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The Year in Review



It's all too easy to jump into a new year and quickly move on to the next task at hand. As we say hello to 2013, I'd like to take the time to reflect on some highlights of 2012.

2012 was a year of celebration. Here are just a few highlights.

We proudly marked 150 years of incorporation as a municipality and 150 years of proud public service provided by generations of City staff.

We also celebrated the approval of a new Official Community Plan for Victoria, a 30 year vision for our community shaped by the input of more than 6,000 people. This plan incorporates what the public told us was most important to them and will guide the decisions of council and staff to ensure Victoria remains a sustainable and vibrant community.

In September, we celebrated the completion of renovations at Queens Manor, a former hotel purchased by the City and converted to 36 studio suites of supportive housing. Thanks to our many partners in this project, including the provincial and federal governments, the Capital Regional District, Cool Aid Society and the United Way Queens Manor is helping provide safe housing for some of our most vulnerable community members.

We also completed Fisherman's Wharf Park in James Bay including the City's largest rain garden, and in

December we welcomed kids and adults alike to the new Cook Street playground and outdoor fitness circuit.

Our Council, and the organization as a whole, renewed our commitment to economic development and customer service, recognizing the foundational role they play in fostering strong relationships and thriving businesses. We continue to find ways to make City Hall more accessible and open through our Customer Service Action Plan. And we are bringing our Economic Development Strategy to life through local investment and building international relationships.

We also launched a new website, making it easier to find information and providing more on-line options that can save you a trip to City Hall.

Preparation for the new Johnson Street Bridge continues to advance and we are now negotiating the fixed price contract with PCL Construction. We expect construction to begin in the spring.

As a new Council we have been focused on ways to streamline decision-making and enhance long term financial planning. With this goal in mind, council has moved to a 3 year budget cycle and made a commitment to hold the yearly tax increase

to 3.25% or less for 2013–2015. Council is having important conversations regarding budget reduction measures, and I look forward to the public budget conversations set for the New Year. I encourage everyone to be part of that dialogue.

On behalf of Victoria City Council, I wish to extend a sincere thank you to the City staff who keep Victoria safe, looking great and moving efficiently. And a heartfelt thank you to our many partners, residents and businesses that together make this city so exceptional.

Sincerely,

Dean Fortin
Mayor

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Budget Conversations

Keeping taxes affordable is important to the well-being of our businesses and households. Like any business or household, the needs and wants within a municipality are often greater than what the municipality and community can afford at one time. Each year, as part of the budget process, choices must be made.

In 2012, City Council decided to hold tax increases to 3.25% or below for 2013, 2014 and 2015. A 3.25% tax increase is the same tax increase applied in 2012 and is lower than previous years since 2000. City Council is considering several strategies to reduce annual operating expenditures in order to achieve 3.25%.

Annual investment continues in infrastructure, like parks and roads, as well as initiatives that improve customer service, making it easier for the taxpayer to access information and services. Planning for key capital projects like the Crystal Pool and Fire Hall #1, public transportation options, and asset management will be a focus in 2013–2015.

2013 Operating Budget Highlights:

- Focuses investment in priority areas
- \$8.3 million towards maintaining Victoria's 70 parks and green spaces
- \$60 million in emergency services; fire and police
- \$7.1 million in maintaining 250 km of roads, 30 km of bike lanes and sidewalks
- \$1.1 million in arts and cultural events and programming
- \$250,000 for economic development to grow the local economy
- Introduces webcasting of Council meetings and implementation of customer service improvements across the organization
- 16% of the operating budget is allocated to capital spending and reserves (in 2012 this was \$25 million)

The following budget reduction strategies have been proposed in order to achieve a tax increase of no more than 3.25% for 2013–2015. While holding non-salary budgets at 0% and reducing expenditures, if all cost reduction strategies are implemented, the 3.25% increase can be achieved for 2013, but a lot of work remains to achieve 3.25% for 2014 and 2015.

