

COVID-19

'Serious but not dire'

394 new cases reported in province

NICOLE MUNRO
THE CHRONICLE HERALD
nmunro@herald.ca

Nova Scotia reported a record high of 394 cases on Friday when provincial officials urged people to be careful about their social activities but not to panic.

Of those cases, 295 cases are in the central zone, 54 cases are in the eastern zone, 27 cases are in the northern zone and 18 cases are in the western zone.

Seven people are in hospital, including two in ICU.

Premier Tim Houston said the symptoms appear to be less severe than previous waves, but "it's still COVID."

"Even if the symptoms of this variant do happen to be less severe, think of how your elderly parents, grandparents or neighbourhood would manage or the immunocompromised or the very young," Houston said during a news conference Friday.

"Think about what would happen if things changed and people started to get hospitalized or record numbers of health-care workers, paramedics or police started to get sick and had to isolate. Think of these things and be smart."

Some non-urgent surgeries at the QEII Health Centre were postponed due to the number of staff in isolation related to COVID-19 protocols.

On Thursday, Nova Scotia Health Authority's labs completed 7,585 tests.

"Because of a spike in testing and positive cases, public health is experiencing some delays in follow-up. Public health will try to contact anyone confirmed positive by the lab within 24 hours to provide information on required isolation and testing. All cases will be asked to contact their close contacts," the Health Department said in a news release.

"We know that restrictions have their own set of significant impacts and so we are watching closely and will adjust as necessary," Strang



Signs direct people to rapid testing and the pick up of home testing kits at the Halifax Convention Centre on Friday. **ERIC WYNNE** • THE CHRONICLE HERALD

said. "If we need to go further or it looks like we can loosen up, we will."

Houston said St. Francis Xavier University and the St. F.X. Students' Union have been fined \$11,622.50 each for failing to comply with masking requirements under the Health Protection Act.

CHANGES COMING TO TESTING

Strang said omicron is pushing the health-care system to its limits, with public health, testing programs and the lab reaching its capacity.

"We are past the point of full control of this variant. We need to change how we manage and respond," Strang said.

Strang said the focus will be on severe illness as opposed to the overall number of cases as there will be a lot of spread of the variant.

"We can limit the impact of omicron by focusing our resources on the health system on limiting severe disease and that means directing testing and vaccines to those most vulnerable and most at risk. As long as we have limited amounts of severe illness we can be more comfortable with high cases and a fair degree of community spread," he said.

Strang said next week there will be changes to who and how we test for COVID-19.

"Our situation is serious but it is not dire. We're going to have to make some tough

decisions about our next steps and we're going to ask even more of Nova Scotians and the people on the front lines to keep us all safe."

People should be careful about their social contacts, the number of people they invite for holiday gatherings (the mandated limit is 20 per household) and if you're feeling at all ill with cough or fever symptoms, isolate yourself and get a test.

MORE SCHOOL EXPOSURES

Also Friday, the Education Department reported 16 new COVID-19 exposure notices were sent to these schools: Atlantic Memorial Terence Bay Elementary, Shad Bay; Bay View High School, Upper Tantallon; Cavalier Drive School, Lower Sackville; Charles P Allen High, Bedford; Citadel High School, Halifax; Hammonds Plains Consolidated, Hammonds Plains (closed); Dartmouth South Academy, Dartmouth; Madeline Symonds Middle School, Hammonds Plains; Millwood Elementary School, Lower Sackville; Prospect Road Elementary, Hatchet Lake; Hants East Rural High School, Milford; Sackville High, Lower Sackville; Antigonish Education Centre, Antigonish; Saint Andrew Junior School, Antigonish; Strait Area Education and Recreation Centre (SAERC), Port Hawkesbury; and Evangeline

Middle School, New Minas.

Friday marked the last day of classes for public schools across Nova Scotia.

Earlier this week, the Education Department announced schools will close early for the holidays after a spike in cases. Students are to return to classes on Jan. 6.

