

Municipality of North Cowichan

Committee of the Whole

AGENDA

Wednesday, March 18, 2020, 10:00 a.m.
Municipal Hall - Council Chambers

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Recommendation:

That the Committee adopt the agenda, as circulated [or as amended].

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3 - 19

Recommendation:

That the Committee adopt the following minutes:

1. Committee of the Whole meeting held February 29, 2020 as amended;
2. Committee of the Whole meeting held March 4, 2020; and
3. Committee of the Whole meeting held March 12, 2020 as presented.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

Opportunity for brief verbal input from registered speakers regarding subsequent agenda items.

5. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Cowichan Housing Society

Purpose: To hear from John Horn, Executive Director of the Cowichan Housing Society regarding how the Society can assist Council in achieving their social housing objectives within the Strategic Plan.

6. BUSINESS

6.1 Social and Housing Planner Position Workshop

20 - 24

Purpose: To facilitate a discussion, as requested by Council on March 4, 2020, to explore the social and housing priorities the proposed position could undertake prior to Council's consideration "*to include a full-time Social and Housing Planner in the 2020 Operating Budget*" at the March 18, 2020 regular meeting of Council.

6.2 2020 Property Tax Rates

25 - 28

Purpose: To provide direction for setting the 2020 Property Tax Rates.

Recommendation:

That Council be recommended to direct staff to prepare the Property Tax Rates Bylaw including a net 4.4% increase for Residential, Utility, Major Industry and Business, and a net 1.7% increase for Light Industry.

6.3 RCMP Facility Loan Authorization Bylaw Elector Approval Process

29 - 37

Purpose: To provide an overview on the Alternative Approval Process (AAP) to be undertaken with the intention of seeking elector approval to allow for the adoption of a loan authorization bylaw to finance the construction of a new North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment.

7. NEW BUSINESS

8. QUESTION PERIOD

Public opportunity to ask brief questions regarding the business of this meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Municipality of North Cowichan Committee of the Whole MINUTES

**February 29, 2020, 9:00 a.m.
Municipal Hall - Maple Bay Meeting Room**

Members Present Councillor Kate Marsh, Chair
Mayor Al Siebring
Councillor Rob Douglas
Councillor Christopher Justice
Councillor Tek Manhas
Councillor Rosalie Sawrie
Councillor Debra Toporowski

Staff Present Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, Councillor Marsh called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:
That the agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

3. CLOSED SESSION

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:
That the meeting be closed to the public at 9:03 a.m. in order that the item, the subject of which falls under section 90(1)(c) of the *Community Charter* which pertains to labour relations or other employee relations be discussed.

CARRIED

3.1 90(1)(c) Labour Relations - Facilitated Council Workshop

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Certified by Corporate Officer

Signed by Mayor

Municipality of North Cowichan Committee of the Whole MINUTES

**March 4, 2020, 9:00 a.m.
Municipal Hall - Council Chambers**

Members Present	Councillor Christopher Justice, Chair Mayor Al Siebring Councillor Tek Manhas Councillor Rosalie Sawrie Councillor Debra Toporowski
Members Absent	Councillor Rob Douglas Councillor Kate Marsh
Staff Present	Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Mark Frame, General Manager, Financial and Protective Services Ernie Mansueti, General Manager, Community Services Rob Conway, Director of Planning and Building Clay Reitsma, Senior Manager, Engineering Jason Birch, Chief Information Officer Shaun Mason, Municipal Forester Michelle Martineau, Corporate Officer Nelda Richardson, Deputy Corporate Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, Councillor Justice called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee of the Whole agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee adopt the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held February 19, 2020.

CARRIED

4. PUBLIC INPUT

The Committee received no public input from registered speakers regarding items on this agenda.

5. BUSINESS

5.1 Chemainus Boardwalk

Lanarc Consultants presented the Chemainus Waterfront Walkway project and provided an overview of the project context and pre-design, as attached to the March 4, 2020 Committee of the Whole agenda, and responded to questions from the Committee. Highlights included background information for the Chemainus Waterfront Walkway; a pre-design scope overview and site context; an overview of the elevated walkway concept, including accessibility; design considerations; detailed studies and recommendations; provincial guidelines; significant grades to consider; the approval process, including previous and future engagement to be undertaken; and project funding and budget estimates for each of the four construction phases.

5.2 Community Wildfire Protection Plan Update

Diamond Head Consulting Ltd. provided an update on the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), as attached to the March 4, 2020 Committee of the Whole agenda, and responded to questions from the Committee. Highlights included project funding; wildfire hazards, threats, and historical data; mitigation and risk assessments; urban growth; climate change; fuel management; provincial trends; public education; volunteer firefighter training; upcoming chipper days (funded through the Community Resiliency Investment grant); and future land use considerations and planning opportunities, such as how to reduce wildfire risks on privately owned land.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee receive the CWPP overview presentation from Diamond Head Consulting for information.

CARRIED

5.3 Utility Rates Review

Staff presented an overview of the water, sanitary sewer, stormwater and road utilities infrastructure upgrades and replacements, as attached to the March 4, 2020 Committee of the Whole agenda, and responded to questions from the Committee. Highlights included funding levels and sources, expenditures, and an overview of the necessary infrastructure upgrades to the Smiley Road, Chemainus Road, and Arthur Street/Coronation Street water mains; Beaumont Avenue cast iron pipe; Beverly Street to Drinkwater Road trunk main; Chemainus Road sewer main; Crofton sewer projects and pipe replacements; South End sewer projects, including the JUB outfall relocation; and the Maple Bay Marina Sewer Treatment Plant.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council be recommended to increase:

- Chemainus water metered minimum and parcel tax by 5%;
- Crofton water metered minimum and parcel tax by 5%;
- South End water metered minimum and parcel tax by 3%; and
- Metered water rates by 3%.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council be recommended to increase:

- Chemainus sewer parcel tax and user fees by 3%;
- Crofton sewer parcel tax and user fees by 3%;
- South End sewer parcel tax and user fees by 3%; and
- Maple Bay Sewer Treatment Plant user fee by 3%.

CARRIED

The Committee recessed the meeting at 10:41 a.m. and reconvened at 10:49 a.m.

5.4 Establishment of a Notice of Motion Procedure

Staff provided an overview of options for Council to consider when implementing a formal process for submitting a "Notice of Motion" as attached to the March 4, 2020 Committee of the Whole agenda, and responded to questions from the Committee. Highlights included establishing conditions for submitting notices, when and if they should be referred to staff for further research; which meeting type they should be introduced at; restrictions to the length of motion backgrounds; the use of preambles; deadlines; notice periods; exceptions, such as whether to allow the member submitting the notice of motion to be permitted to provide any clarifying statements or questions to be asked when notice was given; and the development of a form template.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council be recommended to direct staff to draft a Notice of Motion policy which includes the following provisions:

1. The content for all notice of motions shall include a subject heading/topic, an introduction with a brief outline of 500 words or less, and the notice of motion recommendation;
2. Deadline for submitting a notice of motion shall be one week prior to the meeting;
3. Notices of motion shall be introduced at Council meetings;
4. Members shall not be allowed to provide any introductory remarks when giving notice of their motion;
5. Members shall not be permitted to ask clarifying questions when the notice of motion is given;
6. Notices of motion shall be referred to staff where there are policy implications, statutory requirements, a financial or budgetary impact, staff resource requirements, or where Council would like to consider alternative options at the same time;
7. Notices of motion may be withdrawn at any time prior to the meeting date where it will be considered;
8. Notices of motion may be amended for any reason; and
9. Where the maker of the notice of motion is absent, the motion shall be automatically be postponed to the next regular meeting.

CARRIED

6. NEW BUSINESS

None.

7. QUESTION PERIOD

There were no members of the public present.

8. CLOSED SESSION

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee of the Whole suspend the rules to allow a late item to be added to the agenda under the closed session as item 8.3 which pertains to employee matters.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee close the February 19, 2020 Committee meeting at 12:00 p.m. to the public on the basis of the following sections of the *Community Charter*:

- 90(1)(c) – labour relations or other employee relations;
- 90(1)(m) - a matter that, under another enactment, is such that the public may be excluded from the meeting; and
- 90(2)(b) - the consideration of information received and held in confidence relating to negotiations between the municipality and a provincial government or the federal government or both, or between a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party.

