

Chief Administrative Officer Report

Date: March 31, 2020
To: Mayor and Council
From: Peter de Verteuil, CAO
Re: Chief Administrative Officer Report



RMS 0640-30

Corona Virus (CODIV-19) Update

- **Regional Emergency Operations Centre** - As the number of cases in BC have continued to increase, including 67 cases on Vancouver Island at the time of this writing, City staff continued to collaborate with the CVRD and area Municipalities for coordinated planning and response. City staff collaborate daily with the CVRD Regional Emergency Operations Centre in this regard. The REOC communicates regularly with Island Health and Emergency Management BC regarding the appropriate time for increased precautions.
- **Public Access Closures** - City Hall and Public Works were closed to the public at the end of day March 17th. People are advised that they can conduct their business with the City online or over the phone. In the rare-event that business must be done face-to-face (e.g. limited building inspection), members of the public are required to make an appointment with the relevant staff person.

All recreation facilities in the valley closed their doors on March 16th or 17th.

Similar to other jurisdictions, City playgrounds were closed March 21st with signage, and subsequently with caution tape.

- **Public Washrooms Remain Open** - Some municipalities in the province have closed public washrooms, while others have kept them open. The City has kept the public washrooms open, with additional cleaning by the janitors each day. McAdam Park, Centennial Park, and Canada Avenue washrooms are each being cleaned 4 times per day.
- **All Regular Public Meetings Cancelled** - All regularly scheduled Council meetings, committee meetings (e.g. Advisory Design Panel), and open houses have been cancelled.

Special meetings of Council will be scheduled to take place electronically, as needed. The *Community Charter*, and Council's Procedure Bylaw, permits special council meetings by electronic means as long as notice is provided and participants are provided means to hear, or watch and hear, each other. The province has given special ministerial dispensation to allow local governments to host meetings without public participation. In the interest of transparency, open meetings are streamed live on YouTube and questions on agenda items can be submitted in advance by email to the Director of Corporate Services.

- **Cancel Public Events at City Owned Facilities** - As public gatherings over 50 people are not recommended, staff worked with the DDBIA to cancel all events planned for City Square, except the Farmers' Market (see below). Facility Use Agreements for events in City Parks, and Street Closure Permits, have been cancelled to then end of April, and May events will be considered for cancellation early in April. Fees will be reimbursed.

- **Farmers' Market** - After initially considering closure of the Farmers' Market, in consultation with the Cowichan Medical Health Officer, other Island Health officers, and others, staff allowed the Farmers Market to continue in an extremely limited fashion (no more than 20 food only vendors). The City has received negative feedback about this, but staff continue to maintain and message that with appropriate measures in place, Farmers' Markets are an essential service just like grocery stores.

Public Works and Engineering

- **Complete Ongoing Public Works Projects** - As the COVID-19 issues develop, we will continually evaluate our staff capacity to complete ongoing public works projects. The priority focus at this point is completing the Duncan Street installation of the new water main, and complete the street works if possible. Staff are also planning to conduct the annual water main flushing in the coming weeks. Maintenance of the water and sewer systems are the highest priorities.
- **Pine Avenue Infrastructure Upgrades** – No change - *The construction for this project is substantially complete, with only line painting and landscaping remaining, which are weather dependent and will be completed in the early spring.*
- **Government & Kenneth Intersection Improvements** – No change - *This involves the replacement of a water main, the repositioning of the crosswalk in a safer location, realignment of the travel lanes, and improvement to the public space. A rain garden will be incorporated into the landscaping design. The Totem committee has been consulted regarding the repositioning of the totems within the site. The electrical vehicle charging stations have been removed from this design and will instead be added to the Duncan Street project, increasing the number of charging stations to be included in that project to four. The neighbouring business owners are being engaged, shown the plans, and advised of the likely timelines. This project will begin in late July and is projected to be completed by mid-October.*
- **Cairnsmore Roundabout** – No change - *The engineering design is underway, and surveying is taking place in the area. Ground penetrating radar is being used to ensure accuracy in the location of the existing utilities. Businesses and residents in the immediate area have been notified of the project, have the contact information for staff, and will be kept informed as the design proceeds.*
- **Duncan Street Sidewalk Improvements** – On schedule for completion by June 1. The installation of the new water main is complete. Water service connections and the remainder of the underground works should be completed by mid-April. The surface works, including sidewalks, raingarden, and EV charging stations will follow.
- **Laneway between Third and Fourth Street** – No change - *Design is underway for the installation of a drainage system and paving for the lane. This is projected to begin in May and should last about four weeks.*
- **Canada / Evans Sewer Main Design** – No change - *Staff are reviewing the consultant report to identify the critical sections of sewer main that can be lined. This lining is planned for the early fall.*
- **Downstairs City Hall Office Space** – The downstairs committee room is currently being used as an office to increase the effectiveness of physical distancing at City Hall. The renovations to the remainder of the basement have not yet begun.

