



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of June 17, 2021

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** June 11, 2021
From: Jocelyn Jenkyns, City Manager
Subject: Triannual Accountability Report: January 1 – April 30, 2021

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 – April 30, 2021. This report also provides an update on the operating and capital budgets, Council expenses, grant and procurement activity, motions from Council and Council Appointed Committees, as well metrics.

Strategic Plan Status Report – Attachment A

Attachment A contains the workplan for of 2019-2022 Strategic Plan actions for the year. This information is being presented differently for this report as there were a number of Strategic Plan amendments made in early 2021 to align with the Financial Plan and resource capacity, including deferral to 2022 or in a few cases, removed from the Strategic Plan. Given that the current triannual report reflects the half-way point in delivering on all of the Strategic Plan objectives, staff have focused this reporting update to reflect the continuing and new action items that are planned for the year.

Overall, there are 46 actions that were initiated in 2019 or 2020 and continuing in 2021. There are an additional 8 new actions to be initiated this year. Attachment A reflects a 'reset' of timelines for major milestones going forward. The project status reporting dashboard of all actions that are complete, on track, or experiencing delays will be re-introduced to the second period triannual report based on the new workplan being provided.

Highlights, Accomplishments and Metrics – Attachment B

Significant highlights, accomplishments and challenges experienced in the first period of 2021 are contained in Attachment B and organized by Department. Some key highlights and accomplishments include, but are not limited to:

- Launched a new grant program with \$125,000 in funding for Victoria based non-profit arts and culture organizations.
- Experienced an extremely busy period of film activity with 57 permits issued and 78 days of filming in the City – this level of activity is typical for a whole year.

- Commissioned a new signalized pedestrian and cyclist crossing at Cook and Princess, by George Jay elementary school.
- The Victoria Conference Centre has been designated as 'carbon neutral' by noted corporate sustainability management firms Synergy Enterprises and Offsetters.
- Renewal of agreements with BC Housing for continuation of the MyPlace Transitional Shelter.
- Began engagement to update parts of the Official Community Plan to reflect recently approved plans and policies, improve clarity and respond to emerging trends.
- Beacon Hill Park public washroom upgrades were completed to the public washroom building next to the playground along Bridge Way.
- Staff completed the installation of split rail fencing along Dallas Road between Moss Street and Clover Point. The railing provides separation between the new multi-use pathway and the City's most popular leash-optional dog area.
- Provided 24/7 snow clearing and de-icing services during the February snow falls
- A Greater Victoria Rent Bank pilot program launched to provide short-term financial help for low-to-moderate income households at risk of losing their housing due to a temporary financial crisis.
- Permits and Inspections transitioned to a single phone number with a dedicated staff resource for answering customer inquiries. The division also went live with eApply for Plumbing Permits.
- The City of Victoria has transitioned to 'Alertable' to send Vic-Alert emergency notifications. Emergency notifications are sent using Vic-Alert for incidents such as gas leaks and tsunami warnings. This new system now has the capability to send notifications via landline, SMS, email, mobile applications, smart speaker and more.

While progress has been made in many areas, the pandemic continues to present on-going issues and challenges. In response, the City has pivoted operations in many service areas to address the pandemic such as:

- Launching the Build Back Victoria engagement and managing escalating numbers of patio permit applications resulting in less capacity to advance other planned transportation and economic development action plan initiatives.
- Re-prioritizing actions in the Victoria 3.0 Action Plan to focus on resilience and recovery.
- Continued closure of the Victoria Conference Centre resulting in continued revenue loss.
- Greater focus for support to virtual arts and culture events rather than in person festivals and events.
- Continued focus of bylaw officers on homelessness and outdoor sheltering has resulted in increasing numbers of calls for service and investigations that are not being addressed and creating a backlog.
- Continued focus on both internal and external employee health and personal safety, as well as on-going planning for a safe return to work strategy.
- Use of virtual platforms for conducting Council appointed task force and advisory committee meetings and greater reliance on the engagement portal.
- Provision of Emergency Social Service Grants to organization supporting people sheltering outdoors with access to showers and outreach services.
- Adjustments to recreation programming to comply with public health orders resulting in lower revenue projections.
- Increase calls for overdose response with 382 calls in the first period of the year compared to 242 in 2020.

