



TOWN OF GIBSONS

Mayor's Message

March 2016

This time of year, many local residents seek out sunnier and warmer weather – although as I write this column, the temperature has just topped 10 degrees, and Gibsons on a sunny day like this is hard to beat, no matter where you may travel. For most, these getaways require careful planning and budgeting. Similarly, for the Town of Gibsons, we are prudently allocating funds to get us where we need to go: to a balanced budget that not only reflects fiscal prudence and protects our natural assets, but also allows a focus on cultural benefits and social wellbeing.

Fiscally, we are aiming to stay the course, particularly in light of constrained funding, and global economic uncertainty. As we have worked our way through our annual budget planning process, with managers reviewing their departments' capital and operating budgets to determine needs for the coming year, it has been abundantly clear that we are not in a position to invest in brand new projects. Rather, we will focus on improving on what we already have, investing modestly in the infrastructure needs of our Town, and capitalizing on our natural assets, for example improving on trails that will join people of all ages and abilities to services in a healthy, accessible manner, and renewing the waterfront walkway so popular with local residents and tourists alike.

We have before us an exceptional opportunity to enhance our cultural scene, with the Gibsons Public Market project well underway, promising gathering and learning spaces that will make it a hub of the community, close to our downtown core.

From a social benefit point of view, we will focus on families, considering an update of our Parks Master Plan to review the location and quality of playgrounds to support at-home daycare providers, and to offer opportunities to connect at a neighbourhood scale.

In an ideal world, our sources of funding would be bountiful, and we would be in a position to fulfill all of our plans, and our residents' expressed needs. In reality, our sources of income are limited to grants, fees and to taxes which we strive to keep reasonable, and our responsibility to contribute to such SCRD functions as transit, solid waste and recreation has an impact on the funds we can allocate to the many desirable options before us.

Your interest and input to our budget planning process are welcomed. Please check our website and local papers for the dates of upcoming budget planning meetings in March, and join us if you can.