reinstate a mask bylaw for indoor public spaces, see attached Bylaw 52/2021 Face Coverings

Bylaw . The following motions would be required in order to pass Bylaw 52/2021:

1. That Bylaw 52/2021, being a bylaw to temporarily mandate the wearing of face coverings in specified places including St. Albert Transit Property and vehicles, be read a first time.
2. That Bylaw 52/2021 be read a second time.
3. That unanimous consent be given for consideration of third reading of Bylaw 52/2021.
4. That Bylaw 52/2021 be read a third and final time.

Report Date: September 3, 2021

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