

A G E N D A

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF COUNCIL

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2017 AT 6:00 PM
IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

PRESENT:

A. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Recognition of Traditional Territories.

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Meeting held at 3:30 pm on November 20, 2017.

C. STAFF REPORTS

1. **Chief Administrative Officer – Strategy to Address Big City Problems in Port Alberni**

Continued discussion and review of the Chief Administrative Officer's report dated November 1, 2017 regarding a strategy to address the increase in crime and commercial property concerns.

F. ADJOURNMENT

That the meeting adjourn at pm.

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF COUNCIL
HELD MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2017 AT 3:30 PM
IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

PRESENT: Mayor Ruttan; Councillors Alemany, McLeman, Minions, Paulson, Sauvé and Washington

A. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved and seconded:

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was moved and seconded:

That the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held at 4:00 pm on October 16, 2017, be adopted.

CARRIED

C. STAFF REPORTS

**1. Director of Development Services/City Engineer
Change of Route for Stamp Avenue Multi-Use Separated Path**

Discussion regarding report dated November 16, 2017 outlining route options for the Stamp Avenue Multi-Use Path planned for implementation in 2017.

Director of Development Services, Scott Smith, presented an update on a separated multi-use pathway along both sides of Stamp Avenue between Redford Street and Rogers Street and on one side of Rogers Street from Stamp Avenue to Millstone Park.

The City of Port Alberni had planned and budgeted \$200,000.00 for the project with \$100,000.00 of that coming from a Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure grant through the BikeBC Program. This grant was to have the project complete by March 30, 2018.

When the first option was looked at, a completely separated path on both sides of Stamp Avenue, it became clear that the cost would be more than \$1,000,000.00. This was due to grades, available right-of-way, and the location of existing hydro poles, traffic signs, large trees and fire hydrants.

Staff then started to look at alternative options which included:

- 1) Path on east side of Stamp Avenue only
- 2) Where possible, separated path behind curb with certain section going on the street
- 3) Converting one vehicle lane to separated path
- 4) New route that runs parallel to railway track starting on Stamp Avenue, crossing Rogers Street and going down and across the preexisting pedestrian bridge which then exits onto Pemberton Road
- 5) Increase width of existing path along east side of Stamp Avenue behind curb

Options three and four are a change from what was discussed with Bike BC; however, staff feels they could be done within the budget of \$200,000.00. Staff would need to discuss these new options with BikeBC to verify that the grant is still applicable. These options would be an improvement but may not resolve safety issues for cyclists at the intersection of Rogers Street, Stamp Avenue and Gertrude Street.

Should Council choose the fourth option, staff would need to engage with the Island Corridor Foundation as they own the majority of the land that the City would be looking to use.

Staff has not commenced detailed design on any of the above options as the City has moved away from the original scope of work proposed to Council, the community and the grantor. As a result, staff elected to bring the options to the Committee of the Whole for further discussion.

Committee of the Whole voiced their opinions on matters such as safety, budget implications, the utilization of pre-existing infrastructure, the introduction of new pedestrian and cycling controls and opportunities to explore options on the west side of Stamp Avenue.

Cycle Alberni was invited to speak to the interests of cyclists in the community. Representatives noted the purpose of divided bikes lanes is to create predictability and order for both cyclists and other road users. When considering the options, the ideal route would be protected bike lanes on both sides of Stamp Avenue going both ways; however, a first step would be a two-lane, clearly delineated multi-use path that provides a safe transition through the Stamp Avenue, Roger Street and Gertrude Street intersection. Cycle Alberni supports the proposed bike lane on the east side Stamp Avenue; however, they feel the west side of Stamp Avenue poses the largest safety risk.

The Cycle Alberni representative requested that a video, called "[The Rise of Protected Bike Lanes](#)", be played for those present.

Traffic management measures were discussed regarding the reduction of vehicle speeds as they transition from Roger Street south onto Stamp Avenue. The Cycle Alberni representative made note of innovative bike lane approaches that increase cyclists' visibility at problem intersections.

The Cycle Alberni representative noted the difference between commuter cycling and recreational cycling. Using Penticton's Kettle Valley Trail as an example, Cycle Alberni sees an opportunity with the proposed route that runs parallel to the railway tracks but recommended that be explored in the future as it would not serve those cyclists looking to commute across town.

Committee of the Whole thanked the Cycle Alberni for their input and moved to create a recommendation that bridged both east side and west side options.

