

March 26/20 CAO Remarks

Good Morning Mayor and Council.

I am happy to provide an update on COVID 19 to highlight how we are continuing to protect the health and safety of the public and staff in delivering City services.

Emergency Operations Centre

EOC is functioning at the highest level and all activities being triaged through these channels. We convene daily calls and are sharing information and connecting remotely through the TEAMS software. Our EOC receives daily updates from EMBC and HEMBC to inform our work through the sharing of experiences and initiatives of other municipalities.

Staffing

As an organization, we continue to monitor and implement the directions from the Provincial Health Officer .

We have taken immediate and ongoing action to reduce the risk to employees and the public by implementing operational changes and social distancing measures in alignment with direction from public health officials.

In the workplace, we have implemented changes in how we deliver services to be compliant with all public health orders. This includes:

- Providing workers with Personal Protective Equipment
- Increased hand washing facilities
- Limiting staff in vehicles to one person
- increased our cleaning protocols in all City facilities

Departments have now implemented temporary remote work options for employees in positions where this is operationally possible.

City Hall continues to be closed to the public except by appointment only. Public Service Counter staff continue to serve the public over the phone and development services and permits continue have expanded the ability to interact virtually with clients and are now moving to support 100% of digital submissions for development and building permits.

We have also cancelled all city events, advisory committee and task forces at city hall until further notice.

Parks and Public Space

On the weekend in alignment with the direction of the Provincial Health Officer, we closed all sports courts to the public which included tennis courts, skate parks, sports fields, basketball courts and bike parks.

Caring for our vulnerable population

Activities ramped up through Emergency Operations Centre this weekend and in connection with service providers related to the vulnerable populations.

BC Housing and Island Health are working on implementing a health and housing plan for our vulnerable street population which involves securing spaces for shelter and housing with health supports.

To that end, in partnership with BC Housing, Royal Athletic Park was identified as a venue for outdoor sheltering and harm reduction for those hardest to house. Topaz Park and Beacon Hill Park were identified as venues where food and hygiene services would be provided as interim sheltering areas as individuals are assessed and referred to more permanent shelter.

Topaz and BHP coming on stream next week. RAP needing more time to set up the structure and supports.

Mr. Rantucci in our Strategic Real Estate division is working diligently with BC Housing and the School District to secure shelter spaces as quickly as possible as a shipment of 200 beds from BC Housing is arriving next week.

The City has also secured 35 hotel rooms for homeless individuals who do not require support services. Pacifica is working with the City to get those individuals housed today.

Portapotties and hand washing stations (built by the City) will be installed tomorrow in the 900 block of Pandora.

Communications

We continue to monitor morning Federal update and afternoon updates from the Provincial Health Officer for further guidance on potential changes to City Services.

We continue to share and receive information through various channels including the CAO, CFO and HR networks and are communicating regularly with all staff.

The Mayor also does a FB Live at 3:30pm daily.

We also maintain close contact with our business community to come up with ideas on how we can support and maintain the viability of our small businesses downtown during this challenging period. To that end, we continue to position the Business Hub as the repository of information related to Provincial and Federal services for workers and business owners.

We are also engaged with our 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.