



## Build Back Victoria: A Path to Re-Opening and Recovery



# BUILD BACK VICTORIA

RE-OPENING + RECOVERY

Date: Friday, June 5, 2020

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – The City has implemented a number of initiatives to support local businesses and the community to reopen and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, including \$575,000 in economic stimulus grants.

The new initiatives will give restaurants and businesses the opportunity to expand their patios, and services on sidewalks, streets and neighbourhood squares and plazas. Parks will also be opened up for approved business use, such as outdoor yoga and fitness classes. Free applications open up Monday, June 8. To apply, visit [victoria.ca/bizresources](https://victoria.ca/bizresources)

Government Street will be transformed into a pedestrian priority zone from Humboldt Street to Yates Street.

“We are unleashing the creativity of our community to build back by opening up space for businesses to expand while meeting social distancing requirements. These sweeping new programs are informed by what we have heard from businesses, artists and community groups for what’s needed for recovery right now,” said Mayor Lisa Helps.

In addition to the temporary flex space for businesses, the City has created 14 mobile vending stalls throughout neighbourhoods to allow food trucks and other mobile businesses to operate. Businesses can also apply for special customer pickup and delivery zones in front of or near their locations.

Those businesses already serving alcohol in their day-to-day operations were given additional freedom by Council to open patios with alcohol service. The Province remains responsible for certain aspects of enforcement in regard to food and liquor inspections.

Council has approved a new Everyday Creativity Grant Program to increase access for everyone to be creative and enjoy the arts. A total of \$125,000 is available and grants would encourage applicants to provide new creative programs to engage citizens in the arts and encourage broad participation and learning opportunities. Criteria and availability will be determined at an upcoming Council meeting.

Another motion was passed to allocate an additional \$100,000 to the current round, as well as a \$250,000 second round of Strategic Plan Grants to unleash the creativity of the community by encouraging them to bring forward their project proposals for how the community can continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Council will review the proposals that have a specific focus on recovery and the deadline for submissions is July 15, 2020. An additional \$100,000 was added to the My Great Neighbourhood COVID-19 grant stream that's focused on community recovery and resiliency.

### **Build Back Victoria Virtual Town Hall**

The community is invited to learn more about what's planned and ask questions at the *Build Back Victoria Virtual Town Hall* on Tuesday, June 9 from 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., which will be webcast live and live streamed on the City's Facebook page.

"We're really proud of the work staff have done to be bold and ambitious to Build Back Victoria. We're excited to share it with the community, so we're hoping people join us and ask questions," said Helps.

There are three ways to participate: 1) ask your question by emailing it in advance to [engage@victoria.ca](mailto:engage@victoria.ca) to have it read aloud, 2) email [engage@victoria.ca](mailto:engage@victoria.ca) to pre-register to participate by phone, or 3) watch the Virtual Town Hall on the City's Facebook page and ask your question live. The deadline to email the City is noon on Monday, June 8. All questions will be limited to one minute in length to enable the maximum number of people to participate. For more information, visit: [www.victoria.ca/townhall](http://www.victoria.ca/townhall).

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#### **For More Information:**

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### **Backgrounder: Build Back Victoria Initiatives**

The City of Victoria is launching several temporary initiatives to support local businesses during their reopening and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by providing public spaces for private use. Spaces on sidewalks, on streets, in parking spaces, and in plazas and parks will be temporarily made available for businesses to expand their footprint to safely conduct commercial activities.

Physical distancing guidelines can result in a loss of operational space for businesses, including reduced dining, seating and total indoor capacity. By opening up areas of the public realm that are typically off-limits to business activity, and providing supplemental capacity outdoors, we can help businesses adjust to this new reality.

Each of the new Build Back Victoria initiatives that businesses can apply for are listed below:

1. **Flex Space** – business can set up in public spaces during business hours. Materials/furnishings are removed and stored outside of business hours. Eligible public spaces include sidewalks, plazas, squares, or on-street parking spaces, depending on site-specific conditions.
2. **Temporary Patios** – are a more robust version of Flex Space. Temporary patios involve structures/materials that stay in place 24/7. Space adjacent to the business can be converted into a temporary patio including sidewalks, plazas, squares, or on-street parking spaces depending on site-specific conditions.

3. **Curbside Loading** – parking spaces adjacent to the business can be converted to a pick-up / delivery zone
4. **Mobile Vending Zones** – City-designated zones where food trucks/ bike vendors activate daily for up to two weeks at a time
5. **Street Closures** – full or partial street closures to provide space for multiple businesses to expand their footprint and provide expanded space for active travel including wider sidewalks and passage for people on bikes
  - a. **Government Street:** City will be launching a partial closure on Government Street, between Humboldt and Yates
  - b. **Elsewhere:** Businesses can apply to request a full or partial closure near a cluster of businesses/commercial hub
6. **Business in Parks** – suitable business activities permitted in parks

For more information and to apply online as of June 8, visit [victoria.ca/bizresources](https://victoria.ca/bizresources)