

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION SATELLITE OFFICE AND MAILBOX
INITIATIVE UPDATE**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council receive this report for information.

REPORT

The Financial Management Committee, at its meeting held on 2018 September 26, received and adopted the attached report providing an update on the planned pilot exercise for the provision of alternative locations for the payment of property taxes that took place in 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Johnston
Chair

Councillor C. Jordan
Vice Chair

Copied to:	City Manager Director Finance Director Corporate Services Director Engineering Director Parks, Rec. & Cult. Services Director Public Safety & Community Services Director Human Resources Chief Information Officer
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TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: 2018 Sep 18

FROM: DIRECTOR FINANCE

FILE: 6400-20

SUBJECT: PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION SATELLITE OFFICE AND MAILBOX INITIATIVE UPDATE

PURPOSE: To provide an update on the planned pilot exercise for the provision of alternative locations for the payment of property taxes that took place in 2018.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the Financial Management Committee recommend Council receive this report as information.

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

On 2018 March 07, a report was provided to the Financial Management Committee outlining a pilot program comprising of three new initiatives. The program was comprised of:

1. Remote Property Tax Collection Office – Bonsor Recreation Centre
2. City Hall Car Park Drop Box
3. Recreation Centre Drop Boxes

The main focus was to provide citizens with greater access to tax office services and alternatives to coming into City Hall for payment of property taxes and / or claiming of the Home Owner Grant.

The pilot initiatives were comprised of the following sites and services:

Sites	Services
1. Bonsor Recreation Centre	Remote Property Tax Collection Office, offering cheque and debit payment services, application receipting for Home Owner Grants and Deferrals, plus general enquiry services. Operated Monday to Friday, 8.30 to 4pm, excluding statutory holidays.

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Sites	Services
2. City Hall Car Park Drop Box	New drop box, located in the City Hall parking lot. Two dedicated 5 minute parking spaces were also provided, plus parking enforcement / security.
3. Recreation Center Drop Boxes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cameron Recreation Centre ➤ Edmonds Recreation Centre ➤ Eileen Daily Recreation Centre 	Drop Boxes – located near reception. Payments, grants, deferment and PAD applications. No enquiry services.

All sites were operational from June 4th to July 4th. These initiatives were advertised to Burnaby citizens through the City's website, local newspapers, property tax notices and large signage at the respective locations.

2.0 POLICY SECTION

Goal

- A Connected Community
 - Social connection – Enhance social connections throughout Burnaby
- An Inclusive Community
 - Serve a diverse community – Ensure City services fully meet the needs of our dynamic community

3.0 RESULTS

The following table sets out the volume of either Home Owner Grants, Deferment Applications and payments or a combination thereof received at the various locations.

# of Items Processed	Bonsor	Eileen Daily	Cameron	Edmonds	City Hall Parking Lot Drop Box	City Hall Letterboxes (comparative data)
JUNE 4 – JULY 4	673	236	126	155	369	1810
AVERAGE DAILY	31	18	10	12	17	82

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The Bonsor Satellite Site is seen as achieving the most favourable results, with over 673 items processed. The majority of comments cards provided by citizens at the Bonsor Satellite Site stated an “excellent” rating for the services received. In addition to payment and application acceptance, staff provided information and guidance to customers, whom otherwise would have had to contact or visit staff at City Hall.

The total cost of all three initiatives was estimated at \$47,000. Staffing costs related to these initiatives were accommodated through stabilization funding in the 2018 budget.

Actual costs were absorbed within the Finance Department 2018 Operating Budget as follows:

Expenses	Bonsor Recreation Centre	City Hall Parking Lot	All Three Rec Centres Combined	Total
ONE-TIME	\$9,601.47	\$12,741.48	\$11,661.70	\$34,004.65
ANNUAL	\$12,383.10	\$2,793.75	\$2,774.77	\$17,951.62
GRAND TOTAL	\$21,984.57	\$15,535.23	\$14,436.47	\$51,956.27

One-time costs included parking stall re-arrangements at City Hall, installation of the drop boxes, data ports and cameras at all locations. Annual costs consist of security and collection services from the sites. As a result, in future, ongoing deployment of these services will cost approximately \$18,000.

The number of customer interactions at City Hall is not currently tracked in the existing tax system. From staff observation, only a marginal reduction in the number of visitors to City Hall was noticed. Considering that this was the first year of these initiatives, it is anticipated that future years will see more use of these initiatives by citizens.

4.0 2019 TAX SEASON

Based on feedback received and reasonable customer numbers, it is anticipated that the number of customers using the Bonsor Satellite Site, Recreation Centres and City Hall Parking Lot drop boxes should increase if the City were to repeat these initiatives for the 2019 tax season.

As a result, staff recommend repeating the initiative for the 2019 tax season. The introduction of a new property tax system in 2019 will also bring efficiencies into the property tax collection process. The new system will provide the greatest improvement for customers through revised billing processes, new online account access and e-billing functionality, which in turn should also reduce demand on City Hall services (in person, phone and email).

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5.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Financial Management Committee recommend Council receive this report as information.



Noreen Kassam, CPA, CGA
DIRECTOR FINANCE

NK:RR/ml

Copied to: City Manager
Director Corporate Services
Director Public Safety & Community Services
Director Engineering
Director Parks Recreation & Cultural Services
Chief Information Officer
Director Human Resources