

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM28.7	ACTION			Ward: All
--------	--------	--	--	-----------

Improving Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning systems to reduce aerosol spread of COVID-19 - by Councillor Michael Thompson, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Michael Thompson, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy, recommends that:

1. City Council urge the Federal and Provincial Governments to consider promoting and supporting improvements to indoor ventilation and HVAC systems to reduce the aerosol transmission of COVID-19 and possible future viruses by:
 - a. immediately implementing the recommendations made in an open letter from 363 Canadian experts sent to the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Medical Officers of the Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments on January 4, 2021, notably:
 1. developing clear ventilation standards using existing evidence and best practices, particularly addressing multi-occupant public spaces and activities with a higher risk of aerosol transmission, and integrating those standards into safe reopening guidelines;
 2. mandating and funding ventilation assessments and upgrades of public institutions; and
 3. recommending portable equipment that has been confirmed for safety and effectiveness in reducing aerosols containing SARS-CoV-2 such as air filtration units in spaces where sufficient and effective ventilation is not possible otherwise;
 - b. amending applicable legislative and regulatory requirements, including the Ontario Building Code, to set government-approved standards and requirements for improved indoor ventilation in the alteration and construction of buildings;
 - c. mandating ventilation assessments of all publicly-accessible buildings;
 - d. mandating upgrades to existing HVAC systems to meet ventilation standards required to

reduce the risk of aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2; and

e. providing interest-free loans or grants to owners and operators of businesses and institutions who enhance existing, or install improved indoor ventilation to meet government-approved standards.

Summary

There is convincing and growing evidence that the aerosol transmission of COVID-19 is commonplace and plays a significant role in the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, many buildings are poorly ventilated and require significant ventilation upgrades, including improved HVAC systems, to help contain the transmission of viruses.

Experts warn that while we may gain control over the spread of COVID-19, future pandemics are possible. Consequently, investing in improved ventilation now will not only help prevent the transmission of COVID-19, but have significant future health benefits.

Upgrading indoor air quality standards also comes with significant economic benefits. Safer indoor spaces could enable many business and cultural activities to remain open or to reopen, thus helping them to remain viable. Retrofitting and upgrading HVAC equipment could also create hundreds of high quality jobs in manufacturing and construction.

By incorporating both health and economic considerations, this Motion will help motivate Federal and Provincial governments to consider promoting and supporting the improvement of indoor ventilation, including the upgrade of HVAC systems, to prevent the aerosol transmission of COVID-19 and the possible future viruses that will follow.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM28.7