

Mayor's Message – July 2016

Like many other Gibsons residents, I have been enjoying the newly improved Inglis Trail, which now links Upper and Lower Gibsons. Council is pleased with the progress in this area and very grateful for the community support in making it happen.

As elected officials, we regularly receive feedback from residents. That feedback can be anywhere on the spectrum from positive to outright angry. So perhaps my reaction was understandable when, on a recent hike along the trail, I flinched and backed up a pace or two when a woman approached me, walking briskly and waving her arms, and saying "I am going to write you a letter!" It was a pleasant surprise when she stepped aside to show me her mother, progressing along on her scooter on which she had travelled from Christensen Village alongside her daughter, who commented, "My mother is delighted that this trail is accessible to people who depend on scooters to get around, and not only to hikers, bikers and horseback riders. This trail is great."

All over town, we are committed to increasing accessibility and access to parks and walkways, in an effort to improve all of our public spaces and offer more recreation options to local residents and visitors alike. We are delivering on that commitment: Gibsons now provides bike lanes where they did not previously exist, and several pathways have undergone transformations.

An exciting example of this work, now underway, is the Foreshore Redevelopment and Seawalk Improvements project. If you are among the many walkers who enjoy the seaside walk from the harbour to Armour's Beach, you will have noted a significant clean-up halfway along the path, where property has sat vacant and the pathway allowed to become overwhelmed with rocks, logs and marine debris. This is but the beginning of rejuvenating that path and the foreshore area in general. We are undertaking this project with public input, as a conceptual design is developed for the foreshore area. A questionnaire is available www.gibsons.ca to collect your input. Return it by Friday, July 29 to ensure your voice is heard. You can also indicate your interest in participating in a design charrette planned for this October.

We are also applying our Eco Asset Strategy to the foreshore, recognizing that the efficient and sustainable operation of the municipal service (both the walkway, and the sanitary sewer trunk line which runs along the foreshore, can only be accomplished by working within the capacity and dynamics of the natural foreshore environment, and by planning for anticipated climate change and sea level rise.

I encourage you to participate in the survey – and also, to take advantage of a longstanding Gibsons waterfront tradition during Sea Cavalcade, July 25 and 26. I hope to see you there.