CARRIED

8.1 Closed Committee of the Whole Minutes from February 19, 2020

8.2 Sections 90(1)(m) and (2)(b) Confidential Information under FOIPPA s.16 - Inter-Municipal Agreement (matter brought forward from February 19, 2020 meeting)

8.3 Section 90(1)(c) Labour Relations – Employee Matters

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:16 p.m.

Certified by Corporate Officer

Signed by Mayor

Municipality of North Cowichan Committee of the Whole MINUTES

**March 12, 2020, 4:00 p.m.
Municipal Hall - Maple Bay Meeting Room**

Members Present Councillor Christopher Justice, Chair
Mayor Al Siebring
Councillor Rob Douglas
Councillor Tek Manhas
Councillor Rosalie Sawrie
Councillor Debra Toporowski

Members Absent Councillor Kate Marsh

Staff Present Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
Mark Frame, General Manager, Financial and Protective Services
Rob Conway, Director of Planning and Building
Michelle Martineau, Corporate Officer
Chris Hutton, Community Planning Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, Councillor Justice called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A late item, closed matter related to labour was added to the agenda as New Business after the Question Period.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the agenda be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

Councillor Sawrie arrived at 4:01 p.m.

3. PUBLIC INPUT

Council received brief public input from registered speakers regarding items on this agenda.

4. BUSINESS

4.1 Official Community Plan Project

Chris Hutton provided a brief overview and introduced the consultants from MODUS, Suzy Lunn, the Project Manager, and Vince Verlaan, the Engagement Lead. Mr. Verlaan and Ms. Lunn provided an overview of the project scope, led Committee members

through an activity to learn about Council's hopes and fears, and discussed their engagement planning. Highlights included: the project schedule; gap analysis; growth rates; urban containment boundary; engagement plan; and completed an exercise on what Council hoped to achieve during the process and what they felt should not happen (fears). A copy of the presentation has been attached to these minutes.

Councillor Toporowski left the meeting at 4:22 p.m. and returned at 4:26 p.m.

Mayor Siebring left the meeting at 4:27 p.m. and returned at 4:35 p.m. Left at 5:10 p.m. and returned at 5:17 p.m. Left at 5:56 p.m. and returned at 5:57 p.m.

5. QUESTION PERIOD

Council received questions from the public regarding business considered at this meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council close the meeting at 6:07 p.m. to the public on the basis of section 90(1)(c) – labour relations or other employee relations of the *Community Charter*.

CARRIED

6.1 Section 90(1)(c) Labour Relations

7. ADJOURNMENT

Council adjourned the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Certified by Corporate Officer

Signed by Mayor

NORTH COWICHAN OCP ENGAGEMENT PLANNING



Vince Verlaan, Principal
Suzy Lunn, Senior Planner
MODUS Planning Design & Engagement

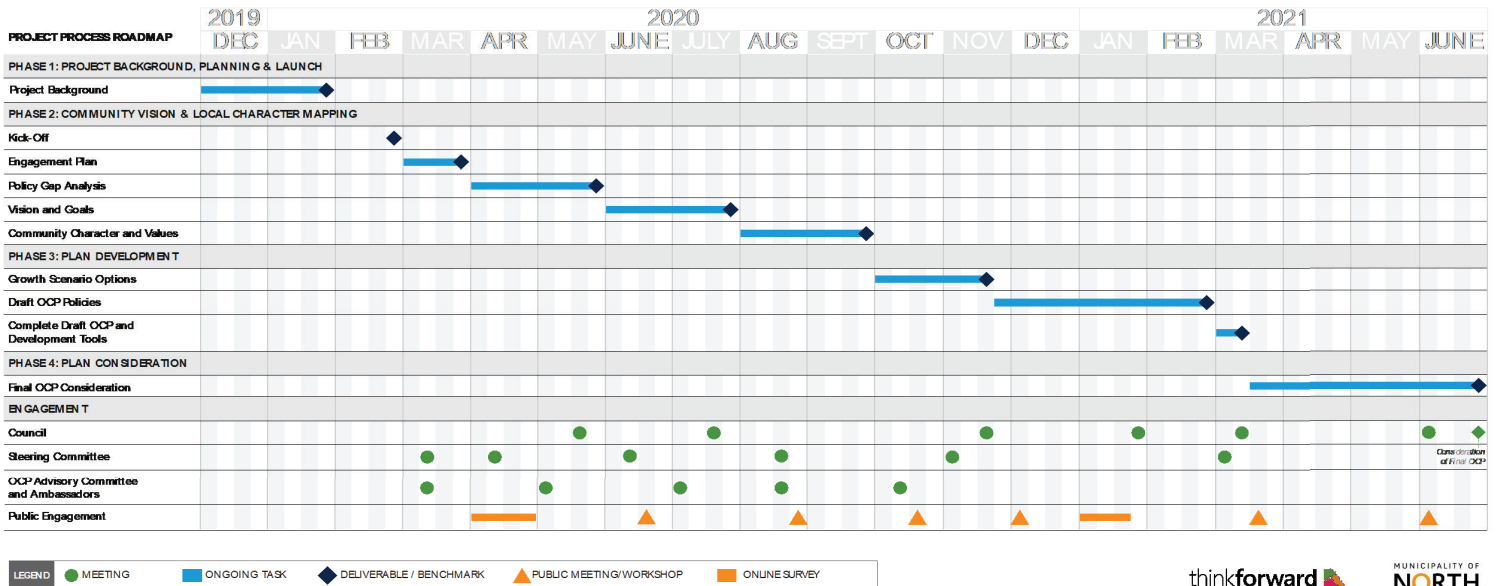


MEETING FORMAT

1. Introductions
 - The MODUS Team and Subconsultants/ Subject Matter Experts
2. Project Schedule
3. Hopes and Fear Activity
4. Engagement Planning

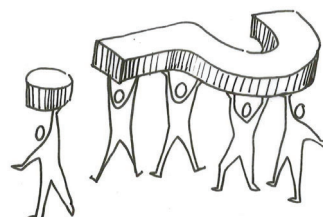


PROJECT SCHEDULE



HOPES AND FEARS ACTIVITY

- 1) Write down three hopes for the OCP project on three stickies
- 2) Write down three fears for the OCP project on three stickies



ENGAGEMENT PLANNING ‘THE WEAVE’