Proposed budget reduction strategies:

- Limit Mayor and Council salary increases to 0% in 2013
- Change to Council taxable remuneration
- Limit exempt staff salary increases to 0% in 2013
- Limit budget increases for library and police to 2% for 2013, 2014, 2015
- Transfer 1.25% of 2013 tax increase to capital, instead of 1.5% by removing "new" capital work proposed for 2013
- Partial automation of some parkades during slow periods
- Advertising in parkades, on parking machines etc
- Shift from annuals to perennials in some beds
- Reduce City-led seasonal programming in Centennial Square
- Review the organizational structure to identify efficiencies and savings

Due to a strong financial sustainability policy, the City has built up reserve funds for renewal and maintenance of existing infrastructure. Victoria's debt-servicing per capita is lower than average cities the same size. This includes the replacement of the Johnson Street Bridge.

For more detailed information on each of the proposed budget reduction strategies, as well as the City of Victoria's Financial Sustainability Policy and Budget Principles, please visit www.victoria.ca/budget.

Join the Conversation

This month, information sessions will be held across the community for taxpayers to learn more about the budget and the proposed budget reduction measures. Public feedback on the budget and the proposed cost reduction strategies is encouraged and input will be collected at information sessions and online. All feedback will be provided to Council before they give final consideration to the 2013 budget, and consider 2014 and 2015 budgets.

Saturday, January 19, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Central Library, Central Meeting Room – 735 Broughton Street

Monday, January 21, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

City Hall, Antechamber – 1 Centennial Square

Saturday, January 26, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Crystal Pool, Lower Auditorium – 2275 Quadra Street

Monday, January 28, 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

James Bay New Horizons – 234 Menzies Street

Monday, January 28, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Vic West Community Centre – 521 Craigflower Road

Wednesday, January 30,

10 a.m. – Noon

Fairfield Community Centre – 1335 Thurlow Road



Your Mayor and City Councillors

Dean Fortin Mayor

Dean Fortin is serving his second term as Mayor of Victoria, and served two terms as Councillor from 2002 to 2008.

City Hall 250.361.0200
Email mayor@victoria.ca



Marianne Alto

Serving in her second term as a City Councillor, Marianne is the Councillor liaison to the neighbourhood of Oaklands.

City Hall 250.361.0216
Email malto@victoria.ca



Chris Coleman

Chris has served on Council since 1999 and is the Councillor liaison to the neighbourhood of James Bay.

City Hall 250.361.0223
Email ccoleman@victoria.ca



Shellie Gudgeon

Serving in her first term as a City Councillor, Shellie is the Councillor liaison to the neighbourhoods of North Park and North/South Jubilee.

City Hall 250.361.0218
Email sgudgeon@victoria.ca



Lisa Helps

Serving in her first term as a City Councillor, Lisa is the Councillor liaison to the neighbourhood of Downtown and Victoria West.

City Hall 250.361.0218
Email lhelps@victoria.ca

Victoria's Bright Future: Our Priorities for the Next Three Years

Faced with exciting opportunities and new challenges, the City of Victoria is finding innovative ways of providing the highest level of service possible while managing the City's finances for the long term.

Victoria's priorities are designed to achieve the vision established through extensive community input and vested in the recently approved Official Community Plan.

The priorities focus on important themes to improve financial sustainability, grow the local economy, and enhance customer service to make it easier to access information and services. The plan outlines several key initiatives for the next three years.

Key Initiatives for 2013 to 2015

City Government

- Implement Customer Service Action Plan to improve access to information and services and streamline business processes
- Enhance governance processes to support decision-making
- Review organizational structure to maximize ability to achieve strategic results
- Pursue naming rights for Victoria Conference Centre

- Review parking services to improve customer experience and maximize cost effectiveness
- Introduce webcasting of Council meetings and pursue other Open Government initiatives

Our Community

- Finalize Official Community Plan Implementation Strategy
- Examine and improve public transportation options
- Introduce initiatives to increase affordable rental housing and home ownership opportunities
- Develop and implement new local area planning program
- Review operations and partnership options for future of Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre
- Renovate or replace Fire Hall #1
- Implement operating agreement for policing in Victoria and Esquimalt

