

Oct., 2019 First Edition

HICEEC REPORT

It's an interesting century—and here's our chance to join it

HICEEC and the Denman Island Internet Committee have secured funding for the development of a Hornby Digital Roadmap & Implementation Plan, with the support of all levels of local government: the CVRD, School District, HIRRA, and Islands Trust. The plan involves public consultation, so PLEASE complete the surveys—every voice counts, as we come together as a community to express our needs and aspirations. Evidence of a cohesive, prepared community will enhance our chance of succeeding with the “big ask”—the multimillion-dollar grant needed to upgrade the Island’s digital connectivity and get fibre-optic infrastructure installed on both Hornby and Denman Islands.

Tasty new letters for the taxation alphabet soup

Since October 2018, many local accommodation providers have had to collect an 8% PST (Provincial Sales Tax) from their customers. As the “P” indicates, that money goes into provincial coffers. Plans are now in progress to add an MRDT (Municipal & Regional District Tax) on top of that. The MRDT is a 2% or 3% “hotel tax” whose revenue stays in the community, to support eligible/specified local programs. All resorts, lodges, B&Bs, vacation rentals, etc., would collect the MRDT from visitors.

To implement MRDT, though, you have to follow a script specified by the Ministry of Finance, which requires the leadership of key local accommodation providers—in Hornby’s case, Ford Cove Store & Cottages, Hornby island Diving, Sea Breeze Lodge, Wind ‘n’ Waves Property Management, The Thatch, and MyHornbyStory property management. These six will then get together with other Island accommodation businesses and tourism stakeholders to develop priorities for the 5-year strategic plan and the 1-year tactical plan for the MRDT program. Discussions are also under way with Island campsites and glamping businesses to voluntarily participate in these efforts. As one person said *“no one likes taxes, but when a very small tax is paid by the tourists, and is used collectively to provide amenities that benefit both the visitors and the residents alike, it makes sense”*.

A small blue contribution to a green cause

Did you take the Hornby bus this summer? Ridership was up this year, and presumably some of that was due to folks supporting public transit to reduce their personal—and our collective—carbon footprints.

With the blue bus’s third summer of service shrinking in the rear-view mirror, we want to thank all the volunteers and drivers for their dedication. Special thanks to our mechanical team of hometown heroes: Garth Millan, Al Dickie and Peter Mills and the rest of the Steering Committee. Much appreciation to: Arna & Daisy/HomeGrown Websites, for the online route and map at hornbybus.com; Hilary Wood McDonnell for the Facebook page; Jean Miserando for directing the boating traffic; Ron Doucette for donating 3 big tires; the Spark Exec. for looking to a future bus bay; Alex and Kate at the Outdoor Education Centre for their oversights; and the Thatch for providing a summer driver’s campsite and parking spot for the bus. The bus wouldn’t be possible without our community minded sponsors: Union Bay Credit Union, Thatch

Pub, Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park, Hornby Island Residents & Ratepayers Association (HIRRA), the Coop Store, LePage Realty (Donna Tuele), Fords Cove Store & Cabins, HICEEC and the CVRD.

Service was expanded this summer to include bikes and dogs, with their appropriate owners. And although the bus was free, riders were generous in their contributions to the donation box.

Drum roll please

Please join with us in celebrating excellence. The HICEEC Business of the Year will be announced at the Fall Business Mixer, October 17th. Nomination forms will be in the Tribune and in an envelope in the HICEEC Free Post Box. Nominations close October 7th. FMI james@hiceec.org

What else are we working on?

Hornbyisland.com EVENTS calendar; Hornby Denman Visitor Guide; participation in CAST; support for shoulder season economic enhancement including the new bcseaside.com regional website; support for the Festival Society and Farmer's Market internet; Ferry Advisory Committee; etc.

Submitted on behalf of the volunteer HICEEC Board: John Heinegg, Katherine Ronan, Carlyn Bishop, Jason Griggs, John Grayson, Jeff Zamluk, Jim Bulmer, and Jack Hornstein.