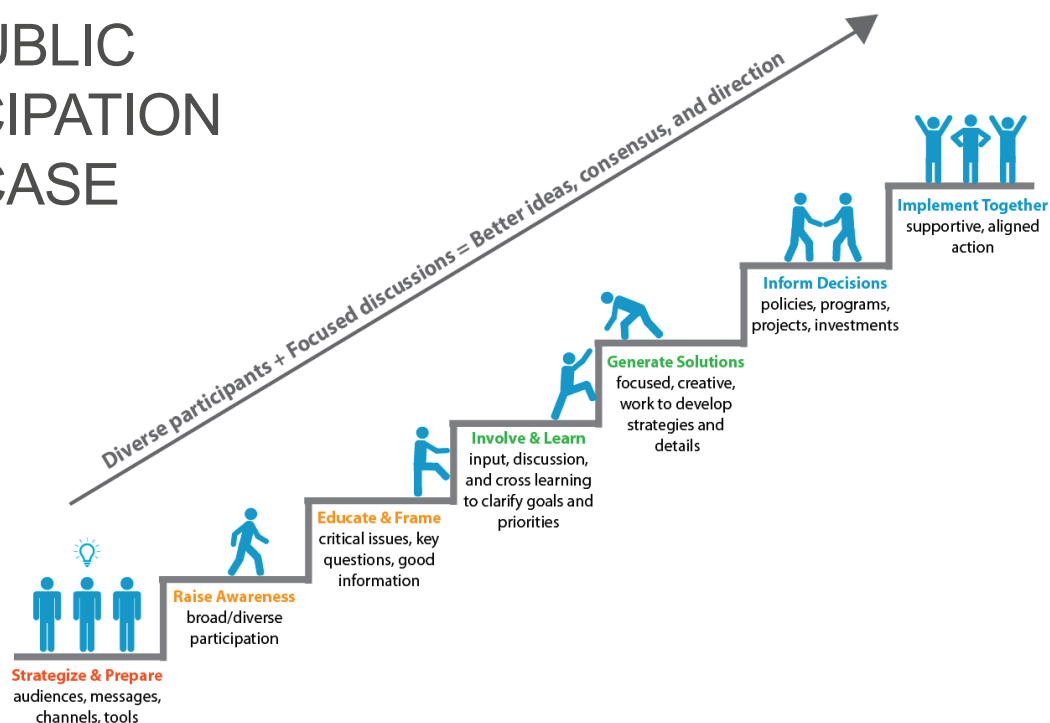


The Engagement Weave

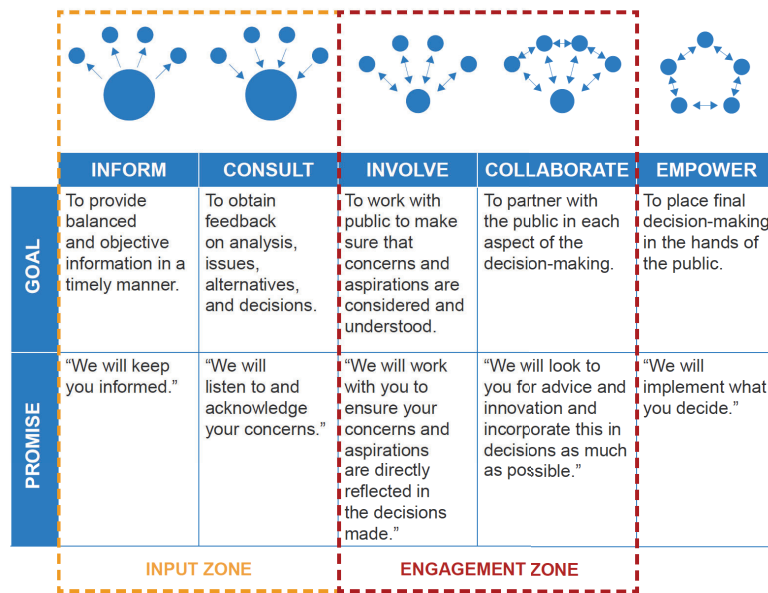
*The Engagement “Weave”
Modus Planning, Design & Engagement*



THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STAIRCASE



KEY CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

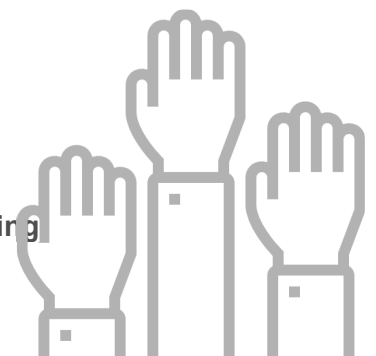


International Association of Public Participation



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Committing** to ensure issues and questions posed are meaningful and stimulating
- Raising broad awareness and **promoting opportunities to a wide range of audiences** using multiple channels
- **Maintaining strong relationships** with community groups and networks
- **Diversifying participation** by using range of tools
- Emphasizing communications and information-sharing with a **focus on “reporting back”**
- Coordinating to **efficiently schedule, plan for, resource and deliver**
- Seeing **all departments buy-in**
- **Evaluating success** of engagement process



ROLES

COUNCIL	STAFF	COMMUNITY
Council members are elected decision-makers who represent the community (and are responsible for setting direction and overseeing progress towards goals).	Staff implement those decisions, bringing technical skills and institutional knowledge.	Community members must also understand that they are involved to inform and improve decisions, but they do not get to decide what happens or direct staff in their work.
Therefore, Council members can and <u>should</u> promote, attend, and observe engagement activities, but <u>should not</u> act as participants nor try to influence the input being gathered.	Staff <u>should</u> design, facilitate and report from participation activities, but <u>should not</u> influence the findings.	Community Members <u>should</u> spread the word about such activities to encourage attendance, participate fully, and monitor how input was used, but <u>should not</u> influence the input of others.

ROLES (NORTH COWICHAN ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK)

Community (External)	Organization (Internal)
Advisory Group of North Cowichan - focused district leaders from various sectors and communities within the municipality.	Project Steering Committee of senior leaders representing each department who will provide strategic engagement and promotion of the plan.
Ambassador Teams champion local communities with each community co-led by a North Cowichan planner.	Project Team of inter-disciplinary staff who will prepare technical information and draft policies for inclusion in the OCP.

ROLE OF COUNCIL

- Helping to **identify issues that may need public participation**;
- **Reviewing staff recommendations** on issues requiring public participation and **assessing the importance of various issues** relative to the capacity of the organization;
- **Promoting public participation opportunities** and encouraging participation of identified audiences;
- **Attending and observing public participation events.** Communicating positively to citizens, stakeholders, and media about the importance of such events and activities to the County;
- Respecting and **supporting the role of staff** in designing, executing, and reporting from public participation activities.
- **Carefully reviewing the findings** of participation initiatives, as presented and summarized by staff;
- **Using these inputs as an essential part of Council discussions** and decision-making; and
- **Supporting the increasing capacity of the organization** in designing and executing useful, efficient, and innovative public participation activities over time.



ROLE OF STAFF

- **Identifying** issues that may need participation;
- **Assessing** whether North Cowichan needs to execute a **public participation initiative** that falls into **either the “Involve Zone,” or “Engagement Zone;”** and the **capacity for running these initiatives**, and **community capacity for participation**, clarifying the rationale for which initiatives to proceed with;
- **Identifying audiences to engage** with, while thoughtfully considering the need to engage “harder-to-reach” audiences for some initiatives;
- **Developing a Plan** that lays out the WHAT of the issue to be discussed, the WHO to engage (and why them), and the WHEN and HOW to engage effectively;
- **Executing the participation initiative** as effectively and transparently as possible, using communications staff and this strategy and toolkit as key resources;
- **Documenting and reporting from the activities** at several stages, keeping participants up to date on activities and results, and encouraging further and broader participation over time;
- **Using the findings of the participation activities** to influence the evolving policy, plan, or decision. Communicating how the input gathered has influenced progress to date; and
- **Continuously building skills and tools for effective participation** that suit the needs and capacities of the local government and the broader community.



THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC

Citizens should spread the word about such activities to encourage attendance, should participate fully, and should monitor how input was used, but should not unduly influence the input of others.

Ideally, citizens will stay open to diverse perspectives and will learn about the complexities of issues and options during the processes, even if/as they advocate for a certain outcome.



DRAFT OBJECTIVES FOR ENGAGEMENT

AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING

Raise broad awareness of the planning process, what an Official Community Plan is and why is being reviewed and updated;

Provide clear information about key issues and opportunities; and

Build a shared understanding of what the OCP will look like 'on the ground'.

OPPORTUNITY & INPUT

Provide a range of meaningful engagement opportunities for the public to learn about the project, share input, and dialogue around key issues.

Gather meaningful ideas and input from a diverse range of community members and stakeholders to inform the OCP update.

PROCESS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Document our process with clear and transparent information about what we did, who participated, what we heard through engagement activities and how input was used to influence the OCP update.



DRAFT GUIDING PRINIPLES AND CORE VALUES (COUNCIL COMMUNICATION PLAN)

Principles: Authenticity, Accountability, Inclusiveness, Transparency, Commitment , Integrity

1. Public participation is based on the belief that two-way communication between Council and the public provides opportunities for open and constructive dialogue.
2. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
3. Public participation is designed to respect the opinions of all those involved.
4. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will be considered in the decision.
5. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
6. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
7. Public participation seeks input from participants on how they wish to participate.
8. Public participation provides the information that is necessary to participate in a meaningful way.
9. Public participation communicates to participants how their input has affected the decision.



