

# **COVID-19 Pandemic Briefing**

## **Update on the Municipal Response to COVID-19**

# Agenda Topics

- ▶ What's been happening
- ▶ Provincial Declaration – State of Emergency
- ▶ Municipal Operations and Staffing Update
- ▶ Fiscal Preparedness during Pandemic
- ▶ Automation of Council Meetings
- ▶ Next Steps
- ▶ Questions / General Discussion



# What's been happening since the outbreak began?

- ▶ Middlesex Centre declared an Emergency on March 17, 2020
- ▶ Emergency Control Group has met since onset and continues to meet weekly to review continuity of municipal operations, health and safety of staff & residents, and to liaise with external stakeholders such as Health Unit, Police, County and other municipal partners
- ▶ Up-to-date pandemic response information on municipal website: [middlesexcentre.on.ca/covid19](https://middlesexcentre.on.ca/covid19)
- ▶ Staff and Council briefed almost daily on updates taking place



# Provincial Declaration of Emergency

- ▶ On January 12, 2021, the Provincial Government declared a (second) State of Emergency to take effect January 14, 2021
- ▶ Over and above the province-wide shutdown declared on December 21, 2020 – some of the notable differences include:
  - Outdoor gathering decreased from 10 to 5 persons
  - Restricted hours of operations for some businesses to 7 AM to 8 PM
  - Some construction activity / projects halted
  - Enhanced enforcement measures / capabilities
- ▶ The Province's response framework to COVID-19 is paused during shut-down
- ▶ Municipal response aligned with Province and Health Unit direction during the emergency. Essential will operate during shut-down; other services/amenities may be closed or limited.



# Stay At Home Order

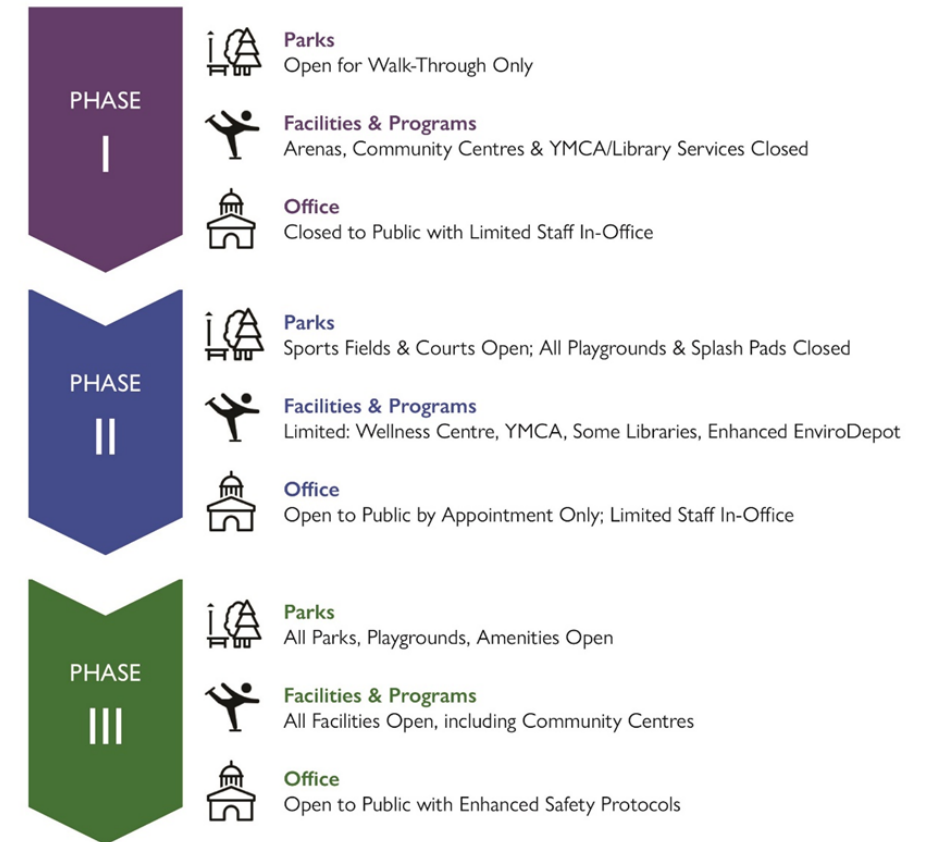
- ▶ As part of the State of Emergency declared by the Province, a Stay-At-Home Order has been issued
- ▶ Details about Stay-At-Home Order can be found at:
  - [Ontario regulation 10/21](#)  
under *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*
  - [Ontario regulation 11/21](#)  
under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*



