



FINANCIAL PLAN

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The Financial Plan has been prepared taking into consideration the priorities and direction established by Council. This plan expresses in financial terms the financial direction for the Town.

The plan provides an outline of the financial system, the municipal budget process, financial principles and policies, and the Operating and Capital Budgets of the Town of Banff. Municipal finance must follow certain practices and conventions set out by the accounting profession and provincial government legislation. This includes the practice of fund accounting and the use of capital reserves and self-funding utilities. These terms are discussed below to provide readers of the Financial Plan with a general understanding of municipal finance and the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.

The financial principles and policies that the Town has fundamentally adhered to for many years are identified, along with new financial principles and policies that will lead the Town's financial stability and sustainability in the coming years. These principles and policies will establish the basic framework for the responsible management of the Town's financial resources.

The plan is segmented into four sections:

- ❖ Financial System
- ❖ Budget Process
- ❖ Financial Principles and Policies
- ❖ Operating and Capital Budgets

FINANCIAL SYSTEM

FULL ACCRUAL ACCOUNTING

This accounting method records revenue and expenses when they have occurred, not when they are paid, and it treats capital purchases as capital assets rather than expenses. Under full accrual accounting capital assets will be recorded as an expense over the useful life of the capital asset. For example, if the Town builds a new public washroom for \$1,000,000 the building will be recorded as a capital asset and will be gradually expensed over its useful life (50 years) at an amount of \$20,000 per year.

OPERATIONAL REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

Revenues and expenses of the Town are recorded on an accrual basis. Briefly, this means that obligations of the municipality are recorded as expenses when they are incurred (i.e. when the work is completed or product delivered) not when they are paid or when they are ordered. Revenues are recognized when the municipality becomes entitled to collect (i.e. when services are rendered) not when actual payment is received.

Revenue collected is used for either operational expenditures or capital purchases. Operational expenses consists of the wages, office supplies, electricity, spare parts and other day to day expenses that are necessary to municipal services to the community. These costs are included in each department's operating budget, and are managed by the department manager.

CAPITAL ASSET EXPENDITURES

Capital asset expenditures as defined in Council policy C110 are recorded as capital assets and amortized as an expense over the useful life of the capital asset.

The requirements for capital asset expenditures are discussed each year, in light of community needs, infrastructure maintenance and Council priorities. The total capital asset expenditures might be more or less than another year, depending upon the number of projects. Each year a portion of the annual revenues collected by the municipality are set aside for current and future capital projects. The Capital plan forecasts expenditures for the next 10 years.

RESERVES

The use of operating and capital reserves provides a more stable approach to taxation. The amount of funding required for capital expenditures and certain operating expenses can vary greatly one year to the next, depending upon what is constructed or purchased. If taxpayers were taxed each year on exactly how much was spent each year, property tax bills would vary widely from one year to the next. If the community needed to build a new facility and funded it solely by a tax increase in the year of construction the burden of the tax increase would be difficult for many taxpayers. The municipality saves funds in reserves to smooth out the fluctuations in property tax rates. Each year, some amount of the revenue collected is set-aside in these reserves in order to "save up" enough cash to fund capital projects. In this way, the property tax bills are smoothed out. The funds placed in the reserve are held until the funds are needed.

Financial Plan

At present, the municipality has twenty six (26) individual reserve accounts: General Operating Reserve, General Capital Reserve, Budget Stabilization Reserve, Water Reserve, Fleet Reserve, and the Parking Facilities Reserve to mention a few.

Funds set aside in certain reserves must be used for the specific purpose the reserve was set up for, and in some cases dictated by provincial legislation. For example, the funds in the parking facility reserve cannot be used to build a pedestrian bridge, or hire an additional RCMP officer—they can only be used for municipal parking projects.

The Governance and Finance Committee reviews the adequacy of the Capital Reserves to replace and maintain assets over 110 year timeline. This ensures that at least one replacement of each of the town's assets is considered when setting reserve targets.

BUDGET PROCESS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following is a description of the roles and responsibilities of the key people involved in the budget process.

