

DATE OF MEETING JULY 29, 2024

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SUBJECT PUBLIC WORKS YARD AAP COMMUNICATION AND
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with a proposed Communication and Engagement Strategy for the Public Works Yard alternative approval process (AAP).

Recommendation

That Council endorse the draft Public Works Yard AAP Communication and Engagement Strategy as outlined in Attachment B of the report titled "Public Works Yard AAP Communication and Engagement Strategy" dated 2024-JUL-29.

BACKGROUND

At the Regular Council meeting held 2024-JUL-22, Council endorsed a new Alternative Approval Process (AAP) Policy and directed staff to prepare a borrowing bylaw for the Public Works Yard project. That bylaw is on tonight's agenda for Council's consideration and endorsement.

Previously, two AAPs took place seeking elector approval to borrow funds for Phase One of the Public Works Yard (Nanaimo Operations Centre) project; however, they were not completed. Staff presented options for Council to consider at the 2024-JUN-24 Governance and Priorities Committee meeting. Council directed staff to proceed with the 'Highest Needs in Single Phase' option for the Public Works Yard project, which would see the highest need and highest cost elements of the plan completed in a single phase of work (the fleet maintenance and administration buildings, along with stormwater management), leaving the rest of the improvements to the Public Works Yard to be completed over time through capital project planning.

As outlined in the AAP Policy (Attachment A), a high-level Communication and Engagement Strategy has been prepared for Council's consideration, which takes into account the scale and borrowing amount of the revamped Public Works Yard project (Attachment B).

DISCUSSION

When developing the Communication and Engagement Strategy, staff considered:

- The expanded scope of the project from what had been proposed during the previous AAPs

- The recent adoption of an AAP Policy, now allowing for electronic submissions
- Feedback heard regarding the previous AAP processes
- The recommendations outlined in the report from Lisa Zwarn, presented at the 2024-JUN-12 Governance and Priorities Committee meeting

Highlights from the proposed Communication and Engagement Strategy include:

- Open houses/tours of the Public Works Yard
- Online advertising with ads on Nanaimo News Now and Facebook/Instagram
- Social media posts (videos, images, messaging) on Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn
- Website content updated for the AAP and project pages
- A 'Sweet Layered Podcast' episode featuring information on the AAP and project
- News releases notifying of key dates, engagement events and where to get information
- Ads printed in the Nanaimo News Bulletin newspaper
- Information stations setup in City facilities
- Radio ads
- Flyers sent to households with information regarding the AAP and project

Staff are recommending an informational flyer drop to households within the City limits due to the expanded scope of the Public Works Yard project from what had previously been communicated, and to help communicate the recent policy change now allowing individuals to submit their completed and signed forms electronically.

Staff also explored the option of sending the information via addressed mail; however, this is much more costly (approx. \$34,000 versus approx. \$13,000 for a flyer drop), and recipients would be limited to homeowners only. The benefit of a flyer drop, along with its reduced cost, is that all addresses, including rentals and apartments or condos, etc. could still receive the information. However, there is a risk that some individuals residing outside the eligible elector boundaries would receive the information flyers, which could cause confusion as they would not be eligible to participate. In addition, there is a risk that some households may not receive the information flyers, particularly those who have indicated they do not want unaddressed mail.

NEXT STEPS

Once a Strategy has been endorsed by Council, staff will develop detailed Communications Plans for the AAP and Public Works Yard project. Staff will update the necessary information, design materials, plan for engagement events and secure advertising space. |

OPTIONS

1. That Council endorse the draft Public Works Yard AAP Communication and Engagement Strategy as outlined in Attachment B of the report titled "Public Works Yard AAP Communication and Engagement Strategy" dated 2024-JUL-29.
 - The advantages of this option: Feedback regarding communication and engagement efforts in the AAP held in January/February 2024 was positive. This Strategy builds on the initiatives that took place at that time, and includes an informational flyer drop

- which would reach more eligible electors (including renters) than an addressed mail option, and at a lower cost.
- The disadvantages of this option: There is a risk that some individuals residing outside the eligible elector boundaries would receive the information flyers; there is also a risk that some households within the boundaries may not receive the information flyers.
 - Financial Implications: The costs of printing and postage for an information flyer drop is approximately \$13,000, with the total costs of the proposed Strategy estimated at \$32,270. This does not include staff time to undertake the various initiatives.
2. That Council provide alternate direction.]

SUMMARY POINTS

- Council recently adopted a new Alternative Approval Process (AAP) Policy which outlines that a high-level Communication and Engagement Strategy will be brought forward for endorsement based on the scale and borrowing amount of a project.
- Staff have considered the expanded scope and cost of the Public Works Yard Project from what had previously been proposed during previous AAPs, along with changes to the City's AAP process allowing for electronic submissions of forms through the City website.
- Staff have prepared a draft Strategy that builds on the communication initiatives previously undertaken and proposes including an informational flyer drop sent to households within the City limits.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Alternative Approval Process (AAP) Policy

ATTACHMENT B: Public Works Yard AAP Communication and Engagement Strategy |

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