



Monthly Report to City Council June 27th, 2016

Brief Update on Selected Work from May 24th to present

Façade Improvement Program

- Our partner in this program, Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot (CFAC), received Expressions of Interest (EOI) applications from 21 building owners for 26 buildings
- EOI applications were from all commercial areas of the City and represent close to \$600,000 worth of façade improvements
- 8 buildings are in Council's priority areas and 18 buildings are on a corner lot or are very visible stand-alone buildings
- In recognition of the value and potential impact of this program, the Board of Community Futures has decided to augment Council's allocation of \$50,000 with an additional \$100,000 of non-refundable investments. This is in addition to CFAC providing for architectural services and special façade improvement loans at Prime + 2% (or 4.7%) for those businesses desiring that
- Most businesses are long-standing ones in Port Alberni and thus have maintained through the recent decade of economic challenges
- Many benefits are anticipated from the program besides a more attractive curb appeal including employment for many local contractors and, based on research done by CFAC, better financial results for the businesses involved.
- The architect has already met with some of the applicants and will meet with all other applicants over the coming weeks
- The architect will work with the building owners to help prepare them for the actual Façade Improvement Program (FIP) application; these are expected to arrive over time considering façade complexity and contractor availability
- Those that get final FIP approval will be required to have any outstanding building permit and fire code issues resolved prior to receiving grant funding
- Some façade improvement will begin imminently awhile others may not conclude until spring 2017
- 4 building owners (some owning multiple commercial properties) have inquired about a second round of funding since the application deadline of June 6th

Grant Applications

- An application was submitted to the Rural Dividend Program for funding to deliver tourism sector training to front-line workers in stores along Johnston Road and Redford Street to better prepare them to respond to questions asked by visitors. The ultimate goals of the project are to increase the number of hours a visitor spends in Port Alberni, to increase tourism revenue and to give workers an opportunity to gain skills useful in the tourism industry which is projecting labour shortages.
- An Expression of Interest was submitted to the Provincial Initiative in Affordable Housing for funding of a project that would install energy-conservation measures in an existing six-unit apartment building in order to reduce monthly expenditures made by low and moderate income renters.
- A letter of support for an Expression of Interest to the Provincial Initiative in Affordable Housing: was provided to a local organization proposing to build 20 new, small units for low to moderate income seniors.

Brief Notes from the BC Economic Development Association Economic Summit

- A BC-wide survey of economic development stakeholders found that their top priorities included Business Retention & Expansion (61%); Tourism & Cultural Activities (48%); Business & Industry Attraction (41%); and Entrepreneurial Development (25%)
- Other top priorities identified by communities with populations between 10,001 and 25,000 included Marketing & Attraction of Residents; Addressing Downtown Matters; Shop-Local Campaigns; and Workforce Development
- A presentation by members of the Fraser River Industrial Association showed that Port Metro's biggest challenge is their growth in the context of a shortage of industrial land
- Co-working and maker-spaces are being created in many communities throughout BC
- There are more than 100 craft breweries throughout BC employing 4,000 people and generating about \$100 million in revenue annually
- The BCEDA Awards are a source of inspiration and in particular, the City of Powell River's 'Resident Attraction Campaign' and the City of Quesnel's 'Healthcare Recruitment Red Carpet Welcome' are two initiatives worth emulating.

Marketing the City of Port Alberni

- A proposed TV ad campaign has been rescheduled for a mid-September start; the advantages to this later start date are that:
 - it provides time to collect responses from surveys being distributed to new residents; these responses are expected to give us more insight into who is choosing to move here, where they are coming from, for what reasons, what was known by them prior to moving and what may have been a pleasant surprise after moving here
 - it provides time for collecting summer footage of events in the city
 - it allows for additional testimonials from new residents
 - the viewing audience is likely to be larger as most people will have returned from summer holidays



Pat Deakin, Economic Development Manager