

THE 2019 BUDGET

Your Investment At Work

The 2019 Budget and 2019-2023 Financial Plan were formally presented to Council. Council gave first and second readings to Bylaw 1285 – the technical requirement for passing a budget. This follows a five-month budgeting process that included six public meetings.

ON THE HOME FRONT

Council has received a Housing Needs Assessment report that indicates that although overall housing affordability in the Castlegar area is better than in other parts of BC, housing is unaffordable for vulnerable groups such as:

- Low income seniors and families
- Homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Persons with disabilities and vulnerable women.

Housing supply deficiencies are noted:

- Senior's rental housing
- Non-market and market rental housing
- Transitional and low-barrier rental housing
- Housing accessible to those with disabilities
- Entry-level and multi-family homeownership opportunities for those on the cusp of being able to purchase a home.

To step into this gap, the City will be exploring three options to enable housing diversity:

- 1.** Zoning Bylaw adjustments such as more mixed-use opportunities in specific growth areas identified in the Official Community Plan, short term rental restrictions and/or allowance for carriage (laneway/second units) housing.
- 2.** Financial incentive via graduated tax exemptions, reduced development cost charges for mixed use and/or multi-family developments and/or density bonusing.
- 3.** Work with BC Housing to identify funding opportunities to support housing initiatives that address housing gaps.



IN THE Weeds

Castlegar Council has received an initial report that explores implications of a Herbicide Reduction Bylaw related to maintenance of the City's parks, playgrounds, sports fields, boulevards, sidewalks, and utility areas.

City Council will direct staff to modify the use of herbicides by removing any herbicide use from passive parks, playgrounds, and green spaces in 2019.

The responsibility of deciding if herbicides should be used on sports fields shift from the contractor to the Civic Works staff, AND FURTHER.

City Council will request that staff provide a report in the winter of 2020 detailing an overall plan following the Council's guidance on the issue.



The City re-instituted herbicide use in 2005 following public complaints and among other initiatives started using EcoClear (more expensive non-herbicide alternative) on sidewalks in 2009.

ON YOUR MARK

A 3-year contract for street line marking has been awarded to Aardvark Pavement Marking Services at \$72K/year. Painting, required annually, is a safety initiative. The City has 88 km of paved roads that includes painted bicycle lanes, crosswalks, directional symbols and long-line painting along corridors like Columbia Avenue. Line marking is also required at the West Kootenay Regional Airport.

Related, Council has postponed renewal of the Pride Crosswalk at 3rd St. until future paving of 3rd St. is completed.

STAFF SALARIES TO RISE 2%

A cost of living adjustment has been made to staff salaries and stipends paid to volunteer firefighters, as per longstanding policy that ties cost of living increases to the BC Consumer Price Index (which actually rose 2.7% in 2018). Total budget impact in 2019 is \$33K, which is factored into both the 2019 budget and 5-year financial plan.

OH CANADA *Event planning for the July 1st Canada Day Celebration has begun.*

The City - in partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage and many local sponsors - has hosted this popular event (600-1000 attendees, Millennium Park) for the last 10 years.

Mark your calendars and enjoy food, entertainment, family activities, a beach volleyball tournament, outdoor movie - and most importantly - connection to community and residents.

Council has approved \$6K for the event from a \$13K Special Event Budget that exists to capture the many benefits of community social connection.



CASTLEGAR
happily ever after