

Build Back Victoria Virtual Town Hall

At a Virtual Town Hall on June 9, 2020, City Council presented its *Build Back Victoria* outdoor business initiatives for reopening and recovery from COVID-19. The community was invited to ask questions by email, phone and Facebook Live.

Council and City staff answered as many questions as possible during the live event, which can be viewed at www.victoria.ca/townhall.

The City received many questions, both in advance and during the Town Hall. Due to limited time, not every question received was able to be answered. The information below addresses those questions and is grouped by theme.

Questions regarding Recovery Funding Available from the City

- Council has invested \$575,000 in economic stimulus grants:
 - **Strategic Plan Grants** - Council increased the funding for the current intake of this grant program by \$100,000, and has allotted \$250,000 for a second round to encourage the community to bring forward creative project proposals with a specific focus on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Deadline for submissions is July 15. See details [here](#).
 - **My Great Neighbourhood Recovery Grants** - An additional \$100,000 has been added to this grant stream for community-led projects that focus on resiliency and recovery. [Learn more](#).
 - **Everyday Creativity Grants** - This new program increases access for everyone to be creative and enjoy the arts. A total of \$125,000 is available and grants will encourage applicants to provide new creative programs to engage citizens in the arts and encourage broad participation and learning opportunities. Criteria and availability will be determined at an upcoming Council meeting.

Questions about Physical Distancing Measures in Beacon Hill Park

- B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer has been clear that physical distancing is key to controlling the spread of COVID-19. Starting May 16, Beacon Hill Park was pedestrianized through the summer to increase opportunities for physical distancing while enjoying the park and staying active.
- Vehicle access is restricted to emergency and service vehicles only on Arbutus Way, Bridge Way and Chestnut Row.
- Parking lots will remain open at Heywood Road, Circle Drive and Nursery Road, and street parking remains available along Douglas Street and Dallas Road.

- The top of Beacon Hill Park will be closed to vehicles through the summer as part of the City's physical distancing measures.

Questions regarding Camping in Parks

- We know there are people still living outside in the city and around the region. To address their needs and get people indoors is going to take continued leadership and investment from the Province and federal government, as well as cooperation and coordination throughout the region.
- Given the public health advisories, City Bylaw Services is exercising its enforcement discretion to allow people to keep their tents up during daytime hours, until June 25, 2020, when City staff will provide Council an update on sheltering in parks, as well as a report from partners on opportunities for indoor sheltering options.
- City Bylaw Officers are communicating some basic rules to people camping in parks to remind them fires are not permitted, and they must avoid setting up tents in environmentally-sensitive areas, playgrounds, sports fields, footpaths or roads within a park.
- Where there are safety or other issues, bylaws will be enforced and people may be required to dismantle their tents.
- It's important to note that BC Housing is leading the efforts to provide vulnerable populations with accommodations including wraparound services such as daily meals, support with mental health and addictions, and help with finding more permanent housing solutions.
- Outreach workers continue to connect with people who are experiencing homelessness to offer support and referral to supportive housing options.
- If you would like further information, please contact communityrelations@bchousing.org.

Questions regarding Housing for Vulnerable Populations, Mental Health and Public Safety

- BC Housing is leading the efforts to provide vulnerable populations with accommodations including wraparound services such as daily meals, support with mental health and addictions, and help with finding more permanent housing solutions.
- Outreach workers continue to connect with people who are experiencing homelessness to offer support and referral to supportive housing options.
- If you would like further information, please contact communityrelations@bchousing.org.
- Anyone seeing criminal activity is encouraged to report it to VicPD by calling 911 for all life-threatening situations and crimes in progress, or by calling 250-995-7654 for all non-emergency calls for service.

Questions regarding the City's Actions to Support Renters and Housing Affordability

- Council has endorsed the following [Victoria Housing Strategy](#) priorities in 2020 to improve housing security as part of COVID-19 recovery:
 - Advance and support the rapid supply of affordable and supportive housing in neighbourhoods throughout the City, with government partners and non-profit housing providers
 - Bring forward an expanded Rental Property Standards of Maintenance Bylaw for consideration
 - Develop a Rental Property Licensing Bylaw to prevent renovictions and demovictions
 - Explore the creation of a non-profit administered rent bank on a pilot basis
- The City's Inclusionary Housing policy encourages new affordable housing through the provision of affordable rental or affordable homeownership units in large strata developments.
- The policy also seeks cash contributions to the Victoria Housing Reserve Fund from small and moderately sized projects. To preserve and enhance the liveability of neighbourhoods, a portion of cash contributions are also targeted for local amenity reserve funds for community use.

For more information visit www.victoria.ca/housing

Questions about Next Steps in the City of Victoria By-Election

- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has initiated discussions with the City of Victoria and other communities that have pending by-elections or referenda to consider how best to move forward with future voting.
- One of the main items to be resolved is how to conduct in-person voting while the public health restrictions on gatherings of more than 50 people remain in place, as well as other measures that would need to meet the public health officer's and WorkSafeBC guidelines, including physical distancing recommendations.
- There are legislative requirements and public health considerations that have to be addressed in order to conduct a by-election voting in larger jurisdictions, such as in the City of Victoria.
- We look forward to continuing to work with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to determine the most appropriate way forward.