

December 10, 2015

Council unanimously approves 2016 budget – Sets property tax increase at 2.45%

At its Dec. 9 meeting, City Council unanimously approved Campbell River's 2016 budget with a 2.45 per cent property tax increase. The increase equates to approximately \$37 per year for the average Campbell River home (valued at \$269,700).

"Council and staff focused on a 10-year plan that emphasizes tax rate stability and community investment," says Mayor Andy Adams. "The long-term plan also aims to keep the base budget – the amount allocated to maintain existing service levels – no higher than increases to the Canadian Consumer Price Index – and we successfully kept that rate well below the rate of inflation this year."

The national inflation rate is at 2.1 per cent, and the portion of the property tax increase above this amount will fund community investment through capital projects, with a focus on downtown revitalization and public safety.

An additional \$170,000 in property tax revenue will come from new building and development in the community. Additional revenue will also come from properties in the Managed Forest Lands tax class (tax increase phased in over three years starting in 2014 to generate \$35,000 in 2016) and the Utilities tax class (increased rate phased in over four years starting in 2014 that will generate \$120,000 in 2016).

The City of Campbell River's operating budget for 2016 will be \$63 million, with another \$45 million for capital projects (\$20 million for the new water supply project – largely funded by BC Hydro).

"Council also recognized the importance of reserve funds, and maximizing the money available in these funds, and we're very pleased with the foundation this provides for community infrastructure investment, now and in future," the Mayor adds.

Council approved modest service increases and wide-ranging investment in community infrastructure.

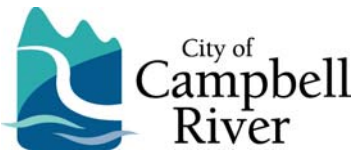
Highlights of enhanced services approved:

- To support volunteerism and community safety: administrative support for record checks and fingerprinting, crime investigation, video analysis and RCMP paperwork (frees up officers for street presence), plus increased downtown security
- To support downtown revitalization: increased funding for Spirit Square events
- To support beautification: increased weed control, street cleaning and parking lot maintenance

Highlights of community infrastructure investment approved:

- Airport fueling facility – \$1,205,000 (a significant source of revenue and potential profit generation)
- Ostler Park improvements – big house pavilion structural repairs (\$60,000), playground replacement (\$100,000 – \$50,000 grant funded), park re-development (\$1,239,000 from Federal Gas Tax grant for design 2016, construction 2017)
- Pier Street / Discovery Pier / Maritime Heritage Centre improvements – entrance improvement (\$275,000), sewer upgrade and site improvement (\$230,000), sign replacement (\$50,000)
- Hwy 28 Elk Falls Cemetery Expansion – \$210,000
- Pave Robron parking lot – \$140,000
- Entrance sign at Jubilee – \$140,000
- Walter Morgan studio rehabilitation – \$75,000
- Dick Murphy viewing platform – \$45,000
- Logger Mike replacement – \$25,000

For public transportation and safety, Council also supported an investment of approximately \$1 million (funded primarily with Federal Gas Tax grants and development cost charges) to provide more transit shelters, parking lot improvements, LED light conversions, cycling infrastructure, pedestrian signal crossings, sidewalk and street light infill and road re-paving.



The City of Campbell River provides more than 100 services, including: drinking water, sewer, emergency response, garbage, recycling and yard waste collection, flood protection, streets, sidewalks and traffic control, public recreation facilities, land use planning, development services and building inspection, law enforcement and firefighters, parks, recreation and culture, transit and airport, environmental management, economic development, museum, art gallery and other facilities.

By law, the City's 2016 financial plan must be formalized as a balanced budget (deficits are not permitted for local governments) and presented to the Province by May 15. Property tax payments will be due by July 4.

View recordings of the budget meetings at www.campbellriver.ca (click on the Council Webcast button).

For more information about the City's 2016 budget, please contact the Ron Bowles, General Manager of Corporate Services at 250-286-5759.

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Media Contacts:

Mayor Andy Adams

250-286-5708

Ron Bowles, General Manager Corporate Services

250-286-5759