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November 10, 2015

Mayor and Council  
Township of Esquimalt

**RE: Esquimalt Road Urban Design Guidelines and Official Community Plan Update**

Dear Mayor and Council,

The Chamber would like to express its support for the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) in order to prepare urban design guidelines for Esquimalt Road. As Esquimalt Road is the main commercial corridor in our community, our members have a great interest in this project and on their behalf the Chamber requests it be consulted throughout this process.

Initially, we offer the following comments on the proposal (DEV-15-060) presented to Committee of the Whole on November 9, 2015.

- **Branding and Marketing** of Esquimalt Road in isolation ignores the need for a more comprehensive, community-wide vision for the entire Township. This has been an issue for many years and one that needs to be addressed in a more holistic fashion.
- **Economics** appear to be downplayed in the proposal especially given that DEV-15-060 specifically states, "During the Economic Development Strategy round table discussions the issue of Esquimalt Road came up over and over again". Economic development needs to be considered as part of this RFP as the guidelines will significantly impact future economic growth in this area. We believe the impact of guidelines on existing property owners and businesses needs to be considered, as does the relationship to current initiatives such as the Business Revitalization Tax Exemption Bylaw.
- **Terms of Reference** to exclude traffic management, bike lanes and medians is concerning as traffic patterns and flows can impact design and certainly design can greatly impact traffic flows. In our view comprehensive urban design guidelines need to consider traffic in all its forms – vehicular (including transit), bicycle and pedestrian.

- **Official Community Plan (OCP)** changes need to be considered carefully and the proposal that, as DEV-15-060 states, "...the Guidelines will be embedded in the OCP..." gives us cause for concern. By their nature, guidelines are not rules so that they are flexible enough to accommodate new ideas and business initiatives. By incorporating guidelines into the OCP you remove this flexibility whereby new initiatives will be subject to a costly and time consuming OCP amendment process that acts as a disincentive to future development along the main commercial artery in our community.

While the Chamber also supports the need to update the Official Community Plan (OCP), we suggest the Esquimalt Road Urban Design Guidelines remain outside of that process. Further to this issue, the Chamber views the OCP update process to be critical to the future economic growth within the Township. As such we respectfully request on behalf of our members, that we be informed and involved as the OCP review moves forward.

We trust the foregoing comments will be taken in the positive, constructive spirit in which they are intended. We look forward to working with you on these two important initiatives in order to produce the best possible outcome for local businesses and the community as a whole.

Sincerely,

Bill Lang, President  
Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce

By email