

Budget 2021



TOWN OF
Paradise



Budget 2021 Speech

Good evening Your Worship, fellow Councillors, senior staff, and those joining us online. It is my pleasure to present the 2021 Municipal Budget for the Town of Paradise.

Budget preparations are a time of reflection, a time to look back on the past year, and review the plans that were made, the challenges faced, and the accomplishments achieved. I think we can all agree that 2020 has certainly been A Year. We thought the snowstorm of the century or snowmageddon, back in January was the worst we would face. However, little did we know 2020 had much more in store and by March we were all facing a global COVID-19 pandemic.

It has been said that during times of greatest challenges we see our greatest strengths, and that is indeed true for the residents, businesses, and employees at the Town of Paradise. It is inspiring to see the ingenuity, determination, and commitment from our community this past year.

We are fortunate to have a team of dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to ensure our residents have the services and programs they need, no matter what hurdles there are along the way. As we confronted snowmageddon and then the pandemic, our staff quickly pivoted to business continuity. Throughout the state of emergency in January and as the Alert Levels changed during the pandemic, staff continued to adapt and respond. Core and essential services were maintained, and they found new ways of providing services. This was certainly not an easy task, but I have to say, our staff made it look easy.

Your Worship, when reflecting on 2020, it's easy to focus on snowmageddon and COVID-19, and all that was changed or deferred because of these major events. However, I think it's important to look for the positive moments and silver linings, and realize all that was achieved despite of, and perhaps, because of, the challenges in

2020. Council and staff found ways to offer Town services like the recycling drop-off program. They adapted processes for things like inspections and permitting to ensure continuity. And they moved several services, like procurement and our Council Meetings, to online platforms.

It has been said that during times of greatest challenges we see our greatest strengths, and that is indeed true for the residents, businesses, and employees at the Town of Paradise.

On behalf of Council, I extend heartfelt thanks to all our employees for going above and beyond in 2020. They listened to our residents and businesses and worked to address the major concerns. Without their dedication, expertise, and commitment, this past year would have been very different.

It is rewarding and motivating to be part of the Paradise Town Council, and that is due in large part to staff serving our residents. It is also because of my colleagues on Council. When elected, none of

us thought we would face a year like this one and it was great to work together to provide governance, offer advice, and make decisions, often during evolving and changing situations. Thank you all for helping to ease the burden this past year.

Your Worship, we are continually monitoring the public health guidance and direction and while there is light on the horizon as the vaccines begin to arrive, we remain in a global pandemic. As we developed the 2021 Budget, responding to COVID-19 and its impact on operations was always top of mind. We have a responsibility to ensure our Town's budget reflects the current situations we face.

Our budget work also involves input from our prebudget consultations, which were completely online this year. The feedback from our stakeholders shows that transportation, road maintenance, snow clearing, and turf field continue to remain the top priorities. We thank all those who took the time to participate in the survey and share their input with us.

Considerable review, careful planning, and thoughtful deliberations guided the development of our 2021 budget. Our focus is about making sure our financial plan is designed for Paradise and is the right one for our Town.

Your Worship, tonight I am pleased to present the 2021 Town of Paradise balanced Budget of \$37.2 million, with no changes to mil rates or to the level of service we provide to our residents.

We are maintaining both residential and commercial mil rates at 7.2 and 11.5 respectively, despite reduced revenues for 2021. This year property assessments throughout the province have decreased and like all municipalities, that means we are facing a reduction in tax revenues. Council understands the difficulties all residents have been facing throughout 2020 and likely into next year, and we felt it prudent to maintain the mil rates.

The Town received \$1.2 million under the Safe Restart agreement from the federal and provincial governments. We are very appreciative of this support and with this financial contribution we can account for the reduced revenues and thereby maintain mil rates. With the decrease in property assessments and the current mil rates, over 80 percent of residents will see a reduction in their property taxes for 2021. Our hope is that for those residents who can, they will use the reduction in their property tax to support our local businesses, thereby helping them address COVID-19 impacts

and all that they have faced in 2020.

