

October 24, 2023

CITY CONTINUES TO INVEST IN ITS COMMITMENTS TO A HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITY **Council approves funding of more than \$1.4 million, dispersed over three years, to expand community safety resources.**

As in many communities across Canada, community safety, particularly in the downtown area, continues to be at the forefront of discussions in Campbell River.

The City of Campbell River (the City) is actively taking steps and investing in solutions to work towards Council's Strategic Priority: Healthy and Safe Community. At the Council meeting on October 12, 2023, City Council approved more than \$1.4 million of funding to support its commitments to a healthy and safe community. The funds will be dispersed over three years (\$471,000 per year) and used to further expand the Downtown Safety Office's hours, public works clean-up activities, and community and downtown security patrol.

"Community safety and downtown revitalization are the top priorities for me and this Council," says Mayor Kermit Dahl. "We have taken, and continue to advance, several steps to address the challenges relating to the complex social issues that Campbell River is facing, and I personally meet with other agencies and levels of government on this each week. We hear residents' concerns and want them to know that we are working on solutions and are committed to fostering a safe and comfortable environment for all of Campbell River's residents, businesses, and visitors."

Earlier this year, Council approved four additional Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) police officer positions and one additional municipal bylaw enforcement officer position in the 2023-2032 Financial Plan. Resources have also been allocated towards enhanced downtown programming and activities in 2023 to encourage a lively, welcoming community core.

Work on the City's Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan is underway, with an expected completion date of late 2024. The City continues to advocate for Campbell River and is working with law enforcement, other levels of government, and community partners on a range of initiatives to address community safety concerns and help safeguard the wellbeing of residents. Recently, the City was at the Union of BC Municipalities' conference calling for:

- Increased engagement with local government and First Nations when considering legislative changes to harm reduction policies, such as decriminalization
- Funding for low-barrier housing solutions, treatment facilities and supportive housing
- Funding that covers the community impacts related to harm reduction and public consumption of controlled substances
- Funding to reimburse municipal fire and rescue departments for medical services provided to respond to the opioid crisis

Other steps the City has taken in recent months include holding the first Table of Partners (TOP) meeting, adopting bylaw amendments to restrict the use of controlled substances in certain public spaces, expanding the hours of the downtown security patrol, and investing in safety by purchasing the Downtown Safety Office building.

The TOP was formed in May 2023, following a meeting between Mayor Dahl, Council, and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions at which the Mayor and Council advocated for more resources for Campbell River. The first meeting took place in June 2023. It brings together the City, RCMP, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Island Health, First Nations and other community partners to collaborate and coordinate efforts to address some of the complex social issues facing Campbell River and other communities in British Columbia.

In July 2023, Council adopted Public Nuisance Bylaw No. 3898, 2023 (Consumption of Controlled Substances). The bylaw prohibits the consumption of controlled substances in specific City-owned public spaces where children and families carry out recreational or leisure activities. The bylaw is being enforced through education and re-direction for six

months, at which time staff will report back to Council. Individuals will be directed to the Overdose Prevention Site at 1330 Dogwood Street, when necessary, as a harm reduction measure.

The City also recently purchased the building at 1302 Shoppers Row where the Downtown Safety Office has been located since 2018. The property was listed for sale in 2022, and the property transfer was completed in June 2023. The City will continue to make use of this property as the home of the Downtown Safety Office, reinforcing the City's commitment to a continued presence and investment in the downtown core.

"The purchase of the Downtown Safety Office, the creation of the Table of Partners, and multiple agencies working together toward the common goal of community and downtown safety on multiple fronts are important milestones for the community," says Elle Brovold, City Manager. "Revitalization of the downtown is a priority for the City staff and we continue to explore opportunities to invest in the downtown and to tackle the complex social issues we face."

Visit campbellriver.ca/downtown-safety for more information about how the City is advancing its commitments to a healthy and safe community.

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