That the Committee of the Whole recommends that staff be directed at a future Regular Council meeting to provide information on the grant extension and that staff look at both the west side on street option with an extension to Roger Street on the curb and any options on the east side.

2. Chief Administrative Officer – Strategy to Address Big City Problems in Port Alberni

Discussion regarding the report dated November 1, 2017 presenting a strategy to address the increase in crime, commercial property concerns, and take action on at least seven outstanding Status Report items.

Chief Administrative Office, Timothy Pley's report titled '*Strategy to Address Big City Problems in Port Alberni*' highlights factors that drive 'big city problems' in Port Alberni, actions that can be taken to mitigate such problems, approaches to help people living at risk and costs associated with the various strategies.

Four strategies were put forward:

- reducing drug addiction in Port Alberni,
- reducing theft of property crimes,
- eliminating the centers of crime; and
- supporting existing business.

Committee of Whole offered their opinions on the various strategies and noted a need to further engage with the key stakeholders involved in poverty, crime and drug addiction reduction, as well as members of the community which can become a part of the solution.

Committee of the Whole requested information on the number of Bylaw Officers in neighbouring communities, as well as information on whether the business license fees could support the salary of the proposed second Bylaw Officer. It was also noted that while enforcement plays a key role in helping solve these 'big city problems,' focus should also be put on providing safe and supportive housing for those living at risk.

John Douglas, spoke to the need for a multi-agency stakeholder meeting.

Ellen Frood, Executive Director the Alberni Community and Women's Services Society, spoke to the importance of safe housing and the need for inclusionary zoning for new developments in Port Alberni.

A Port Alberni resident put forward a suggestion that we look at alternative policing options.

Committee of the Whole thanked those that provided input and moved to create a recommendation that supports the direction of the November 1, 2017 report.

That the next Committee of the Whole meeting be dedicated to further address the report dated November 1, 2017 from the Chief Administrative Officer providing a strategy to address big city problems in Port Alberni and key stakeholders be invited to attend.

That the meeting recess at 5:27 pm until 6:00 pm.

D. DELEGATIONS

1. Alberni Valley Heritage Commission

Discussion regarding the mandate and role of the Alberni Valley Heritage Commission and review of the Heritage Commission Establishing Bylaw.

Dr. Jamie Morton, Manager of Museum, Heritage and Culture reviewed Bylaw No. 4687, a bylaw to establish a Community Heritage Commission. Dr. Morton noted that the Commission meets monthly, with the exception of summer months (July and August), to discuss:

- Correspondence received, requests for information and issues that relate to the Commission's mandate
- Activities, issues, required support and upcoming initiatives.

Mayor Mike Ruttan spoke to the model used for our arts, culture and heritage and noted that City of Port Alberni resident's pay 100 per cent of the operation and maintenance costs. Those living outside of the City's limits pay zero. The question now is how do we share that financial load and what is considered fair cost sharing?

The City must create a governance model that addresses the need to preserve not only heritage but also the arts and culture of the Valley. Council determined that an umbrella society be formed and that the City would contribute through grants and other means of funding - similar to that of the McLean's Mill Society. This newly formed society could include the City, First Nations and the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.

Commission members expressed their displeasure with the engagement and consultation efforts put forward by the City and Council to-date. The Commission asked for clarification around their role going forward.

Willa Thorpe, Director of Parks, Recreation and Heritage verified that there have been discussions with First Nations around their involvement in a new governance model.

Committee of the Whole thanked the Alberni Valley Heritage Commission members in attendance and moved to create a recommendation that facilitates the shift from the current model of the Commission to a new all-encompassing governance model.

That the Committee of the Whole recommends that Council:

- *Consider including the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District in any new governance model*
- *Establish the Alberni Valley Heritage Commission's purpose under the leadership of the Director of Parks, Recreation and Heritage*
- *Review the current bylaw, make necessary revisions and amend the Commission Members list*

E. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded:

That the meeting adjourn at 7:05 pm.

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT

Mayor

Director of Development Services



CITY OF PORT ALBERNI

CHIEF ADMINISTRATION OFFICER'S REPORT

TO: City Council

FROM: Tim Pley, Chief Administrative Officer

COPIES TO: Scott Smith, Director of Development Services
Cathy Rothwell, Director of Finance
Pat Deakin Manager of Economic Development
Brian Hunter, Officer in Charge RCMP - Port Alberni Detachment

DATE: November 1 2017

SUBJECT: Strategy to Address Big City Problems in Port Alberni

Issue:

This report presents a strategy to address the increase in crime, address commercial property concerns, and take action on at least seven outstanding Status Report items.

