



REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Date: March 25, 2020

From: Trish Morgan, General Manager of Community Services

Subject: COVID-19 Update #1

RECOMMENDATION: *[Corporate Unweighted]*

That the Regional Board receive the March 23, 2020 "COVID-19 Update #1" for information.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses found mostly in animals. In humans, they can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The disease caused by the new coronavirus has been named COVID-19. While many of the characteristics of COVID-19 are still unknown, mild to severe illness has been reported for confirmed cases.

The following is a snapshot of the current situation and some measures that have been put into place by local, provincial, and federal governments.

British Columbia (as of March 24, 2020 according to BC CDC)

- **617 confirmed cases as of 3:00 pm March 24, 2020**
 - 173 recovered
 - 13 deaths
 - 59 hospitalized
 - 23 in intensive care units
 - Cases by region:
 - 194 in Fraser Health
 - 41 in Interior Health
 - 44 in Island Health
 - 8 in Northern Health
 - 330 in Vancouver Coastal Health

Canada (as of March 24, 2020)

- Confirmed cases = 1,959
- Probable cases = 883
- Deaths = 27

Worldwide (as of March 24, 2020 at 5:52 pm from John's Hopkins University)

- Confirmed case = 417,966
- Deaths = 18,615
- Recovered = 107,705

Staff Initials:

Dept. Head:

CAO:

Page 1 of 5

Provincial Health Officer/Ministry of Health

- Provincial Health Emergency declared on March 17, 2020
- Since March 16, 2020 the Provincial Health Officer has issued a number of written and verbal orders, which include the following:
 - Social distancing requirements and no mass gatherings
 - Self-isolation for travelers who are returning to Canada after March 12, 2020
 - Closure of nightclubs, personal service providers (e.g., hair & nail salons, tattoo parlors, etc.),
 - Limiting restaurants to delivery and take-out service options only
- Self-assessment online tool and app developed, and launched to the public
- Testing capacity has increased to 3,000 per day, and the backlog of tests needing examination has been addressed
- Provincial park access restricted

Minister of Public Safety/Emergency Management BC

- Provincial State of Emergency declared on March 18, 2020
- Weekly conference calls with regional district chairs and municipal mayors to answer questions and provide important updates
- Daily conference calls with emergency program coordinators to provide policy and operational updates
- Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre activated, as well as the Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centres (PREOC) throughout the province.
- Development of a [FAQ site](#) for local governments and first nations
- Advising that if any local governments are considering a state of local emergency to contact their PREOC first to discuss what the issues are, what powers they are proposing to use, and what they hope the end result will be

Ministry of Education

- Classes have been suspended for all elementary, junior, and secondary school students.
- Post-secondary learning is suspended.
- School districts are working to:
 - Identify ways to support essential workers, who cannot work from home, with school aged children (e.g., health care workers and first responders)
 - Developing ways in which learning for students can continue after spring break (e.g., online, paper based, etc.)

BC's COVID-19 Response Plan

- \$5 billion in income supports, tax relief, and direct funding for people, businesses and services.
 - \$2.8 billion allocated to ensure people have the services and support they need, which includes \$1.1 billion to boost the income of people affected by COVID-19 by providing a tax-free \$1,000 payment to British Columbians whose ability to work has been affected by the outbreak
 - \$2.2 billion will provide relief to businesses and help them recover after the outbreak

- Support for renters and rental housing providers:
 - Up to \$500/month to help renters and delivered through BC Housing
 - While the Provincial State of Emergency continues there will be a moratorium on evictions (except in extreme circumstances)
 - Rent increase freeze
 - Landlord may restrict the use of common areas in buildings (e.g., the number of people in a shared laundry room at one time, closing game rooms or other social spaces, etc.)
 - Restricting the right of landlords from entering people's homes unless there is a clear threat to people or property
- Waiving the payment of student loans until September

Actions taken by the Peace River Regional District

- Development of a COVID-19 Response Plan that focuses on:
 - Health and safety of the staff and Board members
 - Health and safety of the public
 - Continuity of services through electronic means
 - Identification of essential services
- Closure of all PRRD owned public recreation facilities, which includes:
 - North Peace Leisure Pool
 - Chetwynd and District Rec. Centre
 - Kelly Lake Community Centre
 - Buick Creek Recreation Grounds
 - Cache Creek Community Hall
 - Golata Creek Community Hall
 - Goodlow Community Recreation Grounds
 - Halfway Graham Recreation Grounds
 - Jackfish Community Hall
 - Kelly Lake Community Centre
 - Moberly Lake Community Hall
 - North Peace Fall Fair
 - Osborn Community Hall
- Cancellation of all public meetings and travel
- Amendment to the PRRD Procedure Bylaw to allow for electronic meeting participation for Board and committee meetings
- Staff working from home where possible
- Development of a resource page on www.prrd.bc.ca to provide links to reliable and trusted sources of information
- Development of a communications plan to share important COVID-19 reminders, updates and announcements

