



District of Fort St. James

*Annual Municipal Report Year ended
December 31st, 2021*

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When I wrote my first Mayor's Message a year ago I could not have imagined that we would still be enduring the impact of Covid-19 today. *"Two weeks to flatten the curve"* turned into two years of hardship, frustration, fear and distrust and while we have all been impacted, our young people, our old people and those without the support systems many of us are fortunate

to have, have suffered greatly and continue to suffer to this day. The elimination of all mask and lockdown restrictions this April was a huge step on the road back to "normal", whatever that may be going forward and has allowed us to once again gather, celebrate and connect with one another.

As a small rural community, Fort St James lacks many of the amenities available in an urban center. We are however a capable, caring and independent lot and community members have rolled up their collective sleeves many times in the past to build us a curling rink, a golf course, a ski hill, an arena and an awesome tv and radio service. And we haven't lost our touch either with Fort St James residents, businesses and governments recently coming together to pledge over \$500,000 to fund the purchase of a new Search and Rescue building. This is the Fort St James spirit that makes our community such a great place to live. Fort St James is clearly a community that cares.

While we are hopefully now on the back end of the pandemic, there are unfortunately new storm clouds forming on the horizon which will likely be every bit as disruptive as was Covid-19. I don't need to tell you that the cost of living is increasing in leaps and bounds, with energy, food and virtually everything increasing in cost with no end in sight. As an old-timer who worked in the financial services industry during the inflationary 70's and 80's, I can say with certainty that no one will escape the economic impact that that these inflationary pressures will have on our individual lives. District operations are also being significantly affected with higher purchase and operational costs in all areas as well as substantial equipment delivery delays. While Council was mindful of these inflationary pressures when preparing our 2022 Budget, there is no doubt that there will be significant pressure on every budget line moving forward as there is, at this time, no evidence of any governmental actions currently under consideration that could mitigate these inflationary pressures. We are travelling in uncharted waters.

At a District level, in 2021 we installed a new ice plant in the arena, upgraded the campsite and playground equipment at Cottonwood Park, bought a new garbage truck and added Rachele Willick as Chief Financial Officer. Fiscally, after investing over 1.5 million dollars of reserve funds into infrastructure, equipment and IT, the District was still able to grow our reserve funds by \$85,000. In 2022 we lost our Corporate Officer Luke Charlton and in May our Chief Administrative Officer David Schroeter announced he was moving on so there will be two new staff members working in the District Office in the near future. BC General Local Elections will be held on Oct 15 and a new Fort St James District Council will be elected at that time.

On the economic front, the forest industry is in a state of severe uncertainty with substantial reductions in timber cut and licensee allocations and new wildlife and old growth restrictions being imposed, changes which so far do not appear to have appeased anyone in or out of the industry. Eventually they will get it right, we hope, but undoubtedly many people, businesses and communities will suffer significant economic pain in the process. Locally, Apollo Forest Products is, due to a shortage of timber, currently operating only four days a week and the new Hampton Fort St James sawmill is expected to begin production later this year. The Fort St James Green Energy plant, a major contributor to the District of Fort St James property tax base, discontinued operations and was listed for sale in 2021. There was a real risk of the plant being dismantled and the potential loss of significant District tax revenues however Nak'azdli Whut'en, Arrow Transport and Nexus PMG stepped up to the plate to purchase and reopen the facility, saving 38 local jobs and maintaining the District of Fort St James tax base. Nak'azdli Whut'en and the District of Fort St James Councils meet regularly to discuss issues we have in common and we have pledged to work together in the future on projects, services and initiatives that will make Fort St James a better place to live.

The new RCMP building and a much larger hospital will improve local services and may well even attract new residents to our community as more people escape urban centers and move to the rural north. All Highway 16 communities, including Fort St James, are experiencing a surge in new residents, placing pressure on the region's limited housing resources and the increased staffing needs our new hospital will bring will only exacerbate this problem in our community. While our Council is doing all we can at a local level to address this crisis, the problem is much bigger than Fort St James and will require the full commitment of the Province to resolve.

Bob Motion

Mayor

Mission Statement:

To improve and preserve the quality of life for residents of Fort St. James

Vision Statement:

To maintain a beautiful and desirable community that people are proud to live in that work with First Nations, community, and regional partners to provide sustainable services and economic opportunities.

