



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of June 25, 2020

To: Committee of the Whole
From: Jocelyn Jenkyns, City Manager
Subject: First Triannual Accountability Report 2020

Date: June 19, 2020

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report provides a summary of major highlights, accomplishments, and challenges for the period of January 1, 2020 to April 30, 2020. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City is moving to three (3) Triannual Accountability Reports that cover four-month periods for 2020 (formerly quarterly reports).

During the first two months of 2020, Council approved a number of 2019-2022 Strategic Plan amendments, as well as the 2020 Financial Plan to support new initiatives and core service delivery. Based on the provincial state of emergency announced in mid-March and unknown future impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of these new initiatives were deferred to make room for relief measures and support to help residents and businesses who may be experiencing hardship as a result of the pandemic. Early pro-active measures undertaken by the City included:

- A zero-property tax increase in 2020 for residential and commercial ratepayers;
- Extending the deadline to pay property taxes to August 4, 2020 and established the required 10 per cent tax penalty to be instituted at 2% each month for the remainder of the year; and
- Extending the deadline to 90 days to pay utility bills.

The City of Victoria activated their Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to address COVID-19 planning and response in March. A particular focus of the EOC operations has been, and continues to be, working with the Province, BC Housing and other agencies including, but not limited to, the Coalition to End Homelessness, Island Health, SOLID, Indigenous Health Resource Team, Aids Vancouver Island and Doctors of the World on supporting and housing vulnerable populations to ensure health and safety. As a result of this significant work involving City bylaw, parks, facilities, fire, real estate, engagement, and procurement, over 300 people who were experiencing homelessness were successfully moved to safe indoor housing with wraparound supports. Given the provincial state of emergency and direction that all municipal services are “essential”, the City successfully continued to deliver core services consistent with

the guidelines of the Provincial Health Officer. City services and amenities which have been impacted or adapted to meet COVID-19 health and safety measures included:






- City Hall open to the public by-appointment only
 - Closure of the Crystal Pool and Wellness Centre and the Save-on-Foods Memorial Centre
 - Closure of the Victoria Conference Centre and a number of postponed or cancelled future events
 - Closure of outdoor recreation facilities to ensure social distancing
 - Road closures in Beacon Hill Park and Gonzales Beach Park to provide additional space for residents to physically distance
 - Delay of the by-election that was originally scheduled for April 4
 - Suspension of evening council meetings and limiting public participation in council meetings to electronic means
 - Postponement of City advisory committee meetings
 - Postponement of a number of in-person public engagement events and temporary suspension of public hearings
 - Cancellation or delay of a number of festivals and events that were to be held in the summer, including Canada Day celebrations
- Growing backlog of responding to bylaw calls for service and investigations due to staff workload re-prioritized to address vulnerable populations

At the same time, the City has been able to adapt to use technology and find more innovative ways to continue to do business. Some examples that occurred during the first term of the year include:

- Rapid adoption of the 'modern workplace' and cloud-based tools for document collaboration and communication with approximately 300 staff working remotely or rotating between the office and working remotely
- New policies and safe job procedures and other supports were developed and implemented to enable the continued delivery of services to the public while minimizing the potential spread of COVID-19
- Retooling of development application processes to facilitate digital submissions
- Launch of a new program called *Get Growing, Victoria!* to grow and distribute vegetable seedlings to support citizens impacted by the pandemic
- Live stream of the City's Artist in Residence 30-minute concert
- Celebration of National Poetry Month through a virtual poetry reading that connected views in Germany, Portugal, France and Japan, with local poets coordinated by the City's Poet Laureate
- Continued delivery of the City's project management training and leadership development courses through a shift of delivery to an on-line platform
- Launched a new on-line recreation resource to help people stay healthy at home called *Fun for Life, GO!*
- Created new web-based information and resources for residents and businesses during the pandemic
- Prepared and issued 1500 signs and decals related to COVID-19 restrictions and public awareness
- Maintained uninterrupted residential waste collections services for 28,000 green and grey carts
- Installed 44 new "No-touch" pedestrian signal upgrades for public safety
- Introduced physical distancing zones in several neighbourhoods
- Moved City print publications, including CityVibe and the Connect Newsletter, to digital editions

Strategic Plan Progress Report – Attachment A

A progress report on the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan is contained in Attachment A. This Attachment provides a listing of all 84 Strategic Plan action items that were to be initiated in 2019 and 2020 as directed by Council early this year. Of the 86 projects, almost 50% (41 of 86) were on hold, deferred or inactive. Another 25% of projects were experiencing challenges.

