

IN PERSON COUNCIL MEETINGS
DISTRICT OF OAK BAY
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PLAN

October 4, 2021

INTRODUCTION

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, public access to the Municipal Hall has been strictly controlled by way of promoting virtual appointments, accommodating contact-less meetings and screening visitors when entering the building.

In considering the re-opening of Municipal Hall to in-person Council meetings and public attendance at these meetings, safety precautions for the public, employees and Elected Officials were prioritized as directed and recommended by the Province of BC, the BC Centre for Disease Control, Island Health, and WorkSafe BC. The resumption of in-person Council meetings during the reopening process will be balanced with the need to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19.

The provincial government introduced legislation under the *Emergency Program Act (M139)* which exempted local governments from requirements for meetings, hearings, and bylaw adoption. Ministerial Order No. M139 was replaced on June 17, 2020 by M192.

Open Meetings - Municipalities

Under Ministerial Order No. M192:

- (1) A council, or a body referred to in section 93 of the *Community Charter*, must use best efforts to allow members of the public to attend an open meeting of the council or body in a manner that is consistent with any applicable requirements or recommendations made under the *Public Health Act*.
- (2) A council or body is not required to allow members of the public to attend a meeting if, despite the best efforts of the council or body, the attendance of members of the public cannot be accommodated at a meeting that would otherwise be held in accordance with the applicable requirements or recommendations under the *Public Health Act*.

Proof of Vaccination Requirement

In accordance with the Province of British Columbia – *Letter from Ministry of Municipal Affairs – Reference: 268244, September 11, 2021, page one (1), paragraph five (5)*;

“‘Proof of Vaccination Requirement’ does not apply to formal local government business as outlined in the *“Provincial Health Order - Gathering and Events”*. The letter continues to note “...other layers of protections, such as capacity limits and mask requirements described below, would be relevant.”

This indicates that other aspects of the Gathering and Events PHO apply in this scenario, as the proof of vaccinations provision is clearly embedded in an independent and segregated section of the Order. The commentary that the other layers of protections would be relevant, implies that additional measures to prevent the possible spread of COVID-19 would be considered acceptable to be in place. The use of the term “such as” would indicate that capacity limits and masks requirements are common examples of additional measures utilized, however are not the exclusive mitigation options available for use in this scenario and therefore, it would be up to the District to determine the mitigation strategies which would be implemented for this scenario.

PLAN

Consideration	Action		Risk Mitigated
Does the space allow for physical distancing of Elected Officials, the public and employees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Chambers and Lobby layout ensure ability for physical distancing. • Sequential seating of Council by “Staff Host” will ensure physical distancing. • Seating of Public in Lobby by Staff Host, and escort to and from the speaker’s seat located in Council Chambers will ensure physical distancing. 		YES
Has signage been posted reminding community members to physically distance, to wash/sanitize hands when entering the building, to stay home when sick?	<p style="text-align: center;">Type of Signage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No Public Access 2. Help Prevent Spread of COVID 3. Entrance Only 4. Social Distancing 5. Occupancy Limit of 10 people in Council Chambers 6. Participation Guidelines for Council Meetings 7. Exit Only 	<p style="text-align: center;">Location</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MH Reception doors/EOC/Kitchen 2. Entry 3. Entry 4. Front of Council Chambers 5. Front of Council Chambers 6. Front entrance (Oak Bay Ave. side) 7. Rear exit (parking lot side) 	YES
Is it feasible to limit and direct the flow of traffic in/out of the building to minimize contact and allow for physical distancing requirements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage and Staff Host will direct Elected Officials and the public to enter Municipal Hall through the Lobby front door (Oak Bay Avenue side) and exit through the Lobby back door (parking lot side) or as deemed appropriate by the Staff Host. • Chairs in Lobby and Committee Room for public seating have been spaced with a 6-foot separation and marked with tape on the floor. • Public is required to pre-register to attend the Council meeting in person with a maximum of 13 members of the public permitted to attend. 		YES

