



## Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **City of Vernon closes recreation facilities, moves public engagement activities online in response to growing COVID-19 concerns**

The City of Vernon is taking vital steps to promote safe community activities, while maintaining essential services and protecting the health of its employees in the midst of growing coronavirus (COVID-19) concerns in British Columbia.

The City has activated its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Level 2, which enables the Corporation to coordinate its emergency response efforts to a rapidly changing situation under a well-established framework. Activating the EOC allows the Corporation to maintain operations and care for impacted individuals in an effective and efficient manner.

In Vernon, the Interior Health Authority (IHA) remains the lead agency in response to the community impact of COVID-19, but by operationalizing the EOC, the City is able to implement its business continuity strategy.

Following the announcement of significant COVID-19 response measures by the provincial and federal governments yesterday (March 16), the EOC Management Team made several important decisions to help contain the spread of infection in our community.

Effective Wednesday, March 18, at 11:59pm, all City recreation facilities will be closed until further notice. Impacted facilities include:

- Vernon Recreation Centre
- Vernon Aquatic Centre
- Dogwood Gym
- Creekside Conference Centre (Auditorium)
- Halina 50+ Activity Centre
- Priest Valley Arena
- Priest Valley Gym
- Vernon Boxing Club
- Kal Tire Place
- Kal Tire Place North
- Lakers Clubhouse

Recreation rentals and bookings will be cancelled or postponed, and refunds or credits will be issued. Recreation Services staff will work with user groups to find alternative dates where possible.

Refunds or credits will be provided for cancelled recreation programs, lessons, camps and activities. Recreation passes will not be refunded, but will be extended.

All in-person, City sponsored public engagement events have been cancelled. The City will utilize its online platform ([www.engagevernon.ca](http://www.engagevernon.ca)) to conduct public engagement opportunities. It is important to the City that we still receive feedback from our citizens on ongoing projects.

Although recreation facilities are closing temporarily, the City is still open and ready to serve our residents, businesses and stakeholders. If you need to talk to a staff member, we encourage you to reach out; however, we do ask that members of the public call or email where possible. A full list of contacts are available on the [City's website](#).

For those who need to visit a City facility in person, we ask that you join our employees in practicing social distancing, keeping a minimum of 2 meters (6ft) between yourself and others. ***Please note, if you are sick, or have been around someone who is sick, or have returned from out-of-country travel within the last 14 days, you are asked not to enter a City facility.***

To help support businesses navigate the impacts of COVID-19, the BC Economic Development Association has developed a support guide for B.C. companies. The guide can be found [here](#).

For the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 situation in Canada, the City continues to encourage everyone to go directly to the health authorities' websites, including the [B.C. Ministry of Health](#) and the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#).

Across the world, critical actions are being taken to slow and contain the spread of COVID-19. We recognize these may feel like uncertain times; however, the City of Vernon would like to assure its citizens that we are here to continue serving you and maintain operations to the greatest extent that circumstances allow.

The health and well-being of our community continues to be our top priority. This includes our mental and emotional well-being. As time and opportunity permits, we encourage you to get outside and be active, connect with loved ones, and find ways to interact safely. The Mayor and Council wish to thank all the healthcare providers, first responders and community support organizations that are delivering exceptional service in the North Okanagan.

These are unprecedented times. The City will continue to provide updates on the City's website as more information becomes available.