- Management of the impact of the pandemic on the City's real estate portfolio and revenue from leases and licences.
- Enhanced cleaning, graffiti, needles and garbage removal from city streets.
- Unplanned work that is required to remediate parks that were damaged due to sheltering activities.

Additionally, there are some service areas that have been largely suspended. Some examples include the Late Night Program, protocol events, and experiential training for staff related to indigenous cultural safety and accessibility.

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 planned for 2021.

Budget Update – Attachment D

The budget update for the first period of the year is contained in Attachment D. As of April 30, 2021, the overall operating revenues and expenditures/transfers are 10% and 24% respectively, of the annual budgeted amount. This compares to 11% and 24% to the prior fiscal period.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, revenues are not expected to meet budget in some areas. The Victoria Conference Centre closure has resulted in all bookings for 2021 either being cancelled or re-booked for future years. The Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre revenue is trending slightly lower as it opened in February; although with offsetting lower expenditures, the net financial impact is negligible. 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.

As of April 30, 2021, the actual capital expenditures are at 10% spent of total budgeted expenditures for the year, the same percentage as the prior year. Capital projects have varying schedules and the majority of the work planned for 2021 is scheduled to start in Q2/Q3.

The pandemic has also impacted the cost of labour and materials as well as supply chains, translating into greatly increased prices through the procurement process with staff having to assess impacts on specific programs as well as whether to move forward on a number of capital projects this year.

Council Member Expenses – Attachment E

Attachment E contains all expenses submitted by members of Council for reimbursement during the period of January 1 to April 30, 2021. Council travel continued to be restricted due to COVID-19 resulting in few expenditure submissions.

Awarded Contracts – Attachment F

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

Grant Update – Attachment G

An update on the grant activity during the period of January 1 to April 30, 2021 is contained in Attachment G.

Council Motions – Attachment H

During the reporting period covered in this report, Council passed 159 motions and are contained in Attachment H. A significant portion of the Council motions made in the period were related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advisory Committee Motions – Attachment I and J

Attachment I contains motions for Council consideration approved by the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Renters Advisory Committee, and Active Transportation Committee. These are being provided through the triannual report to maintain a consistent public record and for Council consideration of any further action or direction required to staff.

Of particular note is a motion by the Accessibility Advisory Committee to request changes to the Accessibility Impact Statement guidelines for staff writing Council reports. This is in alignment with the Committee's mandate as outline in their terms of reference to "*Review and update current guidelines for writing an Accessibility Impact Statement*". Staff have worked with the new Accessibility Advisory Committee since March to develop the new guidelines and they will be implemented through Legislative Services going forward. These guidelines are contained in Attachment J.

Development Services and Permit and Inspections – Consolidated Reporting – Attachment K

Attachment K contains the Sustainable Planning & Community Development Consolidated Monthly Reporting from September to December 2020. All monthly reports since 2017 are available on the City's website.

Council Motions Referred to the Accountability Report – Attachment L

Staff are providing one report back on a Council motion related to Deer Management as contained in Attachment L for consideration of next steps. This report recommends that Council direct staff to work with interested municipalities to examine options for a regional deer management strategy after the conclusion of the immuno-contraceptive research project, and that staff include considerations for urban deer management during a comprehensive Fence Bylaw review.

Finally, the triannual reports typically include an update on the Urban Forest Master Plan. Staff have actioned a number of major initiatives related to this plan, including the Tree Preservation Bylaw in the first period of the year. Given the continued need to pivot staff focus on pandemic response, this update will be provided in the next triannual report.

CONCLUSIONS

Municipal operations continue to be an essential service as directed by the Province. Measures required to protect employee and public health and safety, while ensuring operational continuity, together with unexpected response measures to mitigate community impacts are expected to continue to divert staff focus in certain areas. With continued uncertainty around the duration of the current pandemic, staff will continue to proactively address emerging issues as required and provide regular updates to Council and the community.

Respectfully submitted,

Mandi Sandhu

Jocelyn Jenkyns

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. Contracts Awarded
- G. Grants Update
- H. Council Motions
- I. Advisory Committee Motions
- J. Accessibility Impact Statement Guidelines
- K. Sustainable Planning & Community Development – Monthly Report (January – April 2021)
- L. Report Back on Deer Management