Northern Health

- Visitor restrictions at health care facilities
- Establishment of an online clinic and information line

- Northern Health has been directed to move all hospitals in the province to Outbreak Response Phase 2. This means our hospitals will shift to running only urgent and emergency outpatient clinics and imaging/image-guided procedures, and will postpone all non-urgent procedures
- All Northern Health sites are involved in the ongoing planning and preparation for COVID-19. Northern Health has an emergency operation centre (EOC) in place to oversee the response to COVID-19. It includes the following 11 task groups:
 - Phase Scenario and Response
 - Acute Management & Ambulatory Care
 - Long-Term Care and Assisted Living Response & Capacity
 - Emergency Departments & Patient Transfer
 - Primary and Community Care / Urgent & Primary Care Centres
 - Population and Public Health
 - Infection Prevention & Control and Environmental Cleaning
 - Staffing and Workplace Health & Safety
 - Logistics and Supply
 - Communications
 - Business Continuity
- Testing for COVID-19 is currently restricted to those who meet the following criteria:
 - Hospitalized
 - In long-term care
 - Are health care providers
 - Are part of a potential cluster or outbreak

Government of Canada's COVID-19 Response

- Border measures to limit those crossing the Canada/US border to essential reasons only (e.g., transportation of goods)
- Other than essential service workers, anyone coming into Canada MUST quarantine for 14 days effective midnight March 26, 2020
- Providing support for Canadians abroad by creating an Emergency Loan Program for those who cannot return to Canada, and trying to work with airlines and foreign governments to get as many people home as possible
- \$275 million dedicated to research on medical countermeasures against COVID-19

Government of Canada's Economic Response Plan

The following are some of the measures that the Government of Canada has put in place to stabilize the economy and support businesses and individuals. The plan can be viewed at

<https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

- Temporary and long-term income support programs
- 2019 Income tax deadline extended to June 1, 2020 for filing & August 31, 2020 for payment of income taxes owing
- Working with banks for flexible payment options, such as mortgage payment deferrals
- \$2,000 per month for four up to four months for those laid off as a result of COVID-19
- Wage subsidies for small businesses to help prevent lay-offs
- \$10 billion business credit availability program for small and medium size businesses

- \$5 billion in lending capacity for the Agricultural Industry through Farm Credit Canada

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Regional Board receive the March 23, 2020 “COVID-19 Update #1” for discussion.
2. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- ☒ Partnerships
 - ☒ Collaboration with Local and First Nations governments
- ☒ Responsive Service Delivery
 - ☒ Enhance Emergency Planning and Response Capacity
- ☒ Advocacy
 - ☒ Emergency Response Capacity for Local Governments

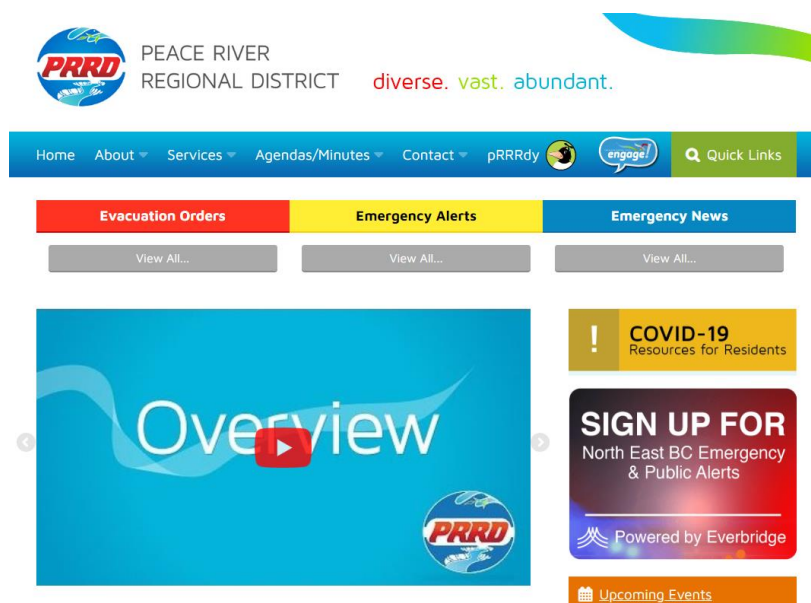
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

No direct financial impact currently identified.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

Staff have developed a communications plan that focuses on supporting the direction of the Provincial Health Officer by sharing information from the Government of BC, BC Centre for Disease Control, etc. The use of North East BC Emergency & Public Alerts platform will also be woven into the communications plan.

A “COVID-19 Resource for Residents” page has been developed on the Peace Regional District website and provides a list of provincial and federal resources.



OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

None.