

February 24, 2023

DRAFT BUDGET RELEASED: “STRATEGY FOR TODAY, A VISION FOR TOMORROW”

Get involved by attending the public budget meetings from March 7 to 10, 2023.

The City of Campbell River (the City) has released the 2023–2032 Draft Financial Plan and 2023 Budget. Staff presented the budget documents to Council during the Committee of the Whole meeting on February 21, 2023.

The 2023 Draft Budget “**Strategy for Today, A Vision for Tomorrow**” addresses challenges facing the City while balancing the need to invest in services relied on by residents. Council’s Strategic Priorities act as a roadmap that guides how to maintain services and also improve and grow the community.

A proposed 11.27% tax increase or an approximate \$217 rise in annual property taxes for the average homeowner is included in the draft budget. This increase is higher than the City’s established tax parameter increase for the first year since the establishment of the Financial Stability & Resiliency Policy, due to today’s volatile economic climate.

Included in the draft 2023 budget are a number of investment projects focused on organizational capacity, one of Council’s strategic priorities. The many benefits of these strategies for new and alternative revenue streams and process improvements to reduce costs or increase capacity cannot be captured in this budget but will be realized by the City in future years. Such projects will help the City overcome pandemic-related financial difficulties and address organizational capacity needs.

“As expected, the proposed 2023 tax increase is higher than we would like to see due to a number of factors like 20-year high inflation, supply chain issues, labour market shortages and fixed increases to city contracts,” says Mayor Kermit Dahl. *“Council has begun discussions exploring the proposed 11.27% increase and we will continue to look for opportunities to lower costs through operational efficiencies ahead of official deliberations. Now is the time for residents to provide feedback on the budget so we can consider their comments when making tough decisions in the coming weeks.”*

Four components make up the 2023 Draft Budget:

- 1) **The base operating budget** covers the day-to-day operations of the City, including road and park maintenance, fire services, police, etc. This year, a 7.8% tax increase is required to maintain these services due to contractual changes and economic impacts on revenue and expenses outside of the City’s control. A 3.16% tax increase is directly related to the City’s RCMP contract.
- 2) **New enhanced/ongoing services** addresses Council’s Strategic Priorities and corporate needs. A 1.81% increase, plus an additional 1% due to inflationary pressure, is proposed.
- 3) **Operating projects** includes short-term strategic initiatives that are funded by reserve funds, and
- 4) **Capital Projects** focuses on asset replacement and renewal including a proposed 0.66% dedicated tax increase to invest in City infrastructure

“Staff have worked diligently on this year’s budget to provide Council with a comprehensive understanding of the City’s financial obligations and projections for the year ahead,” says Alaina Maher, Director of Financial Services and Chief Financial Officer. *“Municipalities across BC are facing similar budget challenges, as we can see by many other communities proposing higher than usual tax increases. The City is committed to providing residents with the services they need and investing in the future of the community while balancing this with the cost to the taxpayer; this has been of particular importance when developing the draft 2023–2032 Financial Plan.”*

How to Get Involved

The 2023–2032 Financial Plan is currently in draft form. Council will deliberate the draft budget from March 7 to March 10, 2023, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily. The public is encouraged to review the draft budget and provide written comments ahead of or to present feedback during the meetings. Written comments must be submitted via email to info@campbellriver.ca or in person at City Hall, 301 St. Ann's Road, by noon on March 3, 2023. To present at the meeting, register at City Hall reception or via the email address above, or attend the meeting in Council Chambers, City Hall, on March 7, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. Presenters must be available at the start of the meeting.

To access the Draft 2023 Budget, visit www.campbellriver.ca/financial-plans. To watch the pre-budget Council meeting presentations online, visit www.campbellriver.ca/webcast.

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