

December 19, 2018

Campbell River now has a working group supporting the Downtown Safety Office

City Council endorsed establishing a working group, made up of City staff from various departments, to coordinate existing funding and resources to act on recommendations to improve downtown safety.

The group will meet regularly and provide monthly updates on its progress.

This group includes staff from RCMP, fire, operations (including roads, drainage and parks), facilities, recreation, long range planning, development services and bylaw enforcement (plus any other operational staff needed from time to time).

“To continue the improvements taking place downtown, this group will coordinate existing resources to act on recommendations from the RCMP crime analyst and an assessment of downtown based on crime prevention through environmental design principles,” says Ron Neufeld, deputy city manager. *“Between these two lists of potential actions, the group will have a significant amount of work to do, and the working group will continue to seek input regarding policy from the City’s community healthy and public safety advisory committee and Council.”*

The Downtown Safety Office continues to be a resource and a partner for social service agencies, downtown businesses and public facilities.

“Regularly connecting with these groups remains a priority for the City’s bylaw enforcement team, and through this collaborative approach, City staff have ongoing contact to discuss safety and behavioural concerns and to generate additional ideas for improvement,” Neufeld adds. *“Already we’ve seen some success, finding housing solutions for working with the John Howard Society to arrange suitable housing for some people who had previously been sheltering in tents.”*

“Council supports this coordinated approach as it uses the full spectrum of existing City resources and combines input from all levels. The Downtown Safety Office remains the key location to relay concerns; the working group will use existing resources to act on any items that can be addressed with the capacity we have available now; and the advisory committee will review suggestions for further improvement from a community point of view. Council will have the benefit of knowing that all options have been considered before assessing recommendations for service level or policy changes,” says Mayor Andy Adams. *“Regular updates from the working group will also ensure that Council and the community have a current understanding on downtown improvements and the status of suggestions for additional measures.”*

The City opened the highly visible, publicly accessible downtown safety office at 1302 Shoppers Row in July. The office houses the City’s bylaw enforcement department and provides a checkpoint for RCMP officers and a base for the City’s downtown security and parking patrol officers.

The City also added two RCMP officers and hired a third bylaw enforcement officer, providing additional resources on complaints and concerns related to unsafe activity – and to connect and collaborate with social service agency representatives working at street level.

The Downtown Safety Office is funded from the City’s gaming reserve – generated from a percentage of lottery and casino revenue rather than from property taxation. Council’s policy directs that this fund supports sport, recreation and social causes.

###

Contact: Ron Neufeld, Deputy City Manager

250-286-5765