ONE-TIME BUSINESS GRANT

Many local business owners have been looking for financial aid after restrictions were reinstated across Nova Scotia on Friday. Many people have also cancelled their reservations or holiday plans at restaurants due to the rise in cases.

Houston said he's heard businesses need additional support, which is why the provincial government is introducing the sector impact support program, which will provide a one-time grant of up to \$7,500 to help small business owners in industries such as restaurants, bars, gyms, live performing art facilities and recreation facilities.

Applications will open in early January. Eligible businesses can receive the following amounts based on November 2021 gross payroll costs:

- Payroll costs between \$1,000 and \$15,000 — grant

- of \$2,500
- Payroll costs between \$15,001 and \$25,000 — grant of \$5,000
- Payroll costs between \$25,001 or more — grant of \$7,500.

Business leaders welcomed news of the grant but said eventually more support will be needed given the massive revenue hit that restrictions will bring, particularly to the dining industry.

"It's a start and I think that's how to position it," said Gordon Stewart, president of the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia. "This interruption is definitely going to bring a lot of pain to a lot of people with cancellations, a lot of costs, people are going to get laid off so any amount of cash and non-repayable as a grant, that would help, that's Step 1."

Stewart said a longer-term funding program to help rebuild the dining industry will be needed.

"They need to think about putting money aside to help the industry respond, it's not going to be every time we have to run back to the cash register. There (should be) a fund there we can draw on to help with education, retooling, menu building, you name all the things that are going to change the industry."

Besides money, the province should create a confidence-building campaign for the restaurant industry given the fears about indoor dining COVID has created. Stewart said the province should be talking to business owners first and getting their expert perspective before implementing restrictions on the industry.

Sue Uteck, executive director of the Spring Garden Business Area Business Association, also welcomed the grant program but said that can't be the end of the support.

"I'm very pleased with the premier's very quick response but if you break down the numbers by \$7,500, that would cover 1,330 businesses, I think. So it's a start, I want to be positive and say it's a start."

With files from John McPhee

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Halifax Regional Municipality Notices will generally appear each Saturday in this section of the newspaper. Readers are still encouraged to look throughout the paper for information which might appear in a different section or on another day.

NOTICE OF APPROVAL HALIFAX MAINLAND AND TIMBERLEA / LAKESIDE / BEECHVILLE

TAKE NOTICE THAT Halifax and West Community Council did, on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 approve the following application:

Case 22879 - Application by ZZap Consulting Inc., on behalf of Armco Capital Inc., requesting substantive amendments to the existing development agreement for Lovett Lake to add additional lands and allow for an extension of Phase 2 and an additional Phase 3 of Lovett Lake, Beechville.

Any aggrieved person, the Provincial Director of Planning, or the Council of any adjoining municipality may, within fourteen days of the publishing of this notice, appeal to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (902.424.4448) in accordance with the provisions of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.
ACC# CPC02310

NOTICE OF APPROVAL BEAVER BANK / LOWER SACKVILLE

TAKE NOTICE THAT North West Community Council did, on Monday, December 13, 2021 approve the following application:

Case 20110 - Application by WSP Canada Inc., on behalf of Marque, for a rezoning and a development agreement to enable a 374-unit Classic Open Space Design Development subdivision on 154.10 hectares (380.8 acres) of land along Windgate Drive, Beaver Bank between the existing Monarch-Rivendale and Capilano Estates subdivisions (PIDs 41043597, 40010514, 41398694 and 41401159). A 19.4 hectares (48 acres) portion of the lands located toward Windgate Drive is rezoned from I-1 (Mixed Industrial) Zone to the MU-1 (Mixed Use-1) Zone to enable the consideration of senior citizen housing in the form of townhouse dwellings and multiple unit

dwellings in the mix of residential uses for the Open Space Design development. The Development Agreement will be considered by Community Council following the approval of the rezoning.

