



2021 Service Review Council Questions

SERVICE AREA: Communications

PAGE NUMBER: 2-25

ELECTED OFFICIAL: Poole

QUESTION:

I'd like to know what might shift in your service areas (staffing, contracting, programs) if there were roughly a 5% or 10% cut in the tax revenue available to your department, compared to 2019, for your service areas.

I'm asking this question of all departments during this pandemic period. Many of us in business are forced to tighten our belts. While there may be arguments at higher-levels of government for fiscal spending to stimulate the economy, at our municipal level, by reducing taxes we help reduce the burdens on our residents.

What operations could be reduced for 2021, perhaps deferred by a year or two?

Operations and capital projects are intertwined. A new capital project typically needs people to oversee it. Are there capital projects, which, if deferred, might free up some of your staff time to deliver current services you would prioritize?

ANSWER:

Administration takes guidance for the service review and budget from the Governance and Finance Committee during the review of the Financial Plan. The service review is this Committee's opportunity to review the services offered by the Town and either enhance or reduce service levels based on based on the needs of their constituents. Administration has adjusted budgets and work plans for the targets set out in the financial plan in July 2020 and reconfirmed in December 2020.

Operating impacts resulting from capital projects can be found at the end of each of the previously approved capital project descriptions included throughout the service review. During the service review presentations administration will highlight individual operating impacts as we go through each capital project.



2021 Service Review Council Questions

SERVICE AREA: Communications – Information and Engagement

PAGE NUMBER: 8

ELECTED OFFICIAL: Christensen

QUESTION:

Information and wayfinding signs

There is a plethora of information and wayfinding signs, what is the current number of signs and when was the last review?

ANSWER:

Wayfinding

There are 99 vehicular wayfinding signs and 55 pedestrian wayfinding signs for a total of 154 wayfinding signs, plus 129 wayfinding signs for trails, for a total of 283 signs.

Council approved the development of a Signage and Wayfinding Plan in September 2008 to create a unified design and purpose of signage and maps to assist motorists, pedestrians and cyclists to move around the community effectively and efficiently, and to address deficiencies identified in a comprehensive review process. The plan followed several years of individual capital projects to improve wayfinding in the Town of Banff. The project created design standards and a community wide location map following public consultation, the development of the plan capitalized on grant programs including the Municipal Sponsorship Intermunicipal Grant and, in subsequent years, the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) funding program. The Signage and Wayfinding Plan has continued to be reported annually in major project updates. The initial unified program of wayfinding was installed over four years, 2010 - 2014. Once the initial program was complete it was expanded as part of the annual capital budget.

The strategic importance of a wayfinding system was reinforced in the Banff Community Plan (2008-2018) with the direction to “develop and implement a town-wide wayfinding plan that is simple and graphically representative of our sense of place.”

Banff's integrated Transportation Master Plan, updated over a 14-month period with significant public consultation, was adopted by Council in May 2013. Several short-term and long-term recommended actions in key areas to help achieve the Banff Community Plan vision of a transportation system that:

- Encourages and complements pedestrian movement and cycling
- Enhances resident and visitor experience
- Encourages the integration of local and regional transportation of people and goods
- Is economically and environmentally sustainable

A section of the Transportation Master Plan is dedicated to describing continuing enhancements to the wayfinding and signage program to help achieve these goals.

The Trails Master Plan, adopted by council in February 2015, included further direction on wayfinding and signage objectives, to guide development in the Town of Banff over the next 10 years.

Information Signage

In addition to permanent wayfinding signage, temporary information signage is used in the Town of Banff.

On page 3 of the Communications section of the 2021 Service Level Review, data shows 299 signs were produced to the end of September 2020. An estimated 20 additional signs in the remainder of the year were produced. The majority were related to COVID information (see below).

Temporary signs are created at different times to address key challenges and opportunities, such as promotion of the web-based parking application, direction to the Train Station Parking lot at times of peak visitation and to share information on new bylaws (e.g. cannabis regulation), social marketing (e.g. no dumping at neighbourhood waste bins and wildlife stewardship) and emergency notification (e.g. COVID restrictions, watermain breaks, wildlife issues, thin ice, wildfire training exercises).

Temporary signage is mainly developed following council decisions on strategic priorities (e.g. wildlife coexistence program, zero waste, cannabis legalization, parking direction, transportation mode shift encouragement). Some signage programs are developed following deliberation at service level review. For example, the program to develop street impact and construction signage, such as watermain breaks, was as a specific program in 2019. Other signage programs are implemented as part of grant

funding obligations and demonstrate use of Banff tax investments (e.g. Transit Storage Facility, BioMass Heating Facility, Legacy Trail Extensions, Ti'nu Apartments, Banff Avenue Housing – The Aster).

In 2020, the COVID pandemic warranted the greatest number of temporary signs to respond to changing requirements, the evolution of safety direction (i.e. emphasis on caution around touch surfaces changed to an emphasis on distancing and masks), and the changes in areas where controls were implemented (e.g. playgrounds, sports fields and courts, canoe docks, parks and trails, retirement home sidewalks, Town facility closures, Town program re-openings, skating rinks, isolation facility – to name only some of the areas that required signage). The program included providing printed signage or design files to other organizations to maintain consistency of message, design and sign type (e.g. Whyte Museum park, Visitor Centre, and Town of Canmore).

