



Duncan City Hall-Watercolour by Robert Amos, reproduced by permission of the Heritage Society of B.C.

## TOTEM BRIEFS

The totems along the Trans Canada Highway in Duncan were removed last year to the Public Works Yard where they were evaluated and restored to their original beauty. Three have been installed in public green spaces downtown. Four more will be installed shortly on the bump-outs on Station and Kenneth Streets. The balance of the poles will be placed downtown, greatly enhancing the City's totem experience for visitors and residents.

The Totem Committee is evaluating the condition of the rest of the poles and developing a long-term plan for promotion of and addition to the City's public art collection.



An interesting sidebar has been the recent controversy over the copyright that the City holds on most of the totems. The copyrights were registered when the poles were carved. The policy is not intended to restrict personal use in anyway, the City only wishes to monitor commercial use so as to protect the integrity of the poles so that they are treated with deference.

# Beneath the Clocktower

YOUR INSIGHT INTO ISSUES AND EVENTS AT DUNCAN CITY HALL

January 2008

Check out our award winning website at [www.duncan.ca](http://www.duncan.ca)

## Graffiti Task Force Information

Graffiti is a crime that is increasing in Duncan and North Cowichan. Graffiti invites other types of vandalism and crime, because it suggests the neighbourhood does not care or cannot cope. It gives the impression a neighbourhood is unsafe.

Ensure your property always looks occupied. Lock all doors and exterior gates and ensure there is good lighting around the property. Participate in a block or business watch program. Do not glorify graffiti by using graffiti images in advertising. Remove objects that can be used to access roofs, and eliminate target areas such as walls and fences by planting shrubs.



Landscape walls, fences and storefronts with flowers, shrubs, ivy, or other landscaping. If you sell products that could be used for graffiti vandalism, be careful how you display the product as it is often stolen. Always be aware of suspicious purchases.

And always, always call the police to report any new graffiti. This helps the police build a case against the vandals, even if they are not seen in the act. Contact the North Cowichan Duncan RCMP at 748-5522.

## Welcome to the Slow Zone

The City is experimenting with a new approach to slow traffic down through the Government Street corridor in downtown Duncan. This corridor has 4 crossings that are used extensively by seniors living in the area and young children going to nearby schools. The new signs are yellow and tell drivers "You are entering a slow zone - 30kmh ahead." The new signs, a first in Canada, seem to be working well as vehicle traffic has slowed considerably since installation. The signs are a harbinger of more to come and will hopefully encourage the adoption of a 'slower' pace in all of downtown Duncan much like the other 'slow' movements in other cities of the world.

## Message from the Mayor

I would first like to take this opportunity to wish you a successful and healthy 2008. This past year has gone by swiftly and the City has been successful in advancing many valuable community projects. The negotiations with the Cowichan Exhibition Society and Malaspina University College have advanced the "Cowichan Place" project to near completion. With the new pool facility under construction, "Cowichan Place" will become a prominent education, recreation and cultural centre with few rivals in BC. The relocation of Pioneer Park to a new site on Somenos Rd. and the Cowichan Exhibition to a new location on the TCH near Mays Rd will see a wonderful rejuvenation of two long serving organizations.



The City has also made good progress on infrastructure. 2006/07 saw capital works on roads and sewer projects increase substantially. This will continue in 2008 and include reconstruction of Chesterfield Ave, traffic signals at Cowichan Way and Trunk Rd and the continued work with the Ministry of Transportation on the TCH in consultation with the neighbourhood.  
(..over)

## ..mayor's message cont.

2007 also saw the completion of a new comprehensive Community Plan, and Council and staff are working to complete a new modern zoning bylaw to reflect the values and vision of this new Community Plan. I encourage you to look over the plan on our website ([www.duncan.ca](http://www.duncan.ca)) to familiarize yourself with the goals and objectives in the plan, further public open houses will be held as we complete a draft of the Zoning Bylaw so that you can give your input and comments.

Council has set another ambitious agenda for 2008, including possible boundary restructure, a redevelopment strategy to stimulate new economic development, affordable housing and advance environmental best practices, along with many other initiatives such as a tourism plan in partnership with Tourism BC, Cowichan Tribes and The Duncan Cowichan Chamber of Commerce and a pedestrian/cycling trail on the E&N corridor to name only a few.

We could not achieve any of these things without the support and the dedicated and professional service of the city's staff and employees. I would like to express a sincere thank you to Tom, Peter, Lynn, Len and everyone at city hall and public works for their hard work.

Finally I would encourage you to give me a call or drop by to talk about how we can work towards making our city the most livable small city in Canada.

## 2008 Budget, Tax Rates & Other News

Initial BC assessment figures show the average assessed value for a single family home in the City of Duncan went up 17% for 2008 while the average Business Property assessment went up 12%. Later this spring, the City will determine its 2008 budget and express a tax increase % for the "average home"; if your assessment increase was higher than the average increase your tax bill increase will also be higher than that expressed for the "average".

Welcome to Tamie and April, our two casual office workers who have been an enormous help during this past fall that was extremely busy, and who continue to be of great assistance. Particular thanks goes to Len Thew for the great work he did on the paving for 2007 as the focus on problem patches has all but eliminated calls about pot hole incidences.

The City was successful on several small grant applications in 2006/7: Community Methamphetamine Program, West Nile Risk Reduction Program, Community Health Promotion (Field to Table), and looks forward to beginning work on the joint City of Duncan/Cowichan Tribes Tourism Plan funded through BC Tourism.

On another very positive note, the City has not had to have a property tax sale for a number of years now and we couldn't be happier. A record number of people are taking advantage of the prepayment plan and other payment options and the number of properties with arrears and delinquent taxes has never been lower.

The City's traffic enforcement department is on the cusp of a self-sufficient level. With fine revenue well down from historical levels due to not ticketing customers when in a time limited space, and only targeted enforcement to encourage people to choose the right space, it is the record levels of \$1 a day parking spot revenues that has made the real difference. Thank you to those employees and merchants who have bought into the system to ensure adequate parking downtown for customers.



## Deputy Fire Chief Robertson Retires

After serving with The Duncan Volunteer Fire Department for 35 years, Deputy Fire Chief Doug Robertson retired earlier this month. At a packed event in the firehall, he was toasted, roasted and thanked by many of his fellow officers, some of whom are long retired themselves but had great memories to share.

Doug spoke feelingly about his many years of service, the camaraderie, the hard and dangerous work, the privilege of working with so many dedicated firefighters as they saved lives and property.

All will miss him and we take this last opportunity to publicly thank him for his many years of dedicated service to the City.

## Mayor's Advisory Committee for Persons With Disabilities

The Cowichan Valley has the largest percentage of disabled persons in BC. The committee is in the process of reinventing itself. New members will be invited from a variety of groups including seniors, sight and hearing disabled and the mental health community.

Two projects are about to begin, the first being to come up with new terms of reference and a mission statement so that we know what we are working toward and in what way.

The second involves getting a provincial grant to continue the 10 x 10 Challenge and the Measuring Up component. Duncan has accepted the challenge to work with the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities to help meet the target of increasing employment for persons with disabilities by 10% by 2010. The committee hopes to overcome barriers to employment for the disabled by education, information and assistance to employers.

For comments/questions/concerns about this newsletter, please contact Councillor Sharon Jackson 746-9451 or email [suggestionbox@duncan.ca](mailto:suggestionbox@duncan.ca)