



MAYOR REPORT TO COUNCIL

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9 | www.princegeorge.ca

DATE: December 28, 2017

TO: COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: LYN HALL, MAYOR

SUBJECT: 2017 in Review and a Look Forward to 2018

ATTACHMENT: NONE

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION the report dated December 28, 2017 from Mayor Lyn Hall titled “2017 in Review and a Look Forward to 2018”.

PURPOSE:

This report is provided for information.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The City started the year 2017 with an activation of its emergency operations centre as ice on the Fraser and Nechako Rivers threatened to flood low-lying areas along the Nechako. Later in the summer, the emergency operations centre was activated once again, this time at its highest level and in response to the mass evacuation prompted by the Cariboo wildfires. Both events, while sometimes worrisome and unpredictable, showed the character and resilience of City staff and residents of our community. The City was privileged to host a “Thank You Prince George” concert and barbecue in Canada Games Plaza in September to celebrate Prince George’s extremely successful efforts to welcome, assist, and care for the evacuees.

The City’s annual report presents information on accomplishments and future priorities according to four pillars that were initially identified in the Community Sustainability Plan, known as MyPG. While the annual report for 2017 will be completed in June, here are some highlights of the previous year, organized by these pillars.

2017 HIGHLIGHTS:

Social Development

Aligned with our aspirations with regards to reconciliation, the City signed a tripartite agreement with the Lheidli T’enneh and the Regional District of Fraser Fort George. In July, work also began on the Pavilion in Lheidli T’enneh Memorial Park as a Canada 150 project that will be a physical expression of the relationship between the City and the Lheidli T’enneh.

The Government of Canada's Canada 150 program brought a range of activities and events that – together with the Celebrate Prince George program of the City and Tourism Prince George – was unprecedented. More than 1000 people participated in new murals and an estimated 25,000 attended the Heatwave concert series in Canada Games Plaza. The murals were unveiled in September at the CN Centre concourse (near section G) and in the Kin Centre atrium.

The City participated in a review of downtown health services led by Northern Health. This review ultimately recommended a more consolidated and coordinated approach to health care delivery in the downtown. In July, the City of Prince George implemented the pilot Downtown Host Team Initiative to help foster a safe, positive atmosphere for downtown businesses, residents, workers, and all who visit the area. The Host Program involved security personnel, tourism ambassadors, and outreach workers working to connect people to services, welcome visitors and tourists, and build relationships within the downtown community.

Economic Development

After a record year in the value of building permits in Prince George in 2016, 2017 wasn't far behind. Put together, the two-year total equals almost a quarter-of-a-billion dollars of investment with the vast majority coming from the private sector. Also in 2017: the Riverbend Seniors Community was completed and the Pomeroy and Best Western Hotels started construction.

Two partnering agreements were approved: one with Northern Development Initiative Trust to expand the incentive program for multi-family housing developments in the City Centre, and another with A&T Development Projects to build a new condominium complex and underground parking on City land adjacent to City Hall. The project promises to attract hundreds more residents to the City Centre to live, which will have multiple benefits for the downtown area.

Late last year, Council passed a resolution to dissolve the Select Advisory Committee on Economic Development as the Committee had fulfilled its mandate and achieved the objectives outlined in its Terms of Reference.

Construction is well underway on UNBC's Wood Innovation Research Lab in downtown Prince George. The state-of-the-art wood science and engineering research facility is the first building in the city to be built to Passive House standards, an internationally recognized method of building for comfort, affordability, and energy efficiency through all stages of design, construction, and livability.

Environment

Work has begun on replacing a pedestrian bridge in Cottonwood Island Park and improving many of the low-lying trails to protect them during periods of elevated water levels in the Nechako. The City has also recently sought public comment regarding erosion control options along various stretches of the Heritage River Trail.

Various projects designed to improve redundancy and reliability of the City's water supply were constructed, including a new watermain along Foothills Blvd to the Hart Hwy and enhanced connectivity between two of the City's main wells.

