

COVID-19 Community Update for April 18, 2020

Fort Erie Transit schedule modified

The safety of our employees and passengers is extremely important to Fort Erie Transit. Effective, Monday, April 20, 2020, the following changes will be made to transit service operations: the East Green Line (751) will be temporarily cancelled until further notice; the East Blue Line (750) and the West Yellow Line (760) will stop at 7pm (Monday to Saturday); and the North Red Line (770) will run as regularly scheduled. For more information, please visit www.fetransit.ca.

Extension of the Provincial Declaration of Emergency

The Province of Ontario has [extended the Declaration of Emergency](#) until May 12, 2020. The extension allows Ontario to continue to enforce current emergency orders, such as the closure of all non-essential workplaces, outdoor amenities, public places and bars and restaurants, as well as restrictions on social gatherings of more than five people, and prohibitions against price-gouging. Town Municipal Law staff and NRPS are working together to ensure citizens and businesses are abiding by these restrictions. Non-compliance can result in fines.

Seasonal residents asked to stay in primary residence

Every year, the Fort Erie population increases during the summer months by about 10,000 to 15,000 seasonal residents/visitors. Seasonal property owners may feel inclined to return early to distance themselves from urban centres amidst the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the Town of [Fort Erie is asking seasonal residents to stay in their primary residence](#) until the Town's healthcare system is in a better position to accommodate them if needed. For those seasonal residents who are still returning from the south, please act responsibly to protect your community by physically distancing, practicing proper hygiene, and self-isolating as required. Dial 2-1-1 for assistance in accessing community resources.

Short-term Rental Restrictions

The Government of Ontario has announced that [short-term rentals are an essential service](#). However, every person/business who provides short-term rentals must ensure that any rentals booked after April 4, 2020, are only provided to individuals who are in need of housing during the emergency period.

Niagara Region makes temporary changes to waste collection

The Niagara Region has made [temporary changes to prioritize the weekly collection of garbage, recycling and organics](#) and to help our collection staff who are working hard to maintain this essential service for the community and help stop the spread of COVID-19.

- Curbside Battery Collection - the annual curbside battery collection, which had been scheduled for April 20 to 24, has been postponed. Residents are

- encouraged to keep their batteries until a new date is announced.
- Leaf and yard waste - effective April 13, only three bags / cans of yard waste will be collected per collection day, per eligible residential property (single family homes and apartments with six units or less). There are also restrictions on leaf and yard waste at the landfill / drop-off depots.
 - Large household item / bulk goods - curbside collection of large household item / bulk goods for single family homes and apartments with six units or less is suspended until May 30. Residents are encouraged to hold on to their items until service resumes.

Financing opportunity for Niagara businesses

Venture Niagara Community Futures Development Corporation is offering [special financing for Niagara businesses](#) that have been in operation for at least one year. Venture Niagara will be providing loans between \$2,500 and \$15,000 to eligible businesses to assist with the short-term financial hardships of COVID-19.

Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program

The Federal Government has announced further support for businesses including the [Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program](#) to assist small and medium sized businesses with their commercial rent for April, May and June. More program details will be available shortly. The Government is also expanding eligibility for the Canada Emergency Business Account to \$20,000 - \$1.5 million in total payroll in 2019.

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) program

To support workers and help businesses keep their employees, this taxable benefit would provide \$2,000 a month for up to four months for workers who lose their income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#) would apply to wage earners, as well as contract workers and self-employed individuals who would not otherwise be eligible for Employment Insurance (EI). In order to be eligible, workers cannot have earned more than \$1,000 in employment and/or self-employment income within the entire four-week benefit period of a new claim.