



Actively Working on Multiple Fronts



It's interesting to me that some people respond to individual initiatives Council is working on with "surely there are more important things to do than that." It happened with our smoke-free public spaces bylaw, in relation to the work we're doing to protect property values by exploring a ban on shipping containers in residential neighborhoods, and we're getting similar sentiments with respect to our intent to build a new public works facility to replace the decrepit one sitting on the Quesnel river floodplain.

I get a little frustrated with this kind of response because Council is actively working on multiple initiatives with great success. Since we were sworn in on December 1, 2014 we've accomplished much on many fronts:

- Our fiscal discipline resulted in a 10% overall reduction in the City's operating costs with minimal service disruptions and job losses.
- We've begun to address the City's infrastructure deficit and can now make investments in our roads, sidewalks, water and sewer systems, and our parks and playgrounds with or without federal and provincial contributions (although we will be actively seeking those contributions).
- We worked proactively with Northern Health to recruit more doctors than will be leaving town and have positioned Quesnel as a preferred place to practice for health professionals.
- We have plans in place to leverage provincial dollars to expand and improve our trails system and commuter walking and cycling options. We will also be conducting a review of our entire transit system this year.
- We're making significant accessibility improvements throughout the City and have obtained funding to help our businesses improve accessibility both into and inside their retail spaces.
- We're actively working on a plan to create an accessible community space in our downtown core that will have a public washroom.
- We've passed multiple bylaws that will enable us to promote Quesnel as an active, healthy, and progressive place to live and invest in and we're now engaged in the process of re-branding our community.
- We've addressed long-standing concerns from our industrial ratepayers that will create a positive investment climate for them while making Quesnel more attractive for new investment.
- We're changing our purchasing policy to ensure your tax dollars stay local as much as possible, especially with some of the large investments we will be making over the next few years. This will give a direct boost to our local economy during this challenging time by supporting our local contractors and directly creating job opportunities for residents.
- Council is taking the lead on housing too, for both market and affordable housing. We will be meeting with developers and housing advocates to develop a new strategic plan for housing that will see the City provide direct incentives to attract investment for the kind of housing we need.

Some of the issues people want Council to focus on (school closures, lack of mental health and addictions services, the need for more seniors' social supports, Highway 97 bypass, etc.) are simply not within the bounds of local government to tackle directly. However, where appropriate, we're also trying to provide some leadership and advocacy to get these issues addressed too.

Please know that you have a proactive Council that is working on multiple fronts; but, email me directly if you still feel we're not on top of your particular issue or concern.

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