

Summerland roads are getting fixed – thanks for your patience!

by Doug Holmes

One of Council's top priorities for this term has been to focus on core municipal infrastructure, including paving more roads than in the past.

This spring and summer will see concurrent roadwork projects that will impact traffic on several major routes including Prairie Valley Road, Wharton Street and Victoria Road South.

For each project, roads will have to be closed for periods of time and there will need to be detours to re-route traffic. Contractors will try to accommodate the movement of traffic wherever possible, however we ask residents for their patience and to keep in mind that we are finally fixing the roads that everyone has been complaining about for so long!

Large roadwork projects usually involve more than just repaving the road. Work on Prairie Valley Rd between Morrow Ave and Darke Rd is currently underway and includes building a multi-use pathway and replacing a watermain that dates back to 1939. A developer is also paying for a sewer main to be installed. The \$3.6 million project is scheduled for completion in August.

Starting in May, Wharton St between Kelly Ave and Victoria Rd will undergo road reconstruction, sidewalk installation, stormwater upgrades, burying of overhead power lines, and enhancements to Memorial Park including relocating the cenotaph and creating a pedestrianized Henry Ave plaza between Main St and Wharton St. There will also be safety improvements at the Main and Victoria intersection.

This major downtown revitalization project will cost \$8.56 million, including \$3.47 million for the electrical upgrades, and is expected to be substantially completed by November in time for Remembrance Day.

The Victoria Road South upgrade will also resume this summer with the reconstruction of a further 750 metres of road, a multi-use pathway, and watermain upgrades. This is a \$3.85 million project, with \$1.5 million coming in grants for the pathway and water infrastructure. It is expected to continue until spring 2026.

Besides these major capital works projects, Council has also steadily increased the District's annual operational budget for basic street repair and repaving. This budget was increased from \$285,000 to \$345,000 in 2023, to \$388,000 in 2024, and to \$461,000 this year.

Besides filling in potholes and sealing cracks, we were able to use this budget last year to repave Blair St and a portion of Canyon View Rd and this year we will repave a portion of Fyffe Rd.

We can often reclaim old asphalt, or millings, from road reconstruction projects and use it elsewhere. While not of the same quality as new pavement, millings have so far been spread onto the parking lot next to the Badminton Hall and at the end of Garnet Valley Rd almost to Garnet Lake.

While it is rare for Summerland to have so much concurrent road construction, all projects have been in the planning and design phase for a number of years, and financing has been accounted for through reserves, borrowing or grants.

Projects have been prioritized in accordance to the District's Integrated Road and Water Master Plan, which received the 2023 Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Excellence Award in asset management. The plan details the condition of all of Summerland's 175 km of local and collector roads and 200 km of water mains. It is available on the District of Summerland website where an interactive map provides information about work being planned and project costs.

Doug Holmes is mayor of Summerland