Your Worship, as we looked to planning our 2021 services, programs, and initiatives, we were guided by our strategic plan, Your Paradise – Plan 2022. We formally adopted this three-year plan, which outlines the long-term priorities and sets the overall direction for the Town, in February. It is based on five strategic pillars, Governance and Engagement, Regional Collaboration, Environmental Stewardship, Infrastructure and Economic Growth, and Social and Cultural Health. For the next three years, we are focused on these areas as we work towards our vision of creating a thriving, well-balanced community together.

To support our *Governance and Engagement* strategic pillar, we are investing in a Financial Re-engineering project. This is a complete overhaul of the Town's financial system and will have benefits for both staff and residents. As the province's fourth-largest municipality which continues to grow, we need a financial system that supports our current and future needs. The financial re-engineering will enable us to implement the software, components, and modules needed to design a system that's right for Paradise. When

completely integrated, the new system will have more robust reporting, enable us to be paperless as much as possible, and allow residents and businesses to access their tax accounts online.

With the decrease in property assessments and the current mil rates, over 80 percent of residents will see a reduction in their property taxes for 2021.

The year ahead also brings a Municipal Election for all towns in the province. Serving on Council and being part of the governance of your municipality is a rewarding and fulfilling experience. I encourage anyone interested in serving their community and wanting to be part of shaping our Town to consider running for office. Any of us here on Council would be happy to share our experiences and talk to people considering running for election.

Your Worship, *Regional Collaboration* is another strategic pillar. Partnerships and regional cooperation have enabled our Town to provide

programs and services, including essential services, in a cost-effective and efficient manner. Regional services account for 20 percent of our municipal budget and include things like fire protection, water services, wastewater treatment, and waste management.

For waste management, we access the Robin Hood Bay Landfill Site and pay tipping fees to the City of St. John's. Next year, tipping fees for garbage will increase and this means that garbage fees are expected to increase by \$100,000. Tipping fees for recycling are much lower. Practicing the three Rs, reducing, reusing and recycling, not only helps lower costs to the Town, but more importantly, it helps our environment. Our youngest residents certainly get this message; I frequently hear children talk about the need to recycle more. Each and every resident has a role to play, and we want to work collectively to keep costs low and help our environment.

This will also support our *Environmental Stewardship* pillar. We want to lead by example and thus ensure a healthy ecology and environment for the Town today as well as for generations to come.

To support *Infrastructure and Economic Growth* we are making investments in our road maintenance program, water and sewer work, and supporting our business community. A strong municipality needs solid infrastructure to provide the public services residents and businesses need.

A strong asset management program helps ensure that municipalities are making the right investments in their infrastructure. Over the past several years, our Town has been working on developing an Asset Management program. With funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, two staff members have received certification and we have completed an Asset Management Plan for Paradise. We are now ready to hire an Asset Management Coordinator who will oversee the program. All of this work has made us a leader in this area among provincial municipalities with other towns seeking our guidance and information. With an Asset Management program in place, we can make evidence-based decisions and strategic investments to support our municipal assets.

Your Worship, there are over 300 lane kilometres of roads in our Town, traveled by our residents day

in and day out. They tell us that road maintenance and upgrades are a top priority, and Council certainly agrees. That is why in 2021 we are increasing our street rehabilitation budget and will invest over \$900,000 for the work. With this allocation, we can complete more improvements and address minor issues on our roads before they become major problems.

We also hear from residents about speeding in school zones, and Council certainly agrees that road safety in these areas is a priority. To help address that, we created a Crossing Guard program which was in place when students returned to school this September. The feedback we have received has been tremendous and we are pleased to continue that program in the 2021 Budget.

This year we had a traffic calming pilot project at Elizabeth Park Elementary. It involved a number of measures, including extra signage, additional line painting, curb bump-outs, and mid-lane break away posts. These measures have helped to reduce vehicle speeds and we have received positive feedback from parents and the school community. In 2021 we will build on this work and install similar traffic calming measures at the other

three school zones in Town. We understand the importance of safety in school zones and we are working to implement programs and measures to address it.