Planning and Development

- **Council Consideration of Development and Development Variance Permits**
 - **262 EJ Hughes** – No change - *The applicant continues to have challenges securing the required parking to replace the 25 stalls on E.J. Hughes Place. The development will not be forwarded to Council until the details of the road purchase agreement, including the agreement for offsite parking, are completed by the developer. On November 20th, the Developer held a public information session, attended by approximately 50 people at Sherwood House.*
 - **1027 College Street** – an amendment application has been submitted, and will likely be presented to Council on May 4th.
 - **300 Brae Road** – a revised variance request for signage will be submitted will likely be presented to Council on May 4th.
 - **321 St. Julien Street** – a Development Permit with Variances application is anticipated, for a fenced playground enclosure in the rear parking area, and security fencing around the property.
- **McAdam and Rotary Park Plan** – The draft plan is expected to be presented to Council early in May 2020. Staff and the consultant are preparing the materials to gather public feedback online, through the PlaceSpeak page, rather than holding in-person events.
- **Cairnsmore Neighbourhood Plan** –The draft plan is expected to be presented to Council in April 2020. Staff and the consultant are preparing the materials to gather public feedback online, through the PlaceSpeak page, rather than holding in-person events.
- **Placemaking Project – Whistler Street & 85 Station Street** – The first of two sets of workshops were held on February 29th and March 1st. The next workshops were supposed to take place on April 25th and April 26th but have been canceled and registrants notified. Staff and the consultant will be preparing the materials to gather public feedback on the preliminary concepts online, through the PlaceSpeak page, rather than holding in-person events. The final designs will be presented to Council at their June 15th meeting.

Administration and Finance

- **Bylaw Enforcement Update** – The City has recruited additional Streets and Parks Patrollers to provide daytime and nighttime patrols throughout the City while people are asked to self-isolate at home. Nighttime patrols have been established in partnership with North Cowichan along the highway corridor and the City is exploring partnering with the DDBIA on nighttime patrols focusing on the downtown area, to provide security support for businesses who may have temporarily closed their businesses or curtailed their hours.
- **Safer Community Plan implementation** – No change
 - *Staff continue to work closely with North Cowichan staff on the implementation of the Safer Community Plan for the Trans-Canada Highway corridor.*
 - *The renovations to the Corridor Safety Office at 490 Trans-Canada Highway are complete. Cowichan Tribes Council has approved partnering on the Safer Community Plan, and staff are finalizing those details. Staff training is continuing. The Safer Working Group continues to meet and to discuss the crime and disorder issues on the corridor.*
- **Housing and Shelter Initiatives** – No change - *Staff continue to work closely with North Cowichan and BC Housing staff on criteria for a temporary shelter site, and a long-term supportive housing site. There will be no perfect properties available, which lends to the challenge in siting these initiatives. These projects will be vital to reducing the issues we are experiencing in the corridor and throughout the Cowichan Valley.*

- **2019 Audit** –The auditors were able to complete their fieldwork by eliminating the onsite portion of the audit and working remotely. Finance staff worked closely with the auditors all last week to assist with their efforts by scanning documents and responding to their questions. We have scheduled MNP to present the audited Financial Statements to Council at the May 4th regular Council meeting.
- **2020 Budget** – The Five Year Financial Plan has been prepared with a 3.16% increase in taxes collected, and will be presented to Council for 3 readings at the April 6th regular Council meeting. The Tax Rate Bylaw is expected to be presented at the April 20th regular Council meeting.
- **Public Engagement Policy** – No Change - *A draft public engagement policy has been prepared and presented to the Committee of the Whole for review. A final version of the policy will be presented at a future Council meeting for adoption.*