

MANAGING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN SIDNEY

The COVID-19 global pandemic is an unprecedented and evolving event that has affected our whole community. As the Town continues to respond to this public health emergency, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our residents and local businesses for the measures they have taken to protect our community. We appreciate the cooperation and patience shown while we all work together during these challenging times. The Town would like to extend a big thank you to all health care workers, including staff in local long term care facilities, as well as first responders and all essential workers who have gone above and beyond to support this region. We are grateful for your efforts.

The Town of Sidney activated its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) on March 12, 2020 to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic on a local level. The EOC is a centralized unit that is responsible for the four pillars of emergency management: mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. The EOC provides strategic direction to the Town's operations, our business community, and to the public. Mayor and Council are a critical component of the EOC, as they function as the Policy Group and are a key information conduit to the community.

Some key activities & initiatives from the EOC are:

- Response, Recovery, and Business Continuity Planning
- Liaising with partners & local organizations (e.g. RCMP, long term care facilities, regional and senior levels of government and public health partners)
- Setting up a Critical Supply Chain Rest Stop
- Offering educational support to local businesses and providing them with physical distancing floor stickers
- Posting educational material throughout Town

Public access to all municipal buildings has been restricted, but the Town is continuing municipal operations to the fullest extent possible. Departmental services are accessible by phone or email through the "Contact Us" page or the "Online Services" page of the Town's website.

As warm and sunny days arrive, we remind the public that **social and physical distancing** remains paramount. If you are sick, stay home. If you are able to stay home, please do so as much as possible. If you are out in public, keep a physical distance of 2 meters (6') from other people. Continue to wash your hands frequently and thoroughly.

As we work together to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, here are some resources we want to be sure all residents know about:

- **Safe Seniors, Strong Community Program – Call 2-1-1:** Operated by bc211 and the United Way, the Safe Seniors, Strong Communities program matches seniors who need support with non-medical essentials (such as help picking up groceries and prescriptions), to volunteers in their community who are willing to help. To register for services, or to offer help, call 2-1-1 or register online at <http://www.bc211.ca/>
- **HealthLinkBC – Call 8-1-1:** If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or require assistance with other health issues, call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1.
- **For non-medical information** about COVID-19, call the Provincial Information Phone Line at: 1-888-COVID-19 (1-888-268-4319) or text: 604-630-0300
- **For Town of Sidney COVID-19** Response information, call: 250-655-6900 or email: information@sidney.ca
- Is it an emergency? Call 9-1-1. **If you or someone in your care has chest pains, difficulty breathing, or severe bleeding, it could be a life-threatening emergency. Call 9-1-1.**

Visit www.sidney.ca/covid-19 for regular updates, and more information regarding the Emergency Operations Centre, FAQs, municipal service updates, service updates from local businesses, ways the public can help, and more. If you have questions or are looking for information and you do not have internet access, please do not hesitate to call the Town of Sidney COVID-19 Response information line at 250-655-6900.

"Be kind, be calm and be safe"

Town Revises 2020 Financial Plan



Changes to Province's Property Tax Deferment Process

The British Columbia Government has announced changes to the property tax deferment process. In April, property owners with existing deferment agreements will receive a letter from the Province with information about this process change. Starting in May 2020, eligible British Columbians can apply online to defer their property taxes. Additionally, property owners can choose to auto-renew their deferment application. Deferment application and renewal forms can no longer be submitted to the Town of Sidney.

More information about the Province's property tax deferment process, including eligibility, can be found at: www.gov.bc.ca/propertytaxdeferment.

If you have any questions about deferring your property taxes, you can contact the BC Government by phone at 250-387-0555 (toll-free: 1-888-355-2700) or by email at: TaxDeferment@gov.bc.ca



In February, Town Council had approved a Financial Plan for 2020 that resulted in a modest municipal tax impact of 1.79% (below the rate of inflation) for existing properties. There is no change to Water or Sewer rates for this year.

