



## Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **COVID-19 update: Council approves changes for 2020 Property Taxes, public input and metered parking enforcement**

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in British Columbia remains dynamic and the City of Vernon continues to take its direction from provincial and federal health authorities. As more information becomes available, the City is making changes, as necessary, to adhere to Provincial Health and Ministerial Orders and support our local residents, businesses, and employees.

*“This public health emergency creates a quickly shifting mix of events. It requires us to change some of the ways we interact with one another, how we conduct our affairs and manage our enterprises,” said Mayor Victor Cumming. “This has not been easy, but I can’t thank you enough for continuing to follow Dr. Henry’s directives so we can, together, continue to hold down the curve and move forward successfully.”*

*“New information is being released daily,” he continued. “All of us have had to adapt to new patterns to protect ourselves, each other, our businesses and our healthcare system. Many of us have also had to work through significant financial changes. So yesterday, Council took additional steps to support our residents and businesses as we continue navigating the local impact of this global pandemic and ready ourselves for a robust recovery.”*

### **2020 Property Taxes**

At its April 15 Special Regular meeting, Council made adjustments to the payment deadline and penalty date for 2020 City of Vernon property taxes and introduced a one-time municipal tax grant.

Since that time, the Provincial Government has announced new measures to assist commercial, industrial, recreation/non-profit, and managed forest taxpayers, through the reduction of applicable 2020 school taxes. The goal of the Province was to reduce the overall property tax bill for businesses by 25%, on average across the province, through the school tax reduction.

In response, Council has reviewed the changes it made locally, and voted to amend the 2020 property tax structure to provide more assistance for residential property owners. The changes are as follows:

- 2020 City of Vernon property taxes are due **July 2, 2020**, with a 10% penalty applied to unpaid taxes as of **October 1, 2020**;
- The one-time municipal tax grant **will only be available to residential property owners**, equivalent to 3.2% of the municipal portion of the Property Tax Notice; and
- There will be no change in the proportion of tax revenue between property classes from 2019 to 2020.

The one-time grant will be automatically applied to all residential Property Tax Notices.

Funding for the one-time grant totals \$906,828, with funds coming from the 2019 year end unexpended uncommitted balance.

### **Public input sessions**

In order to protect the public, Council members, and our employees, the City has implemented strict physical distancing measures in all City facilities, which follow the guidelines and Orders of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO).

Until further notice, to support these measures, Council has directed Administration to receive **public input for development variance permit applications in written form only**, until physical distancing requirements have been lifted by the PHO.

At this time, Public Hearings will continue to be conducted in person. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing has advised this process may change. The City recommends members of the public provide their statement in written format prior to the date of the Public Hearing, if possible. Written submissions are read into the Public Hearing minutes and distributed at the Public Hearing for Councillors' review and consideration.

The Community Infrastructure and Development division remains open and available to assist customers with their inquiries and applications. We encourage members of the public to call or email instead of visiting facilities in person, using the City's online [contact directory](#).

### **Metered and two-hour parking**

Bylaw enforcement of **on-street metered and two-hour parking zones** remains suspended until May 11, 2020, with the exception of enforcement related to safety issues.

The temporary change is intended to continue supporting businesses and encourage people to use the Downtown and access businesses that remain open. Council will revisit the decision at its Regular Meeting of May 11.

## Vernon Regional Transit

In addition to the changes made by Council yesterday, Vernon Regional Transit is announcing it will be **extending rear door boarding and not collecting fares until May 31, 2020**. The extension means customers do not need to purchase monthly passes or other fares for the month of May. Details about refund processes for fare products will be available when we announce the return to regular fare collection.