Council

Council reviews the corporation's strategic priorities, public input, financial plan, service review and other related information as a starting point for the budget process and provides direction for the next budget year relative to the following issues:

- ❖ Priorities, strategies, services and programs, and their service levels to be considered in the service review as preparation for the budget process.
- ❖ Level or range of tax increases or decreases to be considered in the budget preparation process
- ❖ Approval of the Operating and Capital Budget
- ❖ Amending Operating and Capital Budgets during the fiscal year as required

Town Manager

The Town Manager is responsible for providing Council with the background information required to assess budget issues for the next year. This would include information concerning financial trends and the Management Team's perspective pertaining to major issues, services and programs. Finally, the Town Manager is responsible for submitting for Council's consideration a budget that is consistent with the principles, policies and budget guidelines established by Council.

Management Team

The Management Team is comprised of the departmental directors and the Town Manager. The Management Team is responsible for preparing recommendations for Council's consideration relative to major issues, services and programs. This would include recommendations concerning:

- ❖ Adjustments to fees and charges
- ❖ Productivity enhancements
- ❖ Reserve levels
- ❖ Service level adjustments
- ❖ Other budgeting issues as they may arise

Corporate Services Department

The Corporate Services department is responsible for coordinating the annual budget process and preparation of the financial plan. This will include:

- ❖ Coordination of the budget preparation process
- ❖ Accumulating and coordinating all the figures into a final corporate-wide budget;
- ❖ Preparation of appropriate financial forecasts relative to revenue, expenditures, inflation and other important factors
- ❖ Provision of financial advice and recommendations concerning key financial policies
- ❖ Provision of timely financial reports to assist the departments, the Management Team and Council in the review of prior budget performance and preparation of current budget
- ❖ Tracking budget revisions and distributing budget documents

Financial Plan

- ❖ Monitoring of the process for compliance with statutory requirements

Operating Departments

Each department is responsible for formulating and managing their own budgets. This includes documenting the purpose, cost and scope of their capital projects. All directors and managers are responsible for ensuring that budget principles and guidelines are adhered to.

BUDGET FACTORS AND GUIDELINES

There are a number of factors that affect the preparation of the budgets. These include inflation, growth, development activity, economic trends, key trends affecting Banff, changing market conditions, taxation issues, and policy decisions of Council and other levels of government. The more significant of these are discussed below.

Tax Level

The Town of Banff shall benchmark residential and commercial property taxes to a group of similar-sized Alberta municipalities for the prior year.

See Appendix B for historical tax analysis

Tax Adjustment Cap

Our property tax strategy is to limit any increase in total property tax to an amount at or below the current rate of inflation for Alberta annualized for the period ending June 30 of the previous year. The cap is for the same level of service as the previous budget year. New services or increased levels of service would be above the cap.

See appendix B for historical inflation rates and overall tax increase history

Commercial/Residential Municipal Tax Split

It is typical in municipalities across the country to levy a higher tax rate on commercial properties than on residential properties. The municipal tax rate on commercial properties in Banff from 1990 to 2006 was typically five (5) times higher than the residential tax rate with the commercial properties accounting for about 80% of the municipal tax revenue. Over time, Council has deviated from the 5:1 municipal tax rate split in order to offset the impact of disproportional shifts in the assessed value of commercial and residential properties, thereby protecting both commercial and residential tax payers from extraordinary tax increases in a given year. The same split was used for both the municipal tax rate and the sustainable housing rate.

The tax split will move within a range having overall tax decreases/increases being shared equally between both commercial and residential properties with a targeted split of between 6:1 and 3:1. Exceptional circumstances could see council deviate from this range with consideration of tax increases/decreases being shared equally between the commercial and residential sectors.

If a Provincial legislated tax split cap comes into effect for the Town of Banff, administration will bring back options to ensure Council has the ability to fairly distribute the tax levy to its residential and non-residential taxpayers. Other jurisdictions have explored

Financial Plan

sector specific rebates to facilitate this goal, however additional research is required to know whether this would be feasible in Banff.

See appendix C for tax split history

Use of Debt

The Town of Banff's budgeting system has typically been based on the philosophy of no tax-supported debt and paying for projects upfront. The Town has in recent years utilized tax supported debt that is either funded by future capital grants or is short term in nature in order to capitalize on favorable borrowing rates. The Town must manage its debt within the debt capacity and servicing limits set by provincial legislation. The organization will review the Town's debt and loan guarantees during the budget process and at the time of Council considering any new borrowing bylaws.