However, life took an unexpected turn less than a month later. Since the beginning of the current COVID-19 pandemic, Town of Sidney Council has been extremely concerned about the financial impacts on the community. In order to provide financial relief to the community, Council asked staff to bring forward options for eliminating the general tax increase for the year, as well as measures for further reducing the tax impact on businesses. Over the course of two meetings, Council considered a series of options, and settled on the following:

- Reduce the previously-approved 1.79% general tax increase to zero.
- Provide an additional 10% reduction in the municipal portion of taxes for Commercial and Light Industrial properties.

With the above reductions, most Residential property owners will be paying roughly the same amount of municipal taxes as in the previous year. Commercial property owners, meanwhile, will see an overall decrease in their total property tax bill of up to \$2,800, or 22.5% from last year; this reduction reflects both the municipal decrease, as well as a significant cut to the Provincial School Taxes to be paid by businesses for the year.

In addition to the tax reductions, Council, in combination with the Province, also delayed the penalty dates to be applied to unpaid taxes, effectively providing property owners with more time to pay their tax bill this year, without fear of penalty. The tax notices will be mailed in late May, as usual. The notice will be accompanied by detailed information about payment and penalty dates.

The Town is using all the tools at its disposal to provide a degree of financial relief to residents and businesses in an effort to minimize the impacts of the health crisis on the community in the short and long-term.

The approved budget included 102 capital projects that are meant to preserve or improve the services provided to the community. The total value of the 2020 capital program is just over \$10 million, with most of the funding coming from the Town's reserves. The 2020 capital program features \$4.7 million in infrastructure replacement projects, \$900,000 for Reay Creek Dam, \$250,000 for public washrooms, and \$200,000 for improvements at Rathdown Park. Due to the impacts of the pandemic, some of these projects may have to be deferred until next year.

Total *municipal* taxes for the average residence will remain at about \$1,518 for this year or \$127 per month. For this amount, the Town provides fire and police services, road maintenance, parks and public space maintenance, community and emergency planning, bylaw enforcement, as well as a range of related community services. While many of these services may be taken for granted, the value received for \$127 per month compares favourably with many common utility bills.

Residents are reminded that taxes collected for other jurisdictions make up about half the tax bill. As always, tax increase for any individual residence will vary, depending on its assessment change relative to the average home. For more information on the Town's budget, please refer to the Financial Services section of the Town's website at www.sidney.ca.

Public Works & Parks Maintain Essential Services

With the declaration of a provincial state of emergency and public health authorities urging people to stay at home and minimize contact with others, the Town of Sidney has reduced service levels to the extent possible while providing our essential services. This means that you will still see our Public Works and Parks staff around Town carrying out necessary duties. This work is being performed with physical distancing guidelines in place while following safe work practices. Minimizing risk to both Town staff and the public is the top priority when carrying out these activities.

Public Works

Town staff in the Public Works Department continue to carry out essential operations, including maintaining critical infrastructure such as water and sewer systems, roads, sanitation, and municipal facilities. Town staff will also continue to plan and construct capital projects that have been approved as part of the 2020

budget and provide services to support ongoing construction projects. Public Works staff play a key role in supporting and implementing many of the initiatives developed by the Town's Emergency Operations Centre.

Parks

Sidney parks and pathways currently remain open for use, with social distancing guidelines in place to support our residents' physical and mental health. There are minimum levels of maintenance that town staff in the Parks Department must perform to ensure they remain safe for use. Additionally, our municipal parks and gardens require a certain level of upkeep to ensure they do not become fire hazards or fall into a state of disrepair from which they cannot be recovered. By not completing at least a minimum level of maintenance, the Town would simply be increasing future costs to undertake the work once the pandemic ultimately subsides.

In order to balance reduced service levels with essential maintenance, we are taking the following steps:

- Grass cutting frequency will be reduced by 50% with the grass cut at a higher level and fertilizers and irrigation set at minimum levels to maintain the turf.
- Annual lawn maintenance activities such as aerating and top dressing will continue in order to maintain long-term lawn health.
- Boulevards, beach accesses and pathways will be maintained to a standard that minimizes fire and safety risks.
- Trees and plantings will be watered as required to maintain health.
- Reduction of seasonal floral displays, with the majority of the displays planted in areas that have automated watering systems.

