

NO: R092

COUNCIL DATE: May 8, 2017

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor and Council**

DATE: **May 5, 2017**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**

FILE: **7850-40**

SUBJECT: **Museum of Surrey Construction Closure**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Forward a copy of this report to the Cultural Development Advisory Committee for their information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to advise Council that the Museum of Surrey will be closed from July 31, 2017 until September 2018 to facilitate the timely and efficient delivery of the Phase Two Museum expansion, including the relocation of 1881 Town Hall, Anniedale School, site mitigation, and parking lot renovations.

This closure will affect Museum visitor services until the opening in September, 2018. Veterans Square will be open for the Remembrance Day commemoration November 10-13, 2017. The Surrey Archives and Cloverdale Library will both remain fully operational during this period.

BACKGROUND

A Request for Proposal "RFP" for Phase 2 expansion of the Surrey Museum was issued in December 2015 for construction and an architect (HCMA Architecture + Design) was retained in April 2016. Design and permitting continues through spring 2017. Ground preparation and site mitigation has commenced and construction of the Museum expansion is expected to begin this summer with an anticipated completion date of September 2018.

Once completed, this multi-phased expansion will include exhibition galleries, a Kids Explore Zone, community engagement spaces, an Indigenous Hall and other animated areas for interactive learning, community connection and pride in the City of Surrey. The Museum will be a destination cultural facility for Surrey and Lower Mainland residents and visitors.

DISCUSSION

The Museum construction closure will enable significant efficiencies that will ensure fiscal stewardship and the project being completed on time. Construction can commence full-time with no interruptions.

Construction will impact Museum services in a number of ways. The Collections Storage area is getting an independent HVAC system which will require artefacts to be moved into other areas of the facility while this work is being completed. The Anderson Cabin will be relocated, stored and reinstated, making it inoperable for programming. In the History Gallery, all displays will be wrapped to be protected from construction debris. Significant gallery changes include HVAC system improvements, entrance modification, plus floor structure upgrade and gallery re-organization to accommodate a Surrey built firetruck. A new Indigenous Hall will be curated during this time. Construction noise and less than two week notices for service interruptions means that we cannot adequately plan and deliver programs, which need to be delivered in a reliably scheduled manner for the certainty and stability necessary for as teachers, planners, settlement workers, seniors, and families. Museum programs also need the context of exhibitions and community spaces and this will not be the case during construction.

Currently museum facility attendance is 35,000-40,000 per year, including outreach programs and exhibits. Although the proposed closure is for a 14-month duration; the Museum is closed each year from Christmas Eve until early February for exhibit upgrades and program development.

Museum Outreach

Museum of Surrey staff will use this closure as an opportunity for extensive outreach into Surrey's communities. At least 25,000 people will be engaged through these outreach activities. These activities include, installing a new exhibit in the Guildford Shopping Centre called "Urban Fabrics" and staging a travelling exhibit for the 30th Anniversary of the Francophone Association de Surrey. In addition, a portable Kids Explore Zone has been curated and built with an inaugural launch at Party for the Planet. A portable textile exhibit will be completed by late fall, 2017. These portable galleries will travel with Public Programs staff to special events throughout the City as well as be used in conjunction with the Museum's various partners.

Additional program outreach during the closure includes:

- 1) Expanded school program opportunities at the Historic Stewart Farm.
- 2) Customized education programs for elementary and high school delivery.
- 3) Programming at community and City events with interactive exhibits, crafts, activities, and Museum expansion presentations.
- 4) Programming with partners such as Honeybee Centre, Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society, Surrey Archives and the Heritage Re-enactment troupe

A full closure at the Surrey Museum, which would allow for construction to continue uninterrupted, will result in over \$500,000 in construction cost savings.

In addition to these savings, a closure will save the City approximately \$100,000 through utilities, wages, contract instructors and security that will be reinvested in the Museum outreach and the project.

CONCLUSION

Closing the Museum from July 31, 2017 to September 2018 will result in a Museum expansion that will be constructed efficiently in less time, with substantial cost savings.

Although a full closure means that the public cannot attend the Museum during the construction period, Museum services will be brought into Surrey's communities, schools, businesses and cultural celebrations. The addition of outreach activities during the closure will ensure Surrey's citizens are served and offer a better awareness of the Museum and the expansion. In addition, Museum staff will have developed a template of outreach that can be used well after the Museum is open.

The timely and efficient use of resources so that the public is served through Arts and Heritage is of paramount importance. Culture enriches the lives of people, connects neighbourhoods and increases the happiness and wellbeing of communities. City staff are confident this can be better achieved via this closure to help ensure the grand opening of a revitalized and dynamic Museum in September 2018.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation & Culture