



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

BRIEFING NOTE

To: Council

File No.: 4000-20

From: Director of Corporate Services & Director of Public Works Services

Date: September 13, 2023

Subject: **Bylaw and Public Works Services, Service Initiative**

PURPOSE: To inform Council of a service initiative supported by the Corporate Services and Public Works Services Departments in response to increasing service requirements due to community growth and in acknowledgement of public input collected through the Bylaw Services Policy Review project and the “Your Courtenay, Your Voice Resident Survey”.

BACKGROUND:

At the August 30, 2023 regular Council Meeting, Council was presented with the outcomes of the Bylaw Services Policy Review project. To inform the development and update of the City of Courtenay Bylaw Policy the City engaged residents through a survey (online and in person) and conducted interviews with key community contributors. Similar engagement activity through the *Your Courtenay, Your Voice Resident Survey* sought input on priority and service areas in the City. In addition to the input solicited through engagement activities, as the City continues to grow, additional bylaw and maintenance resources are required both to sustain existing service levels and to meet the service expectations of Courtenay residents.

According to the Bylaw Services Policy engagement survey results, respondents shared the following perspectives:

- Bylaw enforcement contributes to a safer and more harmonious community (82%)
- That all bylaws should be actively enforced in our community (73%)
- It is reasonable to expect immediate action from Bylaw Services for all reported violations (68%)
- That it is important to allocate resources (human and technology) to bylaw enforcement (88%)
- Have experienced delays in receiving a response from the Bylaw Services division (28%)

According to the *Your Courtenay, Your Voice Resident Survey* results, 60% of respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with Bylaw Services, but 20% were not, with 22% responding as neutral to the question.

DISCUSSION:

To address service growth and resident expectations regarding bylaw services and urban issues across the City, staff will be augmenting operations by temporarily increasing bylaw services and public works response measures as outlined below.

Bylaw Services – 7 Day and Evening Service

Change: Beginning October 2023, the City will increase its bylaw officer compliment from three full-time officers to four. This increase will allow the City to provide bylaw services seven days a week and some evening shifts.

The growth in bylaw service demands are due to an increase in complaints most notably those related to parking, animal control, tree protection, sheltering, unsightly properties, boulevard maintenance and nuisance. In addition to complaint volume, new bylaws have been adopted by Council such as the amendment to the Nuisance Abatement Bylaw which resulted in new wood burning smoke regulation and enforcement requirements. Looking to the near future, Bylaw Services is also leading an update of the Parks Control Bylaw that will address a variety of issues including but not limited to permitting commercial park activities, sheltering, and smoking/vaping. Weekend and evening bylaw service will allow officers to raise awareness of new bylaw regulations and where needed, enforcement. Weekend and evening service is anticipated to improve officer response times. This temporary change in service is consistent with resident feedback which has indicated strong support for bylaw compliance activities.

Public Works Services

Change: Beginning October 2023, the City will shift from the planned reactive use of contracted services and will extend its retention of seasonal employees to effectively maintain the current or proactive service response level. This increase will allow the City to provide bylaw services with continued support and further maintain our collective community clean-up efforts all year round.

With the introduction of the Council supported Urban Issues service level in 2022, Public Works Services Department has been able to successfully deploy two dedicated seasonal employees to support of Bylaw Services Officers through the effective delivery of community clean-up efforts. This service level has enabled activities such as; daily cleanup of City Hall, City Parks and Greenspaces, site restoration, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and security improvements in our Downtown core.

These temporary employees are tasked annually to this work for approximately 20 hrs each per week (May – Oct). Following this seasonal work term, contracted services (JOMA Environmental) are typically retained and utilized to continue to support clean-up efforts, based on a reactive response or on an as and when needed basis, across the community between November and April. However, large scale site restorations continue to be provided by JOMA Environmental and in support for encampment site restoration works. That said, the fall/winter services level being reduced to purely reactive in nature means a reduction in restoration services and community clean-up efforts. This reduction results in an overall reduction in service delivery, thus reducing resident satisfaction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The 2023 financial implications to add a fourth bylaw officer from October 1st to December 21st is \$18,951.96. The 2024 financial implications to maintain a fourth bylaw officer from January 2023 to June 2023 is \$33,713.17. With a compliment of four bylaw officers, vacation and other vacancy coverage will be provided by regular full time staff through shift adjustments and when required, overtime.

Service impacts of the increase in officers and the provision of weekend and evening service will be reported to Council prior to Council's consideration of the 2024 budget. The Corporate Services Department can cover the cost of the 2023 financial impacts within the current budget. Budget implications for 2024 will be included in the 2024 budget for Council's consideration.

There are no 2023 financial implications within the Public Works Services Urban Issues budget as the current funding allocation for contracted services will be reallocated to support the extension of temporary staff, therefore this reallocation will result in a net zero budget impact. The 2024 financial implications to maintain

year round staffing will result in a net budget increase of ~\$53,400. Budget implications for 2024 will be included in the 2024 budget for Council’s consideration.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no administrative implications of the addition of a fourth bylaw officer, oversight and scheduling would be within the current operational workplan of the Bylaw Division.

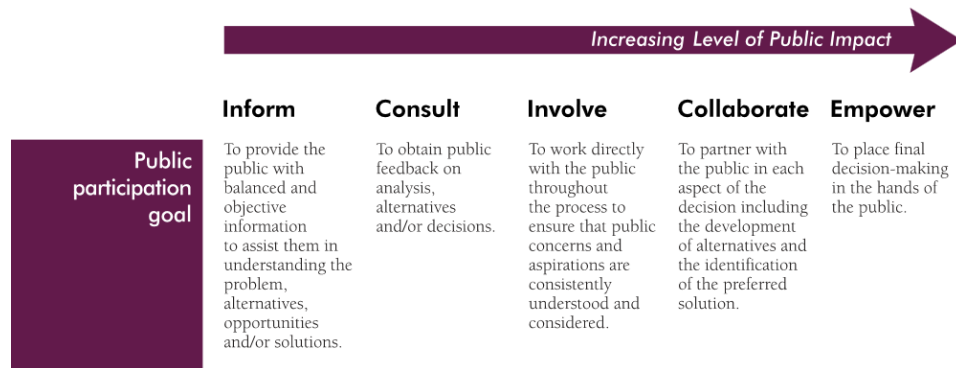
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priority:

- Organizational Well-Being and Sustainability - Ensure capacity to accommodate big change resulting from direct and indirect impacts to our community

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff have consulted, involved and will inform the public on service changes based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



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RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council receive the “Bylaw and Public Works Services, Service Initiative” briefing note.

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