



City of Victoria COVID-19 Update

Date: Thursday, April 23, 2020

For Immediate Release

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

In today's update, Mayor Lisa Helps acknowledged that tonight at sundown marks the first day of Ramadan.

"For those of the Muslim faith, Ramadan will look different this year due to the pandemic. I know I will very much miss the annual Ramadan iftar, fast-breaking dinner we host here at City Hall with the Muslim community," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "To all those celebrating, Ramadan Mubarak!"

Today the Prime Minister announced a \$1.1 billion medical research strategy to fight COVID-19. It will include money for vaccine and treatment research, clinical trials and an expansion of national testing and modelling.

The provincial government announced today its Emergency Benefit for Workers (BCEBW), a one-time, tax-free \$1,000 payment to help British Columbians whose ability to work has been affected by COVID-19. Starting May 1, those eligible to receive the federal government's Canada Emergency Response Benefit can apply for the BCEBW. For more information, visit gov.bc.ca/workerbenefit.

"On behalf of City Council, I want to thank the federal government for this significant investment in the health of all Canadians," said Mayor Helps. "Also, it's so good to see the collaboration between the Province and the federal government in providing the new Emergency Benefit for Workers as a means to top up the Canada Emergency Response Benefit."

Today, Council allocated up to \$52,500 to the Victoria Police to increase public safety in the area around Topaz Park, and up to \$100,000 for City staff to continue to support vulnerable populations.

Since declaring a climate emergency in March 2019, the City has made progress in its work to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Victoria. The new Oil to Heat Pump Rebate that is part of the Climate Friendly Homes Program, became available as of April 1. Homeowners can receive up to \$6,850 in rebates to switch from fossil fuel heating (oil and natural gas) to an air-source heat pump. This financial incentive is a combination of rebates offered by the City of Victoria, the Capital Regional District and the provincial CleanBC Better Homes program. For more information, visit: betterhomesbc.ca.

"Now is as good a time as any to tackle climate change," said Mayor Helps. "The new Oil to Heat Pump Rebate is a significant investment that benefits homeowners, is good for the environment, and will provide an energy-efficient heating and cooling system for your home year-round."

To meet its climate targets, the City is also expanding the placement of electric vehicle chargers in Victoria and introducing charging fees and requirements for EV-readiness in all new residential and commercial buildings. A comprehensive EV Infrastructure Strategy will be developed later this year to guide the City's investment in public and private EV charging stations.

For information on the City's response to COVID-19, the public is invited to tune into the Mayor's Facebook Live weekday updates at 2:30 p.m. on the City of Victoria Facebook page, and to visit victoria.ca/covid19response.

—30—

For More Information:

Bill Eisenhauer

Head of Engagement

Cellular: 250.858.1061

beisenhauer@victoria.ca