

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 22, 2020
FROM:	GEORGE KOTSIFAS MANAGING DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT & COMPLIANCE SERVICES & CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL
SUBJECT:	MANDATORY FACE COVERINGS BY-LAW STATUS UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Development and Compliance Services and Chief Building Official, this report **BE RECEIVED** for information purposes.

BACKGROUND

On July 21, 2020, Municipal Council passed the Mandatory Face Coverings By-law. City Council was desirous to enact a By-law to require mandatory face coverings in enclosed spaces that are accessible to the public to help maintain the spread of COVID-19. City Council also directed Civic Administration to report back to the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC) in sixty day increments with respect to the By-law.

The enforcement protocol was outlined in the July 20, 2020 SPPC report. As noted, the enforcement approach was heavily focused on education and voluntary compliance. Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) also had the discretion to issue fines. A fine of \$500 was approved by a Senior Regional Judge soon after the By-law was in force and effect.

Immediately after the By-law was passed, over 1,500 emails were sent to business premises licensed under the Business Licensing By-law advising them of the requirements of the By-law. The City also utilized various forms of media, including social media, to provide education. The Middlesex London Health Unit also implemented an educational strategy.

A dedicated link was created on the City's website about the By-law. The link included information about the by-law, downloadable posters for businesses and establishments, specifics on locations where face coverings are not required, information on exemptions and FAQs for residents and businesses. Sample FAQs for residents included: what qualifies as a mask or face covering; do people need to show proof that they are exempt; am I required to wear a mask in my apartment or condominium building's lobby and shared spaces; and can businesses have their own policy in place and turn away customers unable to wear a face mask. Sample FAQs for business owners included: what is my responsibility as a business owner; what if someone enters my business without a mask; and do employees need to wear a mask in staff only areas. As common repeat questions are received, the list of FAQs is updated accordingly.

MLEOs began a program on educating the public proactively in the field on the By-law requirements on July 23, 2020. At the time of writing this report, MLEOs attended 2,006 premises and spoke with 101 individuals, including employees and customers, who were observed not wearing a mask. Many of the individuals noted a pre-existing medical condition. MLEOs did not question the specifics of the medical condition. Numerous signs were also distributed to businesses (540). No charges have been issued to either businesses or individuals.

The COVID-19 dedicated email and phone line received 330 concerns and or complaints about individuals not wearing masks. As noted in the July SPPC report, it would be practically ineffective and inefficient to employ an immediate response protocol to complaints. Rather, the process included triaging and geo-coding all complaints and identifying hotspots to which future site visits would be assigned to MLEOs. Identified hot spots were visited and observed.

MLEOs will continue to proactively and reactively respond to complaints in response to the By-law. Administration and enforcement of the By-law is a team effort involving numerous City Departments and partner agencies including the Middlesex London Health Unit.

PREPARED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
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