

May 21/20 CAO Remarks

Good Morning Mayor and Council.

Emergency Operations Centre

We are still at a Level 1 EOC with the Province's extension of the State of Emergency until May 26.

Phase Two of ReStart

Today is day three of Phase 2 of the Provincial ReStart program and the City is supporting businesses as they work to reopen or expand services.

Through the Business Hub, our Business Ambassador has been collaborating over the past few weeks with the Downtown Victoria Business Association, Think Local Victoria, Community Micro Lending and other business leaders to create a toolkit that includes occupancy signage, a checklist of COVID-related measures, and downloadable files for posters and floor stickers that can be taken to many local printers for easy production and use.

The toolkit will be available on the City's COVID-19 Business Resource page along with BC's Restart Plan for reference, WorkSafeBC guidelines, and other relevant information to help get businesses open.

In addition, staff are working on the Council motions passed last week to expedite the recovery actions related to activating city spaces for business use and occupation.

Encampments at Topaz and Pandora

Finally, I want to talk about the work that has been involved with the decampment of the 360 individuals identified on the April 25 census on Pandora and at Topaz Park.

Although the City is not a direct housing nor a health provider, staff have played a key role in moving this work forward and in the placement of hundreds of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Over the last 73 days there have been hundreds of calls with partners such as BC Housing, Island Health, Service Providers and the Ministries of Municipal Affairs, Health, Mental Health and Addictions and Social Development and Poverty Reduction to put together the pieces of the supported housing model which is now in place in an array of housing and shelter units.

It has been an exhaustive process at times when resources were slow to come together but it has been a great learning experience for all and has presented opportunities for service providers to better integrate to serve our vulnerable populations.

And so, I want to take a moment to thank staff on the frontlines with service providers to connect those in need with the services that they require. My deep appreciation goes to staff in bylaw, fire, police, parks, and Public works.

There were also the folks in the background who provided tireless support on a number of other fronts including, engagement, legal, real estate and facilities.

The connection made through this engagement will provide an even more solid foundation for the city's engagement with BC Housing on future projects.

As these two sites wind down, staff are now turning their minds to the remediation of the spaces which includes parks maintenance and boulevard remediation.

As referenced by Minister Simpson yesterday, the work to provide housing for those experiencing homelessness, is not done. To that end, City staff continue to work hard to gather the names of others who require shelter so that they may find their way onto the social housing registry for future opportunities.