

December 2, 2019 eTown Hall Unanswered Questions

- 1. A Nanaimo Householder in preparing the annual household budget must recognize the following categories: Income; Expenses; Savings; Debt; and remainder or shortfall. Can you please provide Nanaimo budget categories that match this simplicity? And if not, why not...**

The Community Charter requires the City to balance its budget every year. Here is a breakdown of the 2020 Provisional Budget:

Funding Sources:

Total Revenues - \$196,553,243

Proceeds From Borrowing (external debt) - \$3,000,000

Funding from Reserves - \$2,021,076

Total Funding - \$201,574,319

Expenditures:

Total Operating Expenditures including operating projects - \$151,395,140

Interest Payments on Debt (external debt) - \$1,817,183

Total Capital Expenditures - \$43,656,234

Principal Payments on Debt (external debt) - \$4,705,762

Total Expenditures - \$201,574,319

Find more information on this on the [Budget Information](#) page on the City website.

- 2. When is Council going to prioritize providing sidewalk infrastructure near schools and other amenities in support of active transportation goals and our most vulnerable which ranges from toddlers to seniors?**

The City has worked with ICBC and School District 68 since 2006 to assess and mitigate mobility issues for vulnerable road users adjacent to schools. [School-specific plans](#) can be found on the City website. Here is a link to the school-specific plans that have been developed.

In addition, proximity to schools and other vulnerable road user-centric facilities is a weighting factor in our prioritization system for capital investments in walking infrastructure.

3. How many km of sidewalks are proposed to be constructed in 2020 and how does that compare to 2019?

In 2019, the City constructed 0.5 km of sidewalk. In 2020, 6.6 km of sidewalk is planned. Find more information on this on the [Budget Information](#) page on the City website.

4. With landlords renting units to the public use, showing neglect. What is the city doing to insure that those places are safe and to code. The city has bylaws officers but do you use them to inspect the properties or do you have building safety inspectors to make sure they are safe?

The City of Nanaimo's Building Inspections department and Nanaimo Fire Rescue are responsible for inspecting buildings. Building Inspectors will inspect construction of new structures and renovations and, on a complaint basis, will inspect structures when a suspected case of illegal construction has taken place. Nanaimo Fire Rescue will inspect for fire protection and life-safety measures in commercial properties, on construction/demolition sites, hotels, public buildings, churches theatres, halls or other buildings used as a place of public resort. On a complaint basis, inspectors will inspect any property within the City of Nanaimo.

5. Page 5 of the Financial Plan shows 2020 Revenues as 196.5 million dollars and 2020 expenses as 152 million dollars. What happens to the other 44.5 million dollars.

The draft budget presented had total expenditures of \$200,320,073. This included expenditures for operations, projects, Vancouver Island Regional Library as well as transfers to reserves. Total funding from all sourcing was \$200,320,073 this included revenues of \$196,535,092, \$3 million in proceeds from external borrowing and transfers from reserves of \$784,981. Find more information on this on the [Budget Information](#) page on the City website.

6. Still hoping for the pedestrian/cycle path from central Nanaimo south. Is this included in the budget?

The southerly extension of the E & N Trail has been reviewed in detail and has been added to the City's Development Cost Charge Bylaw, however the cost of this work is significant and is heavily influenced by the presence of the active rail line. This project is not in the current financial plan.

7. There is no mention of community engagement in this budget either as a function or as an initiative. What has the city done to implement the recommendations from the Community Engagement Task Force since it was provided to City Council in January 2019?

The recommendations from the Community Engagement Task Force were:

1. Be committed to working more closely with the community to improve engagement and participation in council decisions, so that residents feel empowered to be more active in shaping their community and future.
2. Begin with something as simple as a published calendar of what Council intends to engage residents about over the next year.
3. Ensure that existing methods for community engagement are fully understood and utilized.
4. Begin a process of strengthening and empowering neighbourhoods to better ensure that programs and projects are actually meeting community needs.

5. Consider how to improve community engagement through advertising, social media and online technology.
6. Consider establishing a central focus for community engagement within the city.

The City will be launching a new online public engagement software this year to reach a wider range of residents and better engage with them in a different format. The process of launching this will include improving the look and feel of the community engagement section of the website to incorporate more information on planned community engagement activities.

The City will also be reaching to the community and neighbourhoods as it begins its strategic policy development process. This far-reaching process will require collaboration with the community to be successful.

11. Why has Council chosen to support so many initiatives in this budget when citizens don't even have basic infrastructure around major amenities such as sidewalks and lighted crosswalks?

Services provided by a municipality range from the most basic needs of clean water to the most exciting services such as recreation and entertainment. Within this spectrum, the municipality must take a balanced approach of prioritizing its expenditures. The City is investing heavily in active transportation infrastructure, however this is only one of many wants of the community. Find more information on this on the [Budget Information](#) page on the City website.

12. On p.4 of the 2020-2024 Draft Financial Plan there is a graph which shows the 2020 Operating Budget. In that Budget, The Port of Nanaimo Centre shows a cost of \$5.4 million dollars, nearly as much as City Administration. Is this a gross cost or a net cost? And similarly, why are the costs of other similar City venues which do generate revenues like the Port Theatre or recreational revenue not similarly indicated?

Page 4 of the [Draft Financial Plan](#) reflects total expenditures only and includes VICC operations, debt repayment for the Port of Nanaimo Centre and a small operating budget for the maintenance of the Port of Nanaimo Centre. The net operating budget for the VICC only is \$1,050,423 including \$100,000 for capital replacement and the net budget for debt repayment for the Port of Nanaimo Centre of \$1,600,490.

13. Mayor and council declared a climate emergency and also made pedestrian's the top priority in the transportation master plan. Are mayor, council and staff going to finally take action on sidewalk snow removal including fining those who don't clear their sidewalks. Navigating through snow and ice covered sidewalks can deter those who choose a healthier lifestyle from walking, especially for those with disabilities and those pushing a baby stroller or walker.

With more than 1,500 lane km of City streets and more than 325 km of sidewalks, there is a lot to keep clear when it snows. The City uses a tiered priority system to keep Nanaimo's roads plowed after a snowfall event, concentrating on major roads and emergency routes. While the City does have a bylaw enforcing sidewalk clearing in times of snow and ice, there isn't the capacity to enforce it city-wide. Priority is given to busy commercial areas with significant pedestrian traffic. We acknowledge that this is not a perfect system, and we appreciate everyone in the community who does their part in being a good neighbor. Find more on the [Snow and Ice Control page](#) on the City website.

- 14. Property taxes are scheduled to go up more than double the inflation rate for the second year in a row. My pay isn't going up double the inflation rate so I have to cut back my expenses to pay this added tax burden. Does the City conduct regular and systematic program reviews or evaluations of its departments to identify savings, efficiencies, and redundancies?**

From a budget perspective, we do a modified zero-based budget. This means that other than staffing costs (as they are driven by contract) all other costs start at zero and are built up from there. Each budget line needs to be justified. Budgets are created by the department manager and their Financial Analyst. It is then reviewed by the Manager, Business, Asset and Financial Planning for reasonableness.

- 15. The proposed 3km Metral Dr. upgrade is a 'multi-modal network to move more than motorists' Does this 1 project use up all the budget for pedestrian improvements for the next 3 years?**

The project will not consume all of the active transportation funding for the next 3 years. Much of the funding for the Metral project is from senior levels of government. Also, most of the budget for the project is designated for the utility upgrade work not the active transportation parts. Find more about the project on the [Metral Drive Complete Streets page](#) on the City website. There are still projects throughout the City which will include new sidewalks.