CITY OF DUNCAN

Agenda
Special Council Meeting
Tuesday, January 23, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.
Council Chambers, City Hall, 200 Craig Street, Duncan, BC

Page #

1. Call to Order

This Joint Special Council Meeting is being hosted by the City of Duncan. This meeting is open to the public and will be streamed live on Youtube (search "City of Duncan") and archived for viewing on demand.

1.1. Introductions - Host - City of Duncan

Mayor Staples to introduce herself and the members of the Duncan Council.

1.2. Introductions - Guests - Municipality of North Cowichan

Mayor Douglas to introduce himself and the members of the North Cowichan Council.

2. Approval of Agenda

2.1. Approve Agenda

Host Council - call for approval

Guest Council - call for approval

That the January 23, 2024 Joint Special Council agenda between the City of Duncan and the Municipality of North Cowichan be approved, as circulated.

3. Business

3.1. City of Duncan and Municipality of North Cowichan Inter-Municipal Relationship Protocol **3 - 10**

The Inter-Municipal Relationship Protocol is attached to the agenda for information. A hard copy of the Protocol document will be circulated at the meeting for Council member signatures.

3.2. Trans-Canada Highway Corridor Management Plan Update

David Conway, Director, Subdivision and Environmental Services with the Municipality of North Cowichan, to provide an update on actions related to the Trans-Canada Highway Corridor Management Plan originally completed in 2014.

Host Council - call for adoption

Guest Council - call for adoption

***That** Council request that the province refresh the Trans-Canada Highway Corridor Management Plan, to be funded on a 1/3 basis.*

***That** the Councils for the City of Duncan and North Cowichan direct staff to prepare an implementation report, in collaboration, outlining which of the recommendations in the updated Highway-Corridor Management Plan can be accomplished over the next five years, including the resource and budget implications.*

3.3. Temporary Residential Use of Recreational Vehicles **11 - 18**

Host Council - call for adoption

Guest Council - call for adoption

***That** Council receive the January 23, 2024 "Temporary Residential Use of Recreational Vehicles" report from the City of Duncan Director of Planning and Sustainability for information only.*

3.4. Safer Community Plan Update **19 - 57**

Host Council - call for adoption

Guest Council - call for adoption

***That** Council receive the January 22, 2024 "Safer Community Plan Update" from the City of Duncan Manager of Building and Bylaw for information only.*

4. Question Period

4.1. Question Period

Question Period is an opportunity for the public to ask brief questions regarding the business discussed during the meeting. When invited by the Mayor of the City of Duncan, members of the public who are attending the meeting may step up to the podium to ask their question(s).

5. Adjournment

5.1. Adjourn

***That** the January 23, 2024 Joint Special Council meeting be adjourned at _____ pm.*

City of Duncan and Municipality of North Cowichan
Inter-Municipal Relationship Protocol

The City of Duncan and the Municipality of North Cowichan recognize the need to work together to create viable and sustainable communities. Their shared history, adjacent proximity, and general interdependence make it essential that they work together cooperatively. This Protocol is seen as an important tool to help each municipality effectively, efficiently and economically fulfill its mandated purposes and vision for the future. As well, it is hoped that the Protocol will foster a culture of cooperation, provide direction for the broader community, and serve as a foundation for future Councils to build on.

Both municipalities acknowledge that they are legislatively separate with autonomous decision-making authority. While each municipality has Its own distinctive political, administrative and jurisdictional realities, both municipalities see value in working together and wish to take advantage of opportunities to improve the well-being of their communities. By working together, the municipalities express the desire to rise above boundaries, parochialism, and politics for the economic, social, and environmental well-being of their citizens.

This Protocol is based on three main themes.

1. Promote Inter-municipal and Community Relationships

The Implementation of this Inter-municipal Relationship Protocol will serve as a tool to strengthen inter-community relationships by promoting respect, trust and commitment, hallmarks of any good relationship. This Protocol will hold neighbouring Councils responsible and accountable to one another and to the broader community at large and will also set an example for future Councils and other community-based organizations to follow.

2. Commit to Communication

This Protocol calls on elected officials and municipal staff to commit to improve their communication practices with one another. Good communication will facilitate progress on important Inter-community initiatives, by promoting understanding and encouraging mutually acceptable solutions. This will lead to improvements in services, laws and other matters for public benefit. It will also enhance the ability of both municipalities to communicate with the public.

3. Define How Problems Will be Solved

A strong relationship and good communication does not mean that all matters will be agreed upon. In some cases, each community's unique values, goals, beliefs and perspectives may preclude agreement on specific initiatives or issues. However, a strong relationship and pattern of communication will minimize these instances and foster the capacity and commitment of each municipality to solve problems amicably and address challenges as they arise.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of Council

Each Council retains the ability and responsibility to make decisions on behalf of its residents. By signing this Protocol, each Council demonstrates to its administration, staff and public that it recognizes the value of the two municipalities working together. By their thoughtful support and active participation in inter-community dialogue and problem solving, Council members set a positive example for their administration and staff.

Both Mayors' enthusiastic support for this Protocol, and cooperative working relationship with one another, will serve as an example and powerful catalyst for the benefits that can be anticipated to flow from this Protocol.

The Role of Administration

While the elected officials are expected to lead by example and provide direction, this Protocol requires that administrative and operational staff also understand, appreciate and adhere to the principles underlying this Protocol. Administration, through the direction of the Chief Administrative Officers (CAO), will be the primary conduit through which the Protocol is executed. Administration brings continuity to the relationship and will be responsible to ensure effective communication at all levels.

All inter-municipal Council-to-Council information will flow through and be managed by the CAOs who will also oversee management and implementation of combined meetings of both Councils. As the need arises, the CAOs may assign members of their staff to take the lead on various projects and initiatives.

The Role of Staff

Staff at all levels will be expected to implement the decisions and directions that flow from this Protocol. In doing so, staff will take direction from their respective administration and work cooperatively with their municipal counterparts to implement decisions and directions in a timely and efficient manner. Staff will also be expected to inform their managers about opportunities and challenges that require attention for the mutual benefit of both municipalities.

The Protocols

Both municipalities commit to build an effective and professional working relationship at the elected, administrative and operational level. Each municipality will ensure that all members of their senior staff are kept aware of the function of their counterparts in the other municipality. Appreciation of the need to work well with their counterpart will be regarded as a core competency for each senior staff member.

To give this Protocol the best chance to succeed, each municipality will:

1. Invite future elected officials to sign the Protocol to demonstrate commitment to the Protocol.
2. Ensure that all future elected officials and senior staff receive information about the importance of communication and collaboration between the municipalities.
3. Strive to keep the other informed of important plans and changes within their municipality.
4. Explore common interests and opportunities to collaborate.
5. Look for more opportunities to share information, learn from and respect the other.
6. Involve each other in common celebrations and ceremonies.
7. Consider how decisions will affect one another and when mutual dialogue is appropriate.
8. Strive to make decisions that are not at the expense of the other.
9. Explore ways to deliver services more effectively, efficiently and economically through joint initiatives, or through agreement with one another or others.
10. Coordinate preparation of joint media releases through the CAOs.
11. Promote Duncan and North Cowichan as a desirable area in which to live, work and play.
12. Hold joint meetings of the CAOs and one or more applicable staff at least twice a year separate from any regional meetings of the CAOs.
13. Hold joint meetings of Councils at least twice a year (as outlined in the attached Joint Meeting Guidelines) to discuss mutual concerns, assess on-going and future initiatives, and monitor implementation of the Protocol.
14. Seek to resolve problems in a timely, inexpensive, informal, and cooperative manner (subject to Part 9, Division 3, of the *Community Charter*)

Conflict Resolution

Both municipalities recognize the need for a joint understanding about how to address misunderstandings and disagreements, and want to resolve issues:

- At the earliest opportunity and at the point closest to where problems originate.
- In a swift, inexpensive and uncomplicated way.
- Using a clear procedural pathway to a solution.
- To maintain a smooth working relationship even when disagreement survives.

It is acknowledged that the processes in this Protocol are in addition to and do not replace processes and remedies provided in legislation or under existing agreements between the municipalities. However, in the event of an inconsistency between a provision in this Protocol and any other policy, the provisions of this Protocol shall prevail.

If an elected official, administrator, or any staff person from either municipality believes an intention or commitment under this Protocol has been overlooked, or there is a disagreement that is in need of resolution, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the CAO. The CAO shall inform their counterpart who will investigate and, if it appears that an intention or commitment was overlooked or an issue needs resolution, the matter may be resolved directly between the municipalities through informal problem-solving discussions involving the CAOs and applicable staff members.

If the matter identified is not resolved through informal discussions, the municipalities agree to address it using the following processes:

1. The municipalities will identify appropriate personnel and/or Council members (negotiators) who are knowledgeable about the issue and those persons will work to find a mutually acceptable solution through negotiation.

   Those in the negotiation will seek an *integrated outcome* in the decisions they make. An integrated outcome is one in which the municipalities elect to work together, integrating their resources, originality and expertise.

   The municipalities will fully explore the issue with a view to seeking an outcome that accommodates, rather than compromises, the interests of all concerned. In that regard, negotiators will seek to:

   (a) Clearly articulate their interests and the interests of their municipality;

   (b) Understand the interests of other municipality whether or not they are in agreement with them; and,

   (c) Identify solutions that meet the interests of the other municipality as well as those of their own.

2. If the issue cannot be resolved through negotiation, either municipality may apply to a dispute resolution officer for assistance in resolving the dispute as outlined in Part 9, Division 3 - Dispute

Resolution of the *Community Charter*.

3. Although the municipalities have identified the attributes of negotiation as a preferential process to be encouraged, the municipalities may, by agreement, proceed directly to a mediated process (dispute resolution officer) without first exhausting an unassisted negotiation process.

4. If the issue is still unresolved after negotiations and assistance from the dispute resolution officer, and the issue is the subject of an existing agreement that includes the option of arbitration, the arbitration provisions of the agreement may be utilized as detailed in the agreement.

The Commitment

By signing this Protocol both municipalities acknowledge their commitment to, and agreement with, the spirit, intent, and content of the Protocol. Further, their signatures demonstrate such commitment and agreement, internally to their management and staff, and externally to the public, particularly their constituents, both residential and business, and other governments. While this Protocol represents a long-term symbolic commitment to inter-municipal cooperation, each municipality retains the right to withdraw from the Protocol by providing the other with 30-days written notice.

Signed this **29th day of September 2023** in Duncan, British Columbia, Canada.

For the City of Duncan:	**For the Municipality of North Cowichan:**
Michelle Staples, Mayor	Rob Douglas, Mayor
Garry Bruce, Councillor	Mike Caljouw, Councillor
Jenni Capps, Councillor	Bruce Findlay, Councillor
Tom Duncan, Councillor	Chris Istace, Councillor
Mike McKinlay, Councillor	Christopher Justice, Councillor
Stacy Middlemiss, Councillor	Tek Manhas, Councillor
Carol Newington, Councillor	Debra Toporowski, Councillor

Joint Meeting Guidelines

To promote a consistent and shared flow of Information from inter-municipal meetings, the following joint meeting guidelines, as adopted by both Councils, will apply.