Mental Health Supports

It's normal to be worried about COVID-19 and what the future may hold. Stress, anxiety, and sadness are common responses to the disruption and isolation that many of us are experiencing. The B.C. Government has put together a list of tips and resources regarding mental health management during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the key things we can all do include:

- Reach out to friends and family
- Social distancing is critical to help control the spread of the virus. But at the same time, it can also create even greater feelings of isolation, loneliness and sometimes depression. Therefore use safe ways to connect, including picking up the phone and calling friends and family, connect with friends online and offer support to those who need it.
- Have calm conversations – especially when talking to children
- Practice self-care. All things that you can do to manage your stress, whether it's going for a walk in your neighbourhood, exercising, meditating or practicing deep breathing, will better prepare you to take care of yourself and others.
- Seek help when needed. You know your body and its signs of stress. If you are having trouble managing your mental health, please call your healthcare provider, call a support phone line, or access a virtual service online, and encourage those you love to do the same.

You can obtain a wide variety of mental health services and supports by visiting www.gov.bc.ca/covid19 and clicking on "health care and mental health."

Council Meetings

Council Meetings are being broadcast live from the Town's website at www.sidney.ca. All other committee meetings have been postponed until further notice.

Council Meetings are not open to the public at this time due to the COVID-19 Orders and requirements of physical distancing.

Public Participation Period is still available by submitting comments or questions to Council by email at admin@sidney.ca before 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. Please note in the subject line that the email is for Public Participation Period. Any correspondence marked as such will be read aloud during the meeting. Please keep your comments brief, as the allotted time remains limited.



Beacon Wharf Update

The current Beacon Wharf is a timber structure that has been in place for over 50 years. The Town of Sidney took ownership of Beacon Wharf in 2006 after it was divested by the Federal Government. The wharf has required several repairs in recent years in order to remain serviceable and is believed to have a remaining life of less than 10 years. The Town is considering replacement options for the wharf.

Replacing the Beacon Wharf is a complicated decision and will come with costs to the Town. Council has established a Select Committee to review replacement options and feasibility, and to develop a plan for community engagement. Unfortunately, due to the current COVID-19 situation, the selection of the Committee members has been delayed, but stay tuned for updates and opportunities to provide your input.

Construction Management in Downtown Sidney

You may have noticed an increase in construction activity around the Town Hall over the winter. New developments in this area on Fourth Street, Third Street and Sidney Avenue recently began construction and others will soon be getting underway, with construction continuing throughout the year and well into 2021. These sites are being developed with a mix of new commercial space, and multi-family residential homes, including apartments and condominiums, and a new home for the Star Cinema! Redevelopment brings new buildings, new neighbours, and more vitality to our downtown neighbourhood. It also creates a phase of increased construction activity, truck traffic, noise,

and impacts on public parking spaces. Property owners are required by the Town to develop Construction Management Plans as part of their Building Permit applications for this type of construction. These detailed plans for managing construction impacts include specified truck routes, traffic control, pedestrian routes past the site, construction worker vehicle parking, dust control, street sweeping, and other matters related to construction. Proposed plans are reviewed by Town staff in multiple departments before Building Permits are issued in order to ensure that construction impacts on the neighbourhood are consistently managed. Property owners are also required to obtain Right of Way

permits to occupy portions of the public sidewalk, parking spaces, and streets during construction. Council recently approved an increase in permit fees for the occupation of public parking spaces during construction, with the goal of maintaining as much public parking as possible. Construction Management Plans, Building Permits, and Right of Way Permits work in conjunction with the Town's bylaw regulations to effectively manage the impacts of redevelopment on the surrounding area.

If you have questions about construction in the downtown, please contact staff at developmentservices@sidney.ca or 250-656-1725.



Update on Town Solar Panels

It's been approximately two years since the Town installed 132 rooftop solar panels at our Works Yard on Ocean Avenue. Since the panels have been operational, they have collected over 80,000 kWh. This is equivalent to the electricity used by 4 average homes in Sidney for that time, which is in line with the Town's targeted energy production. Stay tuned for more updates on how these solar panels are reducing greenhouse gasses!



Please have items for Garbage and Kitchen Organics Waste collection placed at the curbside prior to 7 am on your collection day. You can contact Emterra at 250-385-4399 or the Town's Engineering Department at 250-656-4502 or engineeringservices@sidney.ca with any questions or concerns.

