

FREE WORKSHOPS ON THE URBAN FOREST

The City of Duncan adopted an Urban Forest Strategy in October 2010, recognizing the many benefits of Duncan's urban trees. In March 2014, the City is offering free presentations by ISA Certified Arborist, Todd Gesshe, to homeowners and developers. These presentations will provide key information on how to be involved in protecting and enhancing the urban forest. There are three opportunities to attend an Urban Forest Workshop:

- Thursday, March 13, from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, St. Andrew's Church Hall (531 Herbert Street)
- Saturday, March 15, from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, Cowichan Green Community (360 Duncan Street)
- Saturday, March 22, from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, location to be determined.

FREE TRANSIT

The City of Duncan has extended the monthly Transit Pass Rebate Program (100% rebate) until the end of 2014.

To obtain a rebate, City residents purchase monthly transit passes through the normal outlets, and then apply for a refund at City Hall, 200 Craig Street. Residents will be asked to fill out a short form, provide proof of residency, and submit the receipt from the purchase of their transit pass.



RESIDENTIAL YARD WASTE PROGRAM

In May, the City will begin a contract with Multi-Materials BC (MMBC) for recycling services. The City will receive an estimated \$28,000 in 2014 and \$45,000 in 2015 from MMBC for picking up your recycling.

Council is considering utilizing this estimated \$38 per household to expand the trial yard waste and glass pick up service to be a new municipal service provided to all single family homes in 2014. This service would join the current suite of curbside collection services (garbage, recycling, and organics) for the same price currently charged at \$136.00 per year.



Under the yard waste and glass program, a contractor will pick up recyclable glass and yard waste once per month from each household. Eligible items are:

- Up to 10 large compostable bags or clean garbage cans;
- Up to 2 bundles of sticks;
- Unlimited loose glass in clean bins.

Please share your thoughts on utilizing the MMBC revenues to expand the program by sending an email to duncan@duncan.ca.

SMOKE ALARM SAFETY TIPS

The City would like to recognize and thank both the Duncan Volunteer Fire Department and Emergency Social Services for the exceptional work done and the compassion shown to those displaced residents from Parkland Place Apartments following the recent fire.

Working smoke alarms are the most important part of fire safety. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Smoke alarms give you and your family an early warning so you can get outside quickly.

- Smoke alarms should be installed inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement
- Smoke alarms should be interconnected so when one sounds they all sound
- Reposition smoke alarms away from the kitchen if they are causing false alarms
- Test your smoke alarm once a month and replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

UNIVERSITY VILLAGE LOCAL AREA PLAN AND TRANS CANADA HIGHWAY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

The University Village Local Area Plan was initiated by the City of Duncan and the Municipality of North Cowichan in June 2013, for the neighbourhoods, commercial and institutional areas surrounding Vancouver Island University. In November 2013, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Cowichan Tribes joined municipal partners to prepare a detailed concept for the Trans Canada Highway (TCH) Corridor from Beverly Street to Boys Road, extending the scope of the plan. A Public Open House will be held on Wednesday, February 26, 2014 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm, at the Alexander Elementary School gymnasium. Two visions for future development of the area and a preliminary concept for the TCH Corridor will be presented for comments. All of the background information is available at www.placespeak.com.

YOUR CITY BUDGET

The draft budget for 2014 projects a tax increase of 2.5% - this equals \$92,110. The increase is largely due to:

- An increase in the City's contribution to the Library
- An increase in the City's contribution to the Cowichan Aquatic Centre
- Projected wage increases
- Addition of an Engineering Technologist to alleviate the backlog of infrastructure projects
- An increase in the transfer to the Police Bridging Capital reserve to lessen the effect of the likely return to City responsibility for policing costs in 2017.

What Does this Mean for the Average Property Owner?

The average single family home that saw a 4.89% assessment decrease will see a 2.54% increase in municipal taxes (\$28.52 if the home is now worth \$251,535).

The average strata home that saw a 3.12% assessment decrease will see a 4.45% increase in municipal taxes (\$27.59 if the home is now worth \$141,559).

The average commercial property that saw a 3.95% assessment increase will see a 2.44% increase in municipal taxes (\$123.46 if the property is now worth \$429,143).

Major projects proposed to begin in 2014 include:

- \$465,000 for Dogwood Avenue from Arbutus to Hemlock which includes: paving, spot repairs to the sewer main, and upgrades to the water main
- \$535,000 for Cedar Avenue from Government to Arbutus which includes: paving, storm main improvements, curb repairs, spot repairs to the sewer main, and upgrades to the water main
- \$300,000 for replacement of the City Hall heating and cooling system and repairs to the flat roof
- \$695,000 for seismic upgrades to the Fire Hall including replacement of the roof
- \$518,000 for commencement of the residential water metering program.



HEDGES & SHRUBS

The City receives many complaints every year regarding hedges and shrubs encroaching onto streets and sidewalks requiring the City to follow up with the property owner to eliminate the encroachment.

If allowed to get out of hand, the hedge may not grow if pruned hard later on. By beginning regular trimming at an early stage, most hedges can be kept compact.

A neat hedge will need to be cut between one to three times during the growing season. The frequency depends on how quickly your chosen hedge grows. Please educate yourself on the different varieties and consider planting a variety that doesn't grow very wide.

Avoid planting new hedges too close to the property line to allow for future growth. By being proactive and trimming your hedges on a regular basis, it is the City's hope that complaints about encroaching hedges, and more importantly the danger and inconvenience for pedestrians will be minimized.



Keep your hedges, trees and shrubs trimmed to allow for safe use of the roads and sidewalks. Please don't wait until the City receives a complaint.

JUNIOR COUNCIL

The format of the City's longstanding Junior Council program is receiving a facelift this year. Several youth from the Safe Youth Cowichan program are interested in participating in the City's Junior Council. Safer Futures Cowichan works with these youth on a regular basis and will be holding an election in early March 2014 to determine the 7 youth who will represent the 2014 Junior Mayor and Council for the City of Duncan.

Prior to the Junior Council meeting in May, staff will provide the Junior Council with an overview of local government including boundaries, services and budgeting. From there, they will have a Committee of the Whole meeting to bring forward their ideas which must fall within the \$3,000 budget allocated by Council to support Junior Council initiatives.

Following the Committee of the Whole meeting, staff will research the Junior Council recommendations and prepare any reports necessary for them to consider at the Junior Council meeting.

The Junior Council meeting will take place on Monday, May 26, 2014 at 3:30 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The public is welcome to attend.

City Council will then consider the Junior Council recommendations at Council's June Committee of the Whole meeting.