

Mayor's Message - April 2017

In backyards and on balconies all over town, Gibsons residents who planted bulbs last fall are enjoying the rewards of their efforts; after a stretch of rather dismal winter weather, the first spring flowers are a welcome sight, inspiring many to begin projects they could only plan, though not implement, during those long grey months.

Similarly, your Town maintains a list of priority projects, so we are well-positioned to maximize any 'seed funding' that comes our way. I'm pleased to advise you that recently, we received news of just such funding: two key projects, designed to improve our natural and engineered infrastructure, will receive funding from the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund, a joint program of the governments of Canada and British Columbia. The Town of Gibsons is very appreciative of these funds, which will enable us to plan the restoration of creeks and ponds that provide vital storm water services, and to replace aging water mains thereby increasing the resiliency of our water distribution system. Here are a few details of each project.

A grant of \$618,420 (Federal) and \$408,157 (Provincial) will provide 80% of the funding required for work within the Town's Water Infrastructure Renewal Program, allowing us to replace water mains identified as priorities because they have reached or exceeded their expected service lives. This will reduce the Town's risk of pipe failure, while improving capacity to address existing and future fire flow needs for Lower Gibsons. Council will examine these projects in the near future to determine the feasibility of incorporating road improvements in the areas where mains are being replaced, to maximize the benefits of this grant.

The second grant (\$150,000 Federal/\$99,000 Provincial) will enable progress on the Integrated Stormwater Management Plan (ISMP), focused on protecting our Eco-Assets. Rather than traditional engineered solutions such as pipes to deal with stormwater from future developments in Upper Gibsons, the Town is using a sequence of both natural assets and constructed assets. These include the use of neighbourhood ponds; the use of playing fields to help manage infrequent emergency storm events; the construction of a new Whitetower pond behind the municipal pool; increasing the capacity of existing ponds; and making improvements to Charman Creek that will enable the creek to carry away stormwater, while improving the environmental health of the creek. Other components of this grant include a management plan for Goosebird Creek; updates to the Town's environmental and geotechnical development permit areas; updates to our stormwater management bylaws; and community engagement, especially important in a town such as ours which treasures its environment.

These, and a number of other projects on our municipal agenda, guarantee that 2017 will be a busy year in Gibsons. I encourage you to stay informed on our progress by visiting the Town's website and Facebook page, as well as attending Council meetings and public information sessions.