A Message from Town of Sidney Mayor Cliff McNeil

As I write this message, Premier Horgan has just announced BC's Restart Plan. I hope we are feeling positive and confident with our success in flattening the curve and with the gradual multi-phase approach in the Restart Plan. I encourage everyone to follow the Plan which allows for more social and economic activity, while closely monitoring health information to minimize the risk for

Everyone should take great pride in the sacrifices we have made to keep ourselves and our community healthy and safe. We have made these sacrifices as individuals, businesses, institutions and community organizations, and we have come together to support each other inspired and motivated while seeing the actions and hearing the stories of people helping neighbours and people who are volunteering and contributing in many ways. It is important we share our stories. We will be sharing them for a long time to come.

The positive spirit from so many in our community helps us all. Who thought we would be banging pots and pans at 7 pm to thank the professional first responders and essential service workers, all of whom are on the front lines to keep us safe what is essential during these challenging times. The hearts displayed in windows everywhere show our gratitude and move those neighbours in the Cleveland area, where I live, have their entire double garage doors painted as heart flags - the burdens feel less and stress has increased.

I want to assure everyone in Sidney that Town staff, those serving in the Emergency Operations Centre and Council are all working diligently to keep our community safe. And very importantly, Sidney recovery plan for all aspects of our community is evolving and actions are being implemented. The businesses, services and community organizations that we have helped really need our support now and in the coming months. Please choose local whenever you can.

All levels of government are working together in this extraordinary situation to put supports and measures in place to assist as many as we can in our community. Our Town website are a broad source of information on health and safety, Town services showing the businesses and organizations that are local links to support programs and the important Provincial Restart Plan.

Let us all stay committed in the coming weeks and months to the guidance from public health officials and the Province as we collectively find our way to a new normal. By our diligent individual efforts and continuing to work together we will come back stronger and vibrant community!

Keep Calm, Be Kind, Stay Safe!

Sincerely,



Mayor Cliff McNeil-Smith
May 2020

Emergency Preparedness & Fire Safety

EMERGENCY KIT SUGGESTIONS

- At least four litres of water per person per day (3-7 days)
- Canned food, energy bars & dried foods (3-7 days)
- Manual can opener
- Flashlight and batteries
- Candles and matches or lighter
- Cell phone charger & battery bank
- Battery-powered or wind-up radio
- First aid kit & medications
- Infant formula, pet food, etc.
- Extra keys for your car and house
- Copies of emergency plan and important documents
- Change of clothing and footwear
- Sleeping bags or warm blankets
- A whistle
- Garbage bags, plastic ties, toilet paper, moist towelettes, hand sanitizer
- Basic tools (eg. hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers, fasteners, work gloves, dust mask)
- Small fuel-driven stove and fuel
- Cash, in small bills and coins

Emergency Preparedness Presentations

Do you live in a strata? Is your neighborhood interested in learning how they can be prepared? Contact the Sidney Fire Department to book a Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness Presentation by phone at 250-656-2121 or by email at firedept@sidney.ca.

What can you do to be prepared?

Register for the Town of Sidney Emergency Notification System:



www.ermsadvantage.com/register/saanichpeninsulaalert/tosresidents

Do you have an emergency kit and a grab & go bag? In the event of a disaster, you may need to remain at home with an emergency kit or leave immediately with a grab & go bag. Refer to the list on the left for ideas for basic supplies. Keep in mind the unique needs for your household, such as pet supplies or medication requirements.

Smoke Alarm Safety

Working smoke alarms save lives. Sidney Fire Department will install a free battery operated smoke alarm to all Town of Sidney residents, and will replace smoke alarm batteries, or clean out your smoke alarm.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



MAKE A PLAN



BUILD A KIT



BE INFORMED

2019-2020 Utility Box Project Celebrating Local Coast Salish Art

Since 2006, the Town of Sidney has wrapped nearly 40 utility boxes, greatly enhancing the look of our streets. The beautification effort has prioritized wrapping utility boxes located in Downtown Sidney, as well as several pump station locations around town. In addition to assisting beautification efforts, this multi-year project has sought to promote and celebrate established and emerging artists from the Saanich Peninsula.