# Municipal Recovery Action Plan

- ▶ Continue to implement MXC Project Restart, which aligns with the Provincial Recovery Plan: [middlesexcentre.on.ca/covid19-reopening](https://middlesexcentre.on.ca/covid19-reopening)
- ▶ The plan outlines a staged reopening approach for all affected municipal services/facilities, with a focus on continuation of essential services
- ▶ Plan is flexible to allow for necessary service changes in response to the State of Emergency, i.e. managing through a second wave

## MXC Project Restart





# Municipal Operations affected by State of Emergency

## ► Municipal Facilities

- All public serving facilities are closed during the shut-down period
- Municipal Office is closed to the public, services available online or by appointment based on need
- Once emergency ends, outward facing services and facilities will reopen
- Hybrid approach some amenities open such as playground (weather permitting) & walking trails open



# Municipal Operations affected by State of Emergency

## ► Continuity of Essential Services

- Essential services such as water/wastewater treatment and snow plowing, among others, will continue during shut-down
- Staff may see changes to shifts/working hours and work locations (work-from-home) due to stay at home order
- Building department is operating however construction activity is paused





# Operations for Municipal Staff

- ▶ All full-time staff have continued to work throughout the pandemic – seamless transition to work remotely
- ▶ All staff have received formal Health and Safety Training prior to returning to work
- ▶ Outside staff have transitioned back to normal working hours
- ▶ Proper training and cleaning/safety protocols have been established
- ▶ Daily COVID Screening protocols established for staff and public

## Physical Distancing


Physical distancing means keeping a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others at all times.

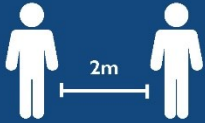
Everyone needs to practice physical distancing, even if you have:

- NO symptoms of COVID-19
- NO known risk of exposure
- Not travelled within the last 14 days

**Do your part to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.**

- Practice good hand hygiene
- Avoid touching your face
- Stagger staff in the office
- Take staggered breaks
- Sanitize items such as keyboards, phone & tablet screens, keys and entry cards regularly with disinfectant wipes
- Dispose of tissues, wipes, gloves, and other cleaning materials in plastic-lined waste containers
- Use disposable gloves when handling garbage





**RED LIGHT: AVOID**

**Close Contact**  
Avoid close contact of any kind with fellow staff, visitors or others whether in or out of the office.

**Unnecessary Meetings/Gatherings**  
Avoid in-person meetings.  
Avoid any unnecessary outings or social gatherings.

**YELLOW LIGHT: USE CAUTION**

**Break Time**  
Stagger break times and disinfect break table, and wash dishes immediately after each use.

**Yield in Hallways**  
Yield to oncoming foot traffic in narrow hallways. Use one way foot paths where possible.

**Public and Visitor Interactions**  
Is the interaction necessary? If so, then wear appropriate PPE if physical distancing cannot be maintained. Follow Off-Site Working Protocols.

**GREEN LIGHT: SAFE**

**Continue to be Social!**

Now more than ever we need to remain socially connected. Conversations with staff, from a distance, virtual interactions, and self care are all encouraged.