2021 Elected and Appointed Officials

Councillors

- Bob Motion, Mayor
- Judy Greenaway, Councillor
- Jennifer Howell, Councillor
- Bradley Miller, Councillor
- Paul Stent, Councillor

The District of Fort St. James is governed by five elected officials: one Mayor and four Councillors. Mayor and Council serve a four year term. All local governments operate within a legislative framework that governs their administration, and finances including financial planning, reporting, revenues (taxes and fees). The Council is responsible for:

- Providing good government of its community
- Providing for services, laws and other matters for the community benefit
- Providing for stewardship of the public assets of its community
- Fostering the economic, social and environmental well-being of its community



Councillor Judy Greenaway

Mayor and Council make decisions together based on majority vote that decides and acts for the municipality.

In 2020 Councillor Gingrich resigned, and in January 2021, Councillor Bradley Miller was elected. This council will have the opportunity serve in their current roles until the next election in October 2022.



Councillor Jennifer Howell

Mayor and Council welcome residents of Fort St. James to participate in their local government by attending regular council meetings, submitting feedback, or appearing as a delegation to speak directly with Mayor and Council at a meeting. Council meetings are called to order at 5:00 pm and are generally held the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The meeting schedule is posted at the

District office and on the Municipality's website. Agendas are posted online the Friday prior to a scheduled Council meeting.

Additionally, Minutes are posted on fortstjames.ca.

If you would like to appear as a delegation before Council please complete a delegation request form and return it to the Corporate Officer no later than 2:30 the Wednesday prior to the meeting you would like to attend.

During the COVID-19 global pandemic, all council meetings were held virtually via Zoom, however, Staff, Mayor and Council look forward to hosting regular meetings in person once again.



Councillor Paul Stent

Declaration on Disqualification of Councillors

No Councillors were Disqualified during 2021 at the District of Fort St. James.

Highlights of 2021 and Accomplishments

2021 was a busy year for Mayor and Council of the District of Fort St. James who participated in a wide variety of local and regional committees relating to several issues. Members of Council participated in the following regional Committees and Commissions:

| | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Northern Development Initiatives Trust | The Regional District of Bulkley Nechako | Northern Health Authority |
| New Gold Blackwater | Community Futures Stuart Nechako | Mt. Milligan Sustainability Committee |
| Nechako Valley Watershed Council | Stuart Nechako Regional Hospital District | Resource Benefit Alliance |
| North Central Local Government Association | | |

Members of Council also participated in several community and District committees such as:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Fort St. James Tourism Committee | Fort St. James Community Forest Commission | Stuart Lake Seniors Association |
| Fort St. James Library Board | Fort St. James Friendship Centre | Fort St. James Seniors Housing Project |

Committees are an important way for Council to access expertise and advice available in the community to help inform their decisions on a variety of topics. These committees make recommendations to Council which may be accepted or declined by Municipal Council. During the 2021-year Council established or continued the following committees to assist in the deliberation of several issues:

| Committee | Membership | Mission |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Community Forest Commission | Chair Councilor Judy Greenaway Member Paul Inden Member Chad Lantz Member Chelsea Heyer Member Craig Houghton KDL representative John-Paul Wenger | To facilitate the active participation of the community in the stewardship of the land base and to demonstrate its capability to practice exemplary stewardship of an extremely complex, diverse and rich area while practicing sound and viable use of resources. |

| | | |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Tourism Committee | Chair Bob Grill Member Jana Gainor Member Jo Ann Alexander Member Terry Weibe Member Brad McRobert Member Vince Prince Member Reg Mueller Member Jennifer Howell Clerk EDO Brooke Eschuk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Advocate for tourism opportunities in the community • Work with Destination BC and Northern BC Tourism Association to promote and expand tourism in Fort St. James • To advise Mayor and Council on Tourism related projects. |
|-------------------|--|--|

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Bylaw & Policy Review | Chair Brad Miller Councillor Howell Councillor Greenaway Clerk Luke Charlton | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review District Bylaws and Policies to make recommendations and changes leading to improved service delivery. |
|-----------------------|---|--|



Chief Administrative Officer David Schroeter

Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM)