Background:

A number of factors may indicate that the City is experiencing a growth in drug addiction and undesirable activities that are often associated with larger cities than Port Alberni. Those factors (or symptoms) include:

- 2 banks in the uptown area have recently added private security staff as a deterrent to crime and harassment of customers
- Seven Eleven has closed in uptown area
- City has received complaints from people reporting that "they feel unsafe" in the uptown area
- RCMP report a spike in property crime and violent crime in the City (but a reduction in the same categories in regional areas outside of the City)
- City's compliance staff (Building Inspector and Bylaw Enforcement Officer) report that their "toolbox is empty" for dealing with emerging challenges that include:
 - Bylaw violations
 - Graffiti
 - Non-maintenance of buildings
 - Non-compliant use of buildings (often involving low rent, multi-unit residential use contrary to zoning and applicable Codes)

City Council, recognizing these emerging factors, has directed that actions be taken. There are at least seven action items on the City's Status Report that the City is unable to complete due to insufficient resources. This report includes recommendations that if enacted, would enable the City to begin addressing the following Status Report items in 2018:

- #29 Commence remedial action against owner of Arrowview Hotel, Athol Street
- #30 Report on steps to declare Carlson Building a nuisance under Nuisance Abatement Bylaw
- #33 Report on options for active bylaw enforcement plan to address derelict/ vacant properties
Mtg with CAO, Director of Dev Services and Bylaw Enforcement to discuss the fees for services, including building and business licensing, sewer connection and regulation, soil removal and deposit, second-hand dealers, and medical marijuana dispensaries.
- #34 Report regarding the City's Nuisance Abatement Bylaw, including enforcement and increases to the fees and charges recoverable
- #35 Report re use and potential regulation of drones within City boundaries
- #36 Report re general regulation and licensing of dogs
- #37 Report re the current provision of parking enforcement within business districts

The term "Big City Problems" is used in this report to describe a socio-economic dynamic that involves the vulnerabilities of drug-addicted people providing economic gain for some, significant negative impacts on those drug-addicted people, and costs and negative impacts on businesses, residents and the community at large. Symptoms of big city problems include:

- People living at risk
- Theft of property
- Violent crime
- Substandard housing
- Building owners/occupants adapting by utilizing business models targeted to profit from drug addiction
- People profiting from other people's drug addictions

Factors that drive big city problems in Port Alberni include:

- Drug addiction
- Insufficient leadership and action from senior governments
- "Holes" in the local government compliance/ enforcement fabric
- Overabundance of commercial buildings leading to:
 - Lack of investment in building maintenance
 - Too many vacant buildings which reduces vibrancy of commercial areas, further challenges neighbouring businesses
 - Buildings owned/occupied by people whose business plans specifically rely upon low rent residential tenancies

Port Alberni may be increasingly becoming a location that enables low rent tenancies/ people living at risk/ drug addiction/ crimes driven by drug addiction. Further changes along that spectrum could manifest as more people living at greater risk, increased frequency and severity of crimes, closures of more businesses, and degradation of the quality of life throughout Port Alberni.

Discussion:

The dynamic described above is not unique to Port Alberni. It is a common North American if not global problem. The best response to these challenges however should consider circumstances unique to Port Alberni.

Proposed Solutions:

A multi-pronged approach is required to make Port Alberni a community that helps citizens address their addiction to drugs, and at the same time make Port Alberni a non-desirable location for people who continue to live with their addiction to drugs, and for the people who profit from or contribute unwittingly to big city problems in Port Alberni.

Reducing Drug Addiction in Port Alberni:

1. Help citizens living with drug addiction who want to recover by advocating for community-based solutions for reducing drug dependencies (which includes availability of safe, drug-free housing environments), and engaging senior governments to fulfill their mandate in this regard.