Status	Number
 On Track	23
 Some Challenges	21
 Major Challenges	1
 On Hold, Deferred or Inactive	41
 Complete	0
Total	86

Operational Highlights, Accomplishments and Metrics – Attachment B

Major operational accomplishments and metrics are contained in Attachment B and organized by Department. In addition to highlights and performance metrics, all departments have identified issues and challenges related to maintaining essential services as well as new work related to COVID-19.

Core Service Delivery Work Plan – Attachment C

The City of Victoria provides over 200 services to residents, businesses and visitors. Attachment C highlights some of the main service and program areas, as well as key activities, that are expected to be undertaken throughout the year. The work plan will be adjusted at the next accountability report as further impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic unfold.

Budget Update – Attachment D

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, revenues are not expected to meet budget. The City is currently experiencing significantly reduced revenues for parking. The Victoria Conference Centre closure has resulted in all bookings for 2020 either being cancelled or re-booked for future years. The Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre closure resulted in revenue loss, although with offsetting lower expenditures, the net financial impact is negligible. Property lease revenue is anticipated to significantly decrease. In addition, the City expects lower seasonal revenues from special events. The overall low percentage of actual to budgeted revenue is also directly related to the property tax and payment in lieu of tax payments that are generally collected in the latter half of the year. Conversely, dog licences and business licenses are collected in the first half of the year resulting in a higher percentage of actual to budgeted revenue in those departments.

To mitigate the uncertainty of revenue shortfalls and additional expenditures due to COVID-19, Council deferred initiatives totalling approximately \$3 million. Seasonal variations in municipal operations and accounting processes that occur outside the triannual basis affect the proportion of revenues received or expenditures incurred to April 30, 2020. Seasonal impacts are reflected in Parks and Corporate budgets due to work programs that will commence in the second and third quarter, such as the Parks boulevard maintenance program. In addition, for Sustainable Planning and Community Development, implementation of the Official Community Plan and Downtown Area Core Plan have varying timelines.

As of April 30, 2020, the actual capital expenditures are at 10% spent of total budgeted expenditures for the year, compared to 11% in the prior year. In response to the pandemic, \$22 million of capital projects have been deferred and will be reviewed in August 2020. Over \$80

million in capital projects were approved to be implemented this year. Capital projects have varying schedules and the majority of the work planned for 2020 is scheduled to start in Q2 and Q3. Capital projects are expected to be completed according to schedule, however unplanned or unforeseen factors could arise and delay completion dates.

Council Member Expenses – Attachment E

Attachment E contains all expenses submitted by members of Council for reimbursement during the first four months of the year.

Grant Update – Attachment F

An update on the grant activity during the first four months of 2020 is contained in Attachment F.

Awarded Contracts – Attachment G

A listing of new contracts awarded for external procurement of goods and services that is expected to exceed \$50,000 is contained in Attachment G.

Council Motions – Attachment H

During the first four months of 2020, Council passed 153 motions and are contained in Attachment H.

Advisory Committee Motions – Attachment I

In 2019, Council directed, *“That motions from advisory committees be presented at Committee of the Whole at the next quarterly update or sooner if the matter is time sensitive.”* Due to COVID-19, many planned meetings were cancelled or postponed. Attachment I has one motion referred to Council by the Renters Advisory Committee earlier this year. The Accessibility Working Group met in January, and the Active Transportation Committee met in January and February, however the minutes from those meetings with approved motions to be referred to Council were not yet approved as of April 30, 2020 due to cancelled meetings in March and April.

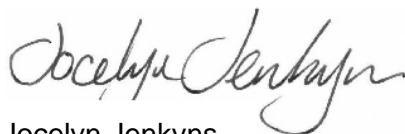
Urban Forest Master Plan Update – Attachment J

As requested by Council, the Accountability Report now includes an update on the Urban Forest Master Plan. This Plan outlines 26 recommendations to help achieve the vision for the urban forest. In late 2020 Council approved an implementation plan for several priority recommendations. Attachment J provides an update on progress made on the implementation of these actions. Staff have made progress s, however there are a few projects that have been delayed as a result of COVID-19. These projects primarily relied on consultant support or community engagement.

CONCLUSIONS

Given the relative uncertainty as to how the year will unfold, City staff continue to focus on delivering essential services to citizens as well as address new emerging issues and challenges related to the current pandemic. Looking forward, the City is pro-actively shifting its focus on recovery activities and the opening of parks and open spaces, as well as supporting businesses to resume operations.

Respectfully submitted,



Jocelyn Jenkyns
City Manager

List of Attachments

- A. Strategic Plan Progress Report
- B. Operational Plan Highlights, Achievements and Metrics
- C. Core Service Delivery Work Plan
- D. Budget Update
- E. Council Member Expenses
- F. Grants Update
- G. Contracts Awarded
- H. Council Motions
- I. Advisory Committee Motions
- J. Urban Forest Master Plan Update