Council met with several different cabinet ministers and various agencies during the 2021 Union of British Columbia Municipalities held in September. The UBCM conference provides council an opportunity to advocate for a variety of policies and actions they wish to see implemented in British Columbia that may directly affect Fort St. James. During meetings Council requested support for Fort St. James’s Forestry Industry, local BC Emergency Health Services training, social services, mental health and addictions in community, affordable and supportive housing options, tourism, as well as improving provincial

transportation and infrastructure. Mayor and Council also spoke with Premier John Horgan. Councillors met with the Ministers of Municipal Affairs, Advanced Education and Skills Training, Forests Lands, Natural Resources and Rural Development, Mental Health and Addictions, Northern Health, the Minister responsible for housing, and finally the Ministry of Citizen’s Services.

Personnel

The District of Fort St. James requires a variety of positions to operate the services residents of Fort St. James expect such as roads, sewer, water, emergency services, recreation and community events. To make this possible the District of Fort St. James employs:

- 18 Full time employees
- 1 Part time employee
- 24 Volunteer Firefighters
- 6 Volunteer Jr. Firefighters
- 6 Summer students

2020 Appointed Officials

Currently Appointed Officials

The Municipality hires for positions occasionally. You can find job postings on the Municipality's website

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Chief Administrative Officer | David Schroeter | Chief Administrative Officer | David Schroeter |
| Corporate Officer | Luke Charlton | Corporate Officer | Luke Charlton |
| Chief Financial Officer | Melanie Ubleis | Chief Financial Officer | Rachelle Willick |
| Public Works Superintendent | Dave Stewart | Public Works Superintendent | Dave Stewart |
| Fire Chief | Ryan McVey | Fire Chief | Ryan McVey |
| Economic Development Officer | Brooke Eschuk | Economic Development Officer | Brooke Eschuk |

and on the notice board at the District Office.

Recreation and Culture

Because the District of Fort St. James was largely unable to host community events in 2021, Mayor and Council encouraged community members to utilize the vast outdoor recreation amenities and resources available to us here in Fort St. James.

Up until 2021, the Fort Forum Arena had the oldest working ice plant in British Columbia. Mayor and Council invested just over half a million dollars in a brand new, freon based ice plant. The old chiller frequently broke down due to its age and often caused delays in installing the ice surface. The new ice plant is safer, easier to use and maintain, and will lessen the Municipality's carbon footprint.

In 2021, the District of Fort St. James in Partnership with Northern Development Initiatives Trust invested in the revitalization of the Cottonwood campsites in a phased project. In Phase one, the Municipality constructed a timber frame, piece-on-piece powerhouse matching the aesthetic of those at the National Historic Site, installed power to each of the four campsites along the waterfront, and upgraded the power pole. Plans for phase two include installing power to each of the Lakeshore Drive sites, replacement of the picnic tables and fire rings, and the installation of landscaping.

Cottonwood Park and the Marina was used extensively in 2021. As we experienced record temperatures, residents enjoyed the waterfront for swimming, boating, and family activities all summer long. In addition, staff were excited to see the installation of new playground equipment at Cottonwood Park featuring natural materials for climbing, and swinging. Also at Cottonwood Park are a set of four pieces of adult exercise equipment.

The Municipality provides \$1.00 leases to a number of community recreation and cultural groups this groups include:

- The Fort St. James Public Library
- The Fort St. James Community Arts Council
- Music Makers
- Stuart Lake Seniors Association
- Fort St. James Curling Club

Community Services

The District of Fort St. James offers several community services. 2021 was a challenging year to in that the province was in the throws of the COVID-19 global pandemic. This prevented the Municipality from hosting most of the community events community members are used to participating in.

The change and social isolation affected each of us differently. With the support from the Province of British Columbia as well as our own Councillor and Dr. Paul Stent, we came through the pandemic.

Mayor and Council as well as District Staff wish to send our deepest condolences to those who tragically lost friends and loved ones to the Corona Virus. This challenge was unprecedented in our lifetime, and like always, the community supported one another when we needed it most.

Thankyou to Dr. Stent for communicating with residents through monthly letters. These letters offered the community his experience and knowledge as well as insights on the latest science and research surrounding the pandemic.