Purpose of meetings

- Discuss significant issues affecting both municipalities.
- Maintain an open dialogue between Councils.
- Foster municipal purposes (see s. 7 of the Community Charter).

Frequency of meetings

- Twice a year (targeting spring and fall).
- Specific dates and times to be determined.
- Additional meetings if necessary.

Location of meetings

Alternate between North Cowichan and Duncan City Hall.

Type of meetings

Committee-of-the Whole meetings

- Concurrent Council meetings (optional and topic dependent).

Meeting Procedure

In accordance with the Council Procedure Bylaw of the host Council.

Clerical responsibility

Corporate Officer of the host Council.

Agenda Preparation

- Each Council may submit up to 3 topics for the agenda, which must be generally supported by the majority of the Council putting forward the agenda item. Final approval of the agenda topics will be determined by both Mayors.
- Each topic should be accompanied by a brief 1–2-page background report describing the issue, options and providing a recommendation.
- Agendas will be prepared and issued by the Corporate Officer of the host Council once approved by the host Mayor and CAO.

Minutes & Follow-up

- Minutes will be prepared by the Corporate Officer of the host Council.
- Minutes will be reviewed by both Councils and approved by the host Council.
- Follow-up tasks will be coordinated by the CAO of the host Council.
- Related Council decisions will be made by each Council, as required.

Information Only

To:	Peter de Verteuil, CAO	**File No:**	0550
Meeting Date:	January 23, 2024	**Submission Date:**	September 12, 2023
From:	Kyle Young, Director of Planning and Sustainability		
Subject:	Temporary Residential Use of Recreational Vehicles		

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive the January 23, 2024 "Temporary Residential Use of Recreational Vehicles" report from the City of Duncan Director of Planning and Sustainability for information only.

BACKGROUND:

At the July 5, 2022 joint Duncan – North Cowichan Council meeting, the following resolution was passed:

> *That Council direct staff to research options for the regulation of people living temporarily in recreational vehicles due to the housing affordability crisis and report back to both Duncan and North Cowichan Councils at a future joint meeting.*

The previous staff report is attached as **APPENDIX A** for information.

ANALYSIS:

The City's zoning bylaw prohibits the residential use of a recreational vehicle, except in the following circumstance:

> *"Temporary accommodation in a recreational vehicle is permitted during the construction of a building or structure pursuant to a Building Permit that has not expired, on the parcel that is the subject of the Building Permit, but the accommodation in the recreational vehicle must be discontinued before the issuance of any occupancy permit for the building or structure."*

This regulation presumes that it is acceptable to reside in a recreational vehicle over multiple years in at least one circumstance.

Recreational vehicles – travel trailers, fifth wheels, motorhomes, truck campers, etc. – are designed and intended to be used for recreation on a short term or seasonal basis. However, since many recreational vehicles have kitchen, washroom, and sleeping facilities, they are also often used for long term habitation instead of recreation. One potential consequence of long term habitation of recreational vehicles over more than three seasons is the increased likelihood of mold growth which can have adverse human health impacts if not properly managed.

Sometimes long term or multi-year habitation of recreational vehicles occurs in campgrounds, resorts, or recreational vehicle parks with different amenities and services provided, including roads, water, fire protection, sewage disposal, garbage collection, and administration offices. Long term habitation of recreational vehicles also takes place in certain bare land strata subdivisions (with appropriate zoning in place) where individuals would own the land on which their recreational vehicle is parked. It is also not uncommon for people to reside in a recreational vehicle on single-unit residential properties. More recently, there have been an increased number of instances where recreational vehicles have been continuously parked and occupied unlawfully on public land.

Generally speaking, residential use of recreational vehicles in campgrounds, resorts, recreational vehicle parks, and subdivisions that are designed for this use and that have appropriate access, fire protection, water, sewage disposal, and garbage collection services is less of a concern. Residential use of recreational vehicles in a group setting outside of these facilities (e.g. private property, private parking lots) without appropriate services in place can be problematic and staff do not recommend authorizing this on a temporary or permanent basis.

The temporary, short term residential use of recreational vehicles on single-unit residential properties might be acceptable as an alternative to secondary dwelling units like suites and carriage houses. The concerns staff have heard regarding this include: noise complaints, privacy, aesthetics, how water and sewage disposal are being addressed, placement of propone tanks, and the increased likelihood of mold growth if occupied for more than three consecutive seasons.

Parking recreational vehicles on public land unlawfully raises a number of concerns, including displacement of other public uses like parking, community aesthetics, sewage disposal, garbage disposal, liability, and access for emergency services. Staff recommend continuing the current approach of taking the appropriate enforcement actions necessary to ensure that recreational vehicles are not continuously parked or stored on public land.

The mechanism to permit the temporary residential use of a recreational vehicle on private land is a temporary use permit. The City's Official Community Plan designates the entire municipality as an area in which Council may issue a temporary use permit, subject to the applicant undertaking public consultation and the provision of detailed implementation information. Temporary use permits may be issued for a term of up to three years and renewed once for up to an additional three years or the term of the original permit, whichever is shorter. Following expiry of a temporary use permit and the renewal, there is nothing preventing someone from applying for a new temporary use permit for the same use at the same location. Prior to issuance of a temporary use permit, the City must provide notice to nearby property owners and tenants and advertise in two consecutive issues of the newspaper. The current application fee for a temporary use permit is $2,500, $1,100 of which is to cover the newspaper advertising costs.

A person can already apply for a temporary use permit to allow the residential use of a recreational vehicle on their residential lot and those applications would be considered by Council. Council could streamline this process, but in the absence of an alternative notice bylaw, the fee should remain high enough to cover the statutory notice and advertising costs (at a minimum) for a temporary use permit application. Streamlining the temporary use permit application process could include things like eliminating the requirement for public consultation or implementation information, delegating

authority for this type of temporary use permit to staff, or adopting an alternative notice bylaw.

Economic Development Cowichan has been working to develop a workforce housing strategy for the Cowichan Valley. Following community engagement, Economic Development Cowichan produced a report on the findings entitled "What We Heard – Engagement Round #2". The following is an excerpt from the report:

> *"Temporary Use Permits*
>
> *Most participants felt that non-conforming housing is already widely in use in Cowichan, including recreational vehicles (RVs) and tiny homes. Since they are not permitted, there are no regulations for health and safety in place. Temporary Use Permits (TUPs) would allow such regulations to be put in place, and are a mechanism to legalize what is already happening across the region, increasing housing security for people living in these situations. Participants suggested that, at the very least, temporary resolutions should be put in place to limit enforcement of non-confirming dwellings where health and safety regulations are being met. However, it was acknowledged that, if these housing forms are permitted on a temporary basis, it may be very difficult to disallow them at a later date.*
>
> *Taking a longer-term view, participants noted that many Cowichan residents desire a rural lifestyle, and in a community context, which results in increasing popularity of RVs, tiny homes, and other housing forms. Suggestions included the creation of zoning for tiny home communities and permanent campgrounds, increasing density on campgrounds, and allowing composting toilets and other alternative systems. It was also noted that RV design and technology is advancing, allowing for four season occupation, and that some park models are permitted as long-term housing.*
>
> *An important distinction made by participants regarding tiny homes and other non-traditional forms of housing is that these options are often very well constructed and represent a lifestyle choice as opposed to a decision made out of desperation."*

Staff are not aware of any proposals to permit or regularize the residential use of recreational vehicles on residential properties in Duncan, but staff have responded to complaints regarding people living in recreational vehicles. Given that there appears to be very few issues with, or interest in, the residential use of recreational vehicles in the City, staff are not recommending any changes to the regulatory framework for recreational vehicles at this point.

IMPLICATIONS:

Financial:	N/A
Policy/Legislation:	N/A
Strategic Priority:	N/A
Sustainability:	N/A
Communication:	N/A

Staffing Implications: Bylaw enforcement resources are required to respond to complaints received regarding the residential use of recreation vehicles.

ALTERNATE OPTIONS:

As directed by Council.

APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A July 5, 2022 Staff Report – Regulation of People Living Temporarily in Recreational Vehicles

Request for Decision

To:	Peter de Verteuil, CAO	**File No:**	0565
Meeting Date:	July 5, 2022	**Submission Date:**	June 27, 2022
From:	Paige MacWilliam, Director of Corporate Services		
Subject:	Regulation of People Living Temporarily in Recreational Vehicles		

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive the report on the regulation of people living temporarily in recreational vehicles from the City of Duncan Director of Corporate Services, for information only.

BACKGROUND:

On April 11, 2022, the City received a letter from Minister Simmonds of the Duncan United Church regarding the plight of people living temporarily in recreational vehicles (RVs) (appendix A). Staff advised Minister Simmonds that this issue is challenging to address as overnight parking requires appropriate garbage and washroom facilities and can result in enforcement challenges (appendix B). At the May 16, 2022, Council meeting, staff were directed to add the topic of people living temporarily in RVs to the joint Duncan and North Cowichan Council meeting agenda.

ANALYSIS:

Because of the escalating housing affordability crisis throughout the Cowichan Valley, people are increasingly resorting to living in their vehicles. In the City's Zoning Bylaw No. 3166, 2017, residential use of RVs is prohibited in all zones. In accordance with the City's Bylaw Enforcement Policy, Zoning Bylaw contraventions are addressed on a complaints basis:

The City's approach to bylaw enforcement is primarily complaint based. The City does not have the resources to proactively monitor all areas of the City to confirm compliance with all potentially applicable bylaws.

Parking on the streets is enforced through the City's Streets and Parking Regulations Bylaw No. 3101, 2014. Parking enforcement is conducted proactively, as staff time permits, and RVs are required to follow the posted time limits.

The City does not currently have any active enforcement action files regarding people residing in RVs; however, it is very likely that this is occurring within City boundaries as well as in neighbouring jurisdictions. For example, on February 2nd, the CVRD's electoral areas service committee received a bylaw enforcement update indicating that the number of people living in RVs in electoral areas was on the rise in 2021.

As indicated in the correspondence to Minister Simmonds, permitting overnight camping in RVs, even temporarily, would be challenging as appropriate garbage and washroom facilities would be required.

Other local governments have explored options for regulating people living in RVs. For example:

- Ucluelet is piloting a streamlined Temporary Use Permit intake and review process for a temporary seasonal working housing pilot project. In this example, private property owners can apply to allow RV parking on their property for up to 6 months.
- Squamish has been working to increase enforcement to address overnight camping in public places by increasing the fines to $10,000 and authorizing staff to remove tents or vehicles from unauthorized places.
- Canmore is piloting a "Safe Park Program" permitting seasonal workers who reside in their vehicles to park in designated spaces for a $10 per night fee.

Because this issue crosses jurisdictional boundaries, it is beneficial that any effort to either increase or decrease enforcement or regulation should be done regionally.