# Automated Screening Protocols

- ▶ The Municipality has enacted automated screening protocols for patrons, contractors using municipal facilities – the QR Code is seamless and used by staff, council and now the general public



Visitors / Contractors



Employee



# Staff placed on Emergency Leave during State of Emergency

- ▶ As a result of the new guidelines announced by the Province on January 13, 2021, resulting in amenity closures, the Municipality has placed part-time and contract-staff on Infectious Disease Emergency Leave which would make these individuals eligible to receive funding assistance through the Federal Government Programs
- ▶ In total, there are 26 employees impacted from Community Services Department affected by this decision
- ▶ Once the State of Emergency and/or the Provincial Framework eases, staff will return back to work



# Fiscal Preparedness during COVID-19

- ▶ Monthly reporting to Council to track revenues and expenses
- ▶ Cost-containment strategies have been implemented including cutting back expenditures and deferring capital projects
- ▶ Municipality received funding through the Canada Safe Restart, amounts in two phases:
  - ▶ Phase 1 \$357,000 for infrastructure
  - ▶ Phase 2 \$80,000 for expenses related to COVID-19



# Fiscal Assistance to Residents

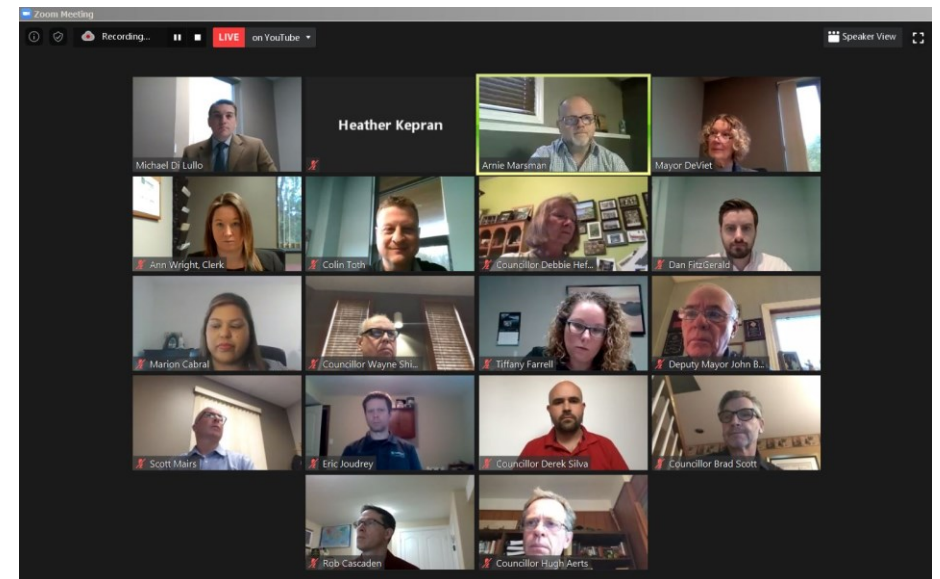
- ▶ The upcoming property tax installment for February is due February 26, 2021
- ▶ Staff are suggesting that we amend this date to March 31, 2021 to provide some reprieve to our residents during the State of Emergency
- ▶ Should Council concur, the amended Interim Tax By-law would be placed on the February 3, 2021 Council agenda acknowledging this date change
- ▶ The utility billing for January will also be moved and due on March 31, 2021 – same as our revised property tax due date for simplicity





# Impacts to Council – Meetings

- ▶ Meetings returned with council members present prior to the Provincial shutdown and YouTube live-streaming platforms in effect since April
- ▶ Once Provincial shutdown ends, resume in-person for elected members (council members will have flexibility to continue to use Zoom) while continuing to live-stream
- ▶ On a go-forward basis, the Municipal Act now permits the usage of technology as a way to conduct meetings and continue business of the municipality



# Next Steps

- ▶ Continue to meet as an Emergency Control Group
- ▶ Monitor and respond to Provincial and Health Unit direction and protocols
- ▶ Providing assistance if called upon for the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution
- ▶ Ensure municipal staff are equipped to return to work via training, sanitation supplies, flexible working arrangements etc.
- ▶ Continue to update Municipal website:  
[middlesexcentre.on.ca/covid-19](https://middlesexcentre.on.ca/covid-19)



# Questions?



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