Throughout 2021, The District of Fort St. James continued to facilitate the long running Seniors' Helping Seniors program. This program provides transportation to and from Fort St. James, Nak'azdli Whut'en, the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako Electoral Area 'C', Vanderhoof and Prince George for medical appointments. The program also offers grocery shopping services for residents who require a little extra assistance due to mobility problems. This is an initiative supported by the United Way and the dedicated Seniors Helping Seniors volunteers with funding from the District of Fort St. James, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, and Nak'azdli Whut'en. If you would like to be a volunteer with this rewarding program, please contact the District office for more information. Seniors are also able to access snow windrow clearing at their homes. This program requires annual registration.

The Municipality supports the Healthy Minds Community Garden located at the back of the Municipal Office located at 477 Stuart Drive West. Plots are available for you to 'dig in'! call the District office for more information. Guests are welcome to help with weeding!

Public Works



Dave Stewart Public Works Superintendent

In 2021 the Public Works Department oversaw several maintenance projects within the District. Phase 1 of the Arena Revitalization Project was completed which saw the failing ammonia ice plant replaced with a new Carbon Dioxide based ice plant. The project will reduce the facilities greenhouse gas emissions and ensure the facility is safe for workers and the public. The project was completed under

budget and on time. The marina was open for the

public in late Spring and continues to bring a number of tourists, residents, and boating enthusiasts to our community. The continuity of garbage services saw significant improvements with the introduction of a new garbage truck into the fleet decreasing disruption caused by the old truck being out of service for repairs. Phase 2 of the Douglas Avenue sidewalk replacement project was implemented with plans for phase 3 submitted to Council for consideration in the 2022 budget. Public Works in partnership with Stantec, the municipal engineering firm began a study of the Spirit Square Slope to determine the cause of land slips and bank erosion. Staff expect the study will be submitted to Council in mid 2022 for consideration. Beautification efforts across Fort St. James is ongoing. Maintenance, and street

maintenance kept the crews busy throughout the year. Park upgrades planned in 2020 were successfully implemented at Cottonwood Park and included a new swing set, climbing equipment, and seniors exercise stations.

Services saw a number of projects implemented in the 2021 year with the completion of sanitary sewer main camera work and Phase two of repairs throughout the community. A number of manhole replacements were also completed throughout the community. The final phase of SCADA improvements were completed resulting in a fully digitized water distribution and lagoon system. The project allows municipal staff and engineers to easily understand equipment failures of other service problems and improved data collection. Initial work on the Elm St. Water service improvement and Looping project began in early Fall with project completion expected during the summer of 2022.

Economic Development

There is a lot of change and development happening in Fort St. James. We continued to struggle through with the challenges presented by the COVID-19 global pandemic, but nevertheless the Economic Development Department had a particularly successful year. The District of Fort St. James was successful in applying for and receiving for \$435,579.04 in grant funding. This funding is used for community capital projects, and Economic Development capacity building. For example, grant funds will contribute to the first phase of the Cottonwood Campsite Electrification; improvements at the Pearson Airport; provided a new set of Jaws – of – life for the Fort St. James Volunteer Fire Department; a FireSmart and community wildfire prevention program, a Wastewater Master Plan and many supports for small businesses.



The Tourism Committee also found success working with a \$20,000.00 Grant from the Northern BC Tourism Association. This grant funded the 2021-2026 Tourism Strategic Plan. This document provided an assessment of the state of tourism in Fort St. James, sets goals, and set the community on track to begin community projects that will help the District of Fort St. James achieve those goals.

The department lead the community in internet speed testing and used the results to apply for grant funding to improve connectivity and internet reliability. The District of Fort St. James is still working on this project and are awaiting grant funding approval from senior levels of government. Mayor and Council recognize that reliable and affordable internet is a direct contributor to attracting and retaining residents to our community and have made it a priority to work with our partners to improve these services.

The District of Fort St. James was also fortunate to be selected to participate in the Ministry of Forest Lands Natural Resources and Rural Development Resident attraction and retention (RAR) pilot program. The Municipality was granted \$165,000 to engage in projects related to RAR. These include planning for future development at Cottonwood Park; a signage and Wayfinding Master Plan, a RAR brochure and Marketing among a few other exciting projects.

