



## City of Victoria COVID-19 Update

Date: Friday, August 7, 2020

For Immediate Release

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

Yesterday, Council revisited the 2020 budget items that were postponed in April due to decreased City revenue in the midst of COVID-19. Council has agreed to defer approximately \$17 million in capital projects and other initiatives to offset projected revenue shortfalls and additional pandemic-related costs, primarily from parking and the cancellation of convention business.

“Council has managed to eliminate the projected 2020 deficit and leave an additional \$17.6 million in reserves – this will keep our reserves healthy because we don’t know how long this pandemic is going to last,” said Mayor Lisa Helps. “Like everyone, we are making tough budget decisions right now, and I believe we’ve landed on a smart, prudent way forward.”

Three paused initiatives were given the green light to now move ahead in 2020 including a \$3.8 million investment in the long-awaited bike skills and skate park at Topaz Park. Design will begin in 2020 with construction anticipated in 2021.

Council also allocated funding to install a new public washroom downtown at the south end of Douglas Street.

This fall, the City will establish an Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, which will be staffed by an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer and an Accessibility Coordinator to carry out a number of strategic plan priorities.

At a public hearing last night, Council approved the Scott Building, a new rental development to be located on the corner of Douglas Street and Hillside Avenue, which will provide 151 new units to Victoria’s rental housing market.

To date, the City’s *Build Back Victoria* initiative, which allows for expanded patio and flex space for businesses, has issued 72 permits and another 25 are in progress.

Also, this week 12 of 13 Greater Victoria mayors wrote to the federal Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages asking for more support for the tourism industry in Victoria. The City’s visitor economy is hurting due to the pandemic, with conferences, sports tourism, cruise ships, the Clipper and the Coho shut down for the year.

“It was great to work with regional mayors on this initiative and we hope the federal government will extend a lifeline to help our local tourism industry get through the winter and be there next spring for a recovery,” added Mayor Helps.

The Mayor’s Facebook Live COVID-19 updates will resume at 1 p.m. on Friday, September 4. For more information on the City’s response and recovery to the pandemic, visit: [victoria.ca/covid19response](https://victoria.ca/covid19response).

—30—

**For More Information:**

Bill Eisenhauer

Head of Engagement

Cellular: 250.858.1061

[beisenhauer@victoria.ca](mailto:beisenhauer@victoria.ca)