



## Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Vernon City Council endorses 2021 budget**

Vernon City Council has debated, amended and endorsed the 2021 budget presented within the 2021-2025 Financial Plan, with a total budget increase of 2.13%.

The 2021 budget maintains core municipal services and establishes an ongoing commitment to key programs that are focused on community safety and development.

“During the budget deliberations, Council carefully considered the various financial impacts that have been experienced by individuals, families, businesses, and our community as a whole, due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Mayor Victor Cumming. “Council has endorsed a budget that is well-balanced and responsible, which maintains levels of service our citizens have come to rely upon, and provides financial stability for our taxpayers, where possible, as we move towards a period of local economic recovery.”

The 2021 budget includes a 1.79% increase to annual operating expenses and a 0.34% increase for a small number of new services and programs and a few services carried forward from 2020.

“Most of the programs and services that have been added into the operating budget are not new for the City,” said Mayor Cumming. “These programs include items such as the Anti-Tag Team, Folks on Spokes, the Downtown overnight seasonal security program, and the weekly cleanup grant program. All of these programs were previously funded on a temporary basis to gauge program performance and community impact. After receiving positive feedback from the community on each of them, Council has committed to continuing the programs through the regular operating budget.”

The original proposed budget included a continuation of the 1.9% ongoing Infrastructure Levy Program. However, Council has directed Administration to pause the infrastructure levy for one year, to reduce the overall 2021 budget increase. Council directed that the levy resume in 2022 and then be extended by one year, to 2023.

The cumulative infrastructure levy was established in 2012 as a 10-year program, to provide the necessary funds to repair or replace aging infrastructure and establish a stronger foundation for future community needs such as improvements to municipal roads, storm sewer management systems, public buildings and parks.

“The infrastructure levy program has been very successful over the last eight years,” said Mayor Cumming. “Because of the program, the City of Vernon is in a stronger position to add, repair, and replace City infrastructure as needed, to maintain and grow our community in a sustainable manner. By pausing the program for one year, we are able to provide some financial relief for our taxpayers, while still keeping our eye on the target to finish the program for the benefit of our community and its future.”

In 2021, the Capital program includes \$18.1 million in upcoming projects. Some of the larger projects include:

- Silver Star Road Multi-Use Path between BX Elementary and Blackcomb Way - \$3.4M
- 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue Reconstruction between 29<sup>th</sup> Street and 30<sup>th</sup> Street - \$2.25M
- City-wide drainage improvements – \$1.9M
- 31<sup>st</sup> Street Reconstruction between 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue - \$1.85M
- The completion of the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Street new road and multi-use path connection at 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This was funded in 2019 and started in 2020.

“This has not been an easy year for any of us, and staff worked diligently to provide Council with a lean budget that continues to meet the needs and expectations of our citizens,” said Mayor Cumming. “The City of Vernon is in a healthy financial position as we move towards a period of recovery and take the steps that are necessary to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, achieve the priorities identified in Council’s Strategic Plan, and continue to serve our residents and businesses with excellent service.”

The 2021-2025 Financial Plan and 2021 budget are available on the City’s website: [www.vernon.ca/budget-process](http://www.vernon.ca/budget-process).