Along the lines of the world wide web, the District's website was long overdue for a complete re-do. The Municipality began work on the new and improved www.fortstjames.ca. The new website showcases all the community has to offer while providing residents, visitors, and the business community all the information they need to be successful here in Fort St. James. The Community has contributed images, through the '*This is Fort St. James*' Photography contest, and we are absolutely blown away with the talent of our local shutterbugs. Well done and thank you for your beautiful contributions!

Finally, the Department is proud to support small local businesses in Fort St. James. We have many programs that can help businesses in our community. Though the support of Northern Development Initiatives Trust, The Municipality is able to offer programs such as LOVE Fort St. James and Plaid weekend, the Business Façade Improvement Program, as well as Business Retention and Expansion programs like annual business walks and supports such as guidance in how to start and register a business, were to find grant opportunities and financial support. If you would like to know more about any of these programs please reach out to the Economic Development Officer! The Economic Development department is looking forward to projects getting started in 2022/2023

Protective Services



Fire Department

As with the rest of the world, late 2021 brought back a more normal way of life with the lifting of restrictions. This allowed the Fort St. James Fire Department to return to in person training and the ability it participate in community events and volunteer firefighter recruitment. In October of 2021, the FSJFD joined SD-91 with the restart of the Jr. Firefighter program. Six students from FSJ Secondary were accepted into the program and put in over 90 hours of training hours and community events.

| Fire Protection Area | Number of Incidents |
|---|---------------------|
| District of Fort St. James | 42 |
| Nak'azdli Reserve | 13 |
| Regional District of Bulkley Nechako Area "C" Fire Protection Area | 6 |
| Regional District of Bulkley Nechako Luck Bay Fire Protection Area | 4 |
| Area "C" Road Rescue Extrication | 30 |
| Total | 95 |

Short- and long-range planning is accomplished in consultation and with oversight of the CAO to meet the vision and objectives expressed by Mayor and Council. There are many additional regulations and standards which must be met by the fire service that guide and regulate the fire department in delivering an effective and consistent emergency service to our community. There were 95 incidents in

2021 which included residential and commercial structure fires, motor vehicle incidents, grass fires, commercial and residential fire alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, RCMP and BC Ambulance Service assistance requests. Firefighters continue to work toward their firefighter certificate to improve their level of knowledge and skills required to be qualified in the profession of firefighting. This is a long-term commitment of the firefighters to further develop their value to the community.

- Membership of the fire department stood at 21 firefighters at the close of 2021.
- Two firefighters tendered leave or resigned in 2021. Resignations were due to a change in work location, lack of available time as well as focusing on their full-time employment in Fort St. James.
- Total of 52 regular training sessions, plus 6 special training events held totaling 1,112 hours for the year, including:
 - Exterior Operations recruit training program.
 - NFPA 1001 FF I&II Standard for Professional Firefighter Qualifications
 - Auto Extrication & Vehicle Rescue
 - Surface Ice Rescue
- Firefighters recorded 2,722 hours in 2021 including:
 - Emergency Fire & Rescue calls
 - Thursday evening practice sessions
 - New member recruit classes
 - Live Fire training weekends
 - Driver Operator training sessions
 - Ice Rescue Technician
 - Junior Firefighter Program

Fire Training Centre

- Facility used for hands on training members and maintenance training for NFPA 1001 firefighter qualifications.

Bylaw Enforcement

Bylaw enforcement received and responded to approximately 10 complaints related to unsightly properties, nine complaints related to animal control, and four complaints related to traffic, and Parking.

Accountability

The Fire Department conducts all fire and rescue operations under the guidance of our operation

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| District of Fort St. James: | Fire Department Establishment and Operating Bylaw |
| Regional District of Bulkley -Nechako: | Fire Protection Agreement, Rural, 1994 and successor agreements |
| Regional District of Bulkley -Nechako: | Fire Protection Agreement, Rural, 2005 and successor agreements |
| Work Safe BC | Part 31 - Firefighting |
| Work Safe BC | Part 11 - Fall Protection |
| Work Safe BC | Part 8 - Buoyancy Equipment |
| Fire Services Act | (RSBC 1996), and successor legislation |
| Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) | 2008 FUS Survey, 2014 FUS Review |
| Wildfire Act | (SBC 2004) and successor legislation |
| Wildfire Regulation | includes amendments up to B.C. Reg. 143/2019, June 24, 2019 |
| Office of the Fire Commissioner of BC | (BC Fire Service Minimum Training Standards Playbook) |
| Motor Vehicle Act | Section 122 - operation of emergency vehicles |
| NFPA | (National Fire Protection Association) |
| BCAS | (British Columbia Ambulance Service) |
| BCEHS | (British Columbia Emergency Health Service) |