IMPLICATIONS:

Financial:	None at this time.
Policy/Legislation:	Zoning Bylaw No. 66, 2017 Streets and Parking Regulation Bylaw No. 3101, 2014 Bylaw Enforcement Policy, 2019
Strategic Priority:	PRIORITY #8: Increase partnerships and connections with the community and neighbouring jurisdictions.
Sustainability:	N/A
Communication:	N/A
Staffing Implications:	The Corporate Services Department oversees bylaw enforcement for the City.

ALTERNATE OPTION:

1. **<u>That</u> Council table the regulation of people living temporarily in recreational vehicles to a future joint meeting.**

2. **<u>That</u> Council direct staff to research options for the regulation of people living temporarily in recreational vehicles due to the housing affordability crisis and report back to both Duncan and North Cowichan Councils at a future joint meeting.**

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – 2022-04-11 Correspondence from Minister Simmonds Re People Living Temporarily in Recreational Vehicles
Appendix B – 2022-04-12 Response from City staff to Minister Simmonds Re People Living Temporarily in Recreational Vehicles

The United Church of Canada

Duncan United Church

246 Ingram Street,
Duncan, British Columbia, Canada V9L 1P4
(250) 746-6043, (F) (250) 746-6785
admin@duncanunited.org www.duncanunited.org

Minister: Keith Simmonds
Minister of Pastoral Care: Rev. Greg Darjes
Administration & Outreach Coordinator: Linda Evans
Children & Youth Ministry: Sarah Prestwich
Music Director: Connie Masson

Keith Simmonds
Minister, Duncan United Church
246 Ingram Street
Duncan BC V9L 4C7

April 11, 2022

Mayor Michelle Staples and Council
City of Duncan
200 Craig St
Duncan BC V9L 1W3

Dear Mayor Staples and Council,

People living temporarily in Recreational Vehicles

I am writing to ask that council consider the plight of persons living in Recreational Vehicles as the ongoing shortage of affordable housing makes it impossible for them to find a better option. Current by-laws do not allow people to live in RVs unless at our overfull and costly RV Parks and this is causing a hardship to many.

Parking lots (including our own) are being sought out as overnight resting places by some folk with no other housing options. People who are working and/or living on disability incomes with no other options in today's housing market. We wonder if the city might consider supporting that use. We would be happy to come to council for a conversation about our experience and to gain more knowledge about council's efforts. We know council has done a lot of work on temporary housing and supportive housing and would appreciate the opportunity to learn more from you.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Keith Simmonds, Minister
Duncan United Church

CITY of DUNCAN

April 12, 2022

Keith Simmonds
Minister, Duncan United Church
246 Ingram Street
Duncan, BC V9L 4C7

Dear Minister Simmonds,

RE: People living temporarily in Recreational Vehicles

Thank you for taking the time to write to Duncan City Council regarding people living temporarily in recreational vehicles. With the ongoing housing affordability crisis, people seeking overnight parking for RVs and other vehicles is likely to continue. However, as you note in your letter, the City's current Zoning Bylaw and Streets & Parking Regulation Bylaw do not permit overnight parking. This is an issue that local governments everywhere are challenged to address as overnight parking require appropriate garbage and washroom facilities and can result in enforcement challenges.

As there is no doubt that overnight camping in RVs and vehicles is increasing throughout the Cowichan Valley, I will ask Duncan City Council to consider including this topic at next joint meeting with North Cowichan's Council, to take place sometime this spring. In the meantime, your letter, along with this reply, will be shared with Council and senior staff members for their information.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact City Hall, 250-746-6126.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Paige MacWilliam,
Director of Corporate Services

CC: Duncan City Council

Information Only

To:	Peter de Verteuil, CAO	**File No:**	7500
Meeting Date:	January 23, 2024	**Submission Date:**	September 14, 2023
From:	Rachel Hastings, Manager of Building and Bylaw Services		
Subject:	Safer Community Plan Update		

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive the January 23, 2024 "Safer Community Plan Update" from the City of Duncan Manager of Building and Bylaw for information only.

BACKGROUND:

An analysis of the Safer Community Plan (SCP) provides an assessment of the plan's effectiveness, accomplishments, and challenges. The Safer Community Plan (the "plan"), which was initiated four years ago, has been actively implemented with collaborative efforts from City of Duncan, North Cowichan, Cowichan Tribes, and RCMP. The initiatives in the plan are meant to enhance visibility, deter criminal activities, and provide a reassuring presence for residents and businesses. Here are some key points and phases of the Safer Community Plan's implementation:

Phase One - Implementation (August to December 2019):

1. **Corridor Safety Office Setup**:
    - Leased and renovated the Corridor Safety Office (CSO) at 490 Trans-Canada Highway, which provided a centralized hub from which to operate. Costs were shared equally between Duncan and North Cowichan.

2. **Security Ambassador Contractors**:
    - Blackbird Security was the successful proponent for the Security Ambassadors for enhanced daytime patrols (the plan called for them to "wake up" the streets) throughout the Trans-Canada Highway corridor area, from Boys Road to Beverly Street.
    - Subsequently expanded patrol areas to include the Overdose Prevention Site on Ypres Street, in partnership with Island Health, as well as an extension to the patrol hours into the evening demonstrated responsiveness to community needs.

3. **Safer Working Group**:
    - Established the Safer Working Group (SWG) to foster collaboration among Duncan, North Cowichan, Cowichan Tribes, and RCMP with the purpose of:
        1. To identify, prioritize and coordinate appropriate actions within the jurisdictions' operational mandates that will reduce crime, reduce public disorder, and enhance public safety.
        2. To integrate public safety and enforcement initiatives with social responses as appropriate through a collaborative and cooperative approach.

3. Where desired actions may exceed established operational mandates, provide advice and recommendations to Council(s).
4. To provide periodic reports to Council(s) on operational actions and progress with on-going matters.

- Bi-weekly meetings held during implementation, transitioned to monthly meetings.
- The CVRD provided direct radio communication which established consistent communication among partners.
- Some SWG representatives participated regularly in the Community Action Team meetings.
- SWG distributed a “Who to Call” brochure clarifying who to contact to respond to various concerns to eliminate confusion and reduce call volume to the RCMP. The "Who to Call" brochure and outreach efforts to businesses and residents within the corridor were positive steps toward engaging the community in the plan. It was meant to empower community members with information on how to report issues and seek assistance while fostering a sense of ownership and involvement in maintaining public safety.

4. **Training for Patrollers and Security Ambassadors**:
   - Staff received training in mental health, conflict de-escalation, and trauma informed approaches, which showcased a commitment to equipping staff with essential skills.
   - Various service organizations provided staff and Security Ambassadors an overview of their client services, which highlighted a multi-agency approach to community safety.

5. **Patroller Staffing**:
   - The plan recommended that Duncan add .5 position to focus on the highway. Duncan added two dedicated .5 positions.
   - The plan recommended that North Cowichan hire one bylaw officer in addition to the two current bylaw officers already in place and equally divide additional duties between them. North Cowichan added one bylaw officer.
   - Duncan and North Cowichan adhered to or exceeded the plan's recommendations for staffing levels, which demonstrated commitment to enhancing safety and enabled sufficient resources for staff from both jurisdictions to patrol together.

6. **Bike Patrols**:
   - Duncan and North Cowichan staff were equipped with bikes, although not part of the plan, which proved successful in increasing visibility and efficiency.
   - Security Ambassadors were also required to patrol on bikes to further enhance efficiency.

7. **Reviewing and Enhancing the Plan:**
   - Discussions took place with various organizations, including Cowichan Tribes and the Highway Corridor Business Council, which demonstrated an inclusive approach to reviewing and enhancing the plan's boundaries and focus.
   - The plan also called for discussions of addition/changes to community programs that could compliment the work but are not part of local government operations, including exploring partnerships with the Clean Up Team to expand the service hours, partnerships with businesses on evening security, sites and budgets for washrooms (porta potties),

and providing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design reviews.

Phase Two - Refining and Reporting (January 2020 - Onward):

The City recognizes the challenge of measuring the success of the Safer Community Plan without baseline statistics or the continued collection of proactive contacts and calls for service within the Highway Corridor.

1. **Coordinated Short-Term Late Night and Early Morning Patrols**:
   - For two weeks in March 2020, coordinated late-night and early morning patrols addressed specific community needs. Although not part of the overall plan the need for coordinated flexibility was identified and actioned by Duncan, North Cowichan and RCMP to disrupt negative public disorder.
   - Collaboration among different agencies showcased a unified approach to safety.

2. **Who to Call Brochure**:
   - The brochure was updated and distributed again in 2022, to add Community Policing contact information, which ensured that it remains current and provides accurate contact information for relevant agencies and services.

3. **Security Ambassadors:**
   - In 2022, another RFP was issued for the Security Ambassadors at the conclusion of the Blackbird Security contract. Footprints Security was the successful proponent. The contract has recently been renewed for one year and is being administered by North Cowichan.

4. **Enhanced Garbage and Sharps Collection:**
   - The plan included: “consider ways to collaboratively address the problem of garbage, waste and needles left in the community”. Following a successful year-and-a-half operation funded by a provincial grant from 2020 - 2022, the Mobile Peer Clean-up Crew program is now sustained through a 50/50 funding arrangement between Duncan and North Cowichan, and some funding from Island Health. Lookout Housing and Health Society recently became the service partner, with the contract currently being administered by Duncan.

5. **Community Engagement:**
   - Regular participation in Community Action Team meetings has shown ongoing community engagement and has established better communication and coordination between various agencies, leading to a more comprehensive and effective approach to community safety.
   - Updates to North Cowichan and Duncan Council meetings ensured transparency and accountability.
   - A survey of residents, employees and business owners was conducted in 2020, demonstrating a commitment to gathering feedback and improving the plan.
   - Staff continue to attend the Community Advisory committees for both the Wellness and Recovery Center on York Street and the Village at 610 Trunk Road.

6. **Consent to Enter Agreements:**
   - A joint initiative between the SWG partners saw the creation and implementation of the Consent to Enter Agency Agreements completed by property owners to enable the RCMP to

enforce against trespassers when a complainant is not present. In addition to the agreements, signage in conformance with the *Trespass Act* was provided to property owners who participated in the initiative.

7. **Bike Patrols**:
   - Duncan and North Cowichan conducting bike patrols together ceased in 2022, instead focusing on our own jurisdictions.

8. **Corridor Safety Office:**
   - The CSO faced challenges in its utilization, partly due to operational issues and the impacts of COVID-19 and as was not intended to become a full-service office with clerical support.
   - The Cowichan Community Policing office on Beverly Street opened in 2022 as an alternative resource for public assistance and community safety programs.
   - Both Duncan and North Cowichan Councils decided to close the CSO in 2022 and reallocate resources to other initiative, such as the Enhanced Sharps Collection program.

