



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 16, 2020

Community Message from Mayor Virginia Hackson

As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, Council's top priority is the health and safety of our community and employees. To ensure every effort is made and all options are considered to protect our citizens, I was part of York Regional Council's unanimous vote in favour of mandatory wearing of a face mask or covering in enclosed public spaces across York Region effective tomorrow, Friday July 17th.

This decision was not made lightly, and I acknowledge that there are varying degrees of opinions on this issue. However, collectively we considered many sources of information and studies as well as the important guidance and recommendation from York Region's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Karim Kurji, who indicated that wearing a mask will have a positive impact on helping to stop the spread of COVID-19. Public Health is also quite confident we will experience a second wave later this year. If wearing a mask has even a small impact on lessening the spread of COVID-19 then I am confident we have made the right decision.

This mandatory policy will be in effect for the period of Friday, July 17th to November 30th 2020. Business owners and operators in York Region must have a policy in place to prohibit people from entering if they are not wearing a face mask or covering and must place approved York Region signage on the premises. Outdoor settings and indoor spaces not open to the public are excluded and exceptions will be provided for those unable to wear a mask for medical reasons, children under the age of 5 and those who require accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

As we embark down this new path, I remind everyone to be sensitive to the fact that some people are unable to wear a mask. It is not for us to judge others or to be the enforcement body in the wearing of face masks. Please be kind to one another.

It is also very important to understand that wearing a mask does not eliminate the need to continue our efforts of frequent hand washing and practicing physical distancing. These coupled with wearing a mask will remain critical components to slowing the spread of COVID-19 and helping us to move through this pandemic.

I truly believe this is a positive step in the right direction. Together, we have made great strides in flattening the curve of COVID-19 and we need to stay together to ensure we win this battle.

To learn the proper way to wear and dispose of face masks to protect yourself and others, visit york.ca/mandatorymasks.

Please be safe, supportive and kind.

Virginia Hackson