



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

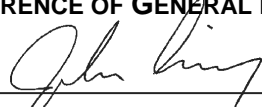


To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** March 14, 2022
From: Suzanne Bycraft
Director, Public Works Operations **File:** 10-6000-00/Vol 01
Re: **2022 National Public Works Week - May 15 to 21, 2022**

Staff Recommendation

That the staff 2022 campaign theme to recognize National Public Works Week as outlined in the staff report titled “2022 National Public Works Week - May 15 to 21, 2022”, dated March 14, 2022, from the Director, Public Works Operations, be received for information.

Suzanne Bycraft
Director, Public Works Operations
(604-233-3338)

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 
APPROVED BY CAO 	

Staff Report

Origin

The Canadian National Public Works Association's annual National Public Works Week is from May 15-21, 2022. In past years, the City has celebrated National Public Works Week with in-person events including an open house, school and education events, engineering exhibits and displays of public works and parks equipment.

Due to the uncertainty with the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have pivoted in 2022 to virtual events to celebrate this year's National Public Works Week, similar to that undertaken in 2021. National Public Works Week promotion in 2022 will include a social media, student engagement and community engagement campaign as outlined in this report.

Analysis

Background

Each May, National Public Works Week recognizes the many people dedicated to their communities by working in public works careers. The week is used to energize and educate the public on the importance of public works in their daily lives. The City recognizes National Public Works Week through a proclamation outlining the following areas:

- Public Works services provided in the community are an integral part of Richmond citizens' everyday lives; and
- the support of an understanding and informed citizenry is vital to the efficient operation of Public Works systems and programs such as water, sewers, roads, public buildings and solid waste collection; and
- the health, safety and comfort of this community greatly depend on these facilities and services; and
- the quality and effectiveness of these facilities, as well as their planning, design and construction, is vitally dependent upon the efforts and skills of Public Works officials; and
- the efficiency of qualified and dedicated personnel who staff the Public Works Departments is materially influenced by the people's attitude and understanding of the importance of the work they perform.

2022 Campaign Theme and Components

This year's National Public Works Week theme is "Ready and Resilient" (Attachment 1). Staff will use this theme to illustrate the preventative work, proactive planning and skilled execution of services that allows us to be responsive, ready and resilient in the community when required.

The City will recognize National Public Works Week by hosting three integrated campaign approaches:

Social Media

Staff are inviting the public to celebrate this year's National Public Works Week by visiting the City's social media channels daily from May 15-21, to view new photos/videos featuring different Public Works' staff and services including a Recycle Depot tour, a watermain project, a drainage project and video footage of a snow plough in action.

Student Engagement

The City and CUPE 394 will continue to award the annual Public Works Open House Scholarship to two School District No. 38 grade 12 students. The scholarships are \$1,000 each and students who have elected to pursue a trades career are invited to submit an application to the School District. A video presentation of the scholarships will be provided to the recipients.

Community Connections

Two community connections communication pieces, a video and an article, were produced to highlight the connection between Public Works and the community, and to showcase the exceptional work of staff. They further demonstrate how Council approved infrastructure based projects materialize into tangible services that provide practical and real benefits to the community.

The video, "Reeder Road South Laneway Drainage & Asphalt Upgrade", highlights the connection made between staff and Errington Elementary School students at this drainage infrastructure capital project. While working in the neighbourhood, staff could see an interest from the students and approached the school with an invitation to spend a morning to learn more about the project. After the field trip, students connected the importance of safety, the environment, social responsibility and City operations through an in-school project, and awarded staff with the title of "Community Heroes".

The article, "Pipes are Really About People", (Attachment 2) features a current watermain project in the Springfield neighbourhood and highlights one of the City's primary corporate values: people. The crew working on the watermain project have a special bond and passion for their work as well as building community, which is apparent from the kudos received from the public at several watermain projects throughout the City.

Going forward, these community connection pieces will be incorporated on the City's website. Staff will continue to produce feature materials which recognize Council's commitment to infrastructure improvements while demonstrating service excellence performed on various capital infrastructure improvement projects. The nature of these key infrastructure services being underground means they may be less visual to the community, but nevertheless are of significant importance to daily life for residents and businesses alike.

Financial Impact

None

Conclusion

The Canadian National Public Works Association's annual National Public Works Week is from May 15-21, 2022 and the City's Engineering and Public Works Division plays an active role in celebrating it. Three integrated campaigns through social media, student and community engagement highlights will be held in virtual format to recognize and highlight the people who provide and maintain the infrastructure services known as public works. Cities across Canada participate by raising awareness of public works contributions, and encourage community support for these dedicated employees who consistently improve the quality of life for residents.



Jatinder Johal
Manager, Public Works Administration
(3330)

LK:lk

Att. 1: National Public Works Week Poster

Att. 2: "Pipes are Really About People" Article

National Public Works Week Poster





CONNECTING COMMUNITY: Pipes are really about people

There's a lot more to replacing water pipes than you'd think. It turns out, pipes are really about people. People who enjoy safe, reliable water. People in the community who share an interest in the project and the people on the City of Richmond Public Works crew who put people first. And with every project, the crews are demonstrating the City's corporate values: people, excellence, leadership, team and innovation.



Putting water pipes in the ground and hooking them up to homes is just part of what goes on when the City upgrades its watermain infrastructure. When you pass by the Springfield area, where the crew is installing new water pipes, you will see everything you expect: an excavator and other big equipment, crew members working together in hard hats and steel-toed boots with shovels and other tools, stacks of long blue pipes and lots of dirt.