Our Economy

- Implement Economic Development Strategy to grow tax base and support existing businesses, with a focus on the following:
 - Develop a feasibility study and business case for Harbour Waterfront revitalization
 - Renew agreement for Victoria Accord Lands
 - Establish new downtown zones and integrate density bonus system

- Continue to participate in regional organizations and partnerships to enhance traditional business sectors while tapping new opportunities and increasing the diversity and resiliency of the City's economy
- Continue to work with an Economic Development Cabinet of community leaders that provides regular, ongoing advice to the City about economic matters, and high level assistance on project implementation

Our Environment

- Continue Johnson Street Bridge replacement and plan for new waterfront park on west side of the bridge
- Implement Dallas Bluffs Stabilization Project
- Pilot transportation changes in Beacon Hill Park and evaluate results
- Develop asset management framework to plan for sustainable long-term management of civic infrastructure
- Maximize infrastructure and transportation improvement opportunities resulting from sewage treatment infrastructure construction on Dallas Road

Licensing Your Dog

Dog owners – don't forget to renew your dog licence for 2013 and take advantage of the early incentive period. When you purchase your licence before February 28, you will save \$20 and automatically be entered into a draw for the #1 dog licence tag for 2013, and gift certificates to local businesses.

Why license your dog?

- A dog licence is identification.
- Dog licences are the fastest way to reunite you with your lost dog. Hundreds of dogs are quickly reunited with their owners in the City of Victoria each year because they were found wearing a current licence.
- A dog licence tells others your lost pet is not a stray and needs to be returned to its family.
- Licensing is a mandatory requirement for all dogs over the age of four months. Current year dog tags must be displayed when in a public place, or on private property other than the owner's.
- Dog licences encourage owner accountability.
- Dog licence fees help to offset the costs of operating an animal control and pound service, which shelters, feeds and provides care for lost and injured animals. Dog licence fees also offset the costs of providing dog waste bags in City of Victoria parks.
- Owners of licensed dogs avoid paying an additional penalty if your dog is impounded.
- Owners of unlicensed dogs can be fined up to \$125 per day for non-compliance.

Fees:

Licence Fees: January and February

- Unaltered Dog – Male or Female \$40
- Sterilized Dog – Neutered or Spayed \$30

Licence Fees: March to December

- Unaltered Dog – Male or Female \$60
- Sterilized Dog – Neutered or Spayed \$50

Licensing your dog is easy. Just take your 2013 Dog Licence Renewal Form to any City of Victoria dog licence vendor. For a full list of dog licence vendors visit www.vacs.ca



Tree Branch Chipping Starts February 11!

Residential branch chipping starts at **7 a.m. on Monday, February 11, 2013**. Victoria residents are asked to place their tree branches on the boulevard for chipping by this date and time.



Each household in Victoria is allowed one tree branch pile, limited to 1.2 metres x 1.2 metres x 1.8 metres. The wood chips produced are mixed with leaf mulch at the Beacon Hill Park Maintenance Yard for use as a fertilizer and to suppress weeds in City garden beds.

Tips:

- Only **tree branches**, please.
- Branches are to be loosely stacked into one pile with their cut ends together.
- Branches should not be placed in bags, boxes or tied with string or wire.

Items that are **not** accepted for chipping include: shrubs and plants, ivy clippings, blackberry canes, morning glory, garden refuse, compost, lawn clippings, loose leaves, soil, rocks, roots, stumps, construction lumber, and material from commercial tree contractors.

Victoria residents can drop off their leaf and garden waste for free year-round at the City of Victoria Public Works Yard, 417 Garbally Road, Saturdays, from 7 a.m. – 2 p.m. Proof of residency is required in the form of a valid driver's licence.

For more information, visit: www.victoria.ca/branchchipping

Ben Isitt

Serving in his first term as a City Councillor, Ben is the Councillor liaison to the neighbourhoods of Hillside/Quadra and Rocklands.

City Hall 250.361.0222
Email bisitt@victoria.ca

Pamela Madoff

Pamela has served on City Council since 1993 and is the Councillor liaison to the neighbourhoods of Fairfield/Gonzales.

