

MESSAGE FROM MAYOR STAPLES

Welcome to 2020, a year none of us could have imagined and where we all try to navigate our way through. We sent out a Special Edition May Newsletter to inform citizens on the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic during Phase 1. This included the addition of extra overnight security shifts from April-June, that were cost shared with the Downtown Duncan Business Improvement Area (DDBIA), and the Municipality of North Cowichan. These extra shifts were in addition to the regular 3 night shifts a week that the City previously had in place, and continues to provide.

City Public Works crews continued to work, and completed the Duncan Street revitalization and watermain replacement project. As well, the pedestrian crossing over the train tracks near Charles Hoey Park was upgraded so that citizens can safely cross over them. This upgrade was possible in partnership with the Federal Government through the Federal Gas Tax Fund.

The City led the formation of what has grown to be a regional food security task force to ensure all citizens have access to food, and that the organizations providing services are connected and able to support each other. The Cowichan Green Community is facilitating the task force and is still meeting weekly (on Zoom). In June, 8,265 meals, 4,700 hampers, 15,000lbs of recovered and redistributed food, and \$17,000 grocery and food coupons were handed out within the Cowichan Valley. When I am able to join them on their meetings my heart is filled, as I listen to the banter among them as they share their struggles, triumphs, plans for the future and support for each other through the uncertainties ahead. This was possible because of partnerships with many community groups throughout the region and require no financial contributions from the City.

The City worked on a COVID-19 Neighbourhood Watch program when we learned that Block Watch was not able to operate because of restrictions from Ottawa. This was possible with partnerships with community groups and the RCMP.

In Phase 2 the City developed a City COVID-19 Grant program. One of the applications was from the DDBIA for the creation of Station Street Commons, helping businesses downtown by providing additional outdoor eating space for people; which ended up creating an even more vibrant and inviting downtown core. In addition, we were able to assist businesses throughout Duncan and the region by contributing to the Buy Local Cowichan Campaign, the Economic Development's COVID-19 response. These were all possible because of the partnerships with local non-profits who represent local business.

These are just a few of the responses so far that the City has managed to put in place to support the community through this pandemic. Partnerships come in many forms, some are short lived, some fall apart, others are long and weather the storms. Whatever form they take, we know that we could not have done any of this on our own, nor should we. It has, and will continue to take all of us working together to find solutions, even when it is hard, especially when it is hard because no government, business, organization, family, or person, should be expected to face the challenges these times are bringing us, alone. We all want a healthy, safe, and prosperous community; and on that we seem to agree so let us continue to do the work that will get us there. Small City, BIG Hearts.

Take care of each other, reach out, and as always, I am available by phone 250-466-9412 or email mayor@duncan.ca. I can also be reached on Facebook or Instagram: @MayorMichelleStaples

~ Michelle Staples, Mayor

CITY COVID-19 UPDATE

The Provincial Medical Health Officer's messaging continues to be clear. It is imperative that social distancing measures (6 feet/2 metres apart), frequent hand washing, and wearing a mask if you are sick, caring for someone, or cannot be 6 feet apart, will help to slow the spread of COVID-19.

British Columbia is in Phase 3, however there are still some businesses following Phase 2 protocol. It is likely all measures will be in place for the remainder of 2020.

To align with the Medical Health Officer's recommendations, and support the City's residents and business owners during the COVID-19 response, the City continues to undertake the following:

Extension of the 2020 Tax Penalty Dates. The 2020 tax deadline was July 2nd and those who did pay, we thank you. The first 5% penalty date has been extended and will be applied on October 1st and the second 5% penalty will be applied on November 2nd .

Waived the Penalties for Water Bills. City Council waived penalties on water bills in March, April, and May 2020. On July 20th Council adopted a motion to waive further utility billing penalties until September 2020 and to reverse any utility billing penalties that were added in June.

Parking. Monthly parking pass holders may now use designated stalls at 89 Evans Street (next to the Island Savings building). As well, a temporary 3 hour free customer parking lot has been created at 135 Kenneth Street.

Food Security. Cowichan Green Community is facilitating an ongoing response to COVID-19 by coordinating resources and support for organizations providing food to people in need.

Public Washrooms & Parks Open. The City public washrooms have remained open during the pandemic.

City parks are open, and we remind folks to continue to physical distance from any passersby.

Duncan Farmers' Market. The Duncan Farmers' Market is open on Saturdays with limited capacity and safety protocols in place. Please enter on Kenneth Street. Open 9:00 am-2:00 pm

Public Access Closures. Public Works remains closed to the public. City Hall is open for payments transactions only from Monday-Friday with the following schedule:

- 8:30 am to 10:00 am for seniors or people who are immune compromised; and
- 10:00 am to 4:00 pm for all other customers.

For other inquiries, please contact City Hall at 250-746-6126 or email: duncan@duncan.ca

Public Events at City Owned Facilities. Gatherings of over 50 people are not permitted. If you wish to host an event, please email the City with your request for consideration.

City COVID-19 Grants Awarded:

- Downtown Duncan Business Improvement Area, "Buy Local" campaign, \$10,000;
- Downtown Duncan Business Improvement Area, Station Street Commons Food Court, \$10,000; and
- Cowichan Green Community, Small Neighbourhood Revitalization Projects, \$10,000

Comments, questions, or concerns?