SAMPLE TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

Group Input Tools

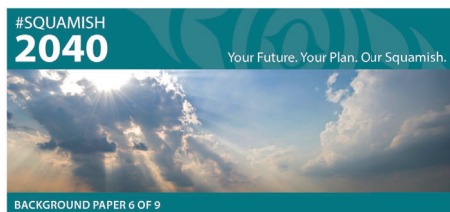
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|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Fill in the Blank Visioning Wall | 13. Focus Groups |
| 2. Hopes & Fears | 14. Idea Jam |
| 3. Superheroes | 15. Interview Matrix |
| 4. Day in the Life | 16. Now, Wow, How |
| 5. Dotmocracy / Likert Scales | 17. Open Space Meetings |
| 6. Sustain-a-bucks | 18. Walking Tours |
| 7. Community Mapping | 19. World Café |
| 8. Global Issues, Local Challenges | 20. Advisory Groups / Committees |
| 9. Online Discussion Forum | 21. Deliberative Forum |
| 10. Community Circles | 22. Resident Feedback Panel |
| 11. Design Charrette | 23. World's Easiest Facilitation |
| 12. Fishbowl Process | 24. Graphic Facilitation |

Individual Input Tools

25. Media Contest
26. SMS Fill in the Blank Campaign
27. Favourite Places Collage
28. Mailbox to the Future
29. Walk in my Shoes
30. Manifestos, Love Letters
31. Person on the Street Interviews
32. Questionnaire
33. Event Feedback Forms
34. Key Informant Interviews
35. Community Asset Mapping
36. Self-directed Workbooks



SAMPLE COMMUNICATION MATERIALS



Climate Change

Long term weather trends over months, decades and longer is referred to as **climate**. Although climate naturally changes over long time scales, in the last 130 years the planet has experienced a 1°C increase in temperature. This is a very rapid rate of change that stresses natural and human-built systems.

Unlike earlier climate changes, we are increasingly certain that these more recent trends are primarily due to the human activities that release 'greenhouse gases' (GHGs) into our atmosphere. These emissions increase concentrations of gases that affect the atmosphere's ability to keep earth's climate within a relatively comfortable livable temperature range. Changing temperatures, and other climate-related changes such as sea level rise will impact our economy, infrastructure, development patterns, ecosystems, culture, and leisure activities over the long term.

While there is much agreement on what is needed to reduce these GHGs and stop making the problem worse, it will take time to transition.

Climate change mitigation is about how communities can stop making the climate change problem worse. **Climate change adaptation** is about how communities might deal with the problems and/or capitalize on the opportunities caused by a changing climate.

Mitigation and adaptation are two key components of a comprehensive approach to addressing climate change. However, these components are not the domain of any specific level of government, department or agency but require considerable cooperation and integration.

How is Squamish contributing to the problem?

The bulk of our GHG emissions are from vehicle transportation. These emissions have increased by approximately 15% since 2007 as our population continues to grow and more and more people commute to work outside Squamish.



Other emissions associated with Squamish residents' air travel and the production of consumables like food, clothing and other products are not included in these figures but all represent significant sources of emissions.

CLIMATE CHANGE

BACKGROUND PAPER 6 OF 9

What changes can Squamish expect?

Estimated changes for the Squamish Lillooet Regional District around 2050 include (PICS at Victoria University):

- Annual rise in temperature of approximately 1.7 °C
- Annual increase in precipitation of approximately 6%
- Annual decrease in winter snowfall by approximately 15%

Over the next century, sea level rise is expected to rise at an accelerated rate, estimated anywhere from 0.6 m to a very extreme 2 metre rise (Vancouver Climate Adaptation Strategy).

Custom climate models for the Whistler area project:

- Increase in the frequency and intensity of heavy rains
- Longer hotter and drier summers
- Milder winters and changes in the amount of snow

All of these trends require a change in thinking and behaviour. Good modeling of expected changes and adaptation planning will be required to ensure that Squamish is resilient and responsive as the climate changes.

What does the current OCP say?

- Reduce total greenhouse gas emissions per capita for regional energy systems to less than one tonne by 2030 (from 7.6 tonnes per capita in 2006).
- The current OCP includes a number of **mitigation** policies related to GHG reduction focused on community planning and design, building efficiency, operations, infrastructure, waste, and renewable energy.
- The current OCP includes a couple of **adaptation** policies such as working with partners to understand local impacts and develop strategies, and reviewing municipal flood hazard and utility plans to ensure extreme weather events are considered. Adaptation planning will be a key component of the new OCP.

Challenges

- Our emissions continued to rise up until 2010 but we don't have an annual inventory to track recent progress.
- Difficult to reduce overall emission levels with significant growth and development.
- Difficult to reduce emission levels within the existing built environment.

Opportunities

- Targets for GHG reductions are extremely ambitious but should help to inspire action.
- Community members and local initiatives such as the Squamish Climate Action Network are very involved.
- Growth and development provide opportunities to encourage efficient, walkable neighbourhoods, trail linkages and energy efficient building.
- Possibility for additional support from senior governments.
- Province now allows Development Permit Areas to promote energy/water conservation and GHG emissions.

For More Information

- Downtown Squamish 2031 Transit Plan (2009)
- Transportation Options for the Squamish-Metro Vancouver Corridor (2009)
- Neighbourhood Energy Utility Feasibility Report (2010)
- District Wide Multi-Modal Transportation Study (2011)
- Transportation Action Plan (2012)
- Transit Service Effectiveness Review (2012)
- Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (2013)
- Climate Actions Survey (2014)
- Carbon Neutral Progress Report (2014)

Current Initiatives

There are a number of local initiatives underway:

- Partnership with Quest University to develop background information on local climate forecast.
- Active Transportation Plan
- Sea to Sky Transit Future Plan (BC Transit)
- Integrated Flood Hazard Management Plan
- Mitigation strategies for the Chehalis Fan
- Updating the 2010 feasibility study for a downtown Neighbourhood Energy Utility
- Curbside pick-up for organics now offered, District reviewing expansion to multi-family areas.
- Mapping environmentally sensitive areas
- Revisions to the Development Permit Area guidelines for the protection of riparian areas

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN Update

Squamish.ca/OCP



NORTH COWICHAN OCP ENGAGEMENT PLAN

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END OF PRESENTATION

Thank you and Questions



Report

Date	February 19, 2020	File:
To	Council	
From	Rob Conway, Director of Planning and Building	Endorsed: 
Subject	Senior Social and Housing Planner Position– Implications of not hiring	

Purpose

To advise Council which social and housing priorities identified within the 2019-2022 Corporate Strategic Plan may be achieved during the term, based upon current staffing capacities.

Background

Presentations to the Committee of the Whole on February 3, 2020 and the February 11, 2020 Special Council meeting on the 2020 Planning and Building Department Business Plan and the 2020-2024 General Operating Budget identified a "senior social and housing planner" as a staff position Council may wish to consider funding as a way to advance a number of its Strategic Plan priorities. At the February 11, 2020 Special Council meeting, Council discussed and debated the merits of the position and ultimately decided not to fund it in the 2020 budget. During Council's deliberation on the position there were questions about how housing and social planning services could be delivered with existing resources and how the position relates to the services provided by the CVRD's Regional Housing Service. This report is intended to provide Council with information regarding the proposed position, and to outline work that can be accomplished on Council's housing and social planning strategic priorities utilizing existing resources.

Discussion

What is social planning?

Social planning is about improving the well-being and quality of life of people. It is a process that involves collaboration with citizens, non-profit agencies, local government departments, provincial and federal agencies, community leaders and local business to address complex issues of accessibility, equity, affordability, safety and public health.

Demands for Social Services:

Housing and social planning are public services that have traditionally been provided by the senior levels of government. Despite past practice, local governments are increasingly involved in housing and social planning issues as the provincial and federal government have moved away from providing social services and the need for such services within communities has become more acute.

Due to the demand for these services and the impact of not providing them has on communities, the Municipality has become increasingly involved in issues of housing affordability, homelessness and the opioid crisis. Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan indicates Council's intention to maintain and expand housing and social planning services.

Current Resources and Capacity:

In response to increased demand for social planning services in the Cowichan Region and community needs identified in the Visions 2020 planning process two decades ago, Social Planning Cowichan was established as a charitable society in 2004 to provide social planning services within the Cowichan region. The organization is partially funded by the CVRD's Social Planning Service, which will provide \$51,000 to Social Planning Cowichan in 2020, of which approximately \$20,000 is funded by North Cowichan.

