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City considering options to gradually offer access to some facilities and in-person services

If public health trends continue in the right direction and the Province confirms increased opportunities for people to interact, the City of Campbell River is planning to offer safe and limited access to some in-person services.

“The most important message for people to hear right now is that any relaxation of the rules depends on the public health trends continuing in the right direction,” says Mayor Andy Adams. *“Second, in line with the province’s phased-in approach, any change to permitted access and activities locally will be staged over time, consistent with the Province’s guidelines.”*

“The City has been planning how to provide limited access to some in-person services when it is safe to do so, and we’re now working to incorporate provincial guidelines into those plans,” says city manager Deborah Sargent. *“While we will continue to do as much as possible by phone and email, we look forward to providing limited access for in-person services, in line with provincial public health guidance, when it is safe to do so.”*

“For example, with the announcement that B.C. Transit will again be charging fares for rides beginning in June, we’re working on ways to conduct sales for bus passes. We’re also thinking ahead to the property tax deadline in July, and we know that some people need assistance with the paperwork and payments,” Sargent says. *“In all cases, high standard of personal hygiene and physical distance will continue to guide how we safely interact.”*

In line with the provincial prohibition on large gatherings will not be permitted, summer festivals and other activities that bring together groups of 50 or more people will not take place this year.

Timelines for opening outdoor facilities such as playgrounds, sports courts and other parks amenities will be based on guidelines and industry standards developed by the Province and the B.C. Recreation and Parks Association.

“Between safety requirements and reduced revenue for City services, at this time, we do not foresee summer recreation programs taking place,” Sargent adds.

The City will share updates on how and when in-person services and facility access will be provided as soon as details are confirmed.

“To be able to safely make these changes, and to gradually increase our activities, it’s clear that we must all continue to stay vigilant about handwashing, maintaining physical distance, monitoring our health and isolating ourselves from others if we are sick,” Mayor Adams adds. *“The provincial announcement also emphasized the importance of staying close to home. So, as much as we’re looking forward to being able to be out and about and together more, we must do this extremely carefully. For example, with so many of us looking forward to being able to use the local BC Parks trails again, we’ll need to continue to interact differently, even outdoors.”*

The Mayor acknowledges that although the provincial announcement about developing safety guidelines to permit more businesses to re-open is a welcome relief to many, others, such as those relying on tourism, will continue to face challenges.

“With public health and safety as the top priority, the Province’s plan is necessarily cautious,” the Mayor says. *“We continue to participate in conversations with the Province and tourism operators about how to approach the limited window of opportunity this summer might offer for tourism businesses.”*

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