Continued on next page

It's evident that there is a routine, even a rhythm, to their work, and they make quick progress, completing about 15 lengths of pipe a day (that's 90 metres). The City is investing \$1,505,000 to replace the watermain, add new hydrants and make other improvements in the area. The work includes digging the ground out, putting in the pipe, burying the pipe, installing valves and hydrants, testing the water pressure, chlorinating the water, dechlorinating the water, initiating water quality tests, connecting the water service to homes and smoothing out the area to make sure it's safe for drivers while waiting for paving. They move about 30 truckloads of soil (some in, some out) daily, and they get everything ready for each service connection so that residents are only without water for about 15 minutes. It's a lot.

"Not many people really like to do what we do, but the guys on this crew want to do the work and they care about the product they put in the ground," says Jason Butler, the supervisor of the water crew. "They work really hard to get the job done well, and get it done quickly. I think my crew is one of the best. We're a tight-knit group."

The quality of their workmanship is evident, as, from the time they first took on these types of projects about eight years ago, they continue to complete them on time and on (or even under) budget. Butler notes that their work also supports sustainability goals for the City as older pipes leak; whereas, with the new PVC pipes, zero leakage is permitted. They also recycle and reuse their materials, which are produced from the Sidaway site.

But when you spend a bit more time watching and listening, (and okay, speaking to their supervisor), you'll discover there's even more going on. When putting pipes in the ground for water service, the crew sees more than the task at hand. They recognize (and emphasize) the importance of a safe, reliable water, and the critical need to support a sustainable water supply to protect this limited and highly valuable resource.



They take pride in their work, and they keep the bigger picture in mind: the people who are connected to the system.

Before every project, the City sends letters to all the area residents who are affected by the construction work. That's pretty standard. But Butler takes it a step further to connect in person with people in the area. On his current project, he noted that there was a school nearby so he went to speak to the principal to let him know about the project and invited classes to drop by to see the work underway. About five classes took him up on his offer, and Butler not only talked to them about the work underway, he used it as an opportunity to teach them about water conservation.

Continued on next page

"I explain the water cycle, how much water there is on earth, and how little of it is water we can drink," says Butler. "It's a lot of work to get the water we enjoy daily, and I ask them to do their part to conserve water, like turning the water off while brushing their teeth."

Then there's the honorary member of their crew: Daniel, a young man with autism who lives in the community, is passionate about water pipes and the work they are doing. Rather than pushing him away, the crew connected with his father, confirmed that he had the required safety gear and allows him on the site with supervision so that he feels like part of the team.

And then there are the many positive community connections that they make simply by reaching out, being friendly and communicating with residents. Residents appreciate the extra effort to keep them informed, and they respond in many positive ways. One dropped by with sandwiches for the whole crew – and Butler shared his with Daniel. A home for adults with disabilities was also in the construction area for a recent project, and they painted thank-you signs on canvas and gave them to the crew.

Others call the City or send emails like these:

"I just had a call from a resident by the name of Terry to compliment the crew working on the watermain in the Chatsworth area, particularly Jason Butler. He said they are all doing a great job and have been super at dealing with the residents and keeping them up-to-date on the project."

"We want to share our appreciation of the onsite project team. They have consistently taken the time to provide us with updates; shown a strong work ethic; and, demonstrated a commitment to our safety while ensuring limited disruption in access to and from our property during the City's work hours. While the water pipe replacement project is not yet completed, it has so far been a very positive experience for us because of the highly competent on-site employees doing their jobs effectively."

Continued on next page





In addition to open, friendly and consistent communication, Butler's crew also puts people first by assessing how their work will affect residents. As an example, on the current project, the surveyors had marked the placement of a hydrant based on the required distance between each hydrant on the street. But this particular placement would result in the hydrant sitting right in the middle of the resident's garden, displacing a recently planted apple tree. Butler approached the residents on the affected property and asked them if they would be fine with him shifting it over a bit to save the tree and put it in a less disruptive location.

"The resident's son was there and was very worried about the apple tree being hurt by the hydrant, so they were happy to see it moved, and the small adjustment is something we can do for them while still meeting all the distance requirements," says Butler.

When asked about why he thinks his crew is so successful, Butler emphasizes that it's a group effort – and there are more crews involved who contribute to their success. Other crews include surveyors, engineering, roads/paving, inspection, water testing, transportation and project management.

But when pushed about his crew specifically, he notes that they share the same goal and everyone is ready to do any job needed.

"We want to make the area better than when we got there, so we look for ways to do that beyond the project itself, like fixing sidewalks and helping residents," says Butler. "We don't take short cuts, and we all do everything. No one says 'that's not my job' and we start the day with 'what can we do' and then work together to make it happen."

When Kenny Laboucane, also a leader of the crew, dropped by, Butler asked him why he thought they were successful. His response: "We're like a hockey team where you may not have all the best players on your team, but it all gels. It's the best crew. We've worked together for a long time. We're buddies. How many people can come into work every day with their best friends?"

Leveraging the success of Butler's crew, the City now also uses them as training ground to teach other crews how they work, and how they connect with the community.

Ultimately, what they do is truly public works. They don't just connect pipes, they connect with people. And the end result is about more than just safe, reliable drinking water. It's about building community.

