



City Council Adopts Seven Immediate Strategic Priorities

Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2009

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — City Council has identified seven priorities for the coming months representing the issues Council wants to see immediate action on.

The seven priorities focus on homelessness; affordable housing; council decision making; public communication; harm reduction; infrastructure; and downtown late night issues.

“Council has worked as a team to analyze a number of pressing community issues with the goal of identifying real, sustainable solutions,” said Mayor Dean Fortin. “It’s critical that the community understand what Council is focusing on so they know what to expect as we move forward.”

Mayor Fortin added, “We’ve hit the ground running in these first months. Already we’ve introduced a number of programs that will help us advance the priorities we’ve set, including the secondary suite grant incentive program, relaxed zoning for secondary suites, and tax exemptions for affordable housing developments.”

In two weeks, Council will hold a full day planning session to finalize the long-term strategic plan for the three year term of Council. This plan will be shared broadly with the community and will contain short and long term performance measures that will guide City operations for the coming years.

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INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY:

Mayor Fortin is available for comment until noon.

ATTACHED:

Backgrounder outlining strategic priorities in detail

For More Information:

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CITY OF VICTORIA

Backgrounder

Council has adopted seven key priorities for the next three-six months:

1. Homelessness

Council's top priority. Everyone who needs a home and support should have one.

*Continue working with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness and community partners on identifying opportunities and service gaps

*Explore funding opportunities with other levels of government

*Continue to facilitate current projects underway – Humboldt Valley, Ellice Street

2. Affordable Housing

Victoria will be a community of mixed-use, mixed income neighbourhoods with a vacancy rate higher than 4%.

*Launch secondary suite grant incentive program and adapted zoning regulations

*Pursue tax incentives for strategic affordable housing initiatives

*Expedite municipal approvals for affordable/social housing projects

3. Enhance Council Decision Making - Governance

Enhance decision-making process and governance model to achieve meaningful input on community issues.

*Introduce new governance model

4. Enhanced Communications

Enhance communications with the residents and businesses in the City and Region to make information easier to access and understand, and provide more opportunities for citizens to provide input and participate in City initiatives.

*Develop a public engagement strategy - a toolkit for effective public engagement on a variety of issues and initiatives

*Produce newsletter three times per year for all Victoria residents

*Redevelop City's website

*Pursue options for web streaming Council meetings

5. Harm Reduction

Improve the overall health and safety of community. Advance substantial progress – not displace problems.

*Pursue distributed needle exchange model to address immediate health risks

*Consider findings of VIHA-led committees on locations for fixed sites

*Advocate for increased detox and treatment services in the Region

6. Quality Core Service Delivery –Infrastructure

Prioritize opportunities, funding and urgency of projects. Provide quality services now and for future generations

*Determine immediate infrastructure priorities in 20 year capital plan

*Create Department of Sustainability and Finalize Sustainability Framework

*Submit project request to federal and provincial government

7. Downtown Late Night Nuisances

Work with key stakeholders to identify strategies to support a robust and vibrant economy and ensure people are safe downtown

*Strike Downtown Late Night Task Force

*Determine design and technical feasibility for public urinals