Your Worship, in 2021, Phase I Evergreen Village upgrades will be started and we'll begin to address the aging infrastructure in that area of Town. The water and sewer for two streets, Ashgrove Drive and Willow Drive, will be completed – and that means that those two roads will also be upgraded, something residents in the area will certainly welcome. The Town received financial support from both the federal and provincial governments for this project and we are thankful for that contribution. We know there is considerable work to be done to the infrastructure in Evergreen Village and this project marks the start of that work.

Our infrastructure work will also see upgrades to Moonlight Drive. This street is at the top of the road assessment list. Twice a year, Town staff physically evaluate all roads and determine road work priorities. Based on that evaluation, Moonlight Drive needs significant work. Simple repairs will no longer be enough. As the road work is done, the water and sewer will also be completed for

that street. For this case, we are not able to follow the Water and Sewer Priority List. It was a difficult decision for Council to deviate from the priority list, but we felt we must in this situation. We don't want to complete road upgrades only to have to tear it up in a couple of years to complete water and sewer. We understand the importance of water and sewer for the streets listed next on the priority list – Stephens Road, Neary Road, Windmill Road, and Bayview Heights, and this Council is unanimously committed to complete that work in 2022.

Solid infrastructure supports the continued growth of our Town, and we are constantly evaluating what is needed for development. A study on the Town's water system outlined that future growth will be impeded if there is inadequate water pressure. This work also identified low water pressure for parts of Town at a higher evaluation, in particular the eastern area. A Water Storage Tank at Neil's Pond Ridge will help to resolve these issues and as such, we are allocating funding in 2021 to start the pre-engineering work of this project.

Earlier this year, we reduced the Infrastructure Improvement Fee by \$500, bringing it to \$2000. I'm pleased to announce, it will remain at \$2000

for 2021. Revenue from this fee will allow us to make a \$200,000 contribution to our Infrastructure Reserve Fund. This fund is part of our Asset Management Program, and the purpose is to have available resources to repair and replace our asset when the time comes. In addition, for next year only, to help stimulate construction and development, and in turn help generate associated employment and economic activity, we are eliminating the fee for New Home Construction Permits.

Your Worship, without a doubt, 2020 has been a tough year for the business community, yet through it all, they are persevering and adapting as best they can to meet the challenges head-on. As part of our pandemic response, we quickly implemented a Business Support Plan. It was a multi-faceted approach offering a number of initiatives designed specifically to support and assist the Town's business sector.

We offered to extend payment plans for the 2020 business tax into 2021, with no interest charged on 2020 Business Tax accounts to help alleviate cash flow challenges on businesses. We had planned to implement a Business Concierge program this year. It was envisioned to be a

single point of contact for our new and existing businesses providing dedicated customer service to our businesses. However, this project had to be deferred as we adapted to respond to the pandemic. We never lost sight of the need for this program, and I'm pleased to announce that we will move forward with the development and implementation of our Business Concierge in 2021.

For next year only, to help stimulate construction and development, and in turn help generate associated employment and economic activity, we are eliminating the fee for New Home Construction Permits.

Deferring the Business Concierge program allowed us to pivot to other business supports. It is important for businesses to have access to various resources, networking, and peer-to-peer support opportunities which local chambers of commerce provide. To enable businesses to avail of these services, we offered to cover the 2020 membership fee for any Paradise business wishing to join either the Mount Pearl-Paradise Chamber of

Commerce or the Conception Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. We had 26 businesses avail of the offer, and the local Chambers tell us they received many inquiries about our initiative. Based on the positive feedback of this initiative, we are offering this program again in 2021.

Your Worship, under our *Social and Cultural Health* strategic pillar, our work focuses on having all residents feel part of, and contribute to, building their community. We want to make our Town more accessible, build our recreation and creative amenities, and ensure inclusion for all residents.

