



## Media Release

### Council considering tax relief for businesses and residents, applauds Provincial announcements today

**Burlington, Ont.—March 19, 2020** — The City of Burlington is committed to supporting the health and well-being of our community by every means possible.

We know many of our residents and businesses are struggling with concerns around health, finances, and supplies and we are taking steps each day to help.

At our next scheduled council meeting, Burlington City Council will be considering a temporary change to late payment charges to provide relief for the April 21<sup>st</sup> property tax installment to help residents and businesses experiencing financial hardship during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Based on council's decision, this temporary change being proposed would mean that for the month of April 2020 and through to May 31<sup>st</sup>, with additional extensions being considered on a monthly basis:

- No penalty or interest charges will be incurred related to the April 21<sup>st</sup> installment for all property owners; and
- No non-sufficient fund (NSF) fee charged by the City for any returned tax payments.

We encourage taxpayers on a pre-authorized payment plan (10-month plan, due date plan and taxpayer defined plan) to continue on these payment plans where possible.

There are many tax payment options available to the public which do not require your physical presence. We encourage taxpayers to make payments where possible during these unique times.

Payment can be made as follows:

- Directly through financial institutions – by internet, telephone banking or ATM
- Pre-authorized Payment Plans
- Regular mail or physical drop box (at the Locust Street entrance of City Hall)
- 3rd party credit card processing companies

Property taxes are the most important revenue source to ensure the city continues to provide the essential services for residents of the City of Burlington during these challenging circumstances.

We applaud the Province's decision today to enact *The Employment Standards Amendment Act (Infectious Disease Emergencies), 2020* providing job-protected leave for employees who are in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19, or those who need to be away from work to care for children because of school or day care closures or to care for other relatives. These measures are retroactive to January 25, 2020, the date the first presumptive COVID-19 case was confirmed in Ontario. The legislation will also make it clear employees cannot be required to show sick notes. This helps alleviate the worry of job security for people across Ontario and ensures no one is punished for following the advice of medical health professionals.

The City's leadership team and Mayor continue to engage daily with members of council, Halton Region, Joseph Brant Hospital, our emergency services teams, Burlington Hydro, and our partners in provincial and federal government.

We are committed to finding ways to continue essential council business. We are pleased that the Province of Ontario passed legislation today giving municipalities the ability to fully conduct Council, local board and committee meetings electronically when faced with local and province-wide emergencies, empowering us to respond quickly when in-person meetings cannot be held. This ensures that we can make efficient decisions that are needed at a local level in a remote setting. These are the decisions that will keep our communities safe, functioning and informed during these challenging times.

The Mayor has also reached out to the Province to consider relief and flexibility on timelines related to planning and development deadlines including those related to statutory public meetings. A copy of that letter can be found on her website.

City staff, the Mayor and Councillors have all received questions from residents about how to obtain support as well as generous offers of help to support others in need in our community.

Ontario 211 is a free helpline that connects you to community and social services in your area 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, in over 150 languages. 211 is answered and updated by highly-trained specialists. You can visit [211.ca](https://211.ca) or call 211 from your phone with questions related to food, family services, employment, community programs and crisis support.

We have also been made aware of online support groups including [The Good Neighbour Project - GTA](#) and [Burlington Covid Response](#), both of which are on Facebook. You may wish to visit those groups to either seek support or offer help to others. Please ensure you always follow the advice of healthcare experts while supporting others including social distancing, hand washing, and staying home if you are sick.

This situation is evolving every hour and we are continually monitoring. The City of Burlington will continue to keep you informed.

Burlington is ranked as Canada's best community and best place to raise a family. It is a City where people, nature and businesses thrive. Sign up to learn more about Burlington at [Burlington.ca/Enews](http://Burlington.ca/Enews) and download the free City of Burlington app.

## Quotes

### Mayor Marianne Meed Ward

"I continue to be impressed by how our community is coming together to support one another and follow the advice of healthcare experts by staying and working from home whenever possible and employing social distancing. These continue to be difficult times and we are looking ahead to how we can best continue council and city business, keep essential services going, and support residents and businesses. Waiving the April property tax payment interest penalty for late or missed payments is one way we can provide some financial relief. The Province's work today to protect jobs is a great step to alleviating worry and help people follow the advice of healthcare professionals. Maintaining council's ability to make decisions on important city business without the need for physical quorum is a top priority and the provincial government's legislation today provides us with the flexibility we need to do so. While the amount of information is changing rapidly I encourage everyone to stay as informed as possible on our city channels and through trusted news sources. The more we each know, the better we can act responsibly to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and keep our community safe."

### Joan Ford, Director of Finance, City of Burlington

"The COVID-19 situation has created a great deal of uncertainty and worry for residents and businesses. For this reason, the city is considering temporary relief for property owners who may for financial hardship reasons, have trouble paying their property taxes due in April. This relief will be reviewed as the situation warrants. The city has implemented necessary steps to limit spending in order to ensure essential/critical services have the much-needed resources available to them. As a reminder there are many ways to make your property tax payments that do not require your physical presence at a certain location."

## COVID-19 Links and Resources

- For further COVID-19 information, including where to get tested, please visit Halton Region Public Health [www.halton.ca/coronavirus](http://www.halton.ca/coronavirus)
- Residents can stay informed at [www.burlington.ca/coronavirus](http://www.burlington.ca/coronavirus) as well as on our social media channels: [@cityburlington](https://twitter.com/cityburlington) on twitter and [facebook.com/cityburlington](https://facebook.com/cityburlington)
- Questions about the cancellation of Recreation programs can be directed to [rentals@burlington.ca](mailto:rentals@burlington.ca) or [liveandplay@burlington.ca](mailto:liveandplay@burlington.ca) or 905-335-7738
- Government of Ontario: [www.ontario.ca/coronavirus](http://www.ontario.ca/coronavirus)
- Government of Canada: [www.canada.ca/coronavirus](http://www.canada.ca/coronavirus)
- World Health Organization: [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

- Joseph Brant Hospital: [www.josephbranthospital.ca/covid-19](http://www.josephbranthospital.ca/covid-19)

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