



# City of Revelstoke

P.O. Box 170, Revelstoke, British Columbia V0E 2S0  
revelstoke.ca

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April 21, 2020

## Mayors Address to the Community

Good Morning Everyone,

We are now several weeks into this new world order of social distancing, working from home, home schooling and conducting business electronically. As we move forward with following the orders of the Public Health Officer I am grateful for the Revelstoke residents on their continued efforts to help flatten the curve in BC during this pandemic.

As the weather continues to improve I see individuals and families out enjoying the sunshine, most of whom are following the Provincial Health Officers recommendations for social distancing, which assists our community in keeping healthy and virus free.

As we all try to follow the strict regulations of self-isolation and social distancing we also need to remember that we need to continue to practice kindness. We all have been sacrificing freedoms and movement to protect ourselves and others in our community. We know that this, in itself, is an incredible show of kindness.

We hear of the underlying anxiety, the feelings of aggravation, annoyance and restlessness brought on by this lockdown. I hear of the stories of social shaming and the voices of the people wanting to re-open. It seems that every week we continue to hear 'hold the line' or 'stay the course' and at this point there is no 'clear answer' or 'clear direction' as to when it will be safe for our lives to go back to normal or 'new normal'. Calling out our friends or neighbours is definitely not the right course of action. None of us know the reason

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DEVELOPMENT  
SERVICES

(250) 837-3637  
development@revelstoke.ca

PUBLIC WORKS

(250) 837-2001  
works@revelstoke.ca

FINANCE

(250) 837-2161  
finance@revelstoke.ca

FIRE RESCUE  
SERVICES

(250) 837-2884  
fire@revelstoke.ca

PARKS, RECREATION  
& CULTURE

(250) 837-9351  
prc@revelstoke.ca

CORPORATE  
ADMINISTRATION

(250) 837-2911  
admin@revelstoke.ca

COMMUNITY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

(250) 837-5345  
ced@revelstoke.ca

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that others may be traveling to our community or those sheltering in place. None of us understand the situations in others' lives that cause them to have to leave home at this time, nor can we understand the toll that this pandemic is taking on people's mental health or the fear that we see in the eyes of another as we pass them on the street. Many of us are struggling to change our behavior as we understand the seriousness of this situation so that we can do our best to adhere to the orders of our Health officials.

I would like you to look after yourself and those around you, do what you can to protect yourself and those you love. I encourage you to focus your efforts and actions on your responsibilities and not spend your time calling out the actions of others. We, here in Revelstoke have done a tremendous job in helping to flatten the curve and we should all be proud of what we have accomplished together. There will come a time when we know that this situation is behind us, but in the mean-time please be safe, be healthy and remember to be kind!

City staff are working to ensure that the essential services of the City are on-going and as we work to bring staff back we need to do so in a way that ensures safeguards for our employees as well as our residents. Each department is examining their workplan and switching priorities to adjust to a 'new normal' way of working. Public Works as well as the Parks & Rec Department are working to clean up the community and prepare our parks for eventual re-opening and also ensure air quality is not compromised at a time when people need to enjoy the outdoors.

During last week's Council meeting Council approved changing the property tax due date from July 2 to September 2 and pushed back dates for the property installment plan in an effort to provide some relief to property owners. Council also removed NSF charges from the Fees and Charges Bylaw so residents are not paying an extra fee during these unpredictable times.

As we move forward we are seeing the creativity of our merchants as they re-invigorate their businesses by going to an on-line and appointment only model, keeping in mind the regulations put forward by the Provincial Health Officer. Again, I acknowledge all of the non-essential businesses and services that have closed their doors in order to stop the spread of COVID-19. I realize that this has come at a great sacrifice to all merchants, but please know that your efforts have made our Community a safer and healthier place to live right now. I urge residents to shop locally, our businesses have gone the extra mile for us and we should reciprocate by using them whenever possible because we will all benefit in the long run!

In my regular communication with Interior Health and our physicians; they say a huge thank you to all members of our community for supporting your healthcare workers at Queen Victoria Hospital and Mount Cartier Court. The continued message of 'Hold the line' is certainly the most important message, with encouragement to do so as everyone is feeling stir crazy and the sense of perceived danger in our own community wanes.

Dr. Henry's update yesterday was interesting. Over 50 more cases in the province over the weekend, 5 more deaths. Now is the time to remind everyone that it simply isn't the time to relax yet and this is a message that we all have to repeat a great deal.

The other big news in her update is regarding virus testing: now ANYONE with coronavirus symptoms can be tested. The new testing criteria is just making its way out, you still need to go through the COVID assessment centre and need to have symptoms related to COVID for at least 24 hours. The public health nurses will do the screen so it is not that everyone who wants will be tested but everyone with appropriate symptoms for 24 hours, no longer restricted to health care workers, long term care, correctional facilities, remote communities, or the homeless as it was last week.

We need to get that message out there now, as testing requirements were stringent before and it is new information that the testing criteria have broadened significantly. Now as we move to chronic containment phase and the infrastructure has been readied to handle

it, BC will do much, much more testing of even people with just mild symptoms.

Again, the process for getting tested is the same: call the Revelstoke COVID testing centre number to speak with a nurse and set up a testing encounter.

Remember Revelstoke, social distancing and washing our hands is just as important as it ever was. Please keep safe, keep healthy and please be kind “we are all in this together”.