



## City of Victoria COVID-19 Update

Date: Thursday, March 26, 2020

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Victoria City Council continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and explore ways to support the community and City staff.

“The City’s hard-working staff in Parks, Recreation and Facilities are performing tasks such as keeping our parks and public washrooms clean for the public to access, producing emergency signage and other priority work,” said Mayor Lisa Helps. “This is a challenging time, and I want to thank all Parks, Recreation and Facilities staff and acknowledge the critical work you are doing to keep the City we love functioning.”

Today Council passed a motion requesting that the Province take measures to provide rent relief and a ban on evictions for small business and non-profits during the provincial state of emergency on an urgent basis. With April 1 coming soon, the City is regularly hearing the stress from small business owners.

In regard to the City’s work to support vulnerable populations, the City is working from the direct advice of health care professionals.

“In these extraordinary times, extraordinary measures will be required to slow the transmission of COVID-19. These efforts will help enable our health care system to prepare for and to respond to the surge of cases expected with this pandemic. Some measures will be for the duration of the pandemic while others will be for staging prior to another measure. The use of our parks to improve physical distancing is one of these measures. Island Health is working with the Mayor, BC Housing and other community partners to identify additional approaches and methods to improve social distancing,” said Dr. Richard Stanwick, Chief Medical Health Officer for Island Health.

In order to maximize efficiency and to move as quickly as possible as Dr. Stanwick urges, the City of Victoria is working with BC Housing to establish two temporary outdoor sites at Topaz Park and Royal Athletic Park – not at Beacon Hill Park at this time.

BC Housing is working hard to create indoor sheltering options. Today Island Health has identified beds for members of the street community who may present as symptomatic.

Through Emergency Management BC, the City of Victoria’s Emergency Operations Centre has requisitioned a block of hotel rooms for use as housing.

The public is invited to tune into the Mayor’s Facebook Live weekday updates, which will be held at 2:30 p.m. starting tomorrow, to learn more about the City’s response to COVID-19 and to visit: [victoria.ca/covid19response](https://victoria.ca/covid19response).

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