



NEWS RELEASE

VILLAGE OF LIONS BAY

Lions Bay Announces Infrastructure Investment Plans Council targets new federal and provincial grants to offset taxpayer costs

LIONS BAY, September 7, 2016 – At its first meeting back from the summer break, Village of Lions Bay Council last night adopted a [Strategic Plan](#) for the remainder of its term through Fall 2018, focusing attention on infrastructure needs, communication with residents and increasing the tax base of one of the smallest independent municipalities in BC. Council also adopted a comprehensive [Infrastructure Master Plan](#) produced by AECOM, one of the most respected engineering firms in the world. The plan provides a roadmap for action on capital projects that improve services, address new regulations, manage infrastructure past its design life, and mitigate property, safety and cost risks.

“We now have much-needed key planning in place,” says Mayor Karl Buhr. “The Infrastructure Master Plan has been almost two years in the making, and calls for urgent investment in water storage and distribution, and in drainage, roads and bridges. We anticipate needing to fund about \$9.5 million of capital projects over the next five years. If we’re going to do these projects, and frankly there isn’t really an option not to, now is the ideal time to position ourselves to take part in upcoming infrastructure grant funding. Since we simply can’t pay our share by increasing taxes we are going to have to borrow.” He elaborated that for the small municipality of only 1500 residents with approximately 575 tax parcels, a one percent property tax increase only raises an additional \$11,000. And essential infrastructure gets expensive fast. For example, a new tank to replace the current leaking and seismically non-conforming primary water tank will be about \$1.6 million.

Recently announced federal and provincial grant programs are expected to cover from 50 to 83 percent of project costs, depending on each program’s rules. To be eligible to apply, Council thus plans for borrowing to cover the municipal share of grant funded projects.

Council last night gave three readings to a \$3.0 million [Loan Authorization Bylaw](#), directing that it next go to a voter referendum to be held concurrently with a vacant [Council seat by-election on November 19, 2016](#). “Borrowing now to be able to fund the municipal share of the grants we apply for is the right and prudent action for our community today”, says Buhr. “It’s telling that Council is unanimous that now is the time to act. Once you look at the Infrastructure Master Plan and the Strategic Plan, I doubt many would dispute the scope and priority of projects we need to execute in the next five years to address our infrastructure deficit. It’s important that Lions Bay’s voters provide their input in the Loan Authorization Bylaw referendum, which I hope they support so that we can take the significant next steps we need.”

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