Over the past several years, we have started to invest in making Paradise more accessible. Most recently, accessibility audits are being completed on the Town Hall. Earlier this year, the Town was honoured to receive a 2020 Inclusion Award - Municipal Category from Coalition of Persons with Disabilities Newfoundland and Labrador, COD-NL. Each year this organization recognizes persons and organizations that it feels have contributed to a more inclusive and accessible Newfoundland and Labrador. We appreciate being recognized for our accessibility efforts and we look forward to continuing our work with COD-NL.

Last year we announced an Accessible Transit Pilot Project. This pilot service is not meant to be a Go Bus model, but rather a system that provides service within the Town for residents who have a disability. The pilot project was planned to be launched in Summer 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the timing of this project. Earlier this Fall, work resumed on this project and just last week we held a focus group with residents who could avail of the service. The feedback from that meeting was informative and productive and will enable us to finalize the pilot project. We are planning to launch it early in the new year.

Over the past number of years we have made strategic investments to build our recreation amenities and we now have a broad range of facilities available to our residents. Places like Paradise Park, Paradise Double Ice Complex, St. Thomas Community Centre, our trail system, and our numerous sporting fields.

Your worship, I am excited to announce that Budget 2021 contains an investment to further develop our recreational amenities. We have allocated \$2 million to install a multi-sport turf at the Dianne Whalen Memorial Soccer Complex and

we hope to have teams play on the new field for the 2021 season. This work will also include the installation of a new lighting system. Having two fields with lighting at the Complex means more hours of play, training, and games for our youth.

This investment for a multi-sport turf field is being made solely by the Town of Paradise, there is no contribution from the provincial or federal government. Several years ago, Council made a commitment to invest in a multi-use turf surface, and we pursued potential funding from both levels of government. This project was our top recreational funding request for the past few years, yet we were unsuccessful in garnering financial support. Our Recreation Master Plan outlined the need and benefits of a multi-use turf and we understand the enhancements it will bring to recreational programming. It is an important investment and that is why the Town is going to fully fund this project.

The multi-use turf is the first phase of upgrades to the Dianne Whalen Memorial Soccer Complex. As a multi-use field it will help grow other sports and recreational programming in the Town. It will also enable us to attract provincial, and hopefully

national, level tournaments. This in turn brings spin-offs to support our business and community groups. The benefits are far-reaching, and we can't wait to watch the first game played on the new turf surface.

Your Worship, next year we will build a new park for the WoodStock Gardens area. This fall, we consulted with residents in the area to get feedback on the type of park and amenities they want for their neighbourhood. The input and sharing of ideas were inspiring and it is great to work collaboratively with our residents in this manner. Early in the new year we will share concept designs with residents as part of the public engagement process and will work together to finalize the plans with construction expected to start next Spring.

Building on the public engagement for the WoodStock Gardens Park, we will host a similar session with residents of Elizabeth Park to seek input on the revitalization of the area. That part of our Town is one of our oldest subdivisions and is home to the most concentrated area of residents. The neighbourhood has matured and we know the recreational amenities and features need to be refreshed. There are many new ideas and

options for park amenities, and we want to bring those to Elizabeth Park. In 2021 we will have a consultant lead a public engagement process and facilitate idea sharing on the types of amenities needed in Elizabeth Park. Our residents know their neighbourhoods and know the features that will enhance their area and we look forward to collaborating with them to design the revitalization.

Your Worship, over the past two years, the Town has been implementing a continuous improvement process, and it is inspiring to see how staff have embraced this movement. The goal is to find ways to streamline operations, increase efficiencies, and offer better service to residents and businesses. I'm pleased to report we are seeing the results. This year, through continuous improvement projects, staff have created efficiencies and stream-lined processes with a collective savings of 1000 hours in staff time and over \$200,000 in cost-effectiveness. These savings are re-invested to provide adapted or new services and programs within our current staffing complement. Staff have also told us that the continuous improvement training and concepts equipped them to pivot quickly and efficiently to remote business models and business continuity for snowmageddon and

pandemic response. We will have more continuous improvement projects in 2021 and I'm excited to see the progress staff will make.