guidelines (OG's) and a variety of legislations. The Fire Department OG's are a living document which are reviewed periodically and updated to keep pace with current and changing regulations. District Policies, and fire service standards. Additional input is derived from but not limited to the following:

Animal Control

During 2021, Nahounli Kennels and Upland continued to provide animal control services for the District of Forty St. James.

Legislative Services

During the 2021 year the Legislative Services Department submitted 15 bylaws for Council consideration. The Legislative Services Department also held a by-election for 1 Councillor concluding on January 30th, 2021. This by-election was held during the COVID-19 pandemic requiring a number of adaptations to sanitation and mail ballot allowances in addition to seeking a Ministerial Order to permit the by-election to be held in another venue better suited to mitigate the covid-19 pandemic. The Department provided ongoing administrative support for the Bylaw and Policy Review Committee and Community Forest Commission including the completion of a Request for Proposal Process for the management of the Fort St. James Community Forest tenure.

Policies adopted or amended:

| Bylaw Name | Bylaw Number | Purpose Statement |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Commission Establishing Bylaw | 2027 | Being a bylaw to establish the community forest commission to oversee the community forest tenure on behalf of the district of Fort St. James council. |
| Development Procedures Bylaw | 1029 | A bylaw to establish procedures for Land use and development applications. |
| Council Procedures Bylaw Amendment 2 | 1030 | A bylaw to amend "District of Fort St. James Council Procedure Bylaw No. 1015, 2019". |
| Water Rates 2021 | 1031 | A bylaw to amend "District of Fort St. James Water Connection and Regulation Bylaw No. 808, 2004." |
| Garbage Rates 2021 | 1032 | A bylaw to amend District of Fort St. James Garbage Collection and Disposal Bylaw No. 832, 2006. |
| Sewer Rates 2021 | 1033 | A bylaw to amend "District of Fort St. James Sewer Connection and Regulation Bylaw No. 835, 2006". |
| Zoning Bylaw Amendment No 38 | 1034 | A bylaw to amend "District of Fort St. James Zoning Bylaw No. 738, 2001." |
| Financial Plan Bylaw 2021 | 1035 | A bylaw to authorize the Financial Plan for the years 2021 to 2025. |
| Tax Rates Bylaw 2021 | 1036 | A bylaw to establish 2021 taxation levies for Municipal, Regional Hospital District and Regional District purposes. |
| Greenbelt Zoning Bylaw Amendment | 1037 | A bylaw to amend "District of Fort St. James Zoning Bylaw No. 738, 2001." |
| OCP Amendment | 1038 | A bylaw to amend "District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 872, 2010. |

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| Culvert Installation Bylaw No. 1039, 2021 | 1039 | A bylaw to establish a culvert system in the municipality and repeal and replace "District of Fort St. James Culve1i Installation Bylaw No. 615, 1995." |
| Water Connection & Regulation Amendment 2021 | 1040 | A bylaw to amend "District of Fort St. James Sewer Connection and Regulation Bylaw No. 835, 2006" |
| Sewer Connection & Regulation Amendment 2021 | 1041 | A bylaw to amend "District of Fort St. James Sewer Connection and Regulation Bylaw No. 835, 2006" |
| Financial Plan Amendment Bylaw | 1042 | A bylaw to amend "District of Fort St. James Financial Plan Bylaw No. 1035, 2021." |

Development Services

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic many developments were delayed for the 2021 year. Development Services saw a decrease in the total number of Building and other applications. In total the District saw a total construction value of \$6,880,096.00 invested in Fort St. James resulting in \$40,832 of building permit revenue for the District of Fort St. James. A total of 9 building permits were issued in the community for 8 construction projects and one demolition. One Environmental Development Permit was issued for a project located within the setback from Stuart Lake.

