



Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of October 15, 2020

To: Committee of the Whole
From: Jocelyn Jenkyns, City Manager
Subject: Accountability Report – Period Two 2020

Date: October 9, 2020

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Receive this report for information.
2. Forward the information contained in Attachment K regarding the International Decade for People of African descent to the 2021 Financial Planning process for Council consideration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report provides a summary of major highlights, accomplishments, and challenges for the period of May 1, 2020 to August 31, 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 second period, a key focus of City operations was to maintain all essential services, while addressing issues and impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been significant operational impacts to staff in public works, parks, bylaw services, engagement and human resources to manage the COVID-19 response, while also delivering core services. These workload impacts are continuing and anticipated to be on-going into 2021. Staff have been planning on how to maintain the COVID-19 response needs, while anticipating potential new issues with the seasonal variation in workloads.

In addition to balancing operational needs, Council adopted the draft economic action plan *Victoria 3.0 – Recovery Reinvention Resilience – 2020-2041* and held a *Build Back Victoria Town Hall*. Pro-active measures undertaken by the City included, but not limited to:

- Development and implementation of a new program to provide support for restaurants and cafes to operate in public spaces
- The introduction of pedestrian priority measures on Government Street
- The implementation of several physical distancing projects for pedestrians in public spaces including village centres
- Shifted funding to create a one-time *Everyday Creativity Grant* program to support the arts and culture sector

- Introduced a second intake of *Strategic Plan* grants related to COVID-19 and increased funding for the *My Great Neighbourhood* Grant program
- Re-allocation of previously approved resources to support Topaz Park policing costs
- Additional resources allocated to addressing temporary sheltering in parks and enforcement, as well as parks clean up and security
- Continued reduction in parking rates
- Increased cleaning of washrooms and public spaces
- Agreement to operate a temporary shelter in the Save on Foods Memorial Arena
- Re-prioritized Victoria Housing Strategy actions to support response and recovery

In August, Council revisited the 2020 budget items that were postponed in April due to decreased City revenue as a result of COVID-19. Council reallocated approximately \$2 million in funding from operating budget initiatives and deferred \$17 million in capital projects to offset projected revenue shortfalls, primarily from parking and the cancellation of convention business, and additional pandemic-related costs.

Three paused initiatives were approved to move ahead in 2020, including a \$3.8 million investment in the bike skills and skate park at Topaz Park. Design will begin in 2020 with construction anticipated in 2021. Council also allocated funding to install a new public washroom downtown at the south end of Douglas Street. In addition, City will establish an Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, which will initially be staffed with two positions to carry out a number of strategic plan priorities.

At the same time, the City has been able to adapt to use technology and find innovative ways to continue to do business while maintaining health and safety during the ongoing pandemic. Some examples that occurred during the second reporting period include:

- Re-opening of the Public Service Centre at City Hall
- Development of safety plans for resumption of in-person public services to meet WorkSafeBC requirements
- Monthly youth transit pass applications available online and mailed to recipient
- Virtual Canada Day celebrations and other arts and culture events
- Re-opening of playgrounds, spray parks, lacrosse box, basketball courts and outdoor fitness areas
- Offer summer camp and public recreational programs at Royal Athletic Park
- Continued public participation to address Council remotely through phone access
- Continued support for staff working remotely, including enhanced technology and training, mental health support and other resources

Implementation of robust health and safety protocols, including safe job procedures and personal protective equipment (PPE), have enabled the majority of staff to continue to work from City facilities and in the public realm as usual throughout the pandemic. This includes staff of the Fire Department, Public Works, Parks, Facilities, and By-law Services, among others. During the early stages of the pandemic, the City successfully transitioned over three hundred office-based staff to remote work. Consistent with the City's recovery planning, many staff have returned to working from the City Hall campus on a full-time or part-time basis, to the extent allowable under ongoing physical distancing requirements mandated by public health officials. On average, approximately 125 staff are working from the City Hall campus on a daily basis.

In response to evolving information from public health authorities regarding COVID-19 and in anticipation of a predicted second wave, the City updated its Pandemic Exposure Control and

Safety Plan and developed and implemented new safe job procedures, work practices and operational guidelines to ensure the health, safety and wellness of staff and the public accessing City services.

Strategic Plan Progress Report – Attachment A

A progress report on the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan is contained in Attachment A. Several of projects have been delayed due to COVID-19, and or hold due lack of resources to initiate. Of the 67 staff led projects to be initiated in 2019 and 2020, 30% (20 of 67) are on track and 3 projects were completed. Another 30% of projects were experiencing challenges (20 of 67) and 35% (24 of 67) were on hold, deferred or inactive. A work plan of Council led initiatives is also contained in Attachment A.

| Status | # of Projects |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| On Track | 20 |
| Some Challenges | 18 |
| Major Challenges | 2 |
| On Hold, Deferred or Inactive | 24 |
| Complete | 3 |
| Total | 67 |

During the second period of the year, staff have also been assessing new projects contained in the Strategic Plan to be initiated in 2021 and the resource implications of these new initiatives from the planning perspective that all deferred items from the 2020 Financial Plan will proceed in 2021. Further information of these resource requirements will be included in the draft 2021 Financial Plan for Council consideration in November.

As part of the City's on-going commitment to accessibility, Attachment A has been modified to better allow readability for individuals with colour blindness. Additionally, the City's website now contains a screen readable version of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan as amended in March 2020.

