



**Council Member Motion
Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 23, 2020**

Date: April 21, 2020

From: Councillor Young

Subject: Re-opening of Provincial Parks

Recommendation

That Council request the Province to re-open Provincial parks for day use in order to reduce levels of use in local and regional parks and allow for greater physical distancing.

Rationale

In her comments on April 18 in response to the following question;

“ ...I'm just wondering to what extent are the new cases we've been hearing about over the past number of days, are we seeing that from public spaces, like grocery stores, parks, things like that, or are we still generally seeing most of the cases emerge at existing outbreak centres?”

Dr. Henry replied;

“Yeah, most cases are emerging in close contacts. We're are not seeing transmission of the virus, nor have we anywhere in the world, from very fleeting contact outside or in places like grocery stores. For the most part, what we're seeing is people who have spent time together inside in a space together, in close contact with them. So if we look at the prison setting, for example, long-term care, we can see that, but many of the community cases as well are people who may have travelled, may have been exposed to someone, been exposed and not recognized that they were ill and passed it on to family and friends.”

“That's where we're seeing across-the-board-- it's mostly those close contacts that we are seeing. It's not something like being outside and being, for a very short period of time, next to somebody.....”

On April 21, in response to a question about what she would do about observed crowding in parks, Dr. Henry pushed back very strongly against the suggestion that parks should be closed. Instead, she stressed the importance of preserving physical distancing in other ways, such as one-way trails and enforcement.

In light of these comments, I think we are likely to see continued heavy use of park space, and should both encourage the Province to reduce pressure on our own parks by re-opening theirs, and ensure that our parks encourage distancing in ways other than by discouraging visitation.

Respectfully submitted,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "G. Young".

Councillor Young