9. **Safer Working Group:**
   - The Safer Working Group has shifted away from coordinating actions within each organizations' operational mandates, instead it has become an opportunity for partners to share information about issues occurring in each jurisdiction.

Staff Accomplishments:

Staff demonstrated dedication to implementing the plan by successfully setting up the Security Ambassadors, coordinating patrols, providing essential training, and engaging with the community. The plan recommended an increase in bylaw enforcement staffing levels, and this has been exceeded with additional personnel.

Staffs' involvement in various regional committees, such as the Community Action Team, Cowichan Valley Integrated Response Team, and Crisis Intervention Committee, demonstrates a commitment to addressing broader social and public safety issues.

The implementation of proactive measures such as bike patrols, daytime patrols, nighttime patrols (Duncan), and evening Security Ambassador patrols, in partnership with Island Health, demonstrates a commitment to addressing community safety issues. Staff have shown adaptability by responding to changing circumstances within the Corridor and addressed these issues by increasing evening patrols, collaborating with Island Health, and continuing bike patrols 6 days a week to enhance visibility and effectiveness.

Next phase of the Safer Community Plan:

While the Safer Community Plan has made significant progress in enhancing public safety and reducing RCMP calls for service in some parts of the TCH corridor, there have been challenges in measuring success. The plan has led to increased staffing levels and budget allocations to address ongoing issues in the community. The significant strides taken to enhance community safety are shown through the Security Ambassadors, expansion of patrol services, and community engagement efforts. However,

challenges related to the toxic drug and housing affordability crises and the need for continued collaboration among stakeholders remain. The plan's flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances are positive indicators of its ongoing effectiveness.

IMPLICATIONS:

Financial:	N/A
Policy/Legislation:	Community Charter – Section 260 {Enforcement Powers}
	Bylaw Enforcement Policy
Strategic Priority:	Goal – strong community connections and a safe, healthy community
Sustainability:	N/A
Communication:	N/A
Staffing Implications:	The development and implementation of the Safer Community has been a very large undertaking. However, it addresses a strategic priority of Council.

ALTERNATE OPTION:

That Council refer the Safer Community Plan update to a Committee of the Whole meeting for further discussion.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Safer Community Plan
Appendix B – 2020-09-08 Safer Community Plan Update
Appendix C – 2021-02-16 Safer Community Plan Update
Appendix D – 2022-03-21 Safer Community Plan Update

June 13th., 2019

Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer
Municipality of North Cowichan

Peter De Verteuil
Chief Administrative Officer
City of Duncan

Re: Municipality of North Cowichan and City of Duncan – Safer Community Plan – Recommended Actions

Introduction

Thank you for this opportunity to submit the Recommended Actions in this Safer Community Plan (SCP). We have now as of June 6th. completed the Stakeholder Review part of the process. This review was by way of a group meeting with 24 of the original 30 interviewees able to attend and each give their overview comments to the larger group. I thank these Stakeholder attendees for their commitment to this process of moving forward to address the importance of a Safer Community and working together towards that goal.

I'd like to introduce additional comments in the SCP as a result of this Stakeholder input – both are found under Recommended Action #1 Safer Working Group – External Partnerships: 1) Future discussion with Cowichan Tribes as to their sitting on SWG and participating in the work of the Corridor Safety Office (CSO) and 2) Establishing linkage between the SWG and the Cowichan Community Action Team (CAT) which works with matters of substance use, the opioid crisis and issues related to mental health and homelessness. Both of these comments are described under Recommended Action #1 Safer Working Group – External Partners.

The neighbouring municipalities of the Municipality of North Cowichan and the City of Duncan ("the Communities" or the "Local Governments" [LG]), like many other municipalities, are faced with challenges as they deal with crime and public-disorder matters occurring in their respective communities.

To be successful, this SCP needs to include many stakeholders, including mayors and city councils, First Nations, the RCMP, LG departments, provincial ministries, area

businesses, health and social services and local neighbourhoods—all are vital to achieving the common goal of having a safer community.

Your collaborative and respectful relationships with the Cowichan Tribes brings with it a shared concern for the effects crime and public disorder are having on all people—and helps provide a way to move forward together in dealing with the emerging challenges arising from homelessness, poverty, mental health and substance use, crime and public disorder.

While listening to your community speak, I was reminded of the fact that homelessness is not just the result of mental illness and substance use. It is increasing as a result of poverty. This fact is evident in the diversity of the people who are on the street.

Similar to what is occurring in North Cowichan and Duncan, many communities across the province are now sharing their concerns regarding the rising levels of homelessness and public disorder. Many communities report that a rise in homelessness and public disorder began approximately two years ago—a rise that coincides with the opioid crisis and increasing signs of poverty.

Communities will need to face these emerging challenges together given their shared boundaries. Crime and public disorder do not take any notice of which side of the highway they are on or what community they are in.

Although I focus to a large extent on the crime and public-disorder aspects of addressing rising community concern, I want to say clearly that long-term actions to address these concerns will be best achieved through community support for the work being done by the health and social service agencies, and that the future availability of housing is integral to reducing crime and public disorder in all its forms.

Although this report deals specifically with an area known as the Highway Corridor, the specifics of the report and the recommended actions are meant to give the Communities tools they can adapt to address public disorder occurring elsewhere.

The key is to create a new organizational capacity and framework to address community public safety concerns in a variety of circumstances. In the case of the Communities, it starts with the Highway Corridor, but its impact will have further value through building partnerships among local governments, the police, social and health agencies and the business community.

Our ability to respectfully partner with those having differing security and social perspectives is key to successfully developing and implementing an effective SCP. Not only are the police important to lessening crime and disorder, but increased municipal efforts are also required as is the successful delivery of health and social services.

We are in this together for the betterment of all community members. We want to improve the situation for neighbourhoods, social services and businesses as well as for people who are street entrenched, dealing with poverty and dealing with mental illness and substance use.

Reducing crime and public disorder is a community problem and requires a community solution.

The writer interviewed thirty (30+) people in this process, including elected officials, First Nations staff, LG staff, RCMP, fire department staff, business owners, citizens, school officials, service providers, social services providers and healthcare professionals.

I wish to submit recommendations regarding actions that can be taken to lessen the impact of crime and disorder occurring in the Highway Corridor specifically and in the community generally.

Foreword

It is difficult to make recommendations for all the factors that can influence a rise or fall in crime or public disorder. Therefore, this report should be viewed as a submission that offers recommendations based on experience addressing similar factors that are occurring in the Communities, but not giving a guarantee of outcomes.

The SCP is intended to be action-oriented and to provide specific actions to respond to identified issues. This will be evident in the recommendations.

The Communities will need to weigh the benefits of the proposed SCP options as they consider costs, budgets, goals and future developments.

This report is not intended as any form of legal advice.

Recommended Actions

Recommended Action #1: Joint LG – Safer Working Group 4

Recommended Action #2: Corridor Safety Office 8

Recommended Action #3: Impact on Business and the Highway Corridor 12
Recommended Action #4: Health and Social Service Roles 13
Recommended Action #5: RCMP Crime Reduction – Crime Analyst 17
Recommended Action #6: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design 18
Recommended Action #7: Dealing with Problem Properties 20
Resourcing Considerations: Staffing/Office – Corridor Safety Office 22

Recommended Action #1: Joint LG – Safer Working Group

That the Communities jointly align LG staff and RCMP resources to create a Safer Working Group in order to coordinate actions to address crime and disorder occurring in the community.

That the Safer Working Group guides the operations of the Corridor Safety Office highlighted in Recommendation #4.

That the Communities consider harmonizing municipal bylaws that can lessen the impact from crime and public disorder, including those dealing with nuisance properties, overnight camping, drinking in public, littering and nuisance activities.

The SWG will serve as a permanent working and advisory body. It will be responsible for providing advice and/or making recommendations to councils and LG staff on matters related to crime, public disorder and safety within the Communities.

Crime and public disorder are of rising community concern, and the Communities will need to collaborate closely to address these issues. Closer coordination and communication can be achieved through the creation of a single SWG. This group will coordinate actions between internal LG departments and the RCMP, which will allow for their more effective joint engagement on matters regarding crime and disorder.

The SWG will also provide joint mayors and councils, senior LG staff and the RCMP detachment commander with an operational arm they can utilize when crime and disorder matters arise that are a concern within the community.

This includes, but is not limited to, developing operational responses to the following:

- Addressing community-wide and corridor-security issues
- Improving the protection of parks and facilities

- Developing the coordination and community between LG/RCMP enforcement personnel
- Integrating enforcement and health/social service responses on issues of community safety
- Giving operational focus to the goal of reducing crime and public-disorder activities as well as finding effective community-level responses
- Supporting the rollout of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) actions and dealing with problem properties

This recommendation potentially has significant short-, mid- and long-term impacts on the ability of the Communities to address crime and public disorder. This joint LG-led working group aligns LG and RCMP resources to address crime reduction by implementing strategies that are based on problem-solving and by launching a partnership that can focus available resources more effectively.



The SWG can function in the following ways:

- Reduce conflict, crime and public disorder in our community by developing a collaborative LG-staffed working group

- Take actions that recognize the fact that integrated health, social and enforcement responses succeed if they are collaborative and coordinated
- Oversee the operation of the CSO if approved
- Realize the ability of LG departments and the RCMP to collaboratively impact crime and public disorder occurring in the community,
- Provide a collective LG-led response to matters of security in the community
- Respond operationally to public-safety problems and develop Action Plans aimed at achieving an effective LG/police response to manage public disorder in both an ethical and practical framework
- Reduce criminal and disorderly behaviour on our streets while protecting the interests of the most vulnerable citizens in the Communities

Key Internal LG departments and police involved: RCMP, Fire, Bylaws, Parks, Public Works, Business Licensing and Planning

Key External partners: Cowichan Tribes, Provincial Health Services, Provincial Social Services, Business Community, Health & Social Service Providers

The SWG serves as a joint LG-led working group. The SWG is responsible for maintaining and enhancing a safe and healthy community that promotes and supports quality of life while encouraging resident involvement and input.

The SWG will invite other groups to attend meetings and engage with them as issues arise that would benefit from collaborations with those agencies or organizations to facilitate joint problem-solving. These groups could also help by providing advice with regard to crime and public disorder issues.

Under the category Key External Partners, I'd make two further comments based on Stakeholder input during the review stage.

1) That during the Implementation discussions occur with Cowichan Tribes to ascertain their interest to partner in both the SWG and the CSO. CT are integral partners to the LGs and would be a natural fit for both the SWG and CSO as their community deals with similar issues. As this report was proposed to address matters focussed on crime and public disorder occurring in the LGs, it started only considering the 2 LGS current involved in the SCP. Now having met with many stakeholders in the community, I believe inclusion of the CT in this process should be considered. It would definitely increase the effectiveness, collaboration and communication required for a successful outcome of the SCP.

