

## **Proposals for vibrant downtown space usage to be brought before Council**

(Penticton, BC – May 17, 2019) – At its upcoming meeting scheduled for May 21, Council will receive two staff reports containing proposals on the use of public space in the downtown. Both reports are in support of the City's Downtown Plan and, based on recent feedback from the community and downtown businesses, staff have developed ways in which the City can continue to enhance the vibrancy of downtown as a place to visit, enjoy and conduct business.

### **Downtown Public Space and Economic Vitality Opportunities**

Building on the success of existing space use arrangements, staff are seeking direction from Council to initiate opportunities for improving public space in the downtown including, spaces along sidewalks, areas in front of vacant storefronts, Nanaimo Square, Gyro Park, vacant parking lots and other locations in and around the downtown. Examples of vibrant space usage may include:

- pop-up event space;
- local artist and musician space;
- storefront use expansion;
- public space beautification;
- vending opportunities; and
- other innovative opportunities.

Approval for these activities and uses would be completed by the City's Land Department, and in consultation with the Downtown Penticton Association, including license agreements and liability insurance, when appropriate. Where any significant budget items are required, staff will bring these forward to Council for approval.

### **Good Neighbor Bylaw amendments**

Staff are also seeking support from Council to make the following changes to the City's Good Neighbour Bylaw:

- under the definition of "Street", include the space between a storefront and a sidewalk, and;
- under the definition of "Obstruction", include "sit or lie on a street" located between 100-300 Ellis Street, 200-400 Martin Street, and 100- 700 block of Main Street, between May 1 and September 30 inclusive.

These locations were identified as places where pedestrian traffic gathers downtown for special events and markets. Additionally, these locations also support public and private investment projects aimed at bringing more people and vibrancy into the downtown.

“The opportunities and changes being proposed in both reports are intended to bring tangible improvements to Penticton’s downtown in accordance with the City’s Downtown Plan,” said Director of Planning and Development, Anthony Haddad.

“With over \$100M of new private investment and close to \$20M in public investment taking place in the downtown since the adoption of the City’s Downtown Plan in 2013, the positive momentum built over recent years will continue by further enhancing our public spaces for our residents, businesses and visitors. New residential development alone, which includes a mix of affordable housing, market rentals and condominiums, have contributed to increasing the amount of new residents living in and around the downtown; bringing new residential density and life to the heart of our City.”

“Staff believe the range of usages being proposed for suitable public spaces will receive a positive response from the community and from those interested in participating in the various initiatives. Whether they be businesses looking to innovate outside of their buildings, local artists wishing to entertain the community, or locals wanting to create a new pop-up event in a public space downtown, all of these activities will continue to enhance the downtown that our businesses and residents have created. Likewise, in order to have a thriving downtown, the City’s Good Neighbour Bylaw requires updating to address circumstances and conditions not considered when the bylaw was originally developed, including the frequency and location of individuals occupying space for the purpose of sleeping, drug use, antisocial behavior or panhandling.”

For further information, members of the public can review both reports on the May 21 Council meeting agenda package, located on the City’s website (posted on May 17 at noon).

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**Contacts:**

Anthony Haddad  
Director of Development Services  
City of Penticton  
250-490-2520

Philip Cooper  
Communication Manager  
City of Penticton  
250-490-2583