

Date: April 15, 2025

To: **Mayor and Council.**

Name and title: Eric Depenau, Director, Administrative Services

Subject: Requesting Temporary Closure of Lower Patricia Access Road

Attachment(s):

1. Site Map.
2. Photos - Lower Patricia Encampment campers and trailers.
3. Photos - Lower Patricia Encampment thru road being blocked.
4. Photos - Entrances to Lower Patricia Encampment.

Recommendation(s):

That Council DIRECTS the traffic upon the access road located within the Lower Patricia Boulevard right-of-way at 498 Ottawa Street be temporarily restricted to emergency and City vehicles only, under the authority of s. 38(1) of the *Community Charter* as detailed in the April 15, 2025 report from the Director of Administrative Services titled "Requesting Temporary Closure of Lower Patricia Access Road".

Purpose:

This report seeks authorization for City staff to install vehicle gates at both ends of the Lower Patricia Boulevard Encampment, located at 498 Ottawa Street.

Background:

Under the *Community Charter* Section 38 subsection (1), under the heading "Temporary traffic restriction and traffic control", "A council may temporarily restrict or prohibit all or some types of traffic on a highway".

Staff recommend this measure be used to install gates on either end of the emergency access road within the Lower Patricia Boulevard right-of-way at 498 Ottawa Street at 498 Ottawa Street starting as soon as practicable and extending until such a time as the site is no longer the location of a full-time encampment. This measure is intended to restrict vehicle access, thereby preventing additional large trailers and campers from being brought into the area as well as the deposit of refuse. This measure is considered as a necessary step in the ongoing management of the site as:

- Several fires have occurred in these recreational vehicles. These structures are not intended for full-time occupation and do not appear to have been contemplated for in the decision rendered by the Honourable Chief Justice Hinkson related to this site. A volume of call outs have been received by the Prince George Fire Rescue Services in response to these vehicles since 2021.

- The road access was initially constructed by the City for emergency vehicle access. Unfettered access has attracted additional unintended motor vehicle traffic through the area.
- Illegal dumping, suspected by the type of items being found on site, is expected to be mitigated by restricting vehicle access.
- The City has invested considerable resources into remediating the site to maintain safer conditions for the adjacent neighbourhood and those sheltering on the site, and limiting vehicle access is perceived as helping to mitigate regression to previous conditions.

Authorized personnel, including City staff, RCMP, BC Ambulance and Prince George Fire Rescue will be provided with keys for access to maintain emergency services to the site. Further, foot traffic will not be impeded by the measures proposed. Nor will the ability to shelter on the site be impacted through these measures.

Strategic Priorities:

The recommendation aims to reduce the persistent presence of camping vehicles, abandoned trailers, and other large, discarded items within the Lower Patricia Boulevard right-of-way which, among other things, is impeding emergency vehicle access.

Summary and conclusion:

Installing locking vehicle gates will reduce vehicle traffic, prevent the dumping of abandoned large items in the encampment and better ensure unimpeded emergency vehicle access.

Respectfully submitted:

Eric Depenau, Director, Administrative Services

Prepared by Matt Hammond, Bylaw Services Supervisor

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: 2025/04/23