



## Council Supports DVBA's Pandemic Recovery Efforts

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Victoria City Council will continue its support of the Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) to enable the organization to focus on supporting local businesses through the pandemic. This year, Council will pay the DVBA its annual levy in July, even though Council has extended the property tax deadline and DVBA membership dues won't be paid to the City until early August.

"City Council is committed to supporting our local business community through the COVID-19 pandemic," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "I'm connecting with the DVBA and other business leaders on a regular basis to find out how Council can best help the local economy. Supporting the DVBA through this challenging time demonstrates that we're all in this together."

Given the unprecedented nature of the pandemic, the DVBA team refocused their efforts. Their immediate priorities shifted to ensuring the 1,500 business members have all relevant information on emerging programs and resources. They are also using online advertising and social media to encourage the public to support local retail and foodservice businesses with online orders, gift card purchases, and take-out and delivery options. For more information, visit: [downtownvictoria.ca](http://downtownvictoria.ca).

In addition, the DVBA Clean Team has stepped up its efforts in helping keep downtown clean, sanitizing and cleaning all transit stops downtown, staying on top of graffiti to ensure the area continues to feel safe, and being extra eyes on the street looking for and reporting any signs of criminal activity.

"On behalf of the DVBA Board, I would like to thank Council for the fiscal assurance of our traditional July levy payment. It will enable us to continue to employ our staff and will greatly help our effectiveness now and our ability to lead and support our small and medium businesses through recovery in the future," said Jeff Bray, Executive Director of the Downtown Victoria Business Association.

"Our Board is looking at scenarios to ensure we have maximum resources available for significant marketing and recovery initiatives to support downtown business during this unprecedented time," added Jeff Bray.

Currently, the DVBA is partnering with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness to help coordinate volunteers to distribute food at the temporary shelter at Topaz Park to help protect vulnerable populations.

In addition to supporting the DVBA, last week City Council made amendments to its 2020 Budget to deliver a financial relief package to help residents and businesses who may be experiencing financial hardship due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. These initiatives include a zero-property tax increase this year for residential and commercial ratepayers, extending the deadline to pay property taxes to August 4 with a reduced penalty for late payment, and extending the deadline to pay utility bills to 90 days.

For more information on the City's ongoing response to COVID-19, watch the Mayor's Facebook Live updates on weekdays at 2:30 p.m. and visit: [victoria.ca/covid19response](https://victoria.ca/covid19response).

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