



March 24, 2022

Mayor and Council
C/O Michelle Martineau,
Manager, Legislative Services
Municipality of North Cowichan
7030 Trans-Canada Highway
Duncan, BC V9L 3X4

Via email: michelle.martineau@northcowichan.ca

Dear Mayor and Council;

Re: Safer Community Plan Review and Next Steps

The Safer Community Plan Review and Next Steps meeting between Duncan and North Cowichan staff and elected officials took place on March 7, 2022. Inspector Chris Bear, Officer in Charge, North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP, attended the meeting, along with the following staff members and elected officials:

City of Duncan

Mayor Staples
Councillor Newington
Peter de Verteuil, CAO
Paige MacWilliam, Director of Corporate Services
Rachel Hastings, Manager of Building and Bylaw Services

North Cowichan

Mayor Siebring
Councillor Sawrie
Ted Swabey, CAO
Kim Ferris, Manager, Bylaw & Business Licensing
Martin Drakeley, Fire Chief & Senior Manager, Bylaw Services

The meeting attendees discussed the Safer Community Plan and another initiative that impacts the highway corridor, the Enhanced Sharps Collection program, and the meeting participants agreed to forward recommendations to both Councils for direction.

Subsequently, at their March 21, 2022 meeting, Duncan City Council passed the following resolutions:

Safety Ambassadors

That Council direct staff to issue a request for proposals, in partnership with North Cowichan, to extend the Safety Ambassadors program for another 2-year period.

Since late 2019, Blackbird Security has been fulfilling the roles of the daytime Safety Ambassadors as envisioned in the plan. The annual cost is \$74,200, which is shared 50% between Duncan and North Cowichan. All parties at the meeting agreed that Duncan should issue another request for proposals for the Safety Ambassadors program. Duncan staff will also explore whether there is an opportunity to partner with any local organizations that offer vocational training.

Corridor Safety Office

That Council support, subject to North Cowichan Council approval, North Cowichan terminating the lease on the Corridor Safety Office, with the funds to be reallocated to other initiatives to support the highway corridor.

The Corridor Safety Office, 490 Trans-Canada Highway, opened in late 2019. The annual cost is \$37,400 plus janitorial, utilities, etc., which totals approximately \$47,000 and is shared 50% between Duncan and North Cowichan. North Cowichan is the lease holder.

All parties agreed the office is underutilized and funding allocated towards this office could be more impactful if reallocated to other initiatives occurring in the corridor. The group also discussed that the Cowichan Community Policing office now open on Beverly Street, which provides a storefront for the public looking for assistance and resources. The Cowichan Community Policing is working to establish Citizens on Patrol and Business Watch programs. The City will encourage Cowichan Community Policing to connect with the business owners in the highway corridor area regarding the Business Watch program.

The participants at the meeting discussed issuing a joint press release about the various initiatives once both Councils had the opportunity to make their decisions. Unfortunately, before either Council could consider the next steps, the Cowichan Valley Citizen Newspaper preemptively printed an article stating that the decision to close the Corridor Safety Office had already been made. Nonetheless, a joint press release can still be issued once North Cowichan has had the opportunity to consider the Safer Community Plan next steps.

Enhanced Sharps Clean-Up Crew

That Council direct staff to send correspondence to North Cowichan requesting a contribution of \$15,000 to fund 50% of the additional costs for the enhanced Peer Sharps Clean-Up Crew Program with Canadian Mental Health Association.

From October 26, 2020, to March 31, 2022, Canadian Mental Health Association has operated an enhanced sharps collection program thanks to \$49,000 in funding that the City received from the Community Action Initiative Wellness & Harm Reduction Grant. The grant funds were used to expand the existing peer sharps collection program, from three hours per day, three days each week (funded by Island Health) to two crew members, three hours per day, seven days each week (excluding stats). The funding was also used for the provision of a vehicle to enable the clean-up crew to also collect garbage and debris. The vehicle expanded the coverage area to include from

Beverly Street to Boys Road and from Government Street to Lakes Road and enabled the team to assist with cleaning up debris in this area left from encampments.

The participants at the March 7th meeting indicated their support for continuing the enhanced program at a cost of \$30,000 annually, or \$2,500 per month, to be shared evenly between the two municipalities. The number of sharps and the volume of debris collected are significant. Since the beginning of the expanded program to the end of February 2022, the clean-up crew received 307 phone calls, and collected 15,062 sharps and 20,756 kgs of garbage and debris. Both jurisdictions would benefit from continuing the program in its expanded capacity, since without the enhanced program the pressures on municipal staff and community members would increase.

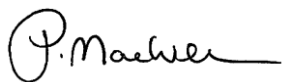
Additional Items of Discussion

In addition to the topics listed above, at the meeting there was consensus among the participants on the following:

- **Safer Working Group** – North Cowichan will provide administrative support for the Safer Working Group and will invoice Duncan for 50% of the administrative support costs.
- **Pro-active Highway Bike Corridor Patrols** – Both Duncan and North Cowichan will continue to schedule bylaw staff to conduct these joint patrols, with staff travelling together by bicycle throughout the highway corridor area, for six hours per day, six days per week.
- **Evening Safety Ambassador Patrols** – Providing Safety Ambassadors coverage from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm will be considered during the Request for Proposal process.
- **Night-time Security Patrols** – Duncan will continue to patrol within the boundaries of the City; inter-jurisdictional patrols will not be included as part of this partnership.
- **Who to Call Brochure** – Community Policing office contact information will be added.

We look forward to receiving information on North Cowichan Council's decision regarding the Safety Ambassador program, the Corridor Safety Office, and the Enhanced Sharps Collection program, and we look forward to continuing to work together on these impactful initiatives. Once we hear back from you, the City will arrange another meeting with both North Cowichan and Cowichan Tribes representatives to discuss increasing collaboration on these initiatives.

Sincerely,



Paige MacWilliam,
Director of Corporate Services

CC: Duncan City Council; Peter de Verteuil, CAO; Rachel Hastings, Manager of Building and Bylaw Services
Ted Swabey, CAO; Martin Drakeley, Fire Chief & Senior Manager, Bylaw Services; Kim Ferris, Manager,
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