See appendix D for debt schedule

Real Assessment Growth

The amount of new construction that takes place each year, measured as new assessment, has a limited effect on Banff's operating budget. New construction provides for some additional tax revenues although growth typically has been less than one percent.

Investment Income

The municipality invests funds that are not required for current financial requirements in low risk investments. The investment income supplements the contributions made by taxpayers. The state of the financial markets, changes in inflation and the amount of capital available for investment all influence the investment earnings. With the number of large capital projects that the Town is currently undertaking, the Town has invested in liquid short-term investments with the Bank of Montreal and other firms.

Given the large number of capital projects currently underway, the Town's cash-flow (the net-cash available to meet expenditures) has become very important. With the new full accrual accounting model cash-flow will have to be monitored more closely. Similar to a business, we must ensure that we are not only financially strong, but that we maintain sufficient cash reserves to meet current as well as future expenditures.

Service Level Review

Each year, as a part of the budget process, Council will review the programs and services, including the level of services, that the municipality provides.

Departmental Budgets

Individual departmental budgets are built from a zero base each year. Based on the programs and services that Council expects, each manager estimates the labour and material costs, and crafts a budget for provision for service accordingly.

New Service Requests

There is continuing pressure to provide new programs and services or expand existing programs and services. Funding for new or expanded programs and services as determined by Council that require ongoing expenditures may be presented as part of the budget process. Funding for new programs and services that do not have a new revenue source could require a property tax increase over and above Alberta inflation, and/or a reduction in other municipal services.

Reserves

Council often allocates funds for future non-capital items. These non-capital items are often future commitments that Council has approved or the deferral of a current project to a future financial period. The funds are placed into the operating reserve and will be brought into future operating budgets when the project moves ahead.

Council will ensure the capital/operating reserves are at a positive balance within the first two years of the capital budget. The Town has established specific targets for each of its reserves and target dates for reaching the required municipal-supported reserve contribution levels will be brought forward as part of the budget process.

See Appendix G for Target Reserve Transfers and Balances vs. Budget

Any new capital infrastructure will include a budget increase to fund an increased transfer to reserve to appropriately fund its replacement

See Appendix E for existing vs new capital projects and funding sources

Budget Stabilization Reserve

Budget surpluses from prior year operating results are retained and used in the following years to stabilize the annual tax increase and provide funding for non-recurring (one-time) expenditures. The Town has established a target balance of 2% of the current year's total expenses net of amortization for the Budget Stabilization Reserve.

See appendix F for historical balance of the Budget Stabilization Reserve

Other Fees & Charges

As local governments move forward, there continues to be an increasing emphasis on reducing their dependency on property tax revenues. As a result, there will be added emphasis on ensuring that existing fees and charges (user fees) remain current and perhaps begin to fund a larger share of the cost burden. Fees and charges will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budget process to ensure that fees are generating adequate revenues and covering programming costs.

See appendix G for historical revenue breakdown

BUDGET CALENDAR

The annual budget cycle commences in July each year and concludes with the adoption of a new Operating and Capital Budget and the passing of the Tax Rate Bylaw.

- ❖ Financial Plan Review – July (November in election year)
- ❖ Strategic Planning Session review – confirm priorities and strategies – August (November in election year)
- ❖ Council Service Review Inputs – September (November in election year)
- ❖ Departments Prepare their Work Plans and Budgets - August-September (November in election year)
- ❖ Draft Operating and Capital Budget – September (November in election year)
- ❖ Management Team Budget Review – September (November in election year)
- ❖ Service Level Review –November/December (December/January in election year)
- ❖ Public Consultation – November/December (January in election year)
- ❖ Council Budget Review – December (January in election year)
- ❖ Budget Adoption – December (January in election year)
- ❖ Passing of Tax Rate Bylaw – April-May

Financial Plan Review – July

Prior to new budget creation, the Governance and Finance Committee reviews and adopts a new Financial Plan which will guide the budget process.

Strategic Planning Session – August

Council has adopted a four year strategic plan cycle that will guide budget and service planning. At the start of the of each budget cycle, Council will review and update the plan if necessary.