The 2019-2020 utility box beautification project worked with four local First Nations artists to celebrate Coast Salish art. The four artists selected to participate include established artists Charles (Temosen) Elliot from the Tsartlip First Nation and Doug LaFortune from Tsawout First Nation, as well as emerging artists James Jimmy from Tseycum First Nation and Doug Horne from Tsawout First Nation.

The installation of all 4 utility box wraps will take place in April 2020 and will add colour and diversity to the public art currently displayed throughout Downtown Sidney. Whether you are out running errands, getting some exercise, or simply enjoying the spring weather, we invite you to take in these displays, while carefully maintaining physical distance from people who are not part of your household.



**“Hummingbird”
by Doug Horne**

Located near the southeast corner of Beacon Ave. & Seventh St.
Generously supported by Van Ise Marina



“Seals”

by Charles Temosen Elliot
Located near the northwest corner of Beacon Ave & Third St.



“SQTO” by James Jimmy

Located across from the Sidney Museum on the Northwest corner of Fourth St. & Beacon Ave.



**“Otters & Blue Heron”
Doug LaFortune**
Located in front of 2488 Beacon Ave.

Help Keep Sidney Illuminated!



Please report all non-functioning street lights to the Town’s Engineering Department at 250-656-4502 or engineeringservices@sidney.ca. Please provide the address and number on the pole when reporting. The Town is responsible for replacing street lights on metal poles while BC Hydro is responsible for replacing street lights on wooden poles.



Mayor Cliff McNeil-Smith presents a Proclamation to Staff Sergeant Wayne Conley of the Sidney/North Saanich RCMP Detachment declaring February 1st “Royal Canadian Mounted Police Appreciation Day”.

Memories From Our Past



Early Policing of Sidney & North Saanich - Part 4 - 1941-1951

The previous edition of Town Talk concluded with a list of the Police Constables who served in Sidney and North Saanich between 1917 and 1941. In July 1941, Constable Joseph G. Gibault was transferred to Sidney, and it was during his lengthy tour of duty that several changes took place. Firstly, he remained stationed in Sidney for nearly 10 years, double the length of anyone previously. Secondly, Sidney's population began to grow significantly, mainly due to the Commonwealth Air Training Program operating at the Patricia Bay Airport, where approximately 10,000 military and support personnel passed through between 1940 and 1945. Because of this growth in population, Constable G. D. Weeks joined Constable Gibault in 1942, thus providing Sidney with a second resident police officer.



Constable J. G. Gibault

In March 1945, the local news media began to focus on the need for adequate police quarters. "There are no lockup facilities at all," reported the News Review. "If a lawbreaker is apprehended,

and it is necessary to lock him up, he must be taken to Victoria. The present location serves not only as an office but also does service as a Magistrates Court. The respect with which this high office should be treated is impossible to attain in such dismal and cramped surroundings. Magistrates must sit behind a rude counter and almost on top of those whom they would judge. There is no space for clerk, for counsel or witnesses. In short, the building is not suitable for the administration of the law."

Over the next five years, phrases like "laughingstock," "downright ugly, inadequate and not fit for the purpose for which it is used," "a disgrace to the government," and a "public eyesore," were used to describe the police quarters. An editorial stated bluntly, "The building is shameful as a public building, and can but do harm to the cause for which it is used." Arthur J. R. Ash, the MLA for the district, petitioned the provincial government, stating that "the cells are in such a deplorable state that offenders must be transported to Victoria. No privacy whatever exists for the senior constable to interrogate prisoners or carry on other private conversations. The court is held once a week in this building, and the issuing of drivers' licences, besides many other routine duties, is carried out with great inconvenience to those on duty." It was not until November 1950 that a change in location was announced, not by the Provincial Government, but by the Federal Government.

This came about because of another significant change that occurred during this decade: the British Columbia Provincial Police was dissolved on August 15, 1950 and was replaced by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police "E" Division. The new police quarters were located on the second floor of Dominion Post Office building on the corner of Beacon

and Fourth, and the RCMP moved in during the last week of November 1950. The new office was composed of two rooms, one of which was to be used by the police, and the room adjoining it to be used as a courtroom. The advantage offered by this arrangement was that police business could be continued during a court session, which was not possible at the previous location.