Your Worship, while 2020 has been a year like no other, the true community spirit has never been more evident in the Town of Paradise than it has this year. Neighbours helped neighbours, our staff worked tirelessly to ensure services continued, and our residents showed cooperation and patience for our adapted operations.

We are all looking eagerly at the year ahead. There is collective hope that the COVID-19 vaccines will bring an eventual return to life without public health measures. While we wait for that time, we will work together to ensure Paradise is a thriving and well-balanced community for all.

This year, through continuous improvement projects, staff have created efficiencies and stream-lined processes with a collective savings of 1000 hours in staff time and over \$200,000 in cost-effectiveness.

For our Town, 2021 holds special significance. On July 13, 1971, the Town of Paradise was officially incorporated and that means next year is our 50th Anniversary. This milestone deserves to be celebrated and we plan on doing just that, all year long! Throughout 2021 we will have events, programs and initiatives celebrating all that Paradise has become over the past five decades.

As part of the celebrations, I'm excited to announce that we are creating an Anniversary Committee. We are looking for residents who are energetic, motivated, and civic-minded to help us celebrate and acknowledge our Golden Anniversary. This committee will serve as ambassadors to help foster community spirit and pride at programs, events, and initiatives throughout the year. In the coming days we will issue an expression of interest for residents to join this committee and help with the Anniversary Celebrations. Of course, all events will be guided by public health guidelines.

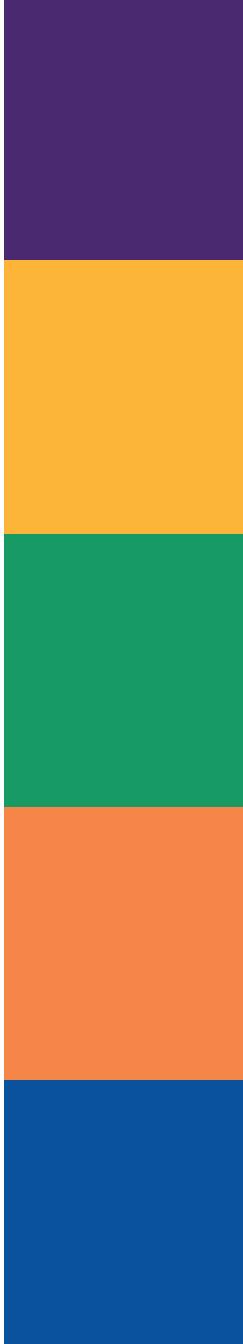
Your Worship, this past year, our residents, businesses, and staff adapted, responded, and learned how to "be in this together while being six feet apart." We all focused on flattening the curve and in doing so, community spirit and pride grew

throughout Paradise. We witnessed first-hand how the greatest challenges really do bring out the greatest strengths in everyone and I look forward to seeing this momentum carry into 2021.

To the senior Town staff who worked on Budget 2021, I thank you for your time and dedication to our annual budget process. I also thank Council for their guidance and support in developing this year's budget. Our budget plan for 2021 ensures we stay on the path for a strong financial position. We have one of the lowest debt-serving ratios in the province and we have reduced our overall operating budget while maintaining services for our residents. We have exciting plans for 2021 and I look forward to seeing these initiatives unfold in the coming year. Thank you.

For those of you watching on Facebook Live, the video will now conclude. The Public Council Meeting is available via webcast on our website at www.paradise.ca/CouncilMeetings.

Thank you.