A new CVRD Regional Housing Service was established by referendum in 2018 for the purpose of assisting the Cowichan Housing Association with costs associated with providing programs and services related to affordable housing and homelessness prevention in the Cowichan Valley. The Service has two primary goals;

1. To increase local funds for affordable housing in order to leverage funds from other sources and to incentivize the development of affordable and attainable housing options in the Cowichan region.
2. To increase the capacity of local communities to develop affordable housing projects by providing expertise, knowledge and support.

The total 2020 budget for the service is \$765,000, of which approximately \$246,500 is funded by North Cowichan property owners. \$252,000 of the 2020 budget is allocated to operating the service with the remainder held in a reserve fund for affordable housing projects.

The Municipality presently does not have dedicated staff for housing and social planning issues or for advancing Council's housing and social planning agenda. Resourcing for housing and social planning is provided by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), senior management and community planning staff. The time that any individual staff member has to allocate to housing and social planning issues is small due to various other duties and competing priorities and none of these staff have specialized training or direct experience with housing and social planning. This ad hoc structure has allowed the Municipality to respond to emerging social issues and participate in social planning initiatives involving other partners, but the approach draws staff resources away from core services and other Council priorities. Current resources do not afford any additional capacity for expanding the level of service for housing and social planning issues without reducing service levels elsewhere.

Anticipated Capacity with Social and Housing Planner Position:

The ideal candidate for the position would be an experienced senior planner with expertise in social planning and housing, but also with a solid understanding of community planning in the municipal context. The candidate would be adept at building relationships, advocating for resources with municipal partners, and capable of delivering on the Municipality's objectives and priorities. The establishment of a dedicated social and housing planner position would allow the Municipality to accelerate the pace at which housing and social policy objectives are achieved and would better position the Municipality to respond to current and emerging challenges related to the cost and availability of housing, the opioid crisis, and the general health and well being of North Cowichan residents.

Specific duties associated with the position include:

- Promote and facilitate affordable housing, social equity, cultural diversity and community health.
- Liaise and develop strong relationships with non-profit agencies, community organizations, local first nations, provincial and federal agencies, and adjacent local and regional governments.
- The coordination and management of affordable housing and other housing and social planning projects.
- Coordinate, compile and maintain housing data.
- Facilitate and develop community partnerships.
- Prepare and administer social and housing policies.
- Participate in community planning processes, including the official community plan, local area plans, comprehensive land use planning.
- Undertake assignments involving the application of specialized knowledge in the analysis of community and social planning policy, legislation and best practice.
- Work collaboratively with Council, North Cowichan staff, external agencies, stakeholders and the public to achieve housing and social planning objectives.

Council Strategic Priorities and Projects:

Priorities from the 2019-2020 Council Strategic Plan that involve housing and social planning are:

SERVICE:	✓	Maintain the existing high level of service in the community
	✓	Identify potential new sources of review
ENGAGEMENT:	✓	Support community groups and organizations
	✓	Work collaboratively with regional government partners, ensuring a strong relationship with the CVRD
	✓	Lobby the CVRD, provincial and federal governments to support North Cowichan through grants, funding and tax revenues
HOUSING:	✓	Seek opportunities to partner and support affordable housing initiatives
	✓	Create opportunities for new forms of housing
	✓	Explore opportunities for additional housing that meets the needs of the community
ENVIRONMENT		"... lead in environmental policies and practices to support the future health of our community (purpose statement)
ECONOMY		"...attract and retain great talent and sustainable business, and have opportunities for all" (purpose statement)

Housing and social planning projects that are not specifically identified in Council's Strategic Plan, but which Council has explicitly supported through resolutions or implicitly supported through policy, including:

- Implementation of the Cowichan Attainable Housing Strategy.
- Participation on the Community Action Team.
- Participation in a Housing Needs Assessment with the CVRD and other member municipalities.
- Facilitation of the new Cowichan District Hospital and the new high school.
- Administration of the affordable housing reserve fund.
- Development of housing and social planning policy through the OCP review.
- Participation with the CVRD in the BC Childcare Space Planning Grant and application for funding from the Community Childcare Space Creation Program.
- Partnering with the Community Land Trust on affordable housing projects at Sherman Road and Willow Street.
- Establishment of the Safer Community Plan and the Corridor Safety Office.
- Exploring affordable housing options for municipally-owned properties.
- Interaction with land owners, developers and non-profit housing providers about prospective affordable housing projects.

Relationship to CVRD's Regional Housing Service and Social Planning Service:

Housing and social issues are not easily contained within municipal boundaries and such issues are often better regionally or inter-regionally. CVRD's Regional Housing and Social Planning Services are being effectively delivered by Cowichan Housing Society and Social Planning Cowichan and current and future resources that North Cowichan Council allocates for housing and social planning priorities within the Municipality should not be considered a substitute for these important regional initiatives. Similarly, while the Cowichan Housing Society and Social Planning Cowichan are valuable allies that help to promote and facilitate affordable housing and social planning in the Cowichan region, including North Cowichan, they have neither the mandate nor capacity to provide direct resourcing for Council's priorities and directives. However, by working in partnership with these organizations the Municipality can make effective use of existing resources and utilize those resources to help both North Cowichan and the Regional District realize their objectives. Cowichan Housing Society and Social Planning Cowichan are resources that complement and facilitate North Cowichan's housing and social planning priorities.

Conclusion:

"Opportunity Cost" is the cost of what has to be given up when making choice. In the context of the senior social and housing planner, the opportunity cost can be thought of as the work and accomplishments that cannot be achieved if the position is not created. While it is difficult to be precise about what won't be accomplished if Council decides to not create the new position because there is an ability to shift existing resources between priorities. The following list attempts to summarize some of the anticipated implications of not filling the position and continuing to use existing resources for providing housing and social planning services as well as implications if capacity is expanded by creating the new position.

Maintaining existing capacity means:

- Responsibility for delivering priorities will be shared among senior staff and community planning staff to the extent possible.
- Response to emerging issues and opportunities will tend to be reactive.
- Affordable housing projects initiated by North Cowichan or projects that involve the Municipality as a partner will require project management services to be contracted or be undertaken by a partner that may not be directly accountable to the Municipality.
- Staff will need to be selective about participating in housing and social planning initiatives due to capacity constraints.
- Some of Council's priorities may be delayed until staff resources are available, or until opportunities and circumstances are conducive to their delivery.
- Progress on Council priorities will be more dependant on other projects (e.g. OCP, local area plans) rather than stand-alone initiatives.

Expanding capacity through the creation of a new position means:

- Time that senior staff and community planning staff currently spend on housing and social planning issues can be re-allocated to other priorities.
- Funding and other resources from senior government can be more readily identified, accessed and leveraged.
- A more strategic and pre-emptive approach to current and emerging social issues can be taken.
- The Municipality can better participate in building the relationships and partnerships that are needed to address challenging social issues.
- Expectations may be raised about North Cowichan's responsibility for providing affordable housing and social services.

Implications

The annual cost of a senior social and housing planner, including wages and benefits, is \$120,000. This represents a tax rate increase of 0.20% in 2020 and 0.19% in 2021.

Recommendation

For information (no recommendation).

Report

Date March 18, 2020
To Committee of the Whole
From M. Frame, GM Financial and Protective Services
Subject 2020 Property Tax Rates

File:

Endorsed:



Purpose

To provide direction for setting 2020 Property Tax Rates.

Background

Council approved the 2020 – 2024 Capital Expenditure Plan, the 2020 – 2024 General Operating Budgets, and directed staff to prepare the Financial Plan Bylaw for first three readings at the special meetings of Council held on February 10th and 11th.

Discussion

Including the addition of the three new positions, the tax increase for 2020 was estimated at 4.5%. Revenue changes included a contribution reduction of \$33,000 to the Quamichan Lake Reserve Fund to reflect developer contributions received, \$35,000 for increased traffic fines, \$6,500 for Fortis road fees, and \$25,000 to be recovered for fire inspections for part of the 2020 year. Staff expect to bring back a report proposing an inspection program and related fees.

The result of these changes, prior to reconsidering the Senior Social/Housing Planner, is a preliminary tax increase of 4.3%.

