

## MAYOR'S REPORT - APRIL, 2021



This past month has been a busy month for all members of Council and Staff.

Administration and management have been extremely busy finalizing the draft five-year financial plan for presentation to Council and the public as we move closer to the May deadline for final reading and adoption.

Mayor and Council asked staff to produce a 2021 budget with only a 2% increase because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect it has had on household incomes over the past year and for the foreseeable future. A 2% tax increase will barely keep up with the cost of inflation in providing the services for residents, but staff has managed to produce a well-balanced approach for this fiscal year.

In March and April, Mayor and Council Ts'uubaa-asatx, as well as the CVRD Directors from area F and I have been participating in a joint Community to community forum to formalize a joint protocol and memorandum of understanding between all three jurisdictions that will guide us towards a closer working relationship as neighbours surrounding the lake.

As for your Mayor and Council itself, we have had 2 facilitated sessions to produce a Town of Lake Cowichan strategic plan that will guide this Council and the next, to 2026 and will help staff and Council stay focused on the core necessities of managing and maintaining services within the municipality that will not only provide for today but for many years out.

The plan has been compiled and ready for review in early May with a possible adoption and presentation to the public by the end of May. So far Mayor and Council are very excited at the results of this facilitated process and are eager to implement the plan moving forward.

We are well into the spring season and the whole of staff are busy getting the parks and streetscape in shape for all of us to enjoy and be proud of. As well, our public works Crews and contractors are busy doing the work of maintaining and upgrading our waterworks, bus stops, commencing playground upgrades, roadworks and sidewalk renewal etc.

Of course, the top-of-mind issue is COVID- 19 and the upcoming tourism season.

On the many zoom calls and emails that Mayor, Council and Staff attend each week, COVID-19 take centre stage in many of the conversations. Council has held 2 Roundtable sessions with community stakeholders regarding possible concerns during our busy tourism season and how that relates to public health orders and guidelines.

The provincial government has done a very good job reaching out and considering all the concerns raised by various municipalities and our input is evident in the recent orders and guidelines especially when it comes to travel within health authorities and regions. I would ask the citizens of the Cowichan Lake area and the traveling public to visit provincial health websites and watch social media posts for new information as it is presented. It is up to all of us to know and understand what it is going to take to keep us all safe while we move through the vaccination program quickly so we can start bending the curve downward on the transmission of COVID-19 towards a robust immunity situation where we can start to move towards whatever the new normal looks like in our lives.

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“Building Community Together”