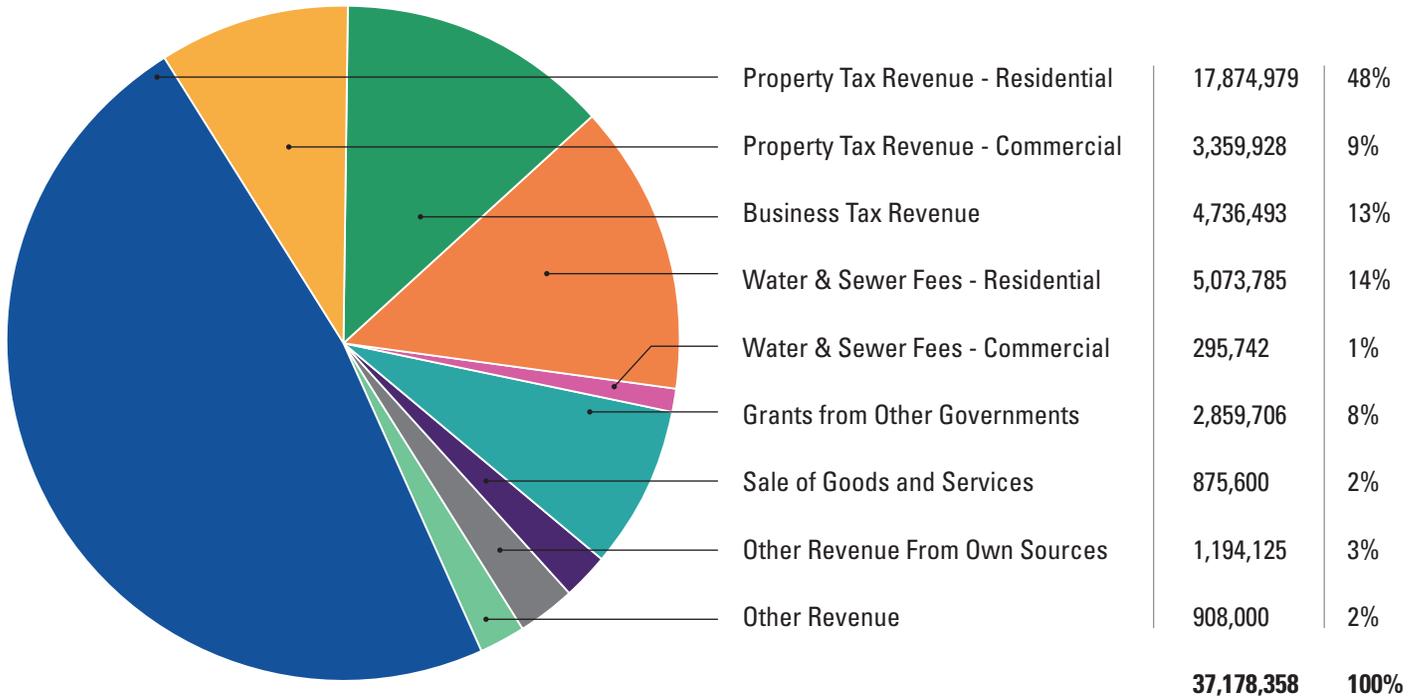


“BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Paradise, in accordance with Section 77(1) of the Municipalities Act, adopt the 2021 Budget with operating revenues and expenditures totalling \$ 37,178,358.”