Tax rates are calculated using the 2020 property assessment and the budgeted tax revenue. The property tax revenue required to balance the 2020 Budget is \$31,736,000 based on the 4.3% increase. BC Assessment provides the Completed Roll in January 2020, this Roll is amended in April to form the Revised Roll that is used to calculate property taxes.

2020 Completed Assessments have increased by 8.4% with an average single family dwelling having increased from \$445,000 to \$474,000 (increase of 6.52%). New Construction/Non Market changes in assessment are \$110 million, of which \$105 million is residential. Residential assessment is 89% of total assessment and provides 67% of property tax revenue. The only other significant assessment class is Business at 7% of total assessment. Historically the District has been shifting taxes from Major and Light Industry to other classes (mostly residential).

For Major Industry this is due to the relatively high rates this class faces compared to Residential and Business, and to reduce the District's reliance on Major Industry. Major Industry has 2.2% of assessment and provides 15% of taxes, 90% of this coming from Catalyst Paper Corp. There is risk in relying too heavily on the Forest Industry as we are seeing mill shutdowns and curtailments across the province.

Light Industry taxes have been reduced to get the rates closer to Business and to encourage this sector that provides well paid jobs. In 2019, Light Industry Tax Rate was \$15.85 compared to Business at \$9.58. Council's Strategic Plan includes "Support, retain and attract light industry".

Light Industry has 87 properties with an average assessment of \$885,900. In 2019 Light industry provided \$983,710, an average of \$11,400 per property.

In 2012, Class ratios were changed to decrease Major Industry 43% and Light Industry 7.6%, Business was increased 5.7% and Residential was increased 32%.

- In 2016, Light Industry was decreased by 12% and all other classes increased by 2.94%
- In 2017, Light Industry was decreased by 2.5% and all other classes increased by 2.97%
- In 2018, Light Industry was decreased by 2.5% and all other classes increased by 2.6%
- In 2019, All property classes had a tax increase of 2.98%

Options

1. Distribute 4.3% tax increase equally across all classes net of new construction.
2. Increase taxes for all classes, except Light Industry, by 4.4%, and increase taxes for Light Industry by 1.7%.

Implications

The Financial Plan contains a sustainable tax increase while maintaining existing levels of service. Aligning with Council's Strategic Plan and providing sufficient capital spending for infrastructure renewal. The total General Municipal Tax requisition is \$31,736,000, an increase of 4.3% net of new construction.

Option 1 results in a tax increase of \$72 on an average single family dwelling (assessed at \$474,200 compared to \$445,400 in 2019).

Option 2 results in a tax increase of \$73 on an average single family dwelling, and a reduction of \$337 for an average light industrial property assessed at \$885,900 when compared to Option 1.

Recommendation

That Council direct staff to prepare the Property Tax Rates Bylaw including a net 4.4% increase for Residential, Utility, Major Industry and Business, and a net 1.7% increase for Light Industry.

Attachment: Property Tax Rate Options

District of North Cowichan
Property Tax Rate Options
2020

Option # 1- Equal Distribution of 4.3% tax increase

\$ 31,736,000

Property Class	Assessment	Multiple	Weighted Assess	Tax Rate	2020 Taxes	2020 Taxes	Increase	%	New Construction	net %	% of Taxes
1 Residential	6,009,533,302	1.000	6,009,533,302	3.5755	21,487,217	20,240,574	1,246,643	6.16%	378,121	4.29%	67.7%
2 Utility	7,160,300	8.160	58,427,569	29.1760	208,909	200,314	8,595	4.29%	-	4.29%	0.7%
3 Social Housing		0.000	-		-	-			-		0.0%
4 Major Industry	149,278,000	8.714	1,300,880,659	31.1588	4,651,327	4,473,306	178,021	3.98%	(13,928)	4.29%	14.7%
5 Light Industry	77,074,600	3.676	283,325,811	13.1436	1,013,038	983,710	29,328	2.98%	(12,883)	4.29%	3.2%
6 Business	452,576,152	2.609	1,180,629,332	9.3274	4,221,366	3,980,331	241,035	6.06%	70,239	4.29%	13.3%
7 Managed Forests	3,344,100	4.114	13,758,000	14.7101	49,192	47,333	1,859	3.93%	(172)	4.29%	0.2%
8 Recreational/Non-P	20,682,100	1.000	20,682,100	3.5755	73,949	63,184	10,766	17.04%	7,008	5.95%	0.2%
9 Farm	8,670,620	1.000	8,670,620	3.5755	31,002	32,069	(1,067)	-3.33%	61	-3.52%	0.1%
	<u>6,728,319,174</u>		<u>8,875,907,393</u>		<u>31,736,000</u>	<u>30,020,821</u>	<u>1,715,179</u>	<u>5.71%</u>	<u>428,446</u>	<u>4.29%</u>	<u>100%</u>
						5.71%					
Ave SFD	474,223		3.5755		\$ 1,696	\$ 1,624	\$ 72		1.43%		
	6.5%						4.41%				

Option # 2 - Reduce Light Industry by 2.5%


\$ 30,748,288

Property Class	Assessment	Multiple	Weighted Assess	Tax Rate	2020 Taxes	2020 Taxes	Increase	%	New Construction	net %	% of Taxes
1 Residential	6,009,533,302	1.000	6,009,533,302	3.5785	21,504,930	20,240,574	1,264,355	6.25%	378,433	4.38%	67.8%
2 Utility	7,160,300	8.160	58,427,569	29.2001	209,081	200,314	8,768	4.38%	-	4.38%	0.7%
3 Social Housing	-	0.000	-	0.0000	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
4 Major Industry	149,278,000	8.714	1,300,880,659	31.1845	4,655,161	4,473,306	181,855	4.07%	(13,939)	4.38%	14.7%
5 Light Industry	77,074,600			12.8150	987,712	983,710	4,002	0.41%	(12,561)	1.68%	3.1%
6 Business	452,576,152	2.609	1,180,629,332	9.3351	4,224,846	3,980,331	244,515	6.14%	70,297	4.38%	13.3%
7 Managed Forests	3,344,100	4.114	13,758,000	14.7222	49,233	47,333	1,900	4.01%	(172)	4.38%	0.2%
8 Recreational/Non-P	20,682,100	1.000	20,682,100	3.5785	74,010	63,184	10,827	17.14%	7,014	6.03%	0.2%
9 Farm	8,670,620	1.000	8,670,620	3.5785	31,028	32,069	(1,042)	-3.25%	61	-3.44%	0.1%
	<u>6,728,319,174</u>		<u>8,592,581,582</u>		<u>31,736,000</u>	<u>30,020,821</u>	<u>1,715,179</u>	<u>5.71%</u>	<u>429,132</u>	<u>4.28%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Ave SFD	474,223		3.5785	\$	1,697	\$	1,624	\$	72.99	1.43%	
							4.49%				

\$	1.40
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Property Class	2020		2019	
	Assessment	Occurances	Assessment	Occurances
Residential	\$ 6,009,533,302	14,235	\$ 5,550,950,128	14,095
Utility	7,160,300	78	6,710,900	78
Social Housing		1		1
Major Industry	149,278,000	13	144,613,000	13
Light Industry	77,074,600	87	62,066,700	86
Business	452,576,152	651	415,602,402	652
Managed Forests	3,344,100	18	3,299,000	18
Rec/Non-Profit	20,682,100	256	17,328,000	257
Farm	8,670,620	470	8,794,996	476
	<u>\$ 6,728,319,174</u>	<u>15,809</u>	<u>\$ 6,209,365,126</u>	<u>15,676</u>

Report

Date	March 18, 2020	File:
To	Committee of the Whole	
From	Michelle Martineau, Manager of Legislative Services	Endorsed: 
Subject	RCMP Facility Loan Authorization Bylaw Elector Approval Process	

Purpose

To provide an overview on the Alternative Approval Process (AAP) to be undertaken with the intention of seeking elector approval to allow for the adoption of a loan authorization bylaw to finance the construction of a new North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment.

Background

In March 2019 Council agreed in principle to proceed with plans for a new integrated detachment on its property located at Ford Road and Drinkwater Road for Municipal and Provincial police and staff. Further discussion regarding the construction of the new detachment took place on July 17, 2019, where Council resolved to proceed with an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) to seek elector assent to borrow the funds needed for the new RCMP detachment and to proceed with the communications plan presented.

