



15 STRATEGIC
PLAN FOR THE
CITY OF PORT
18 ALBERNI
2015 - 2018



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

This is the Strategic Plan for the City of Port Alberni Council. It lays out the guiding principles that frame our next four city budgets. Those budgets help us to achieve the goals that have been articulated for our city.

This Strategic Plan helps us move forward with a renewed optimism coupled with a clear sense of purpose. It bridges where we have been to where we want to be and sets out a direction for the allocation of City resources that will be required in order to achieve our goals.

Mayor Mike Ruttan



“ This is Port Alberni’s path forward to a better, more prosperous and healthy future. ”



VISION

The City of Port Alberni has adopted the Alberni Valley Vision created through the public process led by Outlook 20/20.

The CITY OF PORT ALBERNI is a vibrant waterfront community at the heart of the West Coast that...

Is sustainable and environmentally responsible,

The City of Port Alberni is committed to principles of economic, social and environmental sustainability. The City provides environmentally responsible services and infrastructure that meet our current and future needs.

Is safe caring and healthy,

The City of Port Alberni is committed to creating a safe and healthy community. The City provides safe and accessible facilities, parks and open spaces for the enjoyment and well being of its citizens. The City is proud of its innovative and responsive parks, recreation and cultural services. The City's greatest asset is the "social capital" created by the active involvement of staff and volunteers in all aspects of service delivery.

Has a robust and diverse economy,

The City encourages and supports economic development and the creation of a diversified economy, through active promotion of the City and partnering with a wide range of stakeholders. The City is business friendly and ensures policies and by-laws support a diversified economy including entrepreneurial activity, industry, small business, agriculture and tourism. The City recognizes the waterfront as our greatest natural asset and works to ensure that it integrates residents, tourists, arts, culture, industry and innovation.

Is welcoming, accessible and attractive,

The City of Port Alberni is an attractive and livable city. We embrace and celebrate our natural, historical, cultural and geographic resources. Residents and visitors are welcomed and included in all aspects of service delivery. The City is recognized for service excellence through staff consistently delivering high quality services and meeting the needs of the public.

and is actively creating its future

Mayor and Council provide strong leadership based on a long term vision and ensure public participation in setting priorities. Citizens have access to all public information and participate in decisions that affect their well-being. The City includes economic, social and environmental factors in their decision making processes. The City is fiscally responsible and creates a climate for investment and involvement by its citizens.



MISSION

Our Mission is to enhance the quality of life of residents and taxpayers by creating a vibrant waterfront community through:

- providing or facilitating the delivery of high quality core municipal services and programs;
- balancing economic, environmental and social benefits
- being fiscally responsible;
- planning and encouraging development to ensure a thriving economy and a strong tax base;
- maintaining sustainable infrastructure;
- providing leadership and building partnerships (internal/external), which will be of benefit to the City.

Each city department is guided by their strategic service plan which contributes to achieving the City's Vision and Mission.

VALUES

City Council, municipal staff and volunteers are committed to the following values:

- Service to Others – providing high quality, reliable and friendly customer service.
- Respect – consideration for the beliefs and needs of others.
- Integrity – honesty in all dealings and the courage to act and live by these values.
- Innovation – open to change and learning in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency.
- Contribution – pride in one's work and the recognition and appreciation of skills and accomplishments.



COUNCIL PRINCIPLES

City Council has adopted the following principles to guide the Strategic Plan and their decision making:

- **ECONOMIC GROWTH**
- **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**
- **INNOVATION**
- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
- **PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION**
- **OPEN & TRANSPARENT**
- **LEADERSHIP**

Commitment to Sustainability

The 'Four Pillars' approach to municipal government planning recognizes the need to balance social, environmental, economic and cultural perspectives. There is an emphasis on 'sustainability', ensuring that the needs are being met today but also that future requirements are being strategically addressed.

Sustainability – a definition

The standard definition for Sustainability is: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the current generation without impairing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The Bruntland Report – United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

LIVE WITHIN OUR MEANS



1.1: Minimize tax increases for residential taxpayers

Property taxes serve as one of the most important sources of revenue for the city and fund many of the services and programs we offer to residents and businesses. Unprecedented changes within the resource and manufacturing sectors have forced the City to dramatically reduce the amount of taxes collected from the industrial tax base. This shift, combined with challenging economic conditions, has led to significant increases for residential taxpayers over the last decade.

The City is committed to ensuring property taxes are competitive, rational and affordable, while maintaining our financial stability. Council will be focusing on the five year budgeting cycle to develop departmental plans and budgets that minimize tax increases for residential taxpayers.

A key focus for the City will be working in a collaborative manner with neighbouring communities to explore regionalization of various services.



1.2: Ensure efficient utilization of tax dollars

Utilizing public monies in the most responsible manner is how we deliver programs and services. After all, its citizens' money and we're focused on maximizing value through cost-efficient operations.

To further these efforts Council will undertake a review of staffing levels and service efficiency and consider funding provided to external agencies for service contracts, grants and tax exemptions.



1.3: Increase non-tax revenue sources

Property taxes currently serve as the primary revenue source to fund municipal programs and services. This creates challenges for both local governments and property owners in meeting the needs of the community and distributing costs fairly. To address this situation Council will look to develop new own-source revenues that are sustainable and predictable to reduce our reliance on property taxes.