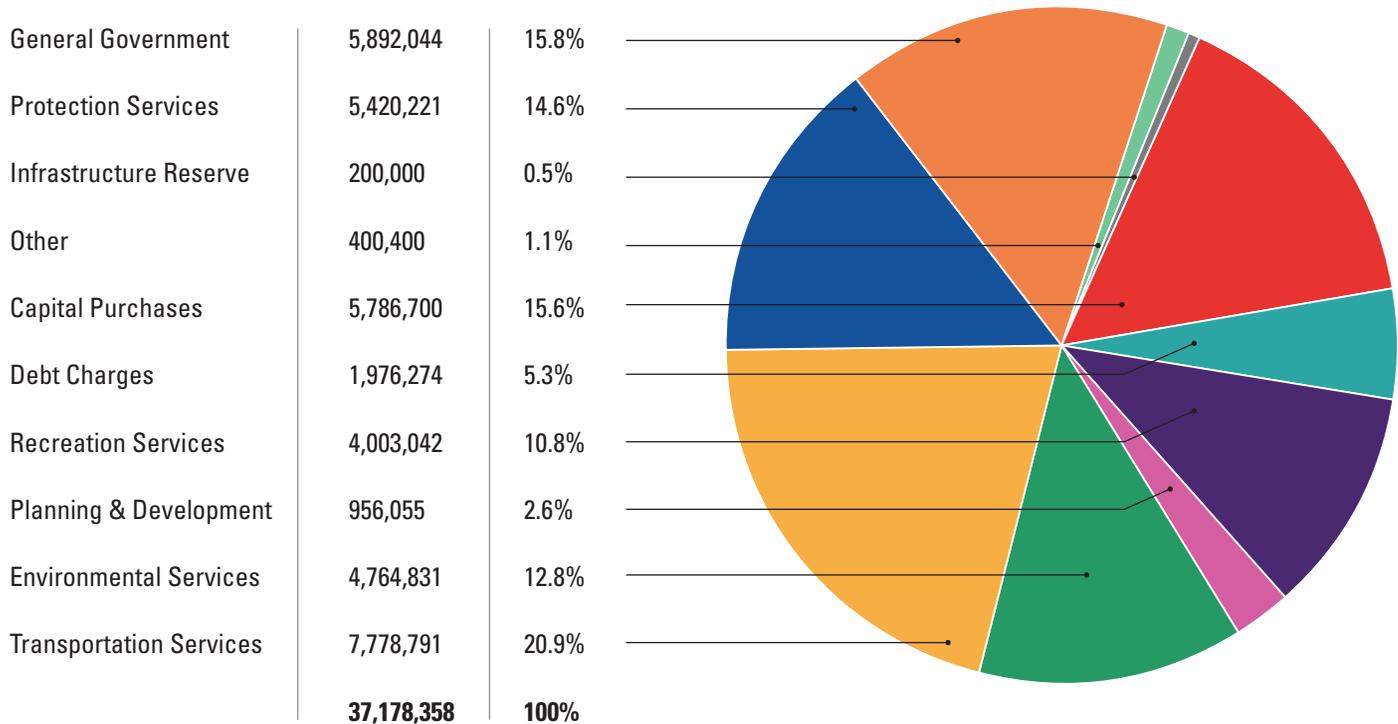
“BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Paradise adopt the 2021 Schedule of Tax Rates as submitted.”

“BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Paradise adopt the 2021 Fee Schedule as submitted.”

Where the money comes from



Where the money goes



2021 Operating Budget Summary

	2020 Budget	2021 Budget	% of Budget
Revenue			
Taxation	32,228,318	31,340,927	84%
Grants from Other Governments	2,818,167	2,859,706	8%
Sale of Goods and Services	1,494,630	875,600	2%
Revenue from Own Sources	1,099,550	1,194,125	3%
Transfers/Assessments	331,000	908,000	2%
	37,971,665	37,178,358	100%
Expenditures (By Function)			
General Government	5,396,287	5,892,044	16%
Protective Services	5,469,628	5,420,221	15%
Transportation Services	7,937,312	7,778,791	21%
Environmental Services	4,768,309	4,764,831	13%
Planning & Development	942,769	956,055	3%
Recreation and Community Services	4,391,382	4,003,042	11%
Debt Charges	2,268,093	1,976,274	5%
Capital Upgrades	5,987,485	5,786,700	16%
Infrastructure Replacement Reserve	480,000	200,000	1%
Other	330,400	400,400	1%
	37,971,665	37,178,358	100%
Net Revenue (Expenditures)	-	-	

Revenue

	2020 Budget	2021 Budget	% of Budget
Taxation			
Property Tax Revenue - Residential	19,067,514	17,874,979	48.1%
Property Tax Revenue -Commercial	3,152,216	3,359,928	9.0%
Business Tax Revenue	4,722,345	4,736,493	12.7%
Water & Sewer Fees - Residential	5,000,400	5,073,785	13.6%
Water & Sewer Fees - Commercial	285,843	295,742	0.8%
	32,228,318	31,340,927	84.3%
Government Transfers			
Gas Tax Revenue	1,839,443	926,380	2.5%
Safe Restart Grant		1,256,908	3.4%
Provincial Share of Debt	664,840	383,534	1.0%
Other Grants	310,164	289,164	0.8%
Grants in Lieu	3,720	3,720	0.0%
	2,818,167	2,859,706	7.7%
Revenue from Own Sources			
Infrastructure Improvement Fee	250,000	200,000	0.5%
Licenses, Permits & Fees	647,550	662,125	1.8%
Investment Income	202,000	332,000	0.9%
	1,099,550	1,194,125	3.2%
Sale of Goods and Services			
Recreation and Community Services	1,494,630	875,600	2.4%
	1,494,630	875,600	2.4%
Transfer/Assessments			
Open Space Assessments	331,000	498,000	1.3%
Transfer from Reserves - Gas Tax		410,000	1.1%
	331,000	908,000	2.4%
	37,971,665	37,178,358	100%