The public participation goal presented at that meeting was to inform the public about the new facility and provide them with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions. The following actions were identified in the communication plan, at an estimated cost of \$5,000:

1. *Webpage* that contains key information about the process, why a new facility is needed, financial implications, and policing statistics.
2. *Mail-out pamphlet* to every North Cowichan household in advance of elector assent notice which focuses on the why a new facility is needed, financial implications, and policing statistics, developed jointly with the RCMP.
3. *Short animated video* to capture key points from the pamphlet.
4. *Limited number of media tours* of the existing detachments, organized jointly with the RCMP
5. *News releases* at every milestone/decision stage through the project.

Discussion

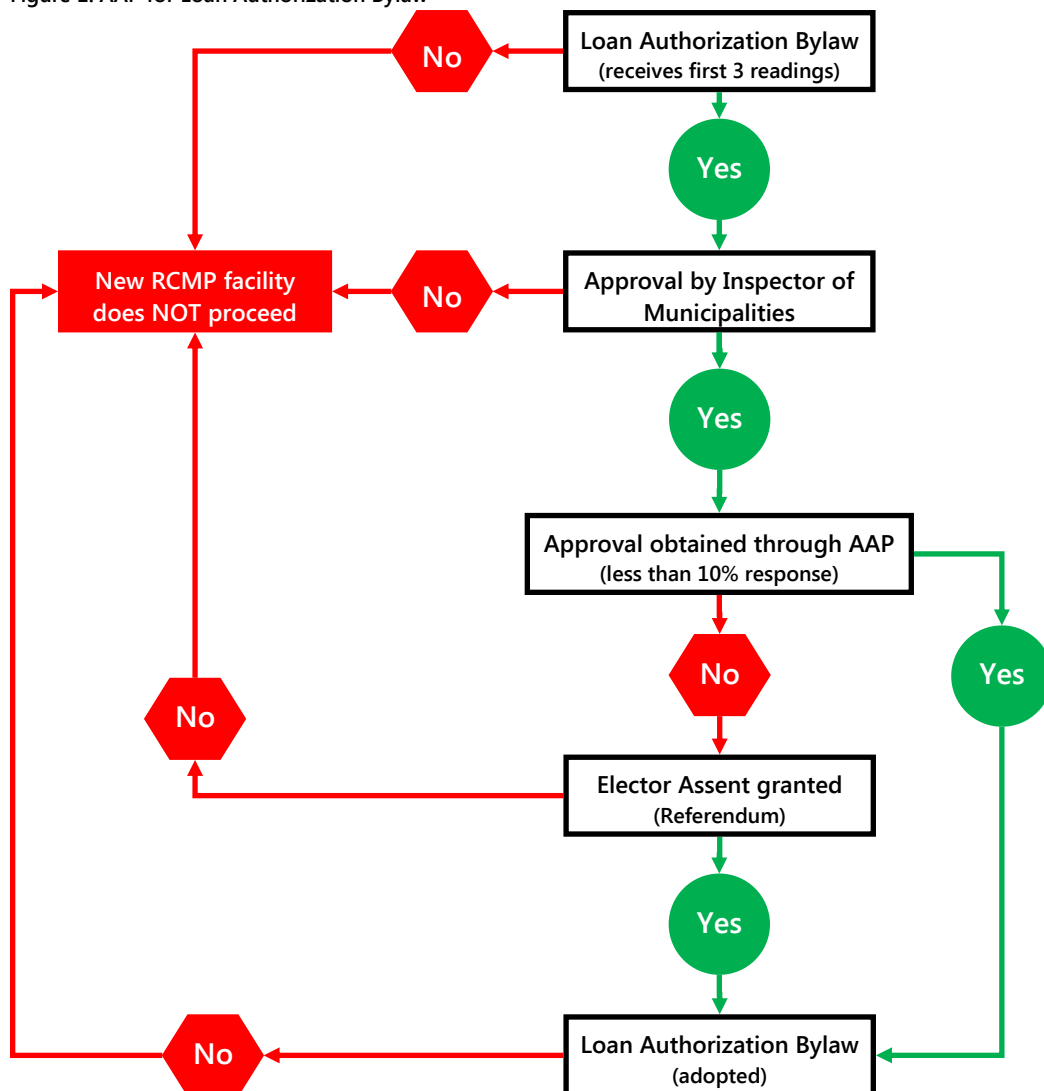
What is an Alternative Approval Process (AAP)?

It is a form of approval that allows electors to indicate whether they are against a local government proposal moving forward. Formerly known as a "counter petition," it requires 10% or more of the eligible electors sign and submit response forms in order for the municipality to be mandated to proceed to assent voting on the matter identified in the notice.

Assent voting (or referendum) allows electors to vote on whether a proposal would move forward or not. Assent of the electors is obtained if a majority of the votes counted are in favour of the bylaw.

Figure 1, below, illustrates the process for adopting a Loan Authorization Bylaw for the proposed new RCMP facility from when the bylaw receives first three readings, through the AAP, assent voting (if required), and finally through to adoption or defeat of the bylaw.

Figure 1: AAP for Loan Authorization Bylaw



What happens before the AAP is initiated?

The Loan Authorization Bylaw is drafted and presented to Council for first three readings. The bylaw is then forwarded to the Inspector of Municipalities for approval prior to initiating the AAP. The municipality may provide general information to electors about the initiative during this time but cannot publish the two required AAP notices until after the Inspector approval has been granted.

Once approval by the Inspector is granted, a resolution of Council must be adopted acknowledging that the Loan Authorization Bylaw has received first three readings. The Bylaw identifies the maximum loan amount, how long the loan will take to be repaid; that an AAP will be undertaken to determine the opinion of the electors in regard to the new North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP detachment; and

establishes the number of days for submitting and receiving elector response forms, which must be at least 30 days after the second notice is published. A copy of the notice, information sheet, response forms, and a summary of how the estimated number of eligible electors was calculated will accompany the report to Council at that time. Table 1, below, illustrates the proposed timeline for the AAP and adoption (or defeat) of the Loan Authorization Bylaw for the North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP detachment.

Table 1: Timelines

Description		April				May				June				July			
Regular Council meeting: to give bylaw first 3 readings	Apr. 1																
Approval by Inspector of Municipalities	Apr-May																
Regular Council meeting: Authorization to proceed with AAP	May 6																
Initiate AAP (report to Council)	May 7-Jun 22																
Update website	May 4-15																
Publish first notice in newspaper and post to notice board and website	May 11-15																
Publish second notice in newspaper and post to notice board & website	May 18-20																
Issue media releases at each milestone	Dates TBD																
Mail information pamphlets out to all households prior to first notice	Mar 30 – Apr 30																
Prepare short video to capture key info from pamphlet and share	May/Jun																
Participate in radio interviews	Dates TBC																
Conduct media and community group tours of existing detachment	May to June																
Deadline for response to AAP (at least 30 days after 2 nd notice)	Jun 22																
Optional: Special Council meeting to consider adoption of bylaw	Jun 29																
Regular Council meeting: to consider adoption of bylaw or referendum	Jul 15																

Note: Cells shaded in **red** indicate Council meeting dates, **orange** for ministry approval, **blue** for AAP period, **yellow** for statutory notices, and **purple** for public communication/engagement.

How is the number of Electors estimated?

The *Community Charter* requires that Council make a fair determination of the total number of eligible electors to form the basis of the AAP 10% threshold. There are a number of resources that staff can draw upon to help estimate the number of eligible electors, which include the provincial voters list, municipal utility records or property tax notices, BC Stats, BC Assessment, or Elections Canada. That estimate is then adjusted to account for people who may have moved into or out of the province within the last 6 months, for people that have moved into or out of the community within the last 30 days, individuals who are not Canadian citizens, and those who would be under 18 years of age.

Who is eligible to participate in the AAP?

Any individual who qualifies as a resident elector or non-resident property elector within the municipal boundaries can participate.

