

City of Victoria considers offering childcare options at City Hall ^[1]

Council's draft strategic plan aims to get more parents out for public discussion

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EXCERPTS

Parents interested in participating in municipal discussions may have more options in the future. The City of Victoria is considering offering childcare spaces at City Hall during public hearings.

The idea is listed in city council's draft strategic plan, a rough outline of what council will aim to accomplish this term.

"There are some people who are limited from coming to public hearings and weighing in on public issues because they simply don't have access to childcare," said Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps. "Childcare would let kids could go and be cared for while their parents are out there in the public forum participating in democracy."

Helps added that the option likely would not be available for every council meeting, but rather for larger public consultation hearings.

Early ideas suggest that parents could sign up in advance and say how many kids would be in attendance, which would let the City know how many caretakers to call in. Helps suggested either the Songhees or Esquimalt rooms in City Hall as possible daycare space.

"There's a lot more work to be done, but it's definitely work exploring," she said.

The idea comes forward following a provincial announcement that would see over 400 childcare spaces created across the capital region, and after two daycares in Greater Victoria were selected for a \$10-a-day childcare pilot project.

The finalized draft strategic plan will ready on Dec. 14, along with the draft budget, and up for public consultation until late January 2019.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

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