Consideration (cont'd)	Action (cont'd)	Risk Mitigated (cont'd)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker’s seat in Council Chambers has been placed and delineated to allow for physical separation of 6 feet between the speaker and Elected Officials/attending staff. • Staff and Council seating in Council Chambers has been placed and delineated to allow for physical separation between the speaker and Elected Officials/attending staff. • Councillors, staff and public must wear masks in shared spaces. 	
Can the Council Chambers & Lobby be properly cleaned/disinfected regularly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep cleaning of all surfaces in Council Chambers and Lobby by janitorial service occurs twice weekly (Tuesdays and Fridays). • Staff are responsible for cleaning high touch surfaces at their designated seat prior to, and after, the Council meeting. • Council are responsible for cleaning high touch surfaces at their designated seat prior to, and after, the Council meeting. • Staff Host will wipe down speaker’s seat in Council Chambers at start of meeting, between presenters, and after close of meeting. • Microphone cover will be changed out after each speaker. 	YES
Can the Council Chambers & Lobby be properly cleaned/disinfected regularly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Host will wipe down exterior and interior door handles prior to the meeting start and after close of the meeting. • Staff Host will wipe down public seating chairs in Lobby prior to meeting start and after close of the meeting. • Both Public and Staff washrooms located off the Lobby are deep cleaned daily by janitorial staff. • 	YES
How can the use be managed, and cleaning of washrooms and other shared spaces achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and Staff washrooms are deep cleaned daily by janitorial staff (Monday thru Friday). • Staff and Public washrooms have been designated and signed separately. • Disinfecting wipes and tissues are located outside of the washroom door to mitigate the requirement for contact with high touch surfaces. • No touch soap dispensers have been installed in both the Public and Staff washrooms. 	YES

Consideration (cont'd)	Action (cont'd)	Risk Mitigated (cont'd)
Are there handwashing/sanitizing options readily available?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwashing is accessible in the Public and Staff washrooms located off the Lobby. • Hand sanitizer is available in the Lobby. • Hand sanitizer is available at each Council and staff seat in Council Chambers. 	YES
Can staff maintain physical distancing while performing their work duties?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff in Council Chambers are physically separated from each other and other attendees. • Staff Host will wear PPE as appropriate. • Phone Operator will be at switchboard with doors closed to the Lobby and physical separation maintained. • Live Stream Operator will be at desk with physical separation maintained. 	YES
Can staff address first aid or other emergency situations in a safe manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid not required based on staff numbers. 	YES
Is additional equipment required?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending staff have training in PPE use and removal. • A mask must be worn by the Staff, Elected Officials, and members of the public in shared spaces. • Extra masks will be available. • Masks must be worn by Councillors when vacating their seats during a Council meeting, while walking by other Members. 	YES
How do staff safely set up and take down necessary equipment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloves will be worn for high touch surface cleaning. • Microphones will be sprayed with a disinfectant. • All microphone covers will be sprayed with disinfectant after close of meeting. 	YES
Have service levels been established to maintain the cleaning protocols and frequency your facility has planned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep cleaning of Council Chambers occurs twice weekly (Tuesday and Friday). • Cleaning Protocols for Municipal Hall have been established, detailing staff and janitorial service responsibilities. 	YES
Have cleaning/disinfection supplies and non-medical PPE been secured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning/disinfection supplies are available and PPE including gloves and masks have been secured. 	YES
Have employees been trained on usage of PPE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training has been provided for staff that wear masks and/or gloves. 	YES
Is there a clear understanding in place regarding hand washing/sanitizing frequency of employees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwashing/sanitization occurs upon entry/exit of the building and when moving between areas of the building. Signage is installed as appropriate throughout the building. 	YES

Consideration (cont'd)	Action (cont'd)	Risk Mitigated (cont'd)
Is there a medical screening process in place for members of the public entering the building?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See District of Oak Bay Screening Policy/Protocol (General). • Staff Host will screen members of the public, Councillors and off-site staff in accordance with the Policy/Protocol, prior to the individuals being granted access to the Lobby. • General signage will be located at the entrance way to Municipal Hall reminding attending members of the public of the following guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If someone is sick or displaying symptoms related to Covid-19, has travelled in the last 14 days or has been exposed to an individual showing signs of illness, they are not permitted into the facility ✓ Physical distancing must be maintained at all times ✓ Hand washing/sanitization must be done when entering and exiting the building ✓ If you cough or sneeze, do so only into an elbow or sleeve ✓ Follow directional signage to respect the safety of employees and other patrons 	YES
Outbreak Protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the event of a patron or employee exhibiting symptoms of an illness once inside the building, the individual will be asked to leave the building or will be isolated while waiting for emergency assistance if required. • Immediate deep cleaning of affected areas will be undertaken by staff and repeated by janitorial staff at the earliest possibility. • In the case of an outbreak, the District will follow the directions of Island Health. • Any suspected cases must be reported to Island Health through Island Health's COVID-19 Call Centre at 1-844-901-8442. 	YES