
Media Release

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Summerland budget discussions move into community engagement

The District of Summerland commenced General Fund Operating & General Fund Capital Budget discussions during the week of January 13-17. Council and staff are now set to consult with the community to obtain feedback on the proposed 2020 budget.

Council supported a property tax rate increase of 4.0% for 2020, which includes \$271,730 (3.12%) of operational investments, with a further \$76,642 (0.88%) proposed for asset management to support long term investment in community infrastructure. For an average Summerland home (\$597,435), the property tax increase will amount to approximately \$77.73.

“Summerland Council feels that the proposed property tax increase meets our obligations to the residents of Summerland,” said Mayor of Summerland, Toni Boot. *“The budget maintains or improves current service levels; it allows for initiatives and projects that will improve the livability and resiliency of our community; and we continue plan for infrastructure investments by setting aside a percentage of the property tax. Staff is now preparing for the Community Open House, the next step in the budget process.”*

Council’s Strategic Priorities for Infrastructure Investment, Good Governance, Community Resilience, Alternative Energy, Active Lifestyle and Downtown Vibrancy have guided the development of the General Operating budget for 2020.

Major capital project highlights identified for 2020 include:

- Quinpool Road (Victoria Rd to Washington Ave) watermain replacement
- Doherty Avenue & Bathville Road (Prairie Valley Rd to Princeton-Summerland Hwy) road reconstruction and drainage improvements
- Victoria Road (Turner St to Jones Flat Rd) asphalt overlay
- Dale Meadows Road (Walton Cres to Haddrell Ave) design for road and watermain upgrades in preparation for construction in 2021
- Giants Head Road (Harris Rd to Hillborn St) design for road and watermain upgrades and water system separation in preparation for construction in 2021
- Completion of the design for Isintok Dam outlet pipe replacement
- Trail repairs at Peach Orchard Beach and Rotary Beach
- Eneas Creek restoration including reconstruction of Centennial Trail
- Landfill second scale and entrance upgrades

The 2020 budget also responds to recent community engagement on future Dog Parks, Pickleball and Tennis courts. Council is proposing to move forward in 2020 with updating bylaws regarding dogs in parks and install new signage and implementing accessibility improvements to the Peach Orchard Dog Beach. Constructing a new fenced dog park on the north end of Peach Orchard Beach Park is also proposed for 2020.

Investment in new Pickleball courts is proposed to take place with the resurfacing the Peach Orchard Campground courts to create an additional 4 dedicated Pickleball courts. With regards to Tennis Courts, direction was provided for staff to explore partnership opportunities with the Lakeshore Racquets Centre for tennis and conduct a geotechnical assessment on the site with the potential for construction of a new tennis court in 2021.

Community Engagement will commence for priority projects in 2020, with each of these looking to enhance long term vibrancy, partnership and investment in our community:

- Summerland Community Health & Wellness Centre, including aquatic center replacement
- Downtown Plan supporting increased investment, vibrancy and growth
- Business Perspectives Survey to identify priorities for the local industry and the business community
- Affordable Housing Forum to identify opportunities to increase the range of housing in the community
- South Okanagan Agricultural Food Hub providing for increased economic activity and benefit to the regions agricultural and food sectors.
- Completion Business Case Templates and Project Prioritization Framework, in accordance with the Asset Management Strategy

Organizational changes undertaken during the latter part of 2019 and contained within the proposed 2020 budget, a total savings of over \$75,000 has been attributed towards resourcing priorities and efficiencies. As part of these changes, two new full-time and one part-time positions are being proposed for 2020, the costs of which have been offset through the reduction of one management position and savings resulting from organizational efficiencies. New positions proposed include: Meter Technician, IT Support Technician and part-time Human Resources Assistant – investing in organizational and customer service needs for 2020.

Director of Finance David Svetlichny said *“The 2020 general fund budget process provided many challenges for District staff. Balancing the communities expected levels of service with limited financial resources is always difficult, however; I am happy to report that the proposed budget does not provide for any reductions in service levels and does provide for increased levels in specific areas.”*

District of Summerland Chief Administrative Officer Anthony Haddad said *“As our organizations looks to support delivering Council’s priorities we will need to invest wisely and efficiently as we deliver high quality service and respond to the community’s needs. Our limited tax base presents us with some challenges. However, recognizing these limitations has been at the forefront of the budgeting process – seeking to deliver the high quality service that our residents and businesses expect, while looking to the future to sustain our infrastructure and community assets.”*

The community is invited to find out more about the proposed 2020 budget at the District’s **Community Open House on February 12th at the Summerland Arena from 4pm-7pm**. Council and Staff will be in attendance so that the community can provide feedback on the proposed budget and priorities for 2020.

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For more information: www.summerland.ca

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