

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **2018-2022 Financial Plan focus of upcoming "eTown Hall"**

#### *Residents encouraged to participate on December 4*

Nanaimo residents wishing to discuss the City's 2018-2022 Financial Plan process can now do so by participating in an upcoming eTown Hall meeting scheduled for Monday, December 4. The meeting follows the tradition of tabling a topic for discussion between Council members and the public but, unlike conventional town hall meetings, Nanaimo's eTown Hall format enables wider involvement by allowing participants to submit questions via Twitter using #NanaimoTH, Facebook, webform at [www.nanaimo.ca/goto/etownhall](http://www.nanaimo.ca/goto/etownhall), phone call to 250-754-4251, as well as in person.

Council and staff have taken these additional steps to ensure that all citizens are made aware of the city's direction for the next five years, and can also provide meaningful input to this important process in a public forum. It is a continuation of the city's efforts to increase accountability to stakeholders.

"Budget approval is the most important policy and governance work that elected representatives undertake. It is important that we hear from City residents on community priorities," remarked Councillor Bill Bestwick, Chair Finance and Audit Committee.

The eTown Hall will start at 7:00 p.m. during the Regular Council Meeting and will run for one hour. If demand is high, an additional 30 minutes will be allocated. Residents are encouraged to review available information prior to the start of the meeting. The draft 2018-2022 Financial Plan will be available for review on the City website starting November 24.

On taking the 2018-2022 Financial Plan to the public for their review and input, Chief Administrative Officer Tracy Samra noted, "Staff has put a lot of work into preparing for the next five years, and we want to make sure we are focusing on things residents find are a priority for the community."

"The eTown Hall format is a great way to gauge what residents are thinking on topics such as this," said Mayor Bill McKay, "and, with multiple opportunities to participate, from sending a tweet to asking a question in person at the meeting, Council is able to hear from a diverse group of residents."

Additional opportunities to provide input and follow the 2018-2022 Financial Plan approval process are available with the draft being presented at the November 27, 2017 Committee of the Whole Meeting, a workshop at the Finance and Audit Committee meeting on December 7, 2017 and when the Financial Plan Bylaw is considered at the Regular Council Meeting on December 18, 2017.

The City of Nanaimo's eTown Hall meeting format provides greater community involvement by diversifying the methods the public can participate in and where they can participate from. To date, the City of Nanaimo has held five eTown Hall meetings. The first meeting, held in March of 2013, was awarded Bronze for Innovation Management by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC).

Draft 2018 – 2022 Financial Plan details will be published on November 24, 2017.

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