- To qualify as a resident elector, the individual must be a Canadian citizen, at least 18 years of age, have resided in British Columbia for at least 6 months, and have resided in the District of North Cowichan for at least 30 days.
- To qualify as a non-resident property elector, the individual must be a Canadian citizen, at least 18 years of age, have resided in British Columbia for at least 6 months and owned property within the District of North Cowichan for at least 30 days. Properties that are owned by corporations are not eligible to be registered as an elector.

What happens during the AAP?

A notice advising the public of the AAP will be published in at least one addition of the Cowichan Valley Citizen in two consecutive weeks (i.e. first notice to be published during the week of May 11th and the second notice to be published between May 18th and 20th). Electors who oppose the Loan Authorization Bylaw will be required to complete an Elector Response Form and submit it to the District of North Cowichan by the date and time identified in the notice. Eligible electors will have at least 30 days following the second notice to submit their completed response form if they oppose adoption of the Loan Authorization Bylaw. Once the AAP has begun, the process must be completed, regardless if Council were to decide to proceed to assent voting.

What happens if MORE than 10% respond?

If more than 10% of the eligible electors submit a completed signed Elector Response Form by the deadline, Council will have two choices; they may proceed to assent voting within 80 days or they may put the matter on hold and consider alternatives to the proposed action. If a majority of the votes counted as valid are in favour of the Loan Authorization Bylaw, Council may proceed with adoption of the bylaw.

What happens if LESS than 10% respond?

If less than 10% of the eligible electors submit a completed signed Elector Response Form by the deadline, Council may proceed with adoption of the bylaw.

Options

1. For staff to continue on to the next step in the process, as directed by Council on July 19, 2019 and subsequent discussions, and prepare the loan authorization bylaw for consideration of first three readings at the April 1, 2020 regular meeting.
2. Refer the matter back to staff or a future Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

Implications

In addition to the implications outlined in the July 17, 2019 report to Council (see attachment 1), how the municipality shares the information in relation to the Loan Authorization Bylaw with the public will be very important in ensuring that a fair and transparent process has been followed. It is important that "what we share" and "how we share that information" is seen as information-sharing and not as promotion by Council or staff of a particular viewpoint on the matter. The municipality's role is to provide accurate and balanced information about the initiative so that eligible electors can make an informed decision about whether or not to sign a response form.

If the response to the AAP exceeds the 10% threshold, Council will be required to obtain assent from the electors before proceeding any further. This would have significant financial and staff resource impacts as the approximate cost of holding a referendum is \$60,000, and with the *Local Government Act's* requirement for the referendum's general voting day to occur within 80 days of close of AAP (i.e. on or before September 5th if the AAP closed on June 22, 2020) some of the projects identified in the Operational Strategic Plan and Corporate Services Business Plan, as they relate to Legislative Services, may need to be deferred.


Recommendation

Staff is recommending option 1, which is to continue moving forward with the project as previously directed by Council. A resolution is not required unless Council decides to change the any of the actions identified in the communications plan or move directly to assent voting over the AAP.

Attachment(s):

1. 2019-07-17 Report to Council from the General Manager of Financial & Protective Services

Report

Date	July 17, 2019	File:
To	Council	
From	Mark Frame, General Manager of Financial & Protective Services Natasha Horsman, Manager of Communications & Public Engagement Karen Robertson, Corporate Officer	Endorsed: 
Subject	Elector Assent Process for New North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment	

Purpose

To confirm Council's preferred approach for seeking elector assent for financing a new North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP detachment.

Background

In March 2019, Council agreed in principle to proceed with plans for a new North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP detachment on its property on Ford Road and Drinkwater Road. The new building would be a Hub detachment bringing together the North Cowichan/Duncan detachment, Forensic Identification Services, South Island Traffic Services, and Shawnigan Lake detachment.

It is envisioned that the new North Cowichan/Duncan Detachment would be built by North Cowichan, and the RCMP would be billed back its portion of the MFA debt through an annual lease. The new detachment is still subject to federal approval and authorities and signing a new Occupancy Agreement with the Municipality.

In order to understand the financial implications of a Hub detachment, an architect was retained to provide space analysis and a cost estimate for the Hub detachment concept. Working with the RCMP, the space analysis provided an agreed gross floor area of 4,640 m². This was costed at \$40 million by a quantity surveyor. Staff is now working with a consultant to hire an integrated design team to develop designs and construction budgets.

Once the preliminary design and estimated construction costs are confirmed, North Cowichan would need to seek elector assent to borrow the money to construct the building. This report provides options and a suggested timeline for elector assent.

Discussion

There are two options for seeking elector assent:

	Option 1 Alternative Approval Process (AAP)	Option 2 Referendum
Description	An AAP requires that 10 percent or more of the eligible electors must sign and submit response forms <u>in opposition</u> to a proposed initiative to require the local government to obtain assent of the electors in order to proceed.	A referendum involves asking electors to cast a vote. Assent of the electors is achieved if a majority of votes counted are in favour of the bylaw or question.
Approx. Cost	\$2,000.00	\$60,000.000
Approx. Timeline	Sept. 4, 2019 Borrowing Bylaw introduced Nov. 18, 2019 AAP Deadline for Response Dec. 4, 2019 Bylaw adopted (pending AAP) Mar. 2020 Long-term Financing Approved (pending AAP)	Sept. 4, 2019 Borrowing Bylaw introduced Nov. 16, 2019 Referendum held Dec. 4, 2019 Bylaw adopted (pending referendum) Mar. 2020 Long-term Financing Approved (pending referendum)
If elector assent not granted	If 10 percent of electors sign forms in opposition to the AAP, the issue is considered significant and the local government has two choices: it may proceed to referendum within 80 days, or they may put the matter on hold and consider alternatives to the proposed action.	If elector assent is not granted the design process would need to be halted. As providing a suitable building is a requirement of our RCMP contract, the only two options available would be either: 1) The RCMP would potentially build the building and charge the cost back to North Cowichan. This would be at a higher cost to the taxpayer than if North Cowichan were to borrow the funds and build the building; or 2) to conduct another referendum based on a smaller non-Hub detachment, which would also likely be at a higher cost to North Cowichan taxpayers.

Public Information

Many key decisions have already been made on this project, and the key remaining decision is which approval approach Council wishes to proceed with in order to seek elector assent. Residents will have a direct say in this through a referendum or AAP, and information should be distributed to residents in advance of elector assent.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

The following communications plan is proposed for both an AAP process and referendum:

1. Webpage that contains key information about the process, why a new facility is needed, financial implications, and policing statistics.
2. Mail-out pamphlet to every North Cowichan household in advance of elector assent notice:
 - a. Focus on the why a new facility is needed, financial implications, and policing statistics
 - b. Developed jointly with the RCMP
3. Short animated video:
 - a. Will capture key points from pamphlet
4. Limited number of media and resident tours of the existing detachment
 - a. Registration up to 30 individuals
 - b. Organized jointly with the RCMP
5. News releases at every milestone/decision stage through the project

The estimated cost for the communication activities listed above is \$5,000. It is recommended that these costs be managed through the RCMP Building project budget.

Options

Option 1: Direct staff to proceed with an AAP to seek elector assent, supported by the communications activities outlined above (**recommended**).

Option 2: Direct staff to proceed with a referendum to seek elector assent, supported by the communications activities outlined above.

Implications

Social/community: there are significant social/community implications, as the next step will be to initiate elector assent for the new North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP detachment. The public's response will affect both tax rates and policing service over the coming years.

Personnel: the existing detachment is well past the end of its life and has ongoing issues with rodents, leaking, flooding, and lack of adequate space. Steps to pursue a new detachment have positive implications for North Cowichan's staff at the detachment and for policing service overall.

Legal: Providing suitable accommodation for the RCMP Detachment is an obligation under North Cowichan's RCMP contract.

Financial: The estimated annual debt repayment is \$2.8 million. The RCMP will pay 56.6% (\$1.6million) leaving \$1.2 million to be paid by North Cowichan tax payers. This will require about a 4% tax increase phased in over 2019 to 2021. In 2019, taxes were increase by .51% assuming initial design work being done with the majority of construction in 2020 and 2021. The tax increases over the three years will total \$65 for an average home.

Recommendation

That Council direct staff to proceed with an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) to seek elector assent for a new North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP detachment;

And That Council direct staff to proceed with the proposed communications plan to inform residents about a new North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP detachment.