For COVID-related information alone, the Town designed more than 40 distinct signs, deployed in over 150 locations.

In 2020, the Bear Street Reconstruction Project also contributed to the year's high number of signs produced to assist pedestrians in navigating the evolving construction zone and to promote the commercial district to visitors.

The Town's goal is to minimize the number of temporary signs in order to minimize impediments to residents' and visitors' views of majestic scenery and the high design standards of the built form. Five approved sign design types are reviewed and managed with scrutiny from the Planning & Development Department in an effort to maintain appealing streetscapes. The five main types of temporary Town signs are:

- Six-foot tall timber-clad signs (preferred use but limited supply) - shared with event organizers in non-COVID years
- Black A-frame/sandwich-board sidewalk signs – mainly used for parking direction, street emergencies, wildlife stewardship and event signs in non-COVID years
- Digital Highway entrance signs – intended for only short-term use for construction alerts, highway driver notices and, in late 2020, COVID alerts
- Street pole signs – mainly used for COVID messages such as basketball court closure, expanded mandatory mask zone, and in normal years temporary parking notices
- Large infrastructure investment information signs placed by new infrastructure projects vary in size based on investment, location and impact on community

In 2020, two additional sign types were developed:

- Self-standing sandwich-board A-frames – used only for COVID safety requirements due to the depletion in the Black A-Frame inventory

- Small grey A-Frame signs for moveable navigation information in the Bear Street construction zone

Traffic and parking signs, facility signs, and entrance signage are considered outside the scope of this question.



2021 Service Review Council Questions

SERVICE AREA: Communications

PAGE NUMBER: 18

ELECTED OFFICIAL: Christensen

QUESTION:

I reiterate the concerns over waiving banner fees as previously stated in the budget summary section.

ANSWER:

The Street Pole Banners Policy C101 states that banners may be used in limited locations to promote special events or activities consistent with the purposes and values of the Town of Banff, Banff National Park and the UNESCO World Heritage site designation. Banners are used by the Town of Banff and external organizations, if approved under guidance of the policy.

Organizations approved to have banners placed on Town street poles may apply to have the fees associated with application and installation waived. The policy states the decision to waive fees can only be made by council, and only at budget deliberations. If the majority of Council votes against an application for the waiver of fees, then non-waiver would be appropriate.

It is administration's assumption that if Council declines the waiver of fees, some organizations would likely opt not to put up banners, and therefore, the rejection would not lead to increased revenue.

In the past decade, Council has rejected fee waiver applications from for-profit organizations. Consequently, the Town has not received applications in the past few years from for-profit organizations. Current organizations identified in the request for 2021 include the destination marketing organization, a learning organization, a volunteer organization and a veterans and community services organization.



2021 Service Review Council Questions

SERVICE AREA: Communications

PAGE NUMBER: 25

ELECTED OFFICIAL: Christensen

QUESTION:

I am not in favour of town pageantry, a basic thought is that people come to Banff to see the mountains. Why should we impede their view?

ANSWER:

Pageantry is also known as seasonal winter lighting. Council Policy C5004 – Seasonal Winter Lighting – guides the use of illuminated decoration with a goal to “enhance visitor’s nighttime experience and to promote Banff’s reputation as a year-round tourist destination, primarily during winter months.” Policy C5004, updated in 2018, states “the installation of seasonal winter lighting has been a combined effort between the Destination Marketing Organization (Banff & Lake Louise Tourism) and the Town of Banff,” and the policy identifies the locations for seasonal winter lighting in Appendix C – Winter Lighting Plan. This lighting plan includes the lighting and pageantry identified for replacement in Capital project 2-230-2002-6000, included on page 25 of the Communications section of the 2021 Service Level Review.

This Capital replacement project identifies the Christmas Tree street pole “toppers” on Banff Avenue and holiday string lights and snowflake decorations at key intersections in the Winter Lighting Plan. These lights and decorations are identified for replacement because they are at the end of their life span, due to age and condition. The deteriorated condition requires significant repair each year to ensure they are fastened safely and they appear festive. The hardware for affixing the decorations

in place have deteriorated after use for more than 10 years, and the decorations are damaged in places, requiring temporary adjustments at the beginning of the festive season.

This pageantry was originally purchased in 2008 as part of the Banff Refreshing project. The decorations complement displays purchased by Banff & Lake Louise Tourism at locations such as the High School fence on Banff Avenue and town entrances. This capital project would also replace the snowflake decorations at the main intersection at the hotel cluster on Tunnel Mountain Road. These decorations are older than the pageantry on Banff Avenue.

The replacement of the decorations would also upgrade the lighting components to better advance objectives of the C5004 Policy that directs “future lighting will be energy efficient, warm in colour, subtle and glare-free to protect the night sky.” The project aims to replace “like for like” with the update of the lighting type.

This Capital project was previously approved by Council for implementation in 2020, but in April 2020 this project was deferred in order to reduce expenditures in a year significantly affected by the COVID pandemic. For the 2020-21 winter season, the decorations were repaired, but crews indicate this may not be possible next year without replacing the attachment infrastructure.

If Council does not approve this Capital project, Council Policy C5004 should be amended to reflect the departure from a desire to have Seasonal Winter Lighting.