

Drayton Valley's 2019 Interim Budget focuses on supporting economic development and enhancing services to residents

December 19, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Town Council approved the Interim Budget for 2019 during the December 19, 2018, Regular Meeting of Council. Focusing on community priorities and attracting investment by supporting the growth of the local economy, the Interim Budget represents responsible management of Town resources that will increase service levels and provide relief for residents and businesses who continue to feel the effects of the economic downturn.

Town Council is committed to supporting strategies that foster growth and increase economic resilience in Drayton Valley. Creating a business friendly environment that encourages the development of new and innovative concepts in education and industry will generate investment, attract new business, and bring workers, students, families, and visitors to the community. Developing a strong and sustainable economy will not only benefit local businesses but create a strong sense of community among residents.

Delivering quality services and ensuring a positive customer service experience is important to Council as well as Administration. Existing department functions, service levels, and resources have been assessed and reorganized to align with the needs and expectations of residents, including seasonal maintenance of Town property. Building confidence with residents and business owners through positive interactions creates an inviting and welcoming atmosphere; an important step in attracting new comers and businesses to the community.

Curbside collection services will be enhanced in 2019 to include weekly recycling pick-up for Town residents. Going forward, a cost recovery approach will be implemented that will eliminate cross subsidization of this service through tax dollars. A fixed rate of \$19.00 per month will be added to residential utility bills beginning March 1, 2019; this will enable the Town to meet current needs and build reserves for anticipated growth in the community and future landfill requirements.

"The responsible management of services and ensuring that appropriate service levels are provided to residents remains a top priority for Town Council" said Mayor Doerksen. "I am proud of the progress we have made in the last year; these changes enable us to focus on our residents and local business community and offer our hard working citizens a tax break."

Administration will undertake a new approach to pursue grant opportunities to offset the cost of capital projects. Leveraging grant funding allows the municipality to reallocate tax dollars to maintaining or enhancing services of value to residents and supporting initiatives in the community.

Dedicated resources have been allocated to the coordinated management and scheduling of maintenance and replacement of Town assets. Ensuring appropriate planning and funding is in place to facilitate required upgrades to Town equipment and infrastructures will result in future savings and efficiencies. Responding to the needs of the community, capital projects have been approved that will facilitate economic growth and contribute to a high quality of life in Drayton Valley. Improvements to roads, sidewalks, and trails will be conducted based on studies completed in 2018. Town Council also understands the importance of investing in the future development of recreational opportunities for residents; these amenities attract families and visitors to the community and also support the economic success of the Town.

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Due to the changes in the “one-third” federal tax exemption for elected officials, the Town of Drayton Valley will be following the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) recommendations to adjust pre-tax compensation for 2019 to maintain elected officials’ after-tax compensation at 2018 levels. The Town of Drayton Valley is among many other municipalities across the country adjusting compensations for elected officials to offset changes from the Federal Government.

With efficiencies being identified in service delivery and new approaches to securing additional revenue sources, Town Council is projecting a tax roll-back for residents and businesses for 2019. The final decision will be made in the spring following a review of the provincial budget, Brazeau Foundation’s requisition, the Alberta School Foundation Fund requisition, and the establishment of Brazeau County’s tax rates.

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