

Council to consider additional steps to support Love Local

(Penticton, BC – May 26, 2020) – At its upcoming meeting scheduled for June 2, Penticton City Council will consider three staff reports providing details and recommendations on the subjects of free parking in the downtown, waived licence fees for sidewalk patios and controlled consumption of alcohol in select public spaces.

Controlled Consumption

The controlled consumption of alcoholic beverages in public places falls within the City's jurisdiction to legislate. Council will consider piloting a program to allow for controlled consumption in designated areas for five weeks starting June 5, with the ability to extend and expand the program if successful or abandon the program if unsuccessful. During the pilot, the City will conduct public engagement to receive feedback on the concept as well as input on suitable locations.

"As Penticton is home to 30 wineries, seven breweries and two distilleries, staff are preparing options for Council to consider allowing locals and guests to enjoy those products in our beautiful outdoors," said Penticton's Director of Developments Services, Blake Laven. "If Council approves the pilot, all rules of the BC Liquor Act, including responsible behaviour, still apply."

Downtown Street Parking

Free metered street parking downtown originally took effect in March as part of an initial series of economic assistance measures at the onset of COVID-19. Since then, street parking demand in the downtown has remained well below normal averages.

"As we adjust to the new norms being established in the era of COVID-19, we need to rethink seasonal patterns of supply and demand that for decades we took for granted and organized our policies and budgets around," said Penticton's Chief Financial Officer, Jim Bauer. "The continuation of the current allowance of free street parking across the entire downtown will give all businesses an equal footing to attract patrons back into their stores when it comes time to reopen."

Street Patios

Business owners currently have the option to extend their commercial activity into the street with a storefront use permit. In an effort to encourage more businesses to take advantage of these areas as

shopping and business downtown resumes, for the summer of 2020, City staff, in conjunction with recommendations from the Economic Recovery Task Force, are proposing that patio permit fees be removed and some design standards be relaxed.

“Byway of this proposed change, City staff will be able to support our community’s retail and food service industry with fast, flexible, no-cost patio permits to help their operations get back up and running,” said Penticton’s Director of Developments Services, Blake Laven.

The recommendations contained in these three reports will build on earlier recommendations presented to Council by the Economic Recovery Task Force who outlined various ways the City could help facilitate an effective economic recovery. Highlights included:

- Continuing to look for ways to promote safety and security citywide.
- Supporting the security of the industrial park through a crime prevention campaign.
- Supporting recovery efforts through a “Love Local Penticton” campaign.

“We greatly appreciate the time invested by the Economic Recovery Task Force to provide insight and actionable steps the City can take to help support our local business community,” said Penticton Mayor, John Vassilaki. “Likewise, Council looks forward to receiving the June 2 reports. I believe it’s important to consider a variety of new options and ‘Love Local’ ideas as we take steps to reverse the impacts COVID-19 has had on our economy and community.”

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Contacts:

Blake Laven
Director of Development Services
City of Penticton
250-490-2528

Philip Cooper
Communication Manager
City of Penticton
250-490-2583