The Dominion Post Office Building

The police change-over in Sidney took a few months to complete. Constable Joe Gibault did not receive his RCMP uniform for several months and had to continue to wear the Provincial Police uniform. Additionally, the police car displayed the emblem of the defunct police force for several months as well. Constable Gibault retired from the force in August 1951, and was replaced by Corporal Peter B. Smith.

1941 to 1951 - Constables Serving Sidney and North Saanich

- 1941: Joseph G. Gibault
- 1942 – July 1944: Joseph G. Gibault & G. D. (Richard) Weeks
- July 1944 – June 1945: Joseph G. Gibault & Darwin T. Douglas
- July 1945 – Apr 1947: Joseph G. Gibault & Robert W. Sinclair
- Apr 1947 – Aug 1951: Joseph G. Gibault & W. F. David Allen
- Aug 1951 – Nov 1951: Cpl Peter B. Smith & W. F. David Allen
- Nov 1951: Cpl Peter B. Smith & Edward W. Bell

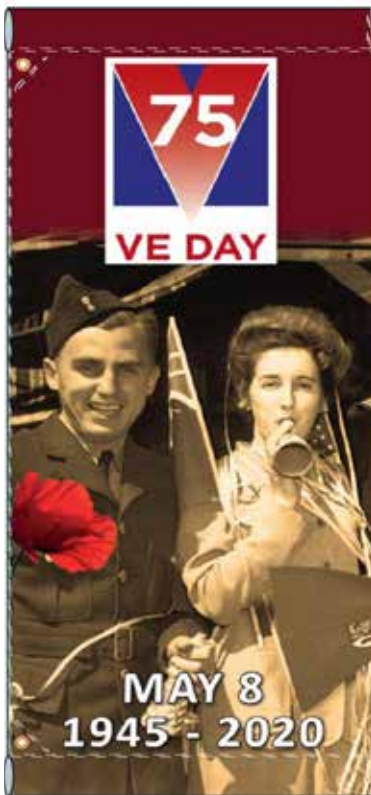
Brad R. Morrison
psresearch@shaw.ca

2020 Street Banners

With the arrival of spring comes the installation of the annual street banners downtown. This year's banners focus on Sidney's military history and our vibrant arts community.

The first banner celebrates the 75th anniversary of VE Day, which marked the end of WWII in Europe on May 8, 1945. The image was provided by the Sidney Museum. It depicts a young couple celebrating the end of the war at a celebration in Victoria. Sadly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, events organized by the local Legion have been cancelled. However, the banners and the 1,500 Liberation Tulips planted at the Mary Winspear Centre are a reminder to recognize this historic event and honour our Veterans.

The second banner features the newest permanent addition to the Sculpture Walk, "The Keeper" by artist Ronald T. Crawford. The piece was recently purchased by the Town and will remain in Sidney, where it stands guarding our shores against the winter storms. ArtSea is currently working to purchase the other sculptures that are on loan and to add new pieces.



Sidney/North Saanich RCMP Looking for Volunteers

Citizens on Patrol's objectives are to reduce crime against property and people, reduce graffiti and enhance traffic and pedestrian safety. All eligible candidates will become Citizens on Patrol and can participate in programs like; Citizens on Patrol, Speed Watch, Cell Watch, Lockout Auto Crime and we are hoping to develop a Bike Patrol program in the future! Candidates will take part in training to qualify them in their chosen program. We have a team of volunteers who care about our community and are actively looking for more! If you are interested in joining our partnership between the Town of Sidney, Police and Volunteers to enhance public safety and reduce crime or you would like more information, please call Jim Shepherd at 250-655-9224.



New Art in Council Chambers

Sidney Council was honoured to unveil the inspirational work of local Coast Salish Artist, Chazz Elliott of Tsartlip First Nation. The carving was commissioned for the Sidney Council Chambers to recognize the WSÁNEĆ people, their customs, and traditions in a prominent and meaningful fashion and to acknowledge the people who have lived on this land for thousands of years.

Chazz Elliott provided this description for his work: "The carving depicts the sun rising over the land, representing new beginnings. The land has a human face to signify mother earth. The wolves on either end represent balance over the land. Each sunray consists of different beings, from which the Coast Salish people draw their teachings and lessons.