Expenditures

	2020 Budget	2021 Budget	% of Budget
General Government			
General Administration	3,249,741	3,400,847	9.1%
Council Expenses	335,158	318,932	0.9%
Municipal Election	-	54,000	0.1%
Property Assessments	241,982	243,698	0.7%
Engineering & Infrastructure	617,393	903,087	2.4%
Common Services	952,013	971,480	2.6%
	5,396,287	5,892,044	15.8%
Protective Services			
Fire Protection	4,455,188	4,434,801	11.9%
Municipal Enforcement	549,438	545,957	1.5%
Emergency Planning	20,400	7,000	0.0%
Security Services	122,400	102,400	0.3%
Inspections	311,202	319,063	0.9%
Animal and Pest Control	11,000	11,000	0.0%
	5,469,628	5,420,221	14.6%
Transportation Services			
Vehicle Operation and Maintenance	1,128,602	1,246,964	3.4%
Roads and Sidewalks	2,804,086	2,414,806	6.5%
Snow Removal	2,875,282	2,918,178	7.8%
Public Transit	319,322	345,223	0.9%
Street Lighting & Traffic Lights	810,020	853,620	2.3%
	7,937,312	7,778,791	20.9%
Environmental Services			
Water Supply	1,971,989	2,099,664	5.6%
Sewage Collection and Disposal	1,297,268	1,114,935	3.0%
Garbage Collection and Disposal	1,040,580	1,112,238	3.0%
Water and Sewer Department	458,472	437,994	1.2%
	4,768,309	4,764,831	12.8%

	2020 Budget	2021 Budget	% of Budget
Planning & Development			
Planning and Economic Development	942,769	956,055	2.6%
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Recreation and Community Services			
Recreation Administration	646,976	640,530	1.7%
Facilities Maintenance	526,057	532,004	1.4%
Recreation and Community Centers	844,552	821,504	2.2%
Arena & Fitness Center	1,150,736	1,182,968	3.2%
Parks, Playgrounds, Fields & Trails	219,885	215,486	0.6%
Programs, Activities and Events	899,576	550,350	1.5%
Other Community Services	103,600	60,200	0.2%
	4,391,382	4,003,042	10.8%
Debt Services			
Town Share	1,603,253	1,592,740	4.3%
Provincial Share	664,840	383,534	1.0%
	2,268,093	1,976,274	5.3%
Capital Upgrades			
Road Upgrades	1,746,485	2,213,000	6.0%
Water & Sewer Upgrades	1,490,000	760,600	2.0%
Vehicles and Equipment	860,000	1,364,000	3.7%
Parks and Trails	1,381,000	566,000	1.5%
Recreational Facilities	510,000	200,000	0.5%
General	-	683,100	1.8%
	5,987,485	5,786,700	15.6%
Fiscal Services and Reserves			
Infrastructure Replacement Reserve	480,000	200,000	0.5%
Other	330,400	400,400	1.1%
	810,400	600,400	1.6%
	37,971,665	37,178,358	100%

The logo for the Town of Paradise features the words "TOWN OF Paradise" in a white serif font. The word "TOWN OF" is in a smaller, all-caps font above "Paradise". A decorative white wave-like flourish arches over the top of the text. A small sun icon with rays is positioned above the letter "i" in "Paradise".

TOWN OF
Paradise

www.paradise.ca