2) It is important to recognize the importance of linkage between the SWG and the Cowichan Communities Action Team (CAT). This has been evident through input during the Stakeholder interview process. CAT deals with collaborative efforts in dealing with substance use, the opioid crisis and issues related to mental health and homelessness. CAT will be one of the key External Partnerships that be will promote effective operational actions by SWG. SWG is an operational group comprised of joint LG staff. I suggest during Implementation phase of SCP we have communication to promote collaborative and effective communication.

The purpose of the SWG is to provide mayors and councils with an ability to do the following:

- Align LG and policing resources to more effectively address crime and public-disorder matters
- Develop a proactive and integrated approach to issues of crime prevention, public disorder and safety
- Partner with First Nations, social, health, neighbourhood and business groups to address issues arising from crime or public-disorder matters that require LG involvement
- Provide co-ordinated services to support public safety throughout the Communities
- Reduce the adverse effects arising from public disorder or criminal activities
- Integrate enforcement and LG departmental responses to issues regarding community safety
- Respond to emerging issues related to public safety,
- Access services and joint strategies that lead to the protection of vulnerable persons
- Bring together those LG resources capable of lessening the crime, security and public-disorder impacts in the community

The SWG is a valuable tool that can help address issues concerning crime and disorder occurring in the whole community. In conjunction with LG bylaw enforcement officers, RCMP officers and private security ambassadors, the SWG can bring a joint focus to lessening crime and public disorder in the Highway Corridor.

Another area that requires consideration by the joint Communities is the fact that municipal enforcement bylaws and policies can differ along the Highway Corridor. This can lead to confusion within the public, business and street population. These bylaws and policies need to be harmonized where possible. The Communities could consider harmonizing municipal bylaws that lessen the impacts from crime and public disorder,

including those dealing with nuisance properties, overnight camping, drinking in public, littering, dealing with chattels and nuisance activities.

Recommended Action #2: Corridor Safety Office

That the Communities create a Corridor Safety Office "storefront" to coordinate and address crime and disorder occurring in the Highway Corridor.

That the Communities commit bylaw enforcement officers to being part of a coordinated presence in the Highway Corridor and as part of the increased enforcement presence addressing public disorder and supporting health and social responses.

That the Communities contract a daytime security ambassador to provide "eyes" on the street and a presence in the Highway Corridor to discourage crime and public-disorder activities.

That the RCMP addresses crime reduction in the Highway Corridor area and assigns supportive, investigative and analytical resources, as able, to reduce crime and public-disorder activities occurring in this area.

That the Communities create a separate "Who Do You Call?" information brochure that lets business owners and the general public know how to report suspicious occurrences, illegal activities and LG-maintenance issues to the right service provider.

This recommendation identifies actions that can be taken to assist in reclaiming, maintaining and protecting the future of the Highway Corridor and the general community as a safe place to visit, shop, work and live.

The Highway Corridor area is the first "Welcome" sign for visitors and travellers alike to the Communities. It is the doorway into downtown Duncan. It needs to be supported and public disorder needs to be addressed. The CSO will be a base for LG bylaw enforcement officers, contracted security ambassadors and RCMP investigative officers.

The Communities are changing rapidly, and public expectations for a safe community continue to increase and will continue to do so as the population grows. Provision of a secure Highway Corridor environment where the RCMP, bylaw officers and private security ambassadors have a visible presence will support that goal.

Public disorder will continue to increase if enforcement and security responders are not a more visible presence in the daily life of the Highway Corridor.

Coordination and communication are the key tools to regaining a sense of order in dealing with the stresses that can occur. To achieve that goal necessitates the daily presence of security resources centred in the core area that is under duress.

This will be actioned through the creation of a CSO. The CSO can help deliver daily street-level enforcement of bylaws as well as a police and security response that can help meet the needs of residents, business owners, property owners, social and health service providers and visitors to the community.

Function of Corridor Safety Office

The CSO will be able to provide the following functions:

- Be a central office in the Highway Corridor for communication and coordination of all enforcement and security matters
- Provide a “uniformed” presence in the Highway Corridor by all three enforcement tiers – bylaws enforcement officers, RCMP officers and contracted security ambassadors
- Function as an office for bylaw enforcement officers, RCMP officers and security ambassadors
- Help coordinate and manage the daily activities of contracted security ambassadors
- Allow the RCMP to have a supportive “come and go” presence focussed on crime reduction
- Work closely with Cowichan Tribes enforcement staff
- Allow enforcement personnel to work closely with health and social service providers by referring those in need to these services
- Assist with street-outreach programs that are being run by health and social service providers
- Assist with RMCP crime-reduction efforts
- Allow LG bylaw enforcement officers, RCMP officers and contracted security ambassadors to have a daily presence in the Highway Corridor depending on the most efficient scheduling of those resources,
- Be a point of contact for security problem-solving in the Highway Corridor
- Help promote effective communication within the Highway Corridor area
- Promote research on best practices in public safety and security for the area and for the community

- Help distribute written public safety as well as fire and emergency planning information
- Be a point of contact for merchants, residents and property owners on bylaw enforcement and security-patrol matters,
- Work with the business community and encourage the distribution of security-advisory notifications
- Explore the use of volunteers for communication and on-going educational aspects of service delivery on public-security matters

The CSO office will not be a full-service office. Staff will come and go as required and there will be no clerical support. When no staff are present in the office, the door will be locked.

Any complaints made to the CSO will occur as laid out in the recommended “Who Do You Call?” pamphlet.

Contracting of a Daytime “Security Ambassador” for the Highway Corridor

Business owners and citizens alike can experience crime and public-disorder matters in the Highway Corridor. This has been an on-going concern and a source of frustration in the community. One of the most effective tools to address and counter these concerns is to hire a contracted private security firm to provide “security ambassadors” (SA) to work in the Highway Corridor during key hours. The actual hours can be assigned based on input from the business community and on input from the RCMP regarding reported crime. One of the key times to have a street security presence is in the hour before businesses open so that potential disorder can be addressed in a timely manner.

This security ambassadors will become the constant “eyes” on the street that will enable RCMP and bylaw staff to respond to concerns based on immediate information when incidents are occurring. They can also provide focussed patrols in problematic areas.

The private security contractor who provides these security ambassadors will be required to provide staff who can communicate and engage the street population, work with enforcement personnel, have an understanding of the health and social services resources available, be able to support the work of street-outreach workers, be able to represent the community in an ambassadorial way and, most importantly, be able to work in a respectful way with the street population.

It is important that the same one or two security ambassadors be utilized in order to develop good relationships with all stakeholders—street people, business owners, enforcement personnel, the public, neighbours and visitors alike.

The following is the rationale for hiring a contracted security patroller service:

- Security ambassadors provide enforcement services with “eyes” on the Highway Corridor during key business hours
- Security ambassadors will be part of a coordinated effort by all enforcement services, including bylaw enforcement officers and RCMP officers, to increase their “visible” presence in the Highway Corridor
- Security ambassadors provide a connection to the public in the Highway Corridor
- Security ambassadors are a cost-effective way to address or prevent public-disorder activities—the people in this role will receive a higher wage based on their skill in building effective relationships with the varied clientele they encounter in their duties
- Security ambassadors can commence an early morning patrol before the start of each business day and help resolve any unwanted activity
- Security ambassadors provide the community with a contact person who can assess minor matters before they escalate to a criminal or public-disorder level
- Security ambassadors allow bylaw enforcement officers and RCMP officers to respond effectively to crime as well as bylaw and disorder matters when they are occurring
- Security ambassadors provide appropriate recording and reporting of incidents

Who Do You Call?

This simple recommendation will have a positive impact to help the public and merchants know who to call to report specific situations. The brochure/card will lay out what services are available and how to contact those services. It will be a handy guide to keep available for merchants and citizens alike who are often confused regarding who to call for a variety of public-disorder, security or bylaw matters.

Without this information being readily available, citizens and businesses often call the RCMP for matters that could be handled more efficiently by the LG department responsible for that area of LG operations.

The brochure will need to differentiate between the services being delivered in the two separate cities: the Municipality of North Cowichan and the City of Duncan.

The creation of this simple brochure will be an effective tool to lessen crime and public disorder by giving the public access to information that will allow them to receive a timely and appropriate response to their concerns.

Recommended Action #3: Impact on Business and the Highway Corridor

That the Communities look for ways to address the stress being experienced by the business community and citizens in the Highway Corridor.

That the Communities take joint actions to collaborate and coordinate their efforts to lessen the impact of crime and public disorder occurring in their respective communities.

That the broader business community consider ways to partner on actions that could support the collective lessening of crime and public disorder.

The Highway Corridor business community has been significantly affected by crime and public disorder during the last two years. They are a small group of businesses that are highly committed to the community and support it in many ways. They are concerned and are looking for input regarding strategies to deal with the on-going public disorder and crime they are experiencing in their daily work.

The last two years have seen a deterioration in the quality of experience for their clientele as the stress being experienced across the province increases through the effects of homelessness, fentanyl, poverty, lack of housing, mental health issues and substance use issues. Many of the businesses have taken on substantial costs to remedy the public-disorder issues associated with needles, garbage, loitering, disturbances, theft and break-ins. Also, the costs of installing CCTV and hiring private security in response to crime and public disorder are high. These businesses range in size but are predominantly smaller in size and do not have the ability to withstand the continued drain of their energies and finances without broader community involvement towards finding resolutions to the on-going pressures of crime and public disorder.

From meeting and talking to these owners, I can say without hesitation that each one I have spoken with understands the health and social needs of the street population, but that does not solve their need to have their business thrive in the face of issues not of their making. Hence, they are looking to local government to consider what would help lessen the effects of crime and public disorder they are facing daily in the Highway Corridor.

The Highway Corridor itself is the Welcome/Entranceway to both communities and perceptions related to public disorder can change how visitors and the travelling public see the whole community. This is an important factor for consideration, and it is important that the business and tourism community work together on possible solutions. Levies could be considered as a way to bring forth other solutions that could be cost-shared by the business community.

I have worked with organized business groups that bring new ideas and positive change to public-disorder matters. It typically starts by focussing collaborative efforts on a single aspect of the problem that could be jointly addressed in order to bring about a positive result for all businesses. Once this problem has been addressed, the group could build off their success by looking at other initiatives to implement.

Recommended Action #4: Health and Social Service Roles

That the Communities recognize the important role of health and social service providers in the Communities and see them as key partners towards reducing crime and public disorder.

That Communities recognize the important work already being done by health and social service providers, such as the Cowichan Valley Basket Society (Food Bank), the Canadian Mental Health Association Sobering Centre, the Canadian Mental Health Association Peers (Clean Team/Sharps Team, Island Health Mental Health and Substance Use/Royal Canadian Mounted Police Car 60 & Integrated Response and the Island Health Overdose Prevention Site, towards reducing crime and public disorder.

That the Communities consider ways to collaboratively address the problem of garbage, waste and needles left in the community and in the Cowichan River and also consider how the existing CMHA Peer Group could be engaged to assist business owners and property owners in dealing with this problem.

That Communities consider taking on a staff facilitation and communication response role, through a Good Neighbour Agreement process, when issues arise between service providers and neighbourhoods.