The orcas at the bottom illustrate unity, and in the centre, the paddle shows working together. The way the paddle is raised, with the handle down and paddle up is known as a sign of peace amongst first peoples. When we arrive as guests on the shores of another's territory or come to a meeting, paddles are upright to show the sign of peace because in the days of war canoes they would also be used as weapons. Therefore, the upright paddle shows peaceful intentions. Still today, when we go on our tribal journeys and ask permission to come ashore, all the visiting paddlers must hold their paddles upright to show their intentions of peace, to be allowed ashore."

OCP Review Update: Spring 2020

One of Council's primary strategic priorities for this term is a review and comprehensive update of the Town of Sidney's Official Community Plan (OCP). An OCP is a Town bylaw that sets out the broad objectives and policies that guide decisions on planning, development, land use and provision of municipal services in the community. It also establishes a degree of certainty about the location and nature of community change for residents, businesses and landowners while providing a framework for guiding and managing future development and growth.

For the past year, Town staff have been preparing for this substantial project. One of the significant pre-project requirements in 2019 was the completion of the Town of Sidney's first Housing Needs Report. A Housing Needs Report provides information on existing and projected gaps in housing supply, as well as strategies to address these gaps. Provincial legislation requires these reports be completed prior to updating an OCP. Sidney's final Housing Needs Report was received by Council in November 2019, which now allows the Town to move ahead with the OCP Review Project.

The project also passed some significant early milestones in late March, when Mayor and Council set up an OCP Review Advisory Committee made up of local community members and also selected **Modus Planning, Design & Engagement** as the Town's primary consultant for the project. Over the next two months (April – May), Modus will be developing a detailed project work plan and community engagement plan, which will be presented to Council for their

consideration and approval. Town staff will also be reaching out to stakeholder groups and inviting their participation in the OCP review process during this time.

While the project is intended as a general update to the existing OCP, it will also include a number of specific focus areas. These will include:

- Incorporating recently complete planning documents (e.g. the Urban Forest Strategy) into the new OCP's objectives and policies;
- Addressing housing affordability;
- Updating Sidney's Development Permit Area Design Guidelines for new developments;
- Incorporating leadership on Climate Action and Adaption;
- Stewardship of the natural environment; and
- Improving transportation options in the community.

Will the current COVID-19 situation affect this project significantly?

It's possible, but Town staff are working with Modus to develop a contingency plan if the pandemic continues into or beyond the summer, when community engagement is expected to begin in earnest. This will hopefully allow the project to proceed on schedule, although if "social distancing" requirements remain in place, public engagement events may need to be held virtually and could look very different than those held by the Town in the past. Updates will be provided on this as the project progresses.

Events in Sidney

The Town of Sidney Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) has continued to monitor messaging from senior levels of government and public health authorities regarding events and gatherings. Recent statements from the Provincial Health Officer indicate that public health guidance regarding events will not be significantly modified for the summer season.

Therefore, it was with considerable regret that the Town's EOC provided guidance to event organizers to cancel or postpone indoor and outdoor events that involve public gatherings scheduled for the summer of 2020. When public health orders and physical distancing limitations are relaxed to the extent that cancelled or postponed events can be safely rescheduled, the Town will work diligently with organizers to facilitate these events. The Town's EOC has also offered to work with event organizers to explore ideas for events that bring our community together remotely.

Unfortunately, this means the Town of Sidney made the difficult decision to cancel the Sidney Street Market's 2020 season. While the Town shares in the disappointment of the cancellation, we are looking forward to the 2021 season. Although the annual Sidney Days/Canada Day celebrations will not be able to proceed in the traditional manner, the Town is working with Peninsula Celebrations Society to look at options for a significantly modified event that will give the community an opportunity to celebrate together in spirit while still staying apart. Be sure to check the Town's website at www.sidney.ca for more information in the coming weeks.

**For events & information:
www.sidneybia.ca/calendar**



For more information on the OCP Review Project, visit www.sidney.ca/ocp. Any questions? Contact Corey Newcomb, Senior Manager of Long Range Planning at 250-655-5428 or cnewcomb@sidney.ca.