Council Service Review Inputs – September

Service level changes typically come from administration based on priorities articulated in Council's strategic planning or the prior years service review. This process gives Council the ability to add ideas/options directly outside of the process to ensure the proper level of analysis can be done prior to service review.

Departments Prepare Their Work Plans and Budgets – August/September

Using the priorities of Council, the Service Level Review, and the budget guidelines, the Corporate Services department provides all departments with the budget templates and guidelines to start their budgets. Departments then outline their work plan for the coming year and develop the related budget requirements, which are then submitted to the Manager of Finance for coordination and compilation of the departmental budgets into the corporate-wide budget.

Management Team Budget Review – September/October

Invariably, estimated expenses exceed the available resources. The Management Team meets to review the requests and evaluate the corporate wide budget impacts of each department. Priorities are evaluated and a draft operating and capital budget is prepared for presentation to Council for review.

Service Level Review – November/December

Each year, as a part of the budget process, Governance and Finance committee will review the programs and services that the municipality provides. This process will confirm the level of service for each program and the associated budget estimates. The Manager of Finance and Management Team members will present the service levels to Council in a series of public meetings and review the budgets and service level expectations.

Council Budget Review - December

Council will meet and review the first draft of the operating and capital budgets with the Management Team and the Manager of Finance. The capital budget impacts on the operating budget will be presented and discussed. All budget meetings are open to public and are advertised in advance. At least one of the scheduled budget meetings is dedicated to external group requests and presentations as well as general comments from the public.

Council Adoption of the Budget - December

The final drafts of the budgets are presented to Council with any changes made during the public consultation process. Council reviews the capital and operating budgets and the impact on taxpayers, with the objective of adopting both budgets by the second meeting in December.

Passing of Tax Rate Bylaw – April/May

The annual tax rate bylaw is presented to Council after the provincial government has presented their annual budget and has set the amount of education taxes to be levied against municipalities. Based on the amount of education taxes, Council may choose to adjust the annual operating budget to reflect any changes required to maintain the overall tax strategy outlined in the adoption of the budgets.

Amending the Budget after Adoption

Often, changes to the operating and capital budget are required as a result of new projects or changes in project estimates. Council approval is required for budget amendments which are made when there is a significant impact to the budget from a pre known event such as bringing a new service online or changing the scope of a capital project. Cost overruns from day to day operation are reported to council quarterly in forecast reports.

FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES

Resident, business and visitor demand for services and the community's ability to pay for these services guide municipal spending. As the infrastructure ages, funds must be committed for proper maintenance and refurbishment. It will be difficult to cover the costs of maintaining a world-class visitor destination, while providing for program and service enhancements. Property taxes cannot fund these costs alone and choices will need to be made between new facilities and services and the appropriate maintenance of what we have.

The Town of Banff recognizes that taxpayers demand value for their money. A balance must be struck between customer demand for services and the taxpayers' ability to pay for these services. The municipality is responding by adopting a more creative, cost-effective approach to the delivery of services. Annual reviews of existing programs and services will be completed to ensure that we are providing the programming and services demanded by the community and visitors and that we are reacting to these changing service and programming needs. We must ensure that services, programs and facility commitments are sustainable now and in the future.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

The policies that have an impact on the Financial Plan are:

Property Taxes

Our property tax strategy is to limit an increase in total property tax to an amount at or below the Alberta annual inflation for the period ending June 30 of the previous budget year. In future years Council could choose to set a separate cap for the sustainable housing portion of the tax levy or exclude it from the inflation calculation.

New projects, initiatives and services could be funded by a property tax increase over and above the annual inflation increase approved by Council.

Property Tax Due Date

Property taxes will be due at 4:30 pm on the last working day of June.

Annual Adjustment of Town Wages

The Town of Banff strives to maintain a union-free workforce. In 2013, council approved a move from a cost of living adjustment to a market facing system for the annual base wage adjustments. The base wage market adjustment is based on an average of the council approved formula, which is calculated as an average of the following:

- (a) Alberta CPI – average Alberta annual inflation for the period ending June 30 of the previous budget year.
- (b) Statistics Canada - using a calculation of annualized average change in average weekly earnings (non-overtime, non-union, local, municipal, and regional public administration) in Alberta from July of the previous year to June of the current year.

