



City of Victoria COVID-19 Update

Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2020

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Victoria City Council continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and look at ways to support residents and businesses.

A reminder that if your birthday is in April, May or June, today is the day to apply for the Federal Emergency Response Benefit. Submission dates are staggered to manage the volume of applications. For more information and to apply, visit Canada.ca/coronavirus.

On Thursday, Council will be looking at their budget options. City revenue is down, and legally, municipal governments have to balance their budgets and cannot run a deficit. However, the City of Victoria does have the option of delaying significant capital projects and new initiatives.

“If we can reallocate significant funds from capital projects as staff are recommending, then we can extend utility bill due dates to 90 days and extend the property tax deadline to August 1,” said Mayor Lisa Helps. “In short, I hope we can make the most of our resources to help our residents, without reducing the services they depend on.”

Additionally, staff are recommending that Council ask the province to:

- Increase amounts for Homeowner Grants and create a new category of grant applicable to people who have lost income due to the pandemic
- Reinstate the financial hardship deferment program and extend the program to commercial properties
- Amend legislation to align payment due dates for taxes collected on behalf of other agencies such as the Capital Regional District, Capital Regional Hospital District, BC Transit, BC Assessment, Municipal Finance Authority, and School District #61 with municipal Alternative Tax Scheme Bylaws

“These are programs that are already in existence, or that the Province could fire up again to provide more help to people who need it. Additionally, by aligning these due dates, we could potentially extend the property tax deadline further. Everything counts right now,” added Helps.

The staff report which includes a list of projects for possible deferral, is available on the City’s website at victoria.ca. The community is invited to tune in to watch the live webcast of Council’s budget discussion at the Committee of the Whole meeting on Thursday, April 9 at approximately 9 a.m. The regularly scheduled evening Council meeting will follow at noon.

Please note that the Mayor’s Facebook Live update will take place at **3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8**. Updates will resume at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 9. There will be no updates on Friday, April 10 or Monday, April 13 for Easter.

For information on the City's response to COVID-19, visit victoria.ca/covid19response.

—30—

For More Information:

Bill Eisenhauer

Head of Engagement

Cellular: 250.858.1061

beisenhauer@victoria.ca