



## CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release – Wednesday, February 23, 2022*

### **South Portland Ends Face Covering Mandate for All Public Buildings**

*The mask requirement had been in effect since January 24<sup>th</sup>*

SOUTH PORTLAND, ME – The indoor mask mandate in the City of South Portland will expire today (Wednesday, February 23). Six of seven City Councilors indicated their preference for the mandate to expire when the matter was discussed at a workshop last night. As such, on Wednesday afternoon, Mayor Deqa Dhalac issued a mayoral proclamation ending the civil state of emergency in South Portland. By extension, the mask mandate regulation promulgated by the City Manager in late January was automatically repealed.

South Portland enacted the mask mandate almost one month ago, on January 24, after a majority of City Councilors requested that the City Manager issue such a regulation under certain emergency powers available to him following the declaration of a state of civil emergency in the City. This declaration was made due to the rise in COVID transmission driven by the omicron variant and significant hospitalization numbers. The City's Code of Ordinances allows the City Manager to issue certain regulations when the City is in a state of emergency. The emergency was first declared by the Mayor and then continued by the City Council. This process allowed the mask mandate to go into effect much quicker than if the Council used the traditional ordinance amendment process, which would have taken several weeks.

While the mask requirement has been lifted, the City strongly recommends masking indoors regardless of vaccination status.

On a related note, the City Manager has also rescinded the mask mandate for municipal buildings and facilities, effective Thursday, February 24. Masks are strongly encouraged, however, and will be provided to those staff and/or visitors who request one.

For more information, please contact City Manager Scott Morelli at 207-767-7606 or [smorelli@southportland.org](mailto:smorelli@southportland.org).