

Mount Pearl presents Budget 2022

Includes no change to mil rate or tax increases as the city continues with practical progress and planning for the future.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 14, 2021 (Mount Pearl, NL) – Today, the City of Mount Pearl presented its balanced 2022 budget of \$52,172,278.

The pandemic has continued to affect residents and businesses, and the 2022 budget aims to provide sustainable support that ensures practical progress and planning for the city's bright future.

"We've faced tough decisions in this budget process to find savings that enable our city to manage expenses while also guaranteeing our residents and businesses continue to receive the premier municipal services they are used to," said Mayor Dave Aker. "Council recognizes how we have all been impacted by the pandemic, and Budget 2022 focuses on living in a post-pandemic reality, with ignited determination to propel our city into a prosperous future."

City revenues are projected to be \$139,000 lower in 2022 resulting from factors that include lower tax revenues due to property values falling by approximately 2.1%, according to the Municipal Assessment Agency. There are moderate increases to select city rates and fees reflective of higher operating costs introduced in response to provincial pandemic related guidelines and requirements. Though, the budget holds the mil rate set in 2021 and does not include any changes to water rates, or commercial taxes.

Budget 2022 is founded on six thematic pillars that reflect priorities raised by both residents and business owners. The themes include *Enhanced Community Safety, Sustainable Development and Re-Development, Attracting Young Families, Modernization and Climate Change Readiness, Investment in Mixed-Use Outdoor Spaces, Trails, and Recreation, and Investing In Our People.*

"The investments and action items found within each of these themes demonstrate that council has clearly heard the message from citizens and the business community", continued Mayor Aker. "They want to grow their business and their family while enjoying a comprehensive lifestyle that includes a full suite of services and opportunities. The city supports these values by delivering first class municipal services as well as community and recreation facilities."

Budget 2022 has a strong focus on community safety, through increases to park patrol coverage, community programming from municipal enforcement, and \$150,000 dedicated to the upgrade of the current surveillance system to continue ensuring safety is priority in city public spaces.

The City of Mount Pearl is known for its sense of community, its welcoming nature. Budget 2022 will help extend that inviting character to young families seeking a place to call home through the completion of an attraction strategy.

The City of Mount Pearl is ambitiously pursuing growth and economic development, sustainably and strategically. Budget 2022 makes significant investments in upgrades to Kenmount Hill, signaling a prioritized commitment to leveraging the potential growth in this area. Some projects and initiatives outlined in the city's recently released *Find Your Centre* – a City Centre Renewal Plan – have funds allocated to them, enabling exploration and action. A new municipal plan will be created, and a transportation network review will take place in the coming year.

The city continues to be an exemplary leader in proactive climate action. Following successful implementation of LED lighting at the Glacier last year, 2022 will see similar LED lighting upgrades made at City Hall. The city's largest natural asset – its 60+ kilometers of trails – will also see a \$330,000 investment that includes boardwalk replacements at Power's Pond and Branscombes Pond, washroom upgrades at Power's Pond to make them winterized, and design of a Donovans trail connection.

Innovative support programs invigorate climate conscious growth within the business sector through initiatives like the Façade Improvement Program, which expands to include climate action proposals.

The city will continue with fleet renewal, with a \$2.1 million investment in 2022, and thanks to federal and provincial cost-sharing agreements, the city will see \$3.5 million in important modernizing infrastructure upgrades. With council serving as custodians of the city's assets and infrastructure, valued at \$330 million, these maintenance allocations are essential to ensuring residents and businesses get the most possible value.

"Budget 2022 is focused on restoring our community roots by enhancing our outreach, programming, and services" said Councillor Jim Locke, Co-Chair of the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee. "This budget competitively positions our city to embrace the future with measured achievable goals that support sustainable growth and development while balancing the best interests of our residents and businesses."

By the numbers:

- The total 2022 budget is \$52,172,278.
- The 2022 budget includes no tax increases and no changes to the mil rate.
- The 2022 budget includes slight increases in some city rates/fees to offset increased operating costs in the wake of the pandemic. All rate/fee increases are available at www.mountpearl.ca.
- The total capital budget for 2022 is \$7.2 million.
- There are no changes to commercial property / business tax in 2022.

Full details on the budget can be found at www.mountpearl.ca.

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Enhanced Community Safety

- \$150,000 dedicated to the upgrade of the current surveillance system for increased visibility and Municipal Enforcement support to preserve safe environments.
- \$20,000 to increase in park patrol program.
- \$20,000 to enhance community programming through Municipal Enforcement.

Sustainable Development and Re-development

- Design and concept for *Find Your Centre* gateways and kiosks.
- Development of a new Municipal Plan (\$70,000), and a Transportation Network Review.
- Investment in Kenmount Hill upgrades (dedicated water line) signaling a prioritized commitment to leveraging the potential growth in this area.
- EOI for former Stapleton Road Pool to better utilize available space.

Attracting Young Families and Reversing the Aging Population Trend

- Exploration of an incentive or attraction strategy for young families (\$20,000).
- Continued investment in traditional and smart, accessible playground structures (\$110,000)
- Continued investment in programming (swim lessons, youth programs, events, etc.).
- Creation of a new budget allocation for diversity and inclusion initiatives (\$22,000).

Modernization and Climate Change Readiness

- Continued focus on urban forestry (\$50,000).
- Allocation for the Power's Pond Stormwater Management Plan including \$70,000 for preventative environmental protection initiatives such as the implementation of Stormceptor to protect against things like oil contamination in waterways.
- Investment in LED lights for City Hall. (\$60,000)
- Exploration of additional charging stations for residents or businesses, in an effort to accelerate adoption of electric vehicles.

Investment in Mixed Use Outdoor Spaces, Trails, and Recreation

- \$330,000 invested in our city's 60+ km of trails, our largest natural asset, including:
 - o Design for the development of a trail connection at Donovan's Business Park (\$30,000).
 - o Boardwalk replacements at Power's Pond and Branscombes Pond (\$230,000).
 - o Upgrade Power's Pond Washrooms to winter-use (\$50,000).

Investing In Our People

- Continued investment in employee engagement action items (\$70,000).
- Increase in budget for city-wide training (\$90,000)

Investing in Assets / Infrastructure

- \$100,000 for ongoing condition assessments of public infrastructure.
- \$3.5 million for important infrastructure upgrades (made possible through federal and provincial cost-sharing agreements).
- \$2.1 million in fleet renewal that is also climate conscious.