Five City playgrounds were replaced in 2017, part of a playground re-investment program that will see 20 more playgrounds replaced over the next four years. The City also increased park options for dog owners in the Hart with the addition of a fenced dog area at Cpl. Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Park.

In May, construction began on the City of Prince George's \$4.4 million Masich Place Redevelopment Project, which will install the first outdoor synthetic field in Northern BC, and benefit local and regional sports teams, athletic clubs and associations, and fitness enthusiasts.

This fall, crews with the City of Prince George began planting 150 lilac, fruitless crabapple, maple, and buckeye trees around the CN Centre parking lot on 18th Avenue and Ospika Boulevard. The trees were funded through financial support from BC Hydro and the CN EcoConnexions program.

Government

The City organized and delivered a referendum regarding the borrowing required to re-build the Four Seasons Leisure Pool and Fire Hall #1. The referendum resulted in "yes" votes for both the Fire Hall and Pool. The City's traditional period of public consultation in October was used in 2017 to provide information about the referendum. However, the City also held two Talktober information sessions in November, providing opportunities for residents to connect with the Mayor and Council in-person, receive information about City initiatives, and ask questions of staff and elected officials.

This fall, the City of Prince George and the unionized employees of CUPE Local 1048 and CUPE Local 399 ratified a new four-year collective agreement. The agreement covers nearly 600 City staff.

The City launched a new website that improves the presentation of Prince George and enhances access to City information, including bylaws, news, and events. "A new website" was named by Council as one of its top "must do" projects for its first term. The City Website Redevelopment Project was recently named a Gold Winner at the MarCom Awards, an international competition for marketing and communications professionals.

The City's commitment to road and traffic safety was furthered in 2017 with the installation of an important new set of traffic signals at the intersection of Ferry Avenue and Ospika Boulevard. The signals are helping to slow down traffic along a high traffic route by encouraging motorists to access College Heights and Highway 16W using Ospika and Tyner Boulevard, rather than via the busy Highway 16W and Peden Hill.

2018 HIGHLIGHTS:

Downtown Revitalization

In 2018, Council will continue to focus its attention on the on-going efforts to revitalize the downtown area. Housing will continue to play a role in our activities with construction on the 151-unit condominium development next to City Hall scheduled to begin next year. Construction on a separate nine-unit condo development on Seventh Avenue is on-going.

This year, the City implemented a system to ensure more parking spaces are available downtown for motorists through measures such as the addition of angled parking, which can increase spaces available on-street by as much as 35 percent. This also serves to slow down traffic, improves safety for pedestrians, and helps downtown businesses. We will continue to consult with Downtown Prince George on additional options.

We will continue to work with UNBC, local arts organizations, and other groups to work to bring a greater arts and cultural presence downtown. Thus far, much has been accomplished by the City's Student Needs Committee, which has been working on ideas to encourage more students to become active in the community while they pursue their studies.

Advocacy Priorities

The City will continue to work to gain access to funding from other levels of government for a number of important projects and initiatives:

- The new library entrance, set to begin construction in 2018
- A refrigerated ice oval
- Expanded emergency response capacity and preparedness
- Additional housing and expanded health services, aligned with Government of BC priorities
- The new pool
- Arts and culture infrastructure and events

Infrastructure Priorities

The City will work to complete the bridge at Cottonwood Island Park that was washed away 10 years ago. We will also continue to build and rebuild the park trail system and to address erosion that has occurred in recent years on the Heritage River Trails along the Nechako River.

Additional infrastructure priorities include:

- Continuing civic facility assessments to understand current conditions
- Working towards an integrated approach to managing and investing in all infrastructure: above and below ground, constructed and natural
- Planning for \$5 Million in road rehabilitation again in 2018
- Completing Masich Stadium, the Pavilion in Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park, and the Hart Watermain extension
- Providing stormwater education and sustainability

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

During 2017, Council and Administration accomplished many of the priorities identified in the City's 2016-2018 Corporate Plan. 2018 promises to be an equally positive and productive year.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:



Lyn Hall, Mayor

MEETING DATE: January 8, 2018