Visit www.duncan.ca | Phone 250-746-6126 | Email duncan@duncan.ca

WHITE ROAD SUPPORTIVE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

BC Housing is creating new, safe and stable homes for residents of the Cowichan Valley. Located at 260 White Road, this new building will offer up to 50 permanent, purpose-built studio apartments to people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. BC Housing is also creating a 50 unit supportive housing development on Drinkwater Road in North Cowichan. The housing will be operated by an experienced, nonprofit housing operator that will staff and manage the building 24/7 and provide building residents with support services, including medical health services, mental health and addictions services, food, laundry, and security. Supportive housing is an opportunity for people to leave the streets and shelter system for safe and stable housing, towards improved quality of life. All residents will sign a program agreement and pay rent. Construction is set to complete in 2021.

For more information please visit:

<https://letstalkhousingbc.ca/cowichan-valley-white-road>

Or email: communityrelations@bchousing.org

MCADAM AND ROTARY PARKS MASTER PLAN

The draft McAdam and Rotary Parks Master Plan, with a vision and action strategy for the parks' natural assets and community amenities, is available at placespeak.com/McAdam. Please take the time to review the documents and concepts and provide your feedback, fill out the survey, or attend one of the upcoming open houses at the parks (following COVID-19 safety protocols). Please contact the Planning Department if you wish to borrow a hard copy of the plan, discuss it with staff, or join the email notification list at: developmentsservices@duncan.ca

- Rotary Park: Wednesday, September 16 from 10:00 am-1:00 pm
- McAdam Park: Tuesday, September 22 from 3:00-6:00 pm

CITY OF DUNCAN 2020 AWARDS

Do you know someone who deserves to be recognized for their contribution to the community? If you would like to nominate someone for the Perpetual Arts Trophy, the Perpetual Trophy for Excellence & Sportsmanship, or the Scroll of Honour, the nomination application forms are available on the City's website (www.duncan.ca). Deadline for submissions is September 30th.

If a recipient is selected this year for any of these awards, a small presentation ceremony may take place at City Hall in December.

WATER METER PROGRAM

In January 2020, the City converted most customers inside the City onto a new tri-annual billing frequency and metered rate. The City is planning on converting the remaining customers to the new system as follows:

Accounts starting:	System Area:	Expected Date:
200 & 300	North Cowichan	January 1, 2021
620-630	North Cowichan	January 1, 2022
690	Cowichan Tribes	January 1, 2022
650 & 850	Cowichan Valley Regional District	January 1, 2022

The new metered rate consists of a fixed charged based on the size of your meter and a consumption charge for each cubic metre (1,000 litres) consumed – therefore the less water you use the less you pay. The three tri-annual billing periods are January to April, May to August, and September to December. For more information please email: utilities@duncan.ca

COUNCIL MEETINGS CONTINUE AS “VIRTUAL”

Duncan City Council meetings continue to be held online to comply with the Provincial Health Officer's social distancing recommendations. Members of the public can view the meetings through the live web stream link:

<https://duncan.civicweb.net/Portal/Video.aspx> Alternately, you may view at YouTube.com by searching “City of Duncan”.

Questions regarding agenda items will be answered in the order they are received during question period. Please send questions to the Director of Corporate Services paige@duncan.ca. Please include both your name and address for identification purposes.

NEW AUTOMATIC PAYMENT PLAN

The City is currently phasing in an Automatic Payment Plan for utility bills. This optional payment plan withdrawals the balance of your bill from your bank account on the due date. Once you are enrolled in the program there is nothing else you need to do. The City will continue to email or mail you a copy of your bill for your records.

Currently customers inside the City (account numbers starting with 100, 610 or 810) are eligible to enroll. The City expects to phase in the remaining customers in 2021. For questions please email: utilities@duncan.ca

SHORTER BILLING PERIOD

In an effort to facilitate the transition to metered water rates, all customers with accounts starting with 200 or 300 (N. Cowichan) have a shortened billing period ending on December 31, 2020. Rates will be prorated to reflect the shorter billing period.

CAIRNSMORE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The draft Cairnsmore Neighbourhood Plan, envisioning the short- to long-term look and feel of the neighbourhood surrounding the commercial area at Cairnsmore Street and Government Street, is available to view at placespeak.com/Cairnsmore. Public surveys for feedback on the plan were accepted from June to August 2020. Staff are refining the plan in response to the community input that was received and will present the final draft to Council this fall. Please contact developmentsservices@duncan.ca if you have questions or comments about the plan or would like to join the email list for notifications.

85 STATION STREET & WHISTLER STREET PLACEMAKING PROJECTS

In February 2020, the City began a collaborative public design process for the empty lot at 85 Station Street and the existing Station Street Park, as well as the public and private outdoor spaces along Whistler Street (one block east of the Trans Canada Highway). Due to COVID-19, the second phase of the public workshops were canceled, but the concept options were available for comment online from May to July. Based on the input received, staff and the consultants have refined the concepts, which will be presented to Council for consideration on September 8th.



FIRE PREVENTION WEEK OCTOBER 4-10

“Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!”

Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires. It is important to be aware of the potential risks; practice and teach safety behaviours when cooking.

- Stay focused on the food
- Time it
- Keep cooking areas clear
- Put a lid on it
- Use oven mitts