CONNECTED COMMUNITY



> **2.1: Maintain and Enhance Infrastructure**

Our municipal infrastructure supports our economy and is integral to our everyday life. Adequately funding the operation, maintenance and replacement of this infrastructure is a challenge being faced by the City of Port Alberni and municipalities across the country. By developing and implementing a Asset Management Plan, Council will work to address this issue by creating a comprehensive plan to guide investments and other actions.

> **2.2: Alternate Transportation Routes**

While strategically located, the Alberni Valley is a relatively remote region with limited access by road, air, water and rail. A diverse, safe and efficient transportation network is needed in order to grow our economy and attract new investment. Council will continue to participate in and support a regional transportation committee to advance these broad efforts through local initiatives and cooperation with senior levels of government.

> **2.3: Active Transportation Network**

Human-powered transportation is an accessible and affordable way to get around. It also supports healthy lifestyles and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. To facilitate increased participation in active transportation, Council will be continuing their implementation of the Active Transportation Plan, including development of a five year implementation plan towards new connections between neighbourhoods, business districts and local attractions.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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3.1: Protect water, air and land quality

Making our community more sustainable isn't just about 'going green', it's also about making Port Alberni more livable, safe and resilient. Underpinned by issues such as safe and secure water, air quality, climate change and waste management, Council has made it clear that the environment is a top priority.

Through the development and implementation of a Liquid Waste Management Plan, water treatment infrastructure upgrades, watershed management plan and development of partnerships with watershed, airshed, and solid waste stakeholders, Council will be focusing efforts and dollars on safeguarding the environment, the people and wildlife that depend upon it.

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REVITALIZING THE ECONOMY & LIVEABILITY

➤ **4.1: Welcome Investment**

Our economic landscape has shifted dramatically in recent decades. This has challenged our community to move beyond traditional industrial sectors and nurture other emerging sectors such as healthcare, education, arts and culture. To grow our economy and take up opportunities that present themselves, Council will initiate steps to encourage and welcome investment through direct and indirect approaches.

➤ **4.2: Attract businesses, new residents and visitors**

Our community is committed to telling our story in a compelling way that helps attract new businesses, residents and visitors. Council will lead a rebranding and external marketing effort in addition to physical improvements and re-developments along our waterfront and major corridors. This will ensure that our message is not only heard but authentic.

➤ **4.3: Ensure an inviting community**

Part of our community's vision is to foster a welcoming, accessible and attractive city. With a spectacular natural setting and a strong culture of hospitality, Port Alberni is chock-full of small town charm and appeal. To further enhance our attractiveness, the City will be creating a development plan for the Johnston Road corridor and undertaking a series of related streetscape improvements. Resources will also be dedicated to capitalizing on opportunities for further public access to the waterfront to shine an even brighter light on some of our greatest natural assets.

➤ **4.4: Facility Development and Improvements**

Port Alberni is proud to be a rural community with big city facilities. Our parks, sporting fields, community halls and recreational facilities are a major source of pride and help drive our high quality of life. The replacement of the almost 50 year old aquatic center and updates of City Hall are a high priority. Council will consider funding strategies to replace the aging pool and develop a concept for a rejuvenated City Hall.

RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

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> **5.1: Collaborative relationship with other levels of Government**

Working together is how we get things done on the west coast. Cooperation and teamwork are hallmarks of our community and these values are strongly supported by City Council. Through both formal agreements and regular engagement, Council will build strong relationships with First Nations and the Regional District to advance our mutual interests and prosperity.

> **5.2: Effective and efficient operations and delivery of service**

We strive to provide high quality, reliable and friendly and efficient customer service through all of our programs and services. By reviewing services and staffing Council is committed to ensuring that public assets and funds are managed in the most responsible manner.

> **5.3: Informed and engaged community**

We are a community that fosters and encourages civic engagement to support our local democracy. As such, we believe that getting involved and sharing your input should be easy. To accomplish this Council will enhance opportunities for the public through social media, webcasting of Council meetings and broad engagement in decision making processes.

Corporate Strategic Plan - Priority Projects/Initiatives



LIVE WITHIN OUR MEANS

- Investigate and implement shared service arrangements and alternate service delivery partnerships
- Increase non-tax revenues by developing an investment management strategy and through investigating other revenue-generating opportunities
- Develop realistic and responsible financial plans through prudent policies, tight budget guidelines and strong leadership



CONNECTED COMMUNITY

- Develop a comprehensive asset management plan
- Further implement the City's Active Transportation Plan and establish enhanced connections with regional trails and attractions
- Support regional transportation initiatives involving air, rail and road enhancements



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- Develop and implement a liquid waste management plan to meet new senior government regulations
- Work with the regional district to update the solid waste management plan with the provision of kitchen/yard waste collection
- Work collaboratively with watershed stakeholders to protect and preserve the integrity of the water supply and support the City's ability to meet senior government regulations



REVITALIZING THE ECONOMY & LIVEABILITY

- Work with regional stakeholders to develop a plan for the replacement of the aquatic centre
- Provide for streetscape and traffic improvements along the Johnston Road corridor



RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

- Advance working relationships with First Nations through engagement, protocol agreements and efforts to advance reconciliation
- Develop a communications plan for enhanced public engagement



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