TAKE NOTICE THAT North West Community Council did, on Monday, December 13, 2021 approve, by resolution, the following application:

Case 23662 - Application by WM Fares Architecture to allow more time for construction to begin on a previously approved 52-unit apartment building and 34 townhouses at 26 Walker Service Road, Lower Sackville.

Any aggrieved person, the Provincial Director of Planning, or the Council of any adjoining municipality may, within fourteen days of the publishing of this notice, appeal to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (902-424-4448) in accordance with the provisions of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.
ACC# CPC02310

NOTICE OF APPROVAL BY-LAW U-110, RESPECTING USER CHARGES

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that By-law U-110, Respecting User Charges was adopted by Halifax Regional Council on December 14, 2021.

By-law U-110 amends By-law U-100, Respecting User Charges. The purpose of the amendment is to allow for the provision of discounted bulk transit fares for both non-profit agencies and event attendees.

The text of the amended By-law U-100 may be viewed on the Internet in the Legislation & By-law section at halifax.ca/city-hall/legislation-by-laws or copies obtained from the Office of the Municipal Clerk by emailing clerks@halifax.ca, calling 902-490-4210 or faxing 902-490-4208.

Effective date: December 18, 2021
HROP-6912-A121 Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk

PLEASE SEE SECTION 158 - EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN SATURDAY'S PAPER AND SECTION 258 - TENDERS IN CLASSIFIEDS FOR ALL TENDERS AND REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS ADVERTISEMENTS IN SATURDAY AND WEDNESDAY'S EDITIONS

NOVA SCOTIA UTILITY AND REVIEW BOARD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

SUNSET PLAZA INC. has made an appeal from a Decision of North West Community Council to refuse to amend a Development Agreement for Sunset Ridge subdivision for a property located at the corner of Hanwell Drive and Swindon Drive, Middle Sackville, Nova Scotia. This matter will be considered in a public hearing as follows:

Hearing Starts: Monday, March 14, 2022 9:30 AM (Continuing Tuesday, March 15, 2022, if necessary)

Evening Session: Monday, March 14, 2022 6:30 PM

Hearing Location: Offices of the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board 1601 Lower Water Street, 3rd Floor Halifax, Nova Scotia

DEPENDENT UPON CIRCUMSTANCES RELATED TO COVID-19, THE BOARD RESERVES THE RIGHT TO HOLD THE PUBLIC HEARING, OR A PORTION THEREOF, BY VIDEO CONFERENCE.

- You may speak at the hearing. You must notify the Board by **Wednesday, January 19, 2022.**
- You may make written comments by sending a letter to the Clerk of the Board at P.O. Box 1692, Unit "M", Halifax, NS, B3J 3S3, or by email at: board@novascotia.ca or by fax at (902) 424-3919 by **Monday, February 28, 2022.**
- You may request formal standing as an Intervenor, subject to Board approval. This will allow you to present evidence or cross-examine witnesses. Your request must be received by the Board by **Wednesday, January 5, 2022**, and a copy of your written evidence by **Monday, January 17, 2022**, for Intervenor supporting the Appellants, and by **Monday, January 31, 2022**, for Intervenor supporting the Municipality.
- Should public access to this hearing be restricted due to circumstances related to COVID-19, public attendance may still be possible by requesting that the hearing be audio or videocast. If required, your request must be received by the Board by **Friday, March 4, 2022**. The Board will make its best effort to accommodate any such request.
- Alternatively, you may request a copy of the audio file for the proceeding after the hearing by contacting the Clerk of the Board.

Additional information about the matter is as follows:

A copy of the Appeal and any timetable applying to this matter may be viewed on the Board's website at <http://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/> by clicking on "Matters & Evidence", "Go To Files & Documents", and in the "Go Directly to Matter" search box, enter Matter No. **M10353**, or at the offices of the Town of Truro, 695 Prince Street, Truro, Nova Scotia.