

April 9/20 CAO Remarks

Good Morning Mayor and Council.

I am happy to provide an update on the steps that the City is taking on COVID 19 to protect the health and safety of the public and staff in delivering City services.

Emergency Operations Centre

We are continuing to triage all COVID-19 related City responses through the EOC with daily check ins. This week we formed a community resilience group which includes stakeholders related to our response to the vulnerable community. We are also assessing and reorganizing EOC personnel and structure to respond to new and changing plans and are identifying unit positions that can be demobilized so staff can return to their daily jobs.

Staffing

We continue to reduce the risk to employees and the public by implementing operational changes in alignment with direction from public health officials.

The Health & Safety Team in Human Resources continues their great work with departments to develop and distribute Safe Work Practices related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This week there was further direction and information on:

- SWP – Handling Physical Correspondence

- SWP – Respiratory Protections
- SWP – Physical Distancing (Work Procedure When Physical Distancing is Not Possible)

Caring for our vulnerable population

Over the last number of weeks, the City has been working with Island Health and BC Housing to develop a distributed model of temporary sheltering to be implemented in Victoria and the CRD to meet the current COVID 19 health crisis.

This model prioritizes temporary indoor sheltering across a variety of sites, consistent with the province's direction to provide safe spaces to self-isolate and enable physical distancing.

These sites will also provide services such as washrooms/hygiene, and social and health care supports as required, including harm reduction.

With the focus on indoor spaces, Island Health has advised that Royal Athletic Park is no longer required as part of the coordinated action plan to support the vulnerable population in the CRD.

With the spaces now identified by BC Housing, Island Health is now putting a staffing model in place to support the transition of individuals to indoor shelter.

I want to express my thank and appreciation to staff in bylaw, fire, parks and public works as they collaborate with our service providers to care for our vulnerable populations.

Beaconhill Park and Dallas Road over the Easter Weekend

Provincial Parks are closed. CRD Parks and Victoria Parks are open.

Over the past two weekends staff have observed significant numbers of visitors entering Beacon Hill Park to enjoy the natural environment and increasingly good weather. The residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods are undoubtedly amongst the most active visitors, however, Beacon Hill continues to attract residents from outside the immediate area who travel by vehicle.

The high number of visitors has resulted in new challenges with physical distancing along the park pathways. In an effort to mitigate this issue, staff are planning to implement new access controls for vehicles on weekends, starting this coming Friday April 10.

As such, barriers and signage will be erected on the three primary roads into the park (Arbutus Way at Southgate, Circle Dr at Douglas St, and Heywood Ave), restricting all but service and first responder vehicles.

Park Monitoring

In addition, Recreation staff will visit park locations to assist with visitor awareness of protocols (i.e. distancing, facility closures) and also to connect with residents on their physical activity needs. The latter component will assist the Recreation operation to anticipate potential program opportunities in the future (recovery) period, as well as supports for the interim that may be offered remotely, such as web-based wellness programs.

In addition, we will have fire personnel on Dallas Road to educate and inform the public on social distancing.

These measures will assist with the incoming complaints to the City about perceived violations of facility closures and social distancing, and will reduce some of the demands on the Bylaw team.

This program will launch this weekend and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Communications

We continue to monitor updates from Federal and Provincial governments for further guidance on potential changes to City Services.

We are also on calls almost daily with our counterparts in other local governments as well as the business, tourism, hospitality and transportation partners to share information and determine

actions that we can take to support each other through this period and to position for recovery.

To end on a positive note, I would like to recognize the great work of all of our front line workers in this City which has been celebrated in neighbourhoods at 7pm all across the country.

Their contribution was further celebrated by the raising of a heart flag yesterday morning here at Cityhall. The flag was inspired by a full page the Times Colonist and the recreation of this flag by Paul Servos of The Flag Shop. Paul is creating these flags and has been able to retain staffing to produce them for the community. \$5 from every flag sale goes towards the Victoria Rapid Relief Fund. Thanks to Councillor Thornton-Joe's quick action, we were able to secure and purchase a flag.