City Hall 250.361.0221
Email pmadoff@victoria.ca

Charlayne Thornton-Joe

A City Councillor since 2002, Charlayne is the Councillor liaison to the neighbourhood of Burnside Gorge.

City Hall 250.361.0219
Email cthorton-joe@victoria.ca

Geoff Young

Served as a City Councillor from 1983 to 1999, and then returned in 2005, Geoff is the Councillor liaison to the Fernwood neighbourhood.

City Hall 250.361.0220
Email gyoung@victoria.ca

Mark your calendar

Business Licence Renewals

January 15

Business owners are reminded that the deadline to renew a business licence is January 15. All businesses must have a valid licence to legally operate in the City of Victoria. A \$25 late fee applies to all business licence accounts with balances 30 days past due. For a list of the convenient ways to renew your licence, please visit www.victoria.ca/payment.

Garden Design

Saturday, February 9, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Learn simple steps to create a landscape plan for your yard and garden. Pack a lunch for this full-day class led by Master Gardener Jeff de Jong at the Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre. \$75. To register, call 250.361.0732.

Residential Branch Chipping

Starts 7 a.m. on Monday, February 11.

Victoria residents are asked to have tree branches on the boulevard for chipping by this date and time.

www.victoria.ca/branchchipping

Succulents and Sedums

Saturday, March 9, 9 a.m. – noon

Learn how to build an alpine trough container to showcase succulents and sedums at this three-hour workshop led by Master Gardener Jeff de Jong at the Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre. \$25. To register, call 250.361.0732.

Turn Off Your Lights for Earth Hour

Saturday, March 23, 8:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Join cities around the world and turn off your lights for one hour to demonstrate what is possible when individuals take action on global warming. Sign up online at www.earthhour.org

Pop-Up Poetry

April 2013

Celebrate Poetry Month in April with *Pop-up Poetry*. Enjoy local poets reading poetry outdoors at venues around town. More information coming soon at www.victoria.ca

Parks Open House

Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Take a behind-the-scenes look at Victoria's Parks Yard at Beacon Hill Park, located at the end of Nursery Road. Tour the nursery, composting facility, native plant garden, park restoration, and witness the release of lady bugs. A French immersion "Nature Parade" tour will be available to families in the afternoon. Free. Registration is not required.

Container Gardening: Flowers and Veggies

Saturday, April 27, 9 a.m. – noon

Learn how to grow annuals, perennials and vegetables in containers on your patio or balcony. Topics will include plant selection, soils, container types, maintenance and care for all seasons. \$25. To register, call 250.361.0732.

Learn How to Make Your Own Victoria Hanging Basket

Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m. – noon

Create your own Victoria trademark hanging "sun basket" with expert greenhouse staff at this hands-on, two-hour workshop at Beacon Hill Park. \$90 fee includes all planting materials. To register, call 250.361.0732.

Emergency Preparedness Workshops

Attend a free workshop in the community to learn what it will take for you and your family to be prepared for a power outage, winter storm or natural disaster such as an earthquake or tsunami. For a list of upcoming free workshops, visit: www.PrepareVictoria.ca

Kitchen Scraps and Garbage Collection Begins in February

Beginning in February, the City of Victoria will be collecting separated kitchen scraps along with garbage. Did you know, this will reduce the amount of waste being sent to the landfill by 30%?

If you currently have garbage service with the City of Victoria, a Green Bin for kitchen scraps and a Grey Bin for your garbage will be delivered to your home in January. You will also receive a small "kitchen catcher" for the daily collection of kitchen scraps. Look inside your bins for a "how to" guide and your new 2013 collection schedule.

Starting in February, you will see the new natural gas trucks that will begin picking up both kitchen scraps and garbage. Please look at the Collection Schedule to see when your first collection day is.

Never miss another collection day: To view your collection schedule online, sign up for email, text, voice mail or Twitter reminders, download a mobile app or integrate the collection schedule into your own online calendar, visit www.victoria.ca/schedule.

