

# **ADMINISTRATION UPDATES**

## **NOVEMBER 27, 2023 REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

### **FIRE SERVICES**

#### Fire Service Review Underway

During the 2023 budget approval process Council approved funding for a third party, core service review of Fire Rescue Services and the Emergency Program. The review is timely as the current Fire Services strategic plan is near completion.

Through a competitive bidding process, Tim Pley & Associates were selected to undertake the project. Tim's team has an in-depth knowledge of fire services and both, local and Provincial governance. As well, the team has relevant legal expertise which is helpful when considering changing legislation, agreements and contracts.

During the week of November 13, 2023 Tim's team was in Vernon to meet with an array of stakeholders concerning how well the current strategic plan has been implemented and also, its level of success in providing for effective and efficient service delivery.

Over the next few months the team is working through documentation, reports, bylaws, legislation, agreements, contracts, budgets, Council resolutions, statistics, mapping and trends in order to provide both a report card of past performance along with best professional advice on priorities to consider in the next strategic planning process.

We anticipate a consultants' presentation to Council in January of 2024. Once informed by Council direction coming out of the January meeting, Fire Rescue Services will create a new strategic plan. We are intending to have the new plan in front of Council for consideration in May of 2024.

### **OPERATION SERVICES**

#### RV Sani-Dump

In 2023, the City of Vernon completed the construction of the new RV sani-dump site on Tronson Rd. The construction expanded the number of sani-dump stations from two to four with improved signage and modernized infrastructure, making the service more efficient and convenient for users and Operations staff. Revenue generated from the site increased from \$3,947 in 2022 to \$8,990 in 2023. Illegal garbage disposal has also been significantly reduced at the new location.

#### Vernon Water Reclamation Centre – High Rate Anaerobic Digester (HRAD)

Substantial construction of the HRAD facility was completed in May of 2023. A fourteen-day performance test was successfully completed in September, 2023 with no issues. The plant is now in operation under the care and control of City of Vernon staff who are currently adjusting the main plant chemistry to account for the diversion of high strength waste to the HRAD facility. Administration will arrange a tour in the coming months for those members of Council who wish to view the new facility.

### Silver Star Road Multi-Use Path (MUP) Phase 2 ([Project 2022-05](#))

The contractor has completed paving of the bottom lift of asphalt for Silver Star Road. All paving for the multi-use path and driveways has also been completed. In order to ensure a high-quality long-lasting road structure, paving of the top lift on Silver Star Road has been scheduled for the spring of 2024. The road will be open in both directions for the winter. Caution signs will be placed on Silver Star Road where the pavement transitions from two lifts of asphalt to one.

### Silver Star Road Median Lighting ([Project 2023-08](#))

The street lights and required infrastructure have been installed and the contractor has scheduled BC Hydro for the power connection. Changes to the pavement markings leading to the intersection of Phoenix Drive and Silver Star Road are in progress. These changes were initiated in response to a design review of the previously completed development work to complete the median and street lights on Silver Star Road and public safety complaints regarding the previous pavement markings.

### Civic Park ([Projects 2023-27, 2022-13](#))

Construction of the water feature is now complete. Construction of the shade structure (pavilion) foundation and concrete is complete (see picture below). Completion of the structure and benches is scheduled for December 2023. Construction on the park building and public washrooms is scheduled to be completed by the end of January 2024.



## **PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **Transportation Related Public Inquiries**

The City's Transportation Manager, has recently left the City to pursue other job opportunities. Her vacancy, together with two other transportation staff currently on return-to-work programs, has overall created short-term capacity challenges for a very busy business unit for the City. The Transportation Department receives approximately 30 to 40 public inquiries per month. Providing responses to these inquiries requires a substantial amount of staff time, which takes away from achieving the 2023 – 2026 Council Strategic Plan Projects & Initiatives (e.g. Developing the Transportation Master Plan Update and Implementing the Climate Action Plan). Therefore, the Administration will be adopting a new public response procedure for transportation related inquiries to help manage the public's expectations and staff workloads. As per the new procedure, inquiries will be logged and a response may not be provided. Administration will review the public inquiries periodically to address top priority requests, and to consider whether requests and comments can be considered in transportation projects, such as the Transportation Master Plan Update.

### **Minimum Level of Service for Sanitary Sewer**

At their Committee of the Whole meeting of November 6, 2023, Council asked if property owners are required to connect to the sewer system when they are on septic and are preparing to add a carriage house. As per Schedule A in the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw #3843, the use of an on-site sewage disposal (septic field) is only permitted in the following rural/agricultural zones:

- A1 – Agriculture Within ALR
- A2 – Rural Large Holdings
- A3 – Rural Small Holdings
- RR – Rural Residential

Interior Health is the responsible authority to review and approve the on-site sewage disposal in compliance with the BC Sewerage System Regulation. Existing septic fields in all other zones will need to be decommissioned as a condition of building permit issuance, as applicants are required to connect to the community sewer. The applicant may be required to extend sanitary mains as necessary to connect to the system.

Additionally, in 2014 the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) restricted the addition of new dwelling units on properties smaller than 1.0 hectare using on-site sewage disposal. Non-compliance with this policy would affect eligibility for OBWB sewage infrastructure funding.

## **CORPORATE ADMINISTRATION**

### **Rubbish Concerns North of the City**

At their Regular meeting held on November 6, 2023, Council inquired about temporary shelter sites and related excess material located to the north of the City near the overpass and along Highway 97 adjacent to Swan Lake out to Stickle Road. These areas are located in the Regional District of the North Okanagan (RDNO) outside the City of Vernon jurisdictional boundary and are managed by RDNO, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), Canadian National Railway (CNR) and private land owners. City staff do not have the jurisdictional authority to conduct operations outside of municipal boundaries.

The RCMP are working closely with area private land owners, MOTI, CNR and RDNO to clean up several sites along Swan Lake west of Highway 97. The Ministry of Social Development is also assisting with connecting occupants to services during the transition. Shelter occupants were notified of the unlawful occupancy of private land by the RCMP on November 9, 2023 and advised to leave the property by 4 p.m. November 17. Area clean-up occurred the week of November 20, 2023.

Temporary shelter sites and related excess material located north of the City near the overpass are the responsibility of MOTI and removal of rubbish material would be at their discretion. Bylaw Compliance recently contacted MOTI's contractor to inquire further about when a clean-up of material around the overpass will be conducted. The contractor advised that a clean-up should occur soon and that they have been instructed by MOTI not to address the issue until a risk mitigation plan is in place and implemented to ensure the safety of staff.

Council also inquired about temporary shelter and rubbish concerns on RDNO property located at 3405 45 Ave. north of the Vernon Square Mall between Highway 97 and BX Creek. Bylaw Compliance is aware of this property, but have not received any recent complaints or concerns. All complaints regarding this property are forwarded directly to RDNO (the property owner) for prompt follow-up.