That the Communities recognize the importance of the Cowichan River to Cowichan Tribes, and all our communities, and work to address the effect of needles being thrown in the river and people not feeling safe while walking on the dikes.

During my time spent in the communities of North Cowichan and Duncan interviewing stakeholders, I had the opportunity to speak with stakeholders with many perspectives on the issues, their causes and the ways to address them.

Goals aimed at lessening crime and public disorder are not in conflict with health or social goals. They are compatible and mutually supportive processes. I can say clearly that the most significant long-term action to lessen crime and disorder is found in the support of health and social service providers dealing with mental health, substance use and poverty reduction as well as building a range of housing for those in need.

Since my focus is specifically on reducing crime and public disorder, I'd like to recognize particular programs that fit those topics closely, while also filling other important roles for their clients. In particular, I'd like to mention the following (not in any prioritized order) programs:

1) Cowichan Valley Basket Society (Food Bank)
2) Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Sobering & Assessment Centre
3) CMHA Peer Group (Clean Team/Sharps Pick-up Team)
4) Island Health MHSU/RCMP Car 60 & Integrated Response
5) Island Health Overdose Prevention Site (OPS)

These services, in addition to all the valuable work they do for their clients, have a significant effect on the reduction of crime and public disorder in the community and should be recognized for the value they bring to lessening the impact of these issues.

The following are challenges I've learned about in your community that need community-wide assistance to lessen the impacts of crime and public disorder:

Needles

Needles are a magnet for community anger, angst, frustration and fear as well as a feeling of being victimized by those who discard of them improperly. It is particularly evident in talking to business and property owners that face the often daily need to move people along from their properties—and then dispose of the numerous needles as well as the garbage and waste left on their property.

Needles are a source of a high percentage of the frustrations I hear from the general community in almost every interview. Solutions are not there yet. I understand that addicts seek the instantaneous feeling they get from injecting. It is one of the preferred methods of drug use. I see great efforts to educate the public on how to dispose of

needles, but public concern for improperly discarded needles on private and public properties remains. In fact, the complaints appear to be increasing in the community.

Health and social service providers together with the community can help to resolve this disorder. Their existing programs, such as the Sobering & Assessment Centre, and CMHA Peer Group (Clean Team/Sharps Team) adds value to the community's effort to reduce crime and disorder while supporting people who are using substances.

Discarded needles and garbage left by the street population is one of the biggest "frustration factors" in the community, and we need to support efforts by health and social service programs to recognize the importance of these needle pick-up services to the community,

Without doubt, needles left on the street, which require the community to clean them up on its own, is a very concerning community issue. Health and social service programs that can help abate the problem and help with clean-ups need to be strongly supported by the entire community.

Efforts by the CMHA Peer Group need to be supported and appreciated. When the community sees the street population involved in solutions, it gives the community a sense of cohesion.

Needles in Cowichan River

The Cowichan River receives its name from the Cowichan Tribes "People of the Warm Land." The river is culturally and historically important in the lives of the people and to the salmon that are in it during the various stages of their lifecycle. This ancient heritage and culturally important river on the edge of the Highway Corridor and is under stress from literally 100s of needles being dropped into its waters. This is an example of public disorder that can be worked on by the whole community.

There needs to be a community-wide recognition of the harm being done to this river and the need to address needles in the river. There needs to be a willingness in the community to be part of the solution by recognizing, addressing, remediating and preventing this from happening in the future.

This could be part of the Safer Highway Corridor project or handled as a separate Communities-supported initiative. It is also a good project for the SWG in partnership with Cowichan Tribes and community services.

Island Health - Overdose Prevention Site

When I first started working on the SCP, I read newspaper articles about the opening of the OPS on Trunk Road and the concerns of the neighbourhood. I understand the community frustration, but I've also seen how these sites can fit in well with neighbours and significantly help influence safe needle disposal.

I encourage neighbours to engage and participate with any Good Neighbour Agreement (GNA) process that occurs. Discuss how community engagement in the beginning went, but then focus on opening up good lines of communication through the GNA process. The process works and I have been part of that experience on many other projects. The LGs have a role to play in helping facilitate collaboration within the community and resolution of community concerns.

From a crime and public-disorder perspective, the work of the OPS is exactly where the community needs to be in regard to full support. The OPS makes a significant difference to the levels of public disorder experienced on the street. Many in the community want needles off the street but they also want people to have a safe place use their drug of choice. The OPS provides this valuable role in the community.

The OPS is part of the solution, not part of the problem. It is an important way to reduce crime and public disorder in the community. A respectful GNA process involving the neighbourhood, local governments, the RCMP and Island Heath will help everyone get through these often challenging start-up phases. The OPS can also encourage and communicate safe disposal practices with its client base as part of the solution.

Public Disorder Increases When There's Nowhere To Go

CMHA Warmland House offers services that are successful and vitally important to the community. However, it does not allow the use of drugs on its premises. This is not a criticism, simply a comment on the model. When a person takes opioids over a period of time, their body becomes dependant on it which leads to withdrawal symptoms within hours after the last use. The OPS is open from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and they have funding for six hours per day. Many people who use opioids need to use first thing in the morning or they start to feel the symptoms of withdrawal, which can be unbearable. People who use substances who cannot or do not want to stay at CMHA Warmland House or the Cowichan Women Against Violence (CWAV) Women's Shelter because of their need to use a substance to stay well, stay on the street. They have nowhere to go, so they sometimes stay on private property during the night and leave behind waste and needles for the property owner to address.

Cowichan Valley Basket Society (Food Bank) is one of the few places during the day that feeds and allows people to stay, play cards and talk during opening hours. Otherwise, the street entrenched spend a lot of hours each day with no place to be personally safe, or use substances safely (except during opening hours) and no place to sleep each night if they are unable to stay at a shelter. This is one factor as to why so many people living on the streets are leaving needles and garbage on the ground and camping rough.

The Communities, businesses, residents, police services, First Nations, visitors and neighbourhoods see the resulting crime and public disorder that occurs daily as the homeless population lives on the street in the Highway Corridor area. Are there other community solutions?

Recommended Action #5: RCMP Crime Reduction – Crime Analyst

That the Communities support crime reduction to address crime occurring in the whole community as well as in the Highway Corridor that is affecting the personal safety of the homeless population on the streets.

That the Communities consider supporting a full-time RCMP criminal intelligence analyst position at the North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment.

That the RCMP criminal intelligence analyst be part of the Safer Working Group (see Recommended Action #1).

Criminal Intelligence Analyst

The criminal intelligence analyst researches, collates, evaluates and analyzes information to develop intelligence products that assist management in decision-making and provides recommendations to further intelligence and investigations. The analyst develops and applies specialized knowledge in specific fields and in law enforcement specialities and makes ongoing decisions regarding products, identification of crime trends and insights into the criminal environment. Analysts are considered an expert resource for detachments.

A RCMP crime intelligence analyst employed at the North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment will, in addition to having a full-time role dealing with community-wide crime analysis, be able to assist in identifying key predatory offenders in the community who cause violent crimes within the homeless population and who use fear, drugs and intimidation to organize thefts in the business and general community.

One of the most effective tools to reduce crime and public disorder that I have seen deployed through crime reduction is having a crime analyst working full time. There are many examples on Vancouver Island of a crime analyst working with police investigators to deal with chronic/prolific offenders. North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment currently has the use of crime analyst services one day of the week.

The Communities would be well served by having a full-time person in this role. This greatly multiplies the ability of police investigators to achieve crime reduction in the whole community. It will also be a valuable tool to lessen resulting public disorder in the Highway Corridor.

It is also important as a tool to reduce violence towards the homeless. The street population is victimized by predatory individuals who use fear and violence to intimidate them into acts that can involve organized shoplifting, break-ins, other crimes or forced prostitution.

In most cases, predation occurs when the victim is a vulnerable person entrenched on the street and has their own mental health and/or substance use issues. These predators are a very small percentage of the street population but cause significant violence and harm if not identified and dealt with by the police and courts.

Recommended Action #6: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

That the Communities and the RCMP Detachment jointly learn, practice and apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles as another crime and public disorder reduction tool.

That the Communities use the upcoming Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design training hosted in the City of Duncan by Cowichan Community Policing as an opportunity to increase their knowledge regarding this valuable crime reduction tool in the community.

That the Communities consider hosting a presentation for community businesses, so they can learn about Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design practices and how to lessen crime and public disorder on their properties.

A successful action that a local government can take to assist a downtown, neighbourhood or business area, such as the Highway Corridor, under stress from crime and disorder is to train LG staff, enforcement officers and police to be able to provide a

CPTED assessment of specific areas under the most stress and to provide advice on the actions property owners can take to reduce those criminal activities.

During my time spent interviewing many persons in the Highway Corridor and surrounding area, I could see areas where previous CPTED actions have been taken. These actions have made a difference towards lessening crime and public disorder in those areas.

I've been involved in using CPTED as we tackled areas that experienced similar problems to those in the Communities. CPTED was used extensively and all staff dealing with public-disorder issues were CPTED trained. We also used the services of a CPTED professional for many LG-owned larger projects both in the planning stage and sometimes to address remedial security solutions where a CPTED assessment was not part of the initial building process.



CPTED training should also be considered as a necessary and valuable skill for bylaw enforcement officers, police officers, planners and park planning personnel. I recommend this training to communities as a valuable tool for addressing crime and public disorder. It is an integral part of developing safe public spaces in the community

and in areas under stress from crime or public disorder. This training can often be cost-shared with other communities.

I also recommend sponsoring a CPTED information session for businesses on how to take actions regarding their properties that lessen crime and discourage unwanted behaviour. It may also be possible to consider using real Highway Corridor areas as work examples for the training sessions. LGs may want to check with Cowichan Community Policing about this possibility.

Recommended Action #7: Dealing with Problem Properties

That the Communities and RCMP intervene early on nuisance properties occurring in neighbourhoods and consider implementing a nuisance property bylaw as an effective tool to deal with such properties.

Nuisance properties in community neighbourhoods can be identified as contributors to the distress being experienced. They are identified by the multiple visits from the police they receive because of noise and disturbance complaints from the neighbourhood. Nuisance properties are often associated with fights, yelling, shouting and disturbing the surrounding neighbourhood.

These properties can be drug houses or chronic “noisy party” houses operating in the neighbourhood. They can also be businesses that are not properly managing issues that arise as a result of their operations. Noise and neighbourhood disturbances are usually the common features regarding why complaints come into the police and often result in frustrated neighbours bringing their concerns to the attention of the mayor and council.

The goal of this recommendation is to provide the police with an LG-led response to a problem that causes frustration in a neighbourhood but cannot be remedied by laying criminal charges or by waiting through lengthy delays for court action.

The most successful resolution occurs when action is taken once the number of police visits shows a pattern of nuisance activity occurring or a significant neighbourhood concern has been reported and police visits have not been able to resolve the situation. When police cannot end the nuisance, the LG becomes involved by taking bylaw enforcement action under a nuisance-property bylaw.