Education Tax Capacity

“Education tax room” occurs when the increase in provincial education tax levy is less than the increase in municipal property taxes. If this education tax room exists, the municipality will collect and dedicate the revenue to the capital reserve for municipal infrastructure renewal. The additional reserve funds will be used for the replacement of capital infrastructure. In the event that the provincial school tax levy increases at a rate greater than inflation, with the intention to fund the capital reserves appropriately annually, Council may allow the amount that exceeds inflation to be billed to the taxpayer. Since 2015, the Town has seen a higher-than-inflation increase annually in the education levy and does not project any additional reserve funds from this tactic.

Infrastructure Sustainability Strategy

- ❖ The municipality is faced with the reality of increasing the amount of municipal property tax contribution to the reserve funds and capital projects on an annual basis up until the point that estimated required transfer levels are met.
- ❖ The municipality has established specific targets for the transfer to capital reserves, based on the estimated remaining life of specific infrastructure together with their replacement costs. The future replacement cost of infrastructure has been estimated using a 20 year average of the Alberta Consumer Price Index and the Calgary Non-Residential Building Construction Index.
- ❖ The municipality has the responsibility to eliminate the infrastructure funding deficit through a combination of funding sources: municipal tax levy transfers, grants, user-pay revenue, and private and municipal partnerships. Council has set a target to close the infrastructure deficit by 2026 or earlier.
- ❖ Allocate interest to reserves based on a monthly average balance.

See Appendix H for Target Reserve Transfers and Balances vs. Budget

Budget Stabilization Fund

- ❖ Annual operating surpluses will be directed to the budget stabilization fund. A target balance of 2% of the current year’s total expenses net of amortization has been set for the reserve.

Utilities

- ❖ Utilities (water and sewer) will be operated on a self-funded basis through equitable user fees.
- ❖ The waste and recycling utility rates are set with 75% funding coming from user fees and 25% from municipal property taxes.
- ❖ Out of Town utility rates will be set to ensure full cost recovery of the service provided.

See Appendix I for municipal rate comparisons

Fees and Charges

- ❖ Recreation fees will be established for full cost recovery for adult recreation programs, 50 percent cost recovery for youth programs, and less than 50 percent of cost recovery for disabled, low income and seniors programs.
- ❖ Development related functions (building inspection, development approvals, and subdivisions) will be set at levels for full cost recovery.

Financial Plan

- ❖ The Town of Banff targets to be in the top 50 percent for cost recovery for transit systems belonging to the Canadian Urban Transportation Association(CUTA).
- ❖ Fees may reflect a difference between a resident and a visitor when appropriate.
- ❖ Comparisons will be made at regular intervals to ensure that fees and charges paid by residents and visitors are competitive with other Alberta communities and similar resort communities.
- ❖ Fees and charges will be reviewed annually as part of the annual budget process.

Municipal Debt

- ❖ The municipality will strive to limit tax-supported debt.
- ❖ Tax-supported debt is being used for capital projects such as the Recreation Centre redevelopment to take advantage of favorable borrowing rates and for capital projects with future grant revenue sources.
- ❖ Non tax revenue streams to fund the debt servicing will be encouraged.

Commercial/Residential Municipal Tax Split

- ❖ Council targets a tax rate split of between 3:1 and 6:1. The annual commercial and residential tax rate split will be set by Council after the provincial government has released the annual education tax levy amount.

Alternative Revenue Sources

- ❖ The costs of maintaining our community to world-class standards will require entrepreneurial government and alternative revenue sources.
- ❖ Banff and other tourism-based communities are reviewing alternative revenue sources with the provincial government in order to fund the cost of municipal infrastructure associated with tourism.

Business Licensing Fees

- ❖ Business licensing fees will continue to fund destination marketing and other tourist-related projects.

Investment Management

- ❖ Funds will be invested to provide an optimal blend of investment return and security while meeting the daily cash flow demands of the municipality.
- ❖ The town can invest with out restriction in the Government of Canada, Province of Alberta, canadian chartered banks or funds guaranteed by any of the same.
- ❖ The Town can invest up to 35% of its funds in other provinces of Canada, municipalities of Alberta or funds guaranteed by any of the same.
- ❖ Trust companies and credit unions can account for 10% of all investments.