

DATE: July 9, 2020**FILE:** 6750-20**TO:** Chair and Directors
Regional District Board**FROM:** Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer*R. Dyson***RE:** Regional Accessibility Strategic Update**Purpose**

To provide an update on accessibility items being the new Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Harmston Avenue office building, the regional Accessibility Strategy and the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee (Accessibility Committee).

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT the Comox Valley Regional District consider a Regional Accessibility Strategy and social inclusion as part of the Board's strategic planning in September 2020.

Executive Summary

- The CVRD has been engaged with the Accessibility Committee for several years, primarily at the staff level regarding transit infrastructure.
- The Accessibility Committee presented to the CVRD Board on October 8th, 2019. The presentations highlighted issues with accessibility related to both public spaces and transportation, and the organizational support needs of the Committee.
- The CVRD received specific feedback from the Accessibility Committee regarding the level of accessibility of the new office building. The offices have been constructed to meet the provincial building code standard for accessibility. CVRD staff has worked collaboratively with Accessibility Committee and has implemented several suggestions that were relatively easy to accomplish. The more complicated improvements will be investigated and brought to the CVRD Board for consideration as part of a 2021 budget discussion.
- A City of Courtenay resolution supports City staff working with the CVRD to develop a regional accessibility strategy.
- Part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy will consider accessibility from the broader perspective of social inclusion. This work will be a short term project to have a conversation about accessibility for all ages and abilities in our community, especially with community partners already engaged in this type of work.
- The Social Planning Society and the Accessibility Committee have agreed to a Statement of Intent whereby the Social Planning Society would provide the Accessibility Committee with an administrative structure and support, subject to available grant funding.
- A Regional Accessibility Strategy could be included as part the Board's strategic planning discussion in September 2020 to consider social inclusion as a strategic driver and provide direction if this should be considered as part of a 2021 budget discussion. A grant in the \$15,000 range could be considered during the CVRD 2021 budget process to provide the Social Planning Society with the funding to provide administrative co-ordination of its own activities while also serving the administrative needs and thus re-assuring the ongoing viability of the Accessibility Committee.

Prepared by:

S. Smith

Scott Smith, RPP, MCIP
General Manager of Planning and
Development Services Branch