To watch a video about the new Kitchen Scraps and Garbage program visit: www.victoria.ca/greenbin. For more information call 250.361.0448 or email greenbin@victoria.ca.



What goes in my Green Bin:

Kitchen scraps include:

All food leftovers: meat, fish and poultry, bones, dairy products, bread, cereals, pasta, pizza, tea bags, coffee grinds and filters, nuts and shells, solidified fats and grease, house plants, fruit and vegetable scraps, eggshells and plate scrapings.

Soiled paper products: including paper towels and tissues and food packaging such as used paper cups and plates.

What goes in my Grey Bin:

Garbage includes:

Make-up remover pads, cotton swabs and balls, dental floss, rubber bands, dryer sheets and lint, cigarettes and butts, vacuum contents and bags, pet food bags and other wax-lined bags, foil chip and cookie bags, butter wrappers, pet feces or litter, hair, bread clips or ties, diapers, baby wipes, sanitary hygiene products.

Make Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre your Place for Fitness in 2013

If you would like to improve your fitness levels in 2013, Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre is the place to be!

We're kicking off the New Year right with all new weight room equipment. This includes the Kinesis One Movement Trainer which helps to improve balance, strength or flexibility through zero-impact exercise, making it ideal for users of all abilities and fitness levels.

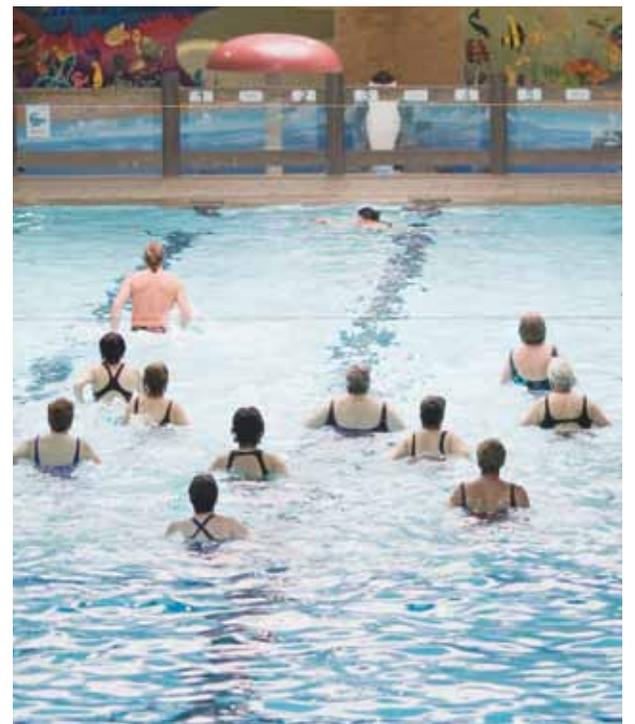
Whether you purchase a single drop-in admission, or an annual pass, you'll have access to all areas of the weight room, cardio equipment, pool, sauna, steam room and hot tub during your visit. You're also welcome to attend any of the drop-in fitness or aqua-fit classes scheduled while you are in the facility.

If you haven't been to the Centre in a while, or just need a hand getting started, one of our qualified personal trainers is available to you. Single sessions include an initial assessment, facility tour and orientation to the equipment, and a strength training program tailored to your needs. You'll also enjoy two complimentary admissions with your consultation.

Admission passes are available by one month, three month, and Silver and Gold level Annual Passes.

Our friendly front desk staff would be happy to help you determine which pass is best for you.

Call today at 250.361.0732 and Crystal Pool and Fitness staff will help you get on track to meet your fitness goals in 2013.



Connect

The City of Victoria *Connect* newsletter is produced and delivered to Victoria households three times a year to inform you of the many programs and services provided by the City.

For more information or to provide feedback, please email connect@victoria.ca

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Our Commitment to the Environment

Using 1.46 tonnes of Harbour 100% PCW paper instead of virgin fibres paper reduced our ecological footprint of:

- Tree(s): 17
- Solid waste: 748 Kg
- Water: 6,593 L
- Air emissions: 1,305 Kg