The Communities need to have the ability to claim the costs for the visits by the police, the fire department and bylaw officers that are required to address nuisance activity at these properties. These properties, when acting as nuisances, can waste a large amount

of resources. By having to respond to a nuisance-property complaint, the police may be unable to respond to a more pressing issue in the community. Owners need to be held accountable for this misuse of police resources and for the unnecessary costs to the public.

The process of dealing with nuisance properties can require coordination and planning with health and social services if a displacement of persons is expected to occur. If needed, these services can work with youth and adult outreach services and help people find appropriate shelter, such as CMHA Warmland House and the CWAV Women's Shelter. These services are valued partners when dealing with people who need a place to go when a nuisance-property issue is being resolved. The process involves outreach to these services and they become part of the process when handling a nuisance property. The goal is to deal with neighbourhood concerns and fears created by nuisance activities that are on-going as a result of the resulting nuisance activity associated with the property. Another goal is to find assistance for those being displaced in the process.

Engagement of these properties should be coordinated and resolution should be sought through an LG-hosted person-to-person meeting involving the owner, the police and bylaw enforcement staff in order to gain early resolution.

In most cases, early intervention of this type brings positive action from the owner and the concern is usually addressed without a need for continual attendance. LG staff and RCMP officers would explain the nuisance-property process to the owner and provide information on the issues the owner needs to address in order to meet the requirements of the bylaw.

If the intervention meeting does not result in a resolution, the LG needs to be able to address such properties by way of fining or charging for costs. Each LG should look into the creation of a nuisance-property bylaw focussed on addressing problematic properties causing excessive calls for police, fire and bylaw services as a result of disturbances and nuisance behaviour caused by lack of action by the property owners.

As stated, this process starts with the goal of having the owner address the issues arising from their property. It is a positive interaction as long as the problem is addressed in a reasonable manner and timeframe and does not require the issue to be brought before council. If the issue is not addressed, council hears the matter and can elect to deem the property a nuisance.

Once deemed to be in contravention of the nuisance-property bylaw, cost recovery for services rendered attending nuisance properties can be sought through either fines or through taxes.

Note: LG will need to obtain an updated legal opinion when writing the bylaw.

Resourcing Considerations: Staffing Impact – Corridor Safety Office

That additional bylaw enforcement staffing and the contracting of a private security ambassador be considered as necessary to the resourcing of recommended actions in this SCP report.

That bylaw enforcement officers be in uniform due to the nature of enforcement duties.

That Occupational Health & Safety perform a workplace risk assessment to determine the need for bylaw enforcement officers to have personal protective equipment to perform their duties.

Municipality of North Cowichan – Staffing/Uniforms

The following recommendations are for the Municipality of North Cowichan.

The municipality should hire one (1) additional bylaw enforcement officer (BEO) to add to the two (2) current positions already in place and equally divide additional CSO duties between them. The current workload of your BEOs is approximately 330 files per year for each BEO. This is already higher than expected compared to other municipalities and I would consider your staffing level to be short by .75 of a position even without taking on the new CSO role. The municipality need to add an additional BEO and monitor the new CSO workload.

There will also be an increase in responsibility for the position of the senior bylaw compliance officer. This is a result of the increase in work out of the CSO and because bylaw enforcement officers will be responsible for a higher proportion of the action out of the SWG.

This new CSO duties for bylaw enforcement officers can only be performed by uniformed LG personnel due to the nature of enforcement duties in a challenging street

environment. I recommend that all three (2 existing and 1 additional BEOs) wear uniforms during the delivery of all bylaw services.

If not already completed, I recommend that an Occupational Health and Safety OHS Risk Assessment be done on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for officers performing a bylaw enforcement role.

City of Duncan – Staffing/Uniforms

The following recommendations are for the City of Duncan.
The city should consider reconfiguring its current staffing levels by adding hours to existing personnel in order to meet a .5 of a position, which will focus on the Highway Corridor area. Alternatively, reduced parking enforcement could lead to an increased ability to focus resources in Highway Corridor duties.

This new CSO role for bylaw enforcement officers can only be performed by uniformed LG personnel due to the nature of enforcement duties in a challenging street environment.

If not already completed, I recommend that an OHS Risk Assessment be done on the use of PPE for officers performing a bylaw enforcement role.

Shared Cost of Renting Office Space

I do not see the increase in crime and public disorder as being seasonal in nature. It appears to have been a rising concern through the winter and issues were actively rising months ahead of any expected springtime increase with the warmer weather.

To be successful in addressing crime and public disorder, strategies will need to be operational in the areas under stress. The opening of a CSO in the stressed Highway Corridor area will be an important step.

I recommend that the LGs rent suitable storefront space to house a CSO in the Highway Corridor. This office will be the central work office for bylaw officers, security ambassadors and RCMP crime reduction members. It could be considered for a one-year initial rental contract and assessed yearly thereafter.

Cost of Private Security Ambassador Staff

This private security role is important to the success of a safer Highway Corridor project as discussed. It requires the contracting of dedicated private security staff who are trained and comfortable in dealing with a challenging street environment. The role is outlined in Recommended Action #2.

Concluding Comments

A supported SCP process will focus on reducing crime and disorder occurring in the Communities and specifically in the Highway Corridor. The development of an SCP works to address community concerns by coordinating enforcement, improving community communication and collaboration, supporting the health and social service community, supporting the business community and supporting neighbourhoods so all citizens achieve the goals of having a safe and healthy community.

Recommended Roll-Out

The following process is recommended for the rollout of the report's recommendations:

- The report goes to joint councils as a draft
- If the joint councils approve the report in principle, the report goes forward as a draft for input by stakeholder groups
- The report will consider all input prior to being finalized
- The report goes back to the joint councils for final approval
- If approved, implementation of phase two of the Safer Community Plan commences

The recommendation for an SCP that is initially focussed on the Highway Corridor is not a process to start and stop. This will only make future efforts more difficult to launch. This is especially true in the Highway Corridor where shop owners have a high level of frustration with the lack of resolution regarding current crime and public disorder. They have a sense of being isolated and rely on themselves for solutions without broader local government involvement. They have stopped reporting crime through frustration over a perceived lack of disinterest by the court system regarding their victimization.

It requires a commitment by all stakeholders to understand and to be willing to look for ways to lessen public-disorder impacts while carrying on their many important roles in the community.

If the recommendations in this report are supported, reported crime and public disorder may actually increase in the early stages of the SCP Implementation Phase as more

citizens and businesses learn of the role of the CSO and decide that they now have somewhere to call and receive assistance based on the “Who Do You Call?” pamphlet.

Your community cares about the availability of health and social services to those in need. It also cares about the quality of life for neighbourhoods, businesses and all its citizens. The Communities have demonstrated the ability to achieve their goals through a history of working together, and I’m sure it will also achieve the goal of lessening the impact of crime and public disorder occurring in the community.

It is a pleasure to meet with individuals in the community while working on this SCP. I thank everyone that I have interviewed for sharing their words, wisdom and knowledge.

Thank you for inviting me to your community and receiving this report.

Randy Churchill
Consulting For Municipalities

Request for Decision

To:	Peter de Verteuil, CAO	**File No:**	0640-30
Meeting Date:	September 8, 2020	**Submission Date:**	August 31, 2020
From:	Paige MacWilliam, Director of Corporate Services		
Subject:	Safer Community Plan Update		

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **<u>That</u> Council approve a one-year extension to the contract with Blackbird Security Inc. to supply Safety Ambassadors on the Trans-Canada Highway for the City of Duncan (approximate annual cost of $74,200) to be cost shared with the Municipality of North Cowichan on a 50/50 basis.**

2. **<u>That</u> Council approve conducting a Safer Community Plan impact survey of the residents and business owners in the highway corridor area, to be cost shared on a 50/50 basis with the Municipality of North Cowichan.**

BACKGROUND:

In August 2019, Duncan and North Cowichan Councils agreed to undertake the Safer Community Plan (Appendix A), which included establishing a corridor safety office and hiring security to patrol the highway corridor area during daytime hours. Since then, Duncan, North Cowichan, RCMP, and Cowichan Tribes staff have met regularly to implement the plan.

At the August 17, 2020, Committee of the Whole meeting, staff provided an update on the Safer Community Plan (Appendix B), and sought the Committee's support for a one-year extension to the contract with Blackbird Security Inc. and for undertaking an impact survey of residents and businesses in the corridor area. The Committee of the Whole made the above recommendations for Council consideration.

ANALYSIS:

The Safer Community Plan partners are now one year into the implementation of the plan, and staff are working with the partners on refining and reporting. Renewing the security ambassador contract, shifting their mode of transport from foot to bike, are examples of refining the plan. Conducting a survey, and measuring statistics, will help to measure the success of the plan going forward. Staff are intending to print flyers to notify residents and business owners about the survey and use Placespeak to collect the responses.

Cowichan Tribes has indicated that the partnership will include a funding contribution sometime in 2020. While the plan did not originally envision nighttime security patrols (in addition to the 3-4

nights/week patrols the City regularly conducts), if the survey confirms the need, and when Cowichan Tribes confirms their financial contribution, Council may want to consider asking the partner organizations to increase the Security Ambassador hours and conduct some nighttime patrol hours.

As previously reported, for many years the City has conducted rotating night patrols of 3 nights per week. At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic the City added overnight shifts to get 7 day a week coverage. These were cost shared with the DDBIA and the Municipality of North Cowichan. Those partnerships ended and the City has continued its rotating 3 night a week patrols in Duncan only, but has doubled the capacity and now has two staff members conducting night patrols, 3 nights per week.

IMPLICATIONS:

Financial:	The cost for the Safer Community Plan can be accommodated in the 2020 budget with use of Policing Operating Reserve funds. Further discussions will be required during the 2021 budget preparation for next year's costs. The cost of conducting the impact survey is estimated at $300 - $400 for printing and distributing the survey flyers.
Policy/Legislation:	Community Charter – Section 260 {Enforcement Powers} Bylaw Enforcement Policy
Strategic Priority:	7.3 Work with TCH businesses and residents to develop plans 12 Ensure responsible management of City resources.
Sustainability:	N/A
Communication:	N/A
Staffing Implications:	The development and implementation of the Safer Community has been a very large undertaking and has had implications on the completion of other work. However, it addresses a strategic priority of Council and a high priority item identified in the last Citizen Satisfaction Survey.

OPTIONS:

That Council direct staff to issue an RFP for the Security Ambassador Contract.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Safer Community Plan
Appendix B – 2020-08-17 Safer Community Plan Update RFD
Appendix B - 2019-08-19 Safer Community Plan Implementation RFD

Information Only

To:	Peter de Verteuil, CAO	File No: N/A	7500-20
Meeting Date:	February 16, 2021	**Submission Date:**	February 8, 2021
From:	Rachel Hastings, Manager of Building and Bylaw Services		
Subject:	Safer Community Plan Impact Survey Result		

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive the Safer Community Plan Impact Survey results report of the Manager of Building and Bylaw Services, for information only.

