

July 18, 2018

Downtown safety office now open, City bylaw officers building community connections

The City has opened an office at 1302 Shoppers Row to focus resources on community safety in downtown Campbell River.

The highly visible, publicly accessible location houses the City's bylaw enforcement department and will provide a checkpoint for RCMP officers, Citizens on Patrol and a base for the City's downtown security and parking patrol officers.

The City has also hired a third bylaw enforcement officer to help focus more resources on complaints and concerns related to unsafe activity – and to connect and collaborate with social service agency representatives working at street level.

“Based on feedback from people working and living downtown, Council endorsed this plan to increase resources, including more foot patrols, and to help build connections with and among social service providers,” says Mayor Andy Adams. “We anticipate that this initiative will better serve vulnerable people as they connect with social services, creating a more welcoming, safe and friendly downtown for everyone.”

Campbell River City Council approved new resources and endorsed a Safer Downtown plan in May. The plan, created by an experienced public safety consultant, includes opening a downtown safety office to help set expectations for behaviour and connect people in need with social services and establishing a working group of community representatives (representing diverse interests from downtown businesses, public facilities, law enforcement authorities and social service providers) to review and recommend opportunities for improvement.

“The working group will build strong connections between social service providers, public facilities and downtown businesses to consider options from various perspectives. The group will review recommendations from the local RCMP crime analyst and work with social service agencies who are working hard at street level to generate other ideas as well. They'll also advise on which recommendations to act on in the medium and longer term,” says city manager Deborah Sargent.

The Safer Downtown initiative is funded from the City's gaming reserve – generated from a percentage of proceeds from lottery and casino revenue rather than from property taxation. Council's policy directs that this revenue support sport, recreation and social causes. Costs for 2018 cover are anticipated to be \$176,000, which pays for an additional bylaw enforcement officer, office space lease and one-time workstation and security installations as well as working group set-up. Costs for 2019 and 2020 are estimated at \$129,000.

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