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.

Additional metrics regarding development application processing and turn-around times are planned to be re-introduced into accountability report through year-end reporting to Council starting with the 2020 Annual Report.

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 continue to be adjusted at the next accountability report as further impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic unfold as well as new Council direction provided to staff to address emerging community issues.

Budget Update – Attachment D

Attachment D contains an update on the capital and operating budgets as of August 31, 2020. Overall operating revenues and expenditures/transfers are 78% and 50% respectively, of the annual budgeted amount. This compares to 85% and 62% to the prior fiscal period. Due to the

COVID-19 pandemic, revenues are not expected to meet budget. The City is currently experiencing significantly reduced revenues for parking.

Due to the Victoria Conference Centre closure, no events were held in the second period of the year and the majority of bookings for 2020 have been 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. Reduced seasonal programs, summer camps and outdoor recreation programs started in June, though revenues are expected to be lower. Property lease revenue is trending lower due to rent adjustments for City tenants whose businesses have been impacted by COVID-19. In addition, the City is experiencing a decrease in seasonal revenues from special events and ticket surcharge revenue related to the arena. To mitigate the uncertainty of revenue shortfalls and additional expenditures due to COVID-19, Council deferred a variety of initiatives.

Seasonal variations in municipal operations and accounting processes that occur outside the triannual basis affect the proportion of revenues received or expenditures incurred. Seasonal impacts are reflected in Parks and Corporate budgets due to work programs that will commence in T2 and T3, 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.

Actual capital expenditures are at 25% spent of total budgeted expenditures for the year, compared to 26% in the prior year. In response to the pandemic, several capital projects have been deferred. Over \$80 million in capital projects were approved to be implemented this year. Capital projects have varying schedules and most of the work planned for 2020 is scheduled to start in the latter part of the year. Staff are working diligently to complete the capital work plan according to schedule, however unplanned or unforeseen factors could arise and delay the completion date. Requests to move the capital budget forward into next year will be considered as part of the regular year-end budget process.

Council Member Expenses – Attachment E

Attachment E contains all expenses submitted by members of Council for reimbursement during the period of May 1 – August 31, 2020. During the second period of the year, Council travel was restricted due to COVID-19 resulting in few expenditure submissions.

Grant Update – Attachment F

An update on the grant activity during the period of May 1 – August 31, 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 reporting period covered in this report, Council passed 161 motions and are contained in Attachment H. A significant portion of the Council motions made in the second period of the year were related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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.”* Starting in the second period, Advisory Committees that had previously cancelled or postponed meetings due to

COVID-19, in the first part of the year resumed meetings through virtual platforms. Attachment I contains motions for Council consideration approved by the Renters Advisory Committee, Active Transportation Committee and the Accessibility Committee during the period of May 1 – August 31, 2020. It should be noted that while these committees have several recommendations for staff that are captured within their respective committee meeting minutes, only the recommendations for Council are captured in the Triannual Report.

Urban Forest Master Plan Update – Attachment J

As requested by Council, the Accountability Report 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, however there are some projects that have been delayed as a result of COVID-19. These projects primarily relied on consultant support or community engagement.

Council Motions Referred to the Triannual Report – Attachment K

1. International Decade for People of African Descent

On July 23, 2020, Council approved the following Council Member Motion dated July 16, 2020 from Councillor Dubow and Mayor Helps regarding the international decade for people of African descent as follows:

1. *That the City of Victoria joins the government of Canada, the province of Ontario, the cities of Toronto and Ottawa, in acknowledging the International Decade for People of African Descent for the purpose of promoting respect, protection and fulfillment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent, as recognized in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.
That Council directs staff to report back at the Period 2 2020 Update on the resource implications of reporting back as part of the 2021 budget on how to implement the International Decade of People of African Descent from 2021-2024 including:*
2. *i) Raising awareness in the general public about the heritage and culture of people of African descent and around the International Decade of People of African Descent's broader goals and actions in Victoria.
ii) Delivering anti-racism including anti-black racism training to prevent systematic racism in city policy, bylaws, programs and services.*
3. *Creating an advisory committee of people of African descent to work with and advise staff between 2021-2024 on the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent and commitment to People of African descent.*
4. *Developing a capacity building grant program for Black-led organizations, black business owners, and institutions supporting and working with people of African descent.*
5. *Tracking and demonstrating progress with respect to City hiring practices at all levels to reflect the diversity of the community.*
6. *Creating internship opportunities for people of African descent to diversify the city's workforce*

Information from staff on the resources required to scope this work for inclusion in the 2021 Financial Plan is included in Attachment K.

2. City Council Meeting Dashboard

On November 28, 2019, Council requested staff to “*report back on the options for adding attendance for COTW and Closed meetings to the dashboard*”. Reporting back on the implementation of the dashboard has been delayed due to a focus on other emerging issues related to COVID-19. In order to implement the changes to the council meeting dashboard to accommodate attendance for the other meetings, the changes could be undertaken by re-prioritizing existing work in the Information Technology Department and be implemented no later than Q2 2021.

CONCLUSIONS

2020 continues to be a challenging year for the City with continued uncertainty as to how the year will unfold and the need to address new emerging issues and challenges related to the current pandemic. Staff continue to focus on delivering essential services to residents as well as shift focus on recovery activities to support the community.

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
- K. Council Motions forwarded to Accountability Report