

June 18, 2009

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### **Downtown Revitalization Another Step Closer**

At Council's direction City Staff have presented a proposal for new tax exemption bylaw that will bring Campbell River closer to its goals of a revitalized downtown and a more livable community.

With the introduction of the proposed Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption Bylaw, during its June 9th meeting, Council considered tax exemptions for development and redevelopment investments located between Dogwood Street, the waterfront, 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, including properties on both sides of South Island Highway to the Government Pier.

Options considered may include tax exemptions for commercial and residential buildings for up to five years, beginning when a building permit is issued.

*"Council's strategic plan for 2009-2011 identifies revitalizing downtown as one of our priorities under planning for a livable community,"* explains Acting Mayor Mary Storry. *"Our Official Community Plan and our Downtown Study list this as a priority too, calling for a more aesthetically pleasing downtown core with mixed use because a strong, vibrant, pedestrian-oriented downtown brings social and economic benefit to the entire community."*

Councillor Andy Adams, liaison to the City's Development Advisory Commission, states that *"this proposed bylaw would not affect existing property taxes as it would apply to new development only."* Adam's further explains: *"Council's desire is focused on creating incentives for increasing mixed use residential and commercial development in the downtown core that would not adversely impact on existing tax revenues."*

The bylaw, if adopted, will complement other downtown improvement initiatives, Adams adds, citing street lighting upgrades, improvements for the transit interchange, Spirit Square planning, rezoning properties for downtown infill, and reduced residential downtown development cost charges as examples that have already been implemented.

*"Promoting new development in areas where City services already exist is consistent with the Smart Growth principles that frame Council decisions, and this bylaw supports our livability and sustainability goals by increasing public safety, making better use of infrastructure and reducing vehicle traffic by attracting more people to live in the downtown core,"* Storry concludes.

The City of Campbell River will hold an open house to gather public feedback on the bylaw later this summer.

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