Action and Cost: *The City can do this through advocacy, policy and providing incentives for the development of safe housing and community-based support programs (estimated cost to the City will be project driven).*

2. Make Port Alberni an undesirable location for people who are drug-addicted and contributing to the big city problems.

Action and Cost: *Reduce opportunities for acquiring money through theft of property, reduce opportunities for low-cost housing that is sub-standard and unsafe, eliminate havens of drug-addiction lifestyle (specific actions and costs set out below).*

Reduce Theft of Property Crimes:

1. Community-based awareness and action programs (ex. Community Policing, Neighbourhood Watch, other programs)

Action and Cost: *Support current and new programs utilizing existing resources and new community-based volunteers. Expansion of resources beyond existing may be considered in specific cases (estimated cost to the City will be project driven)*

2. City provide subsidy to property owners to encourage installation of security lighting, CCTV, and other engineering solutions to reduce property crime

Action and Cost: *In a manner similar to the City's façade program, provide incentive subsidy to property owners to offset their investment in hardening their properties against crime. Eligibility for this program could require that property owners undertake property security due diligence. Such due diligence would be set out within the program. The City would work closely with the RCMP in implementing this program (estimated cost to the City \$25,000 per year).*

3. Target prolific offenders

Action and Cost: Sustained implementation of RCMP – Port Alberni Detachment's Crime Reduction Strategy (utilizing existing resources in conjunction with bolstered Bylaw Enforcement resources as set out below).

4. Eliminate ready markets for stolen goods

Action and Cost: Utilize a multi-agency approach including City resources (Bylaw Enforcement, Building and Fire inspections and Policing) to eliminate locations where stolen property might be resold, and support education programs that encourage citizens to identify belongings before they are stolen (Utilize existing resources or resources accounted for elsewhere in this document).

Eliminate Loci of Crime

1. Multi-agency task force to use all tools available in a coordinated fashion to discourage building owners/occupants from activities that encourage big city problems.

Action and Cost: City-led multi-agency task force (using existing resources or resources accounted for elsewhere in this document) working in conjunction with external agencies and senior government representatives.

2. Develop a Bylaw Services Department that encompasses development, implementation and enforcement of the bylaws necessary to provide the City with the powers that are available through existing legislation. This will enable for example usage of the nuisance building provision.

With the necessary staff resources the City can use all methods available to discourage big city problems and discourage building ownership by those who would profit from those problems.

Action and Cost: Develop a Bylaw Services Department by adding one additional enforcement officer, one manager, and one half time support position (est. annual cost \$220,000).

3. Develop a City function that can purchase and repurpose problem and strategic properties.

An overabundance of commercial properties in Port Alberni results in low return on investment for owners of those buildings. Some building owners do not invest in maintenance and improvement of their properties, thus leading to a decline in the condition of buildings. Some owners repurpose older, non-viable commercial buildings as multi-resident tenements. Buildings in this category are not safe for tenants, absorb significant local government resources, and can become loci of crime that, if left unchecked, can negatively impact the viability of neighbouring buildings.

The City should develop a staff-level committee that has the authority within pre-established limitations to purchase, demolish or renovate, and resell properties. In this manner City

funds would be used to expand the City's land holdings, eliminate problem buildings, and repurpose lands for the best use and through good developers.

Action and Cost: *This function can utilize existing staff with some professional support. The function could be pre-authorized to buy, modify and sell properties utilizing borrowed funds within a pre-set limit. Annual costs could be limited to professional services and interest costs associated with servicing debt. Current Land Sale Reserve Funds could be placed at the discretion of this function.*

Support Existing Businesses

1. Protect existing businesses in order to support the development of successful clusters.

Businesses, especially in the retail and personal services sectors succeed when clustered with other successful businesses. There are current businesses in locations without supportive clusters due to empty neighbouring commercial buildings, and worse, businesses trying to succeed despite negative influences in the neighbourhood.

Action and Cost: *The actions outlined above could minimize negative influences, and by taking ownership of some properties seek to repurpose those properties in ways that support neighbouring businesses. In general, a greater commitment to reducing big city problems will support the development of business clusters around existing businesses.*

The City's Economic Development Department could be engaged to determine further specific action in this regard.

Estimated Annual Costs:

While some items listed above will have costs that are based on project approvals, other action items will involve an annual budget allotment.

Proposed Annual Costs Include:

Program to assist property owners in engineering security solutions	\$25,000
Development of a Bylaw Services Department	\$220,000

<u>Total Estimated Annual Costs</u>	<u>*\$245,000</u>
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One-Time Costs Include:

Infrastructure to support Bylaw Services Department (vehicle, desks, computers, employee support needs)	\$70,000
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* Some costs will be offset by revenue realized when nuisance building charges are collected from owners of designated buildings

Recommendation:

That the Committee of the Whole forward the report from the CAO dated November 1, 2017 to the next regular meeting of Council and recommend that Council for the City of Port Alberni consider immediate implementation of all actions outlined in the report to reduce drug addiction in Port Alberni, reduce crime, eliminate loci of crime, and support existing local businesses.



Timothy Pley
Chief Administrative Officer