BACKGROUND:

The attached report (see Appendix A) to Council dated August 17, 2020 provided the safer community plan update after its first year in operation. Phase ONE details all the initial tasks that were implemented including the creation of the Corridor Safety Office, the addition of Bylaw Officers and the Safety Ambassadors.

At the September 8, 2020 Regular Council meeting, Council passed the following resolution:

> *That Council approve conducting a Safer Community Plan impact survey of the residents and business owners in the highway corridor area, to be cost shared on a 50/50 basis with the Municipality of North Cowichan.*

Please see the attached report (Appendix B) for the relevant background information.

The purpose of the survey was to provide baseline statistics of the overall perception within the corridor of the Safer Community Plan implementations and to help determine success of the plan going forward. The intention is to survey the same group in 1 years' time to compare the results.

ANALYSIS:

The Safer Working Group collaborated on an online survey where residents or employee/business owners could provide feedback on the effectiveness of the Safer Community Plan and a review of the initial tasks as implemented by the Safer Working Group.

A flyer was created, and hand delivered by Blackbird security to all businesses and residences within the Corridor as well as emailed out to business owners 10 days prior to the closing. The online survey, which was facilitated through Placespeak, was available for a 2-week period from October 13 to 31, 2020 and resulted in 22 participants. To better understand the needs of the respondents in the corridor and the regulating body that could help facilitate any recommendations, the following statistics were requested.

Count of Are you responding as a resident, employee, or business owner?	Duncan	North Cowichan	Blank	Grand Total
Business Owner	5	1		6
Employee	2	1		3
Resident	5	3		8
blank				
Grand Total	**12**	**5**		**17**

Of particular importance from the survey were the 2 questions that surrounded the perception of safety where the results of those who responded showed improvement.

In the past year, how has the Corridor Safety Office impacted your perception of safety at your business/residence?	Duncan	North Cowichan	Grand Total
Improved	**2**	**4**	**6**
Business Owner	1	1	2
Employee	1	1	2
Resident		2	2
Same	**6**	**1**	**7**
Business Owner	4		4
Resident	2	1	3
Worse	**1**		**1**
Resident	1		1
Did not provide response	**2**		**2**
Blank			
Employee			
Resident	2		2
Grand Total	**11**	**5**	**16**

How have the Bylaw Enforcement and Safety Ambassador patrols impacted your perception of safety at your business/residence?	Duncan	North Cowichan	Grand Total
Improved	**6**	**4**	**10**
Business Owner	2	1	3
Employee		1	1
Resident	4	2	6
Same	**4**	**1**	**5**
Business Owner	3		3
Employee	1		1
Resident		1	1
Worse	**1**		**1**
Resident	1		1
Grand Total	**11**	**5**	**16**

The remaining questions centered around the safety ambassador's role within the Corridor and the level of satisfaction attributed to their presence and availability. 32% of the respondents indicated that they have contacted the safety ambassadors and would again if the need for assistance arose. 85% of those respondents stated that the safety ambassadors were able to resolve the issue and no further assistance was required.

Full details of the survey questions are in Appendix C

IMPLICATIONS:

Financial:	The survey was conducted on a 50/50 cost share basis with the Municipality of North Cowichan.
Policy/Legislation:	Community Charter – Section 260 {Enforcement Powers}
	Bylaw Enforcement Policy
Strategic Priority:	7.3: Work with TCH Businesses and residents to develop plans.
	12: Ensure responsible management of City resources
Sustainability:	N/A
Communication:	in November 2020, subsequent to conducting the survey, the City issued a position paper on the issues of Housing Unaffordability, Opioid Use, Mental Health, Homelessness, and Crime, as a tool to inform the public on the City's efforts in these areas.
Staffing Implications:	The development and implementation of the Safer Community Plan has been a very large undertaking and addresses a strategic priority of Council and a high priority item identified in the last Citizen Satisfaction Survey.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Safer Community Plan One-Year Update report to Council August 17, 2020
Appendix B – Safer Community Plan Update report to Council September 8, 2020
Appendix C – Safer Community Plan Survey Questions

Request for Decision

To:	Peter de Verteuil, CAO	**File No:**	0640-30
Meeting Date:	March 21, 2022	**Submission Date:**	March 11, 2022
From:	Paige MacWilliam, Director of Corporate Services		
Reviewed:	Rachel Hastings, Manager of Building and Bylaw Services		
Subject:	Safer Community Plan Update		

RECOMMENDATION:

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;

And 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.

BACKGROUND:

On January 17, 2022, Council considered an update from staff on the Safer Community Plan (SCP), attached as Appendix A. City of Duncan staff recommended requesting a meeting with North Cowichan to review the effectiveness of the current initiatives and propose next steps for addressing the ongoing issues the community is experiencing. At that meeting, Council passed the following resolution:

> *That Council direct staff to organize a meeting with staff responsible for the Safer Community Plan and up to two elected officials from Duncan and North Cowichan to review the Safer Community Plan and recommend next steps;*
>
> *And That Council select the Mayor and Councillor Newington to represent Duncan Council at the Safer Community Plan review meeting.*

The 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	North Cowichan
Mayor Staples	Mayor Seibring
Councillor Newington	Councillor Sawrie
Peter de Verteuil, CAO	Ted Swabey, CAO
Paige MacWilliam, Director of Corporate Services	Kim Ferris, Manager, Bylaw & Business Licensing,
Rachel Hastings, Manager of Building and Bylaw Services	Martin Drakeley, Fire Chief & Senior Manager, Bylaw Services

ANALYSIS:

Discussion on the following topics took place:

Sharps Clean-Up Crew Program - This topic will be addressed in a separate report.

Corridor Safety Office

Established at 490 Trans-Canada Highway 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. The City's cost for the office is approximately $24,000 annually and is funded from policing reserve and cannabis reserve. The SCP recommended that the office space be rented for one year and then assessed yearly thereafter. The SCP was clear that this office was not intended to be a storefront. The office has been used as a meeting location and a centralized location from which both bylaw staff and the Safety Ambassador conduct their patrols. In part due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the office is not being used as much as the plan anticipated. Staff believe that the desired outcomes of the Corridor Safety Office, namely daily communication and coordination, are being achieved without a physical office.

This was discussed at the meeting and 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. Staff recommend that Council support North Cowichan, as the lease holder of 490 Trans-Canada Highway, to terminate their lease on the Corridor Safety Office. North Cowichan will also be bringing forward a report seeking direction from their Council on terminating the lease at an upcoming meeting.

Safety Ambassadors Model (Blackbird)

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. The annual cost to the City is approximately $37,100 and is funded from policing reserves and cannabis reserves. The initial one-year contract with Blackbird Security was renewed in August 2020 and is now due for another renewal, subject to Council approval. Staff have reported that the initial effectiveness of these patrols has decreased overtime due to many factors, including disruptive individuals becoming more aware of Blackbird's limited enforcement authority.

This was discussed at the meeting and all parties 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.

Safer Working Group

Since the adoption of the SCP, Duncan, North Cowichan, RCMP, and Cowichan Tribes enforcement staff have met regularly. The plan originally envisioned Fire, Bylaw, Parks, Public Works, Business Licensing, and Planning, but in practical application, with the two local governments and the first nations

government participating, that broad scope of staff participation wasn't feasible. Experience has demonstrated that the Safer Working Group needs administrative support to set the agenda, take the minutes, and track the action items.

This was discussed at the meeting and North Cowichan agreed to provide administrative support for the Safer Working Group, and Duncan will contribute to half of the cost of the administrative support.

Pro-active Highway Bike Corridor Patrols

In 2019, the City and North Cowichan began coordinating efforts to pro-actively bike patrol throughout the highway corridor. To be able to meet the service level expectations of the plan, the City transitioned from contracted enforcement patrollers to in-house CUPE "Streets & Parks Patrollers". The SCP recommended that Duncan increase the City's bylaw enforcement staffing level by .5 FTE to focus on the corridor area. The City has significantly exceeded the SCP's recommendation to increase the City's existing personnel, there are 1.25 FTE dedicated to the corridor patrols as well as nighttime coverage that was not considered in the SCP. Both the City and North Cowichan aim to provide bylaw staff traveling together by bicycle throughout the highway corridor area for six hours per day, six days per week. This coverage gives Blackbird the necessary assistance if bylaw enforcement is required.

When this service level was discussed at the meeting, North Cowichan's Manager, Bylaw and Business Licensing, agreed that they would like to continue to schedule a bylaw staff person to conduct these joint patrols for six hours per day, six days per week.

Nighttime Bylaw Department Patrols

While the plan did not originally envision nighttime security patrols (in addition to the 3-4 nights/week patrols the City conducted prior to 2019), the City has increased nighttime patrols to 7 nights/week for a rotating portion of each night. Short-staffed at the moment, 7 nights a week are not able to be covered, but the City is currently recruiting additional staff to fulfil this service level within the City boundaries.

When this service level was discussed at the meeting, North Cowichan's Manager, Bylaw and Business Licensing, indicated that they are not receiving complaints about nighttime issues and they do not intend to expand the partnership to include nighttime patrols.

Evening Safety Ambassador Patrols

Thanks to funding provided by Island Health as part of a partnership to provide jointly managed security services for the Trunk Road Overdose Prevention Site, which is now co-located at the York Road Wellness and Recovery Centre, Blackbird Security is also providing late afternoon/early evening patrols throughout the corridor.

This was discussed at the meeting, focusing on the additional evening coverage funded by Island Health through this partnership. Varying the hours to have the Safety Ambassadors provide coverage from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm was discussed and will be considered during the Request for Proposal process, if approved by both Councils.

Who to Call Brochure

Issued in 2020, the Who to Call Brochure was one of the concrete recommendations included in the SCP. Staff consider the creation and distribution of this brochure to be completed.

This was discussed at the meeting, and it was agreed that now that the Community Policing office has been established, their contact information should be included in the brochure. Duncan's Manager of Building and Bylaw Services offered to update the brochure.

IMPLICATIONS:

Financial:	The cost for the Safer Community Plan can be accommodated in the 2022 budget with use of Policing Operating Reserve and Cannabis Reserve funds. Further discussions will be required during the 2023 budget preparation for next year's costs.
Policy/Legislation:	Community Charter – Section 260 {Enforcement Powers} Bylaw Enforcement Policy
Strategic Priority:	7.3 Work with TCH businesses and residents to develop plans 12 Ensure responsible management of City resources.
Sustainability:	N/A
Communication:	N/A
Staffing Implications:	The development and implementation of the Safer Community Plan has been a very large undertaking and has had implications on the completion of other work. However, it addresses a strategic priority of Council and a high priority item identified in the 2018 and 2021 last Citizen Surveys.

OPTIONS:

That the next steps for the Safer Community Plan be referred to the Committee of the Whole for further discussion.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Safer Community Plan Update – RFD – January 17, 2022
Appendix B – Safer Community Plan