

# COVID-19 will have a 'huge impact' on local economy, says Kawartha Lakes mayor

*Sarah Sobanski*

How big will the impact of COVID-19 be on the local economy? What infrastructure projects are critical and which can be pushed back? Should budgets be adjusted?

These are all questions the City of Kawartha Lakes is working on quantifying answers too — but it's hard to know when pandemic variables keep changing.

“It's going to be a huge impact on the local economy,” Mayor Andy Letham said at his regular press conference on April 7.

He added the city is working with finance staff to look at budgets and is juggling which projects are critical and which can be pushed back.

“We're just trying to keep a running total of where we stand from a financial perspective and then, as we get a little farther into this, we'll make decisions accordingly,” he noted.

The city is OK right now, Letham continued. It's working with residents to balance their needs and difficulties with the municipality's needs.

“I think it's going to be a hard go for the next while for our local economy and some of our local businesses,” he said. “I think there's businesses out there that will not survive this. A lot of small businesses are living paycheque to paycheque like a lot of people do.”

Two [major projects](#) that won't be getting the axe are the reconstruction of Kent Street and Colborne Street in Lindsay.

Chief administrative officer Ron Taylor said the city has been closely following the province's COVID-19 regulations. Both reconstruction projects are to provide “critical utilities” to their respective areas and, as such, have to move forward.

Construction on Colborne Street has been pushed back two weeks, at which point the city will re-evaluate the project timeline.

Taylor said Kent and Colborne streets are the only projects the city is continuing, besides smaller critical repair work. Procurement for city projects has also been put on hold so local businesses don't need to worry about missing tenders.

A lot of time has been put into developing policies and procedures to protect workers and their families over the last week, Taylor said. Physical separation measures include limiting one person to a vehicle.

While the city remains focused on emergency operations, critical roadwork is being done. Moving forward, Kawartha Lakes is looking at the process of bringing services

back online.

Letham said the economy both locally and globally is going to take a “long, long time to recover.”

“We’ll get back to some sense of normalcy eventually, but it certainly won’t be what we had two months ago,” Letham said.

***CORRECTION: An earlier version of this story stated the Colborne Street reconstruction project moving forward was in Fenelon Falls, this was incorrect. It is the Colborne Street reconstruction project in Lindsay.***