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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Duncan and North Cowichan Partner to Tackle Crime and Disorder on Highway Corridor**

DUNCAN – Duncan and North Cowichan have partnered on an initiative to address crime and public disorder along the Trans-Canada Highway corridor between Beverly Street and Boys Road. Both local governments have now endorsed the Safer Community Plan, which will establish a Corridor Safety Office and coordinate municipal bylaw enforcement and RCMP resources.

The plan was developed in consultation with local business owners, Cowichan Tribes, Cowichan Valley School District, health and social service providers, RCMP and many others. Staff from both local governments have taken immediate action by seeking a location for the Corridor Safety Office, and initiating planning for increased daytime security patrols, bylaw enforcement resources, and cost-sharing. An implementation plan will be back before both Councils for approval in August.

“This is just the beginning,” says Duncan’s Mayor Staples, “we will be working on further steps for the Highway Corridor area to support businesses and residents. Duncan and North Cowichan will continue to work together to advocate for additional resources for the existing community health and social service organizations, as well as more long-term housing and treatment facilities that are needed for people dealing with homelessness and those also dealing with addiction and mental health issues.”

“The Corridor Safety Office, staffed with municipal bylaw resources, will greatly support the local businesses along this stretch that have been dealing with these challenges for far too long,” says Mayor Al Siebring. “Another recommended action in the plan is crime reduction, and I am pleased to confirm that North Cowichan is close to wrapping up the hiring process for a new RCMP Crime Analyst position, which will focus on gathering data to reduce crime.”

The Safer Community Plan was prepared in collaboration with Randy Churchill, an enforcement and security professional who is a former RCMP officer and former Manager of Bylaws with the City of Nanaimo.

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