



City of Moose Jaw

COMMUNICATION # CC-2020-0216

TITLE: Water Main Replacement Construction Communication Update

TO: City Council

FROM: Department of Communications

DATE: September 1, 2020

PUBLIC: PUBLIC DOCUMENT

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Communication #CC-2020-0216 regarding the Water Main Replacement Construction Communication Update be received and filed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2018 the City of Moose Jaw has taken multiple steps to enhance communication practices surrounding the Water Main Replacement Program. The goal is to give property owners notice when work will impact their business, provide them with all relevant information about the project and its impact, provide opportunities for property owners to ask questions, and then provide regular status updates when the project is underway, all the while encouraging an open line of communication to City Hall.

Each location brings its own set of challenges, from project execution to communication, and some locations are more complex than others. Water Main Communication is, and needs to be, a joint effort between the Department of Communications, the Department of Engineering Services and the selected contractor.

The purpose of this report is to shed light on the various tactics used for Water Main communication to property owners, and opportunities for greater communication success.

BACKGROUND

The Water Main Replacement Project was approved by Council and implemented in 2015. It is a project critical to the future of water safety and security for Moose Jaw residents.

As with all construction projects, it does cause disruption for property owners in selected water main replacement locations for which we apologize. When those locations are in business corridors, those disruptions are extended to the business owners, operators, employees and customers.

Since 2018 the City has taken a more proactive approach to communicating to businesses when construction projects are scheduled for their location. Specifically related to Water Main Replacement construction, those steps have included:

- Door-to-door, in-person notification to property owners by City staff and/or contractors.
- Traditional mailing of informational program literature.
- Open House Information sessions.
- Construction updates on City website and social media.
- Earned media coverage.
- Signage in construction zones indicating "Businesses Open" (Attachment A).
- (New in 2020) Notifications via the City app.

The City also addressed Water Main Communication in the Communication Policy, adopted by City Council in September of 2019 (Attachment B). Relevant wording:

- When capital construction projects (i.e. water main replacement, road repair/reconstruction) are scheduled, business owners shall be hand-delivered notices regarding the pending project a minimum of one month from the expected construction start date.
- Information provided will relate to overall scope of the project, potential disruptions and providing customer/delivery access. At that time an estimated construction start date shall be provided.
- Once a construction date has been finalized, updated notices shall be delivered a minimum of one week prior.
- Business owners shall be provided with contact information of the Project Manager and Communications Manager to address ongoing questions or concerns.
- Where construction impacts access to area businesses, communications messaging shall indicate that "businesses remain open" throughout the project and, where applicable, maps be produced showing how customers may access the respective business(es) during construction.

- Regular updates shall be posted to the City website/social media accounts/local media regarding any changes to traffic accommodation plans, project timelines, etc.

DISCUSSION

The following is a breakdown of some key dates related to our water main communication to businesses in 2020:

March 16 – Letters hand-delivered to 0-300 block High St. and 0-200 block Fairford St. properties, advising of pending water main replacement. Follow up emails/letters sent to property management companies/those that were not present at time of delivery.

March 17 – All City facilities closed to public due to COVID-19 safety measures, which meant scuttling our planned Open House information sessions for affected property owners.

April 8 – 2020 Water main locations media release issued.

April 17 – The planned Power Point presentation for the Open Houses was produced as a video and posted to the City's YouTube channel. Follow-up letters were sent to property owners advising where to watch the video (City YouTube page) and to contact the Engineering department with any questions (Attachment C).

May 15 – NIS hand-delivers project update letters to affected property owners on 0-300 block High St., (Attachment D). Letter includes *"If you have a secondary access for customers (back/side entrance) please indicate and email to the City's Communications Manager, Craig Hemingway. His email address is: chemingway@moosejaw.ca. The City will provide regular construction updates on their website (www.moosejaw.ca) and with the City of Moose Jaw app"*.

Water Main update media releases issued: May 15, 22, 28, June 3, 17, 26, July 2, 10, 17, 31, August 7, 14, 20, 28.

June 18: City issues "**City Council Approves Additional 2020 Water Main Replacement Location**" release, detailing additional work on 2nd Avenue NW between Manitoba and Fairford St., as approved by City Council.

June 26 – Communications Manager and Project Manager hand-delivered update letters to 0 block High ST. businesses advising that the project would be starting on their block June 30 (Attachment E).

As noted, the selected Contractor plays a vital role in communication. They are "on the ground" and in contact with property owners detailing the project, how it may affect their property/water supply, etc. The City has received multiple compliments from business owners related to their dealings with this year's contractor. The same can be said of the selected contractor the previous two years as well.

Communication challenges presented in 2020 included a scope change (adding 2nd NW as a location that impacted the High St. timeline), and incorrect information from a sub-contractor (paving work did not begin on the communicated start date).

Communication successes included engagement with the Moose Jaw & District Chamber of Commerce, who shared some of our updates with their members, and engagement with a High St. business that allowed the new median on the 100 block to be designed such that it provided maximum access.

The Water Main Communications strategy is always evolving in order to best meet new challenges. Future opportunities for success include further engagement with community partners (such as the Chamber of Commerce) to help spread business access information, use of video, and additional signage. (Attachment E). One-to-one communication will continue whenever possible.

OPTIONS TO RECOMMENDATION

- Do not receive and file.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

As noted, the City will continue to monitor and refine our Construction Communication strategies as needed.

STRATEGIC PLAN

This report supports the long-term strategy to be customer-focused in our deliberations and actions, always start with open, honest and frank conversations with our stakeholders and be forward-thinking and innovative in identifying problems and finding solutions.

PRESENTATION

Mr. Craig Hemingway, Communications Manager, will provide a brief overview of this report. Mr. Bevan Harlton, Director of Engineering Services, will also be in attendance to provide additional project detail as needed.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. WM Construction Sign 2020
- B. CityMJCommunicationPolicy2019
- C. MJ WMRP Notice April 2020
- D. Construction Notice High Street 2020
- E. 2020 WMR Business Update – 0 Block High St. West
- F. Business Access Sign Design

REPORT APPROVAL

Written by: Craig Hemingway, Communications Manager
Reviewed by: Tracy Wittke, Assistant City Clerk
Approved by: Jim Puffalt, City Manager
Approved by: Fraser Tolmie, Mayor

To be completed by the Clerk's Department only.

Presented to Regular Council or Executive Committee on _____.

Resolution No. _____

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	City of Moose Jaw Water Main Replacement Construction Communications Update - CC-2020-0216.docx
Attachments:	- WM Construction Sign 2020.jpg - 2020 WMR Business Update - 0 Block High St. West.pdf - CityMJCommunicationPolicy2019.pdf - Business Access Signage Design.pdf - MJ WMRP Construction Notice High Street 2020.pdf - MJ WMRP Notice April 2020.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 2, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Tracy Wittke



Jim Puffalt



Fraser Tolmie