



City of Victoria COVID-19 Update

Date: Friday, May 8, 2020

For Immediate Release

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

The federal government announced today that they will extend both the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) programs beyond June 1. This week, the Prime Minister also announced plans to offer wage top-ups for essential workers. The federal government will provide up to \$3 billion in support to increase the wages of low-income essential workers. Each province or territory will determine which workers will be eligible for support and how much support they will receive.

“I would like to commend the federal government for extending its CEWS and CERB programs and topping up the wages of our essential workers,” said Mayor Helps.

Also this week, Premier Horgan announced the Province’s *Restart BC Plan*, which lays out a series of steps that communities will take together to protect people and ensure that BC can come back from COVID-19 stronger than before.

In keeping with the Province’s phased plan for restarting the economy, the City’s Facilities staff are hard at work evaluating safety measures to plan the gradual reopening of City Hall and other City service centres, to ensure that the public and employees are safe.

“As the Premier stated earlier this week, this is not a return to normal – we are entering a new normal. Starting May 19, we will see small gatherings, more services and retail businesses reopening following WorkSafeBC sector guidelines. We too will be seeking guidance from the Province on the reopening of City facilities, and we will work with our municipal partners to work towards consistency and the sharing of ideas and best practices,” added Mayor Helps.

At next Thursday’s Committee of the Whole meeting, Council will discuss the City’s recovery plans in more detail and how the City can best support Victoria restaurants and businesses to reopen safely with appropriate distancing. Council will also be discussing how to ensure there is enough public space for safe physical distancing.

With more people at home gardening, there has been increased demand for the City’s garden waste drop-off service. A temporary yard waste drop-off service will be offered for the next two weeks. Victoria residents can drop off their yard waste Tuesdays to Fridays from May 12 to 22 from 7 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Royal Athletic Park parking lot. This temporary service is in addition to the City’s Saturday Garden Waste Drop-off service at the Public Works Yard. For more information, visit: victoria.ca.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also renewed the community's interest in food security and growing their own food. The City has launched a pilot program that provides free leaf mulch and compost to four community locations for pick-up by Victoria residents. The pilot has been so successful registration is now full.

Starting next week, the Mayor's Facebook Live COVID-19 updates will take place on Tuesdays and Fridays at 2:30 p.m. on the City of Victoria Facebook page. For more information on the City's response to the pandemic, visit: victoria.ca/covid19response.

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