2021 Adopted Priorities

Council adopted eight priorities in 2020 to narrow their focus and highlight what goals and action items will assist in fulfilling their vision.

Building a Relationship with Staff

- Support Learning and Growth
- Promote Community Pride
- Lead by example

Promote and Develop Forestry and Industry

- Secure and Support Industry
- Promote Industrial Growth
- Liaise with Ministries

Invest in Water, Sewer, and Sidewalks

- Increase Capital reserves
- Explore Partnering Agreements

Community Development

- Promote Tourism
- Build Reserve Funds

Build a Relationship with Local First Nations

- Rebuild Mutual Trust and Cooperation
- Hold Regular Consultations
- Build an Inclusive Relationship

Invest in an Arena Chiller and Upgrades

- Apply and Secure Funding

Official Community Plan Redevelopment

- Review Zoning Bylaw
- Review Relevant Policies
- Explore Opportunities
- Stop the “One Horse Town” Syndrome

Diversification

Building a Relationship with Staff

The District of Fort St. James welcomed three permanent employees and saw a notable decrease in employee turnover throughout the 2021 year. Council has continued to work with administration to determine what steps must be taken to reduce employee turnover and retain long-term employees in key municipal positions.

Build a Relationship with Local First Nations

The District of Fort St. James held two Council-to-Council meeting with the Nak’azdli Whut’en with the goal of improving inter-jurisdiction cooperation and planning.

Promote and Develop Forestry and Industry

Mayor and Council have provided on going support and advocacy for the Forest sector through meetings with industry and the provincial government to share concerns and find opportunities to create value added businesses in Fort St. James. With the announcement of the old growth deferral and indigenous consultation Mayor and Council have been working closely with the Nak’azdli Whut’en, industry, and the Community Forest to address concerns and support contractors and industry in Fort St. James

Invest in an Arena Chiller and Upgrades

The District completed upgrades to the Arena Chiller and waited to hear additional information from the provincial and federal governments on the second and third phase of the Arena Upgrades and Revitalization Project.

Invest in Water, Sewer, and Sidewalks

The District of Fort St. James has taken steps to complete a water master plan which will summarize a number of actions and recommendations for the District of Fort St. James to undertake to improve water service in Fort St. James. The project is expected to be completed in 2022. The District, in partnership with the Nak'azdli Whut'en began discussions on improving wastewater service and treatment to address historical and ongoing concerns. Finally, The District has completed phase 2 of the Douglas Avenue sidewalk improvement project.

Official Community Plan Redevelopment

This priority has been delayed until 2022 as COVID-19 restrictions limited the ability of the District of Fort St. James to undertake effective consultation efforts with community members to redevelop the Official Community Plan.

Community Development

In 2021 the District of Fort St. James adopted the Tourism Strategic plan establishing clear goals and a path to increase the appeal of Fort St. James for tourists. In addition, the District continues to build its reserve funds for future capital projects and

Diversification

Diversification continues to be a priority of the District of Fort St. James. Though economic diversification is driven by the private sector the District of Fort St. James can support diversification by working with private sector organizations, senior levels of government, and community organizations. In addition, Covid-19 impacted the District of Fort St. James ability to meet with potential business owners or undertake other business attraction activities. During 2020 a number of business retention activities were undertaken by the District of Fort St. James to support existing businesses currently operating in community.

Finance



The Finance Department is responsible for monitoring, managing, and allocating financial resources to achieve the District's immediate and long-term goals and objectives. Finance provides recommendations, support, and guidance to all departments and Council in preparing the five-year financial plan.

In 2021 the District collected \$2.4 million in property taxation revenue, \$68,000 in frontage tax, and \$606,795 in garbage, sewer and water fees. Of these revenues, the District of Fort St. James transferred \$500,979 to reserve funds. Reserve funds are funds set aside for investment in future municipal projects. Up until 2021, the District had to borrow from the reserve funds to provide the needed cash flow to meet the Municipality's financial obligations. Happy to say, as of 2021 the reserve funds are now finally fully cash backed! This said, the District's reserve funds are far from adequate to prepare for aging infrastructure. Although the District has made good progress in preparing for the future by allocating as many dollars as possible to reserve funds, we still have a long way to go to reduce the liability of infrastructure failure and to ensure the service level our community expects can be maintained.