

## New tool to prioritize our investments in capital projects

A new tool will help the City make more informed decisions about investments in big projects in Penticton. Introduced at Council in October, the Capital Prioritization Framework formalizes the process for determining which projects to include in the City's budget and when.

"We now have a more rigorous and transparent process for prioritizing capital investment across the City," says Jim Bauer, Chief Financial Officer for the City of Penticton. "Instead of basing decisions on what we spent in the past, this tool shifts the focus to what the future needs are. It's a best practice approach for asset management.

The City spends roughly \$12 to \$16 million annually on capital projects ranging from replacing water mains and repairing buildings to resurfacing roads. Under the new Capital Prioritization Framework, these projects will be scored according to a set of criteria and then prioritized for inclusion in the upcoming budget.

As part of developing the new tool, the City used it to prepare this year's



The City's new Capital Prioritization Framework will help staff make recommendations to prioritize and fund capital projects such as repairs to the Penticton Trade and Convention Centre.

draft budget. Information about the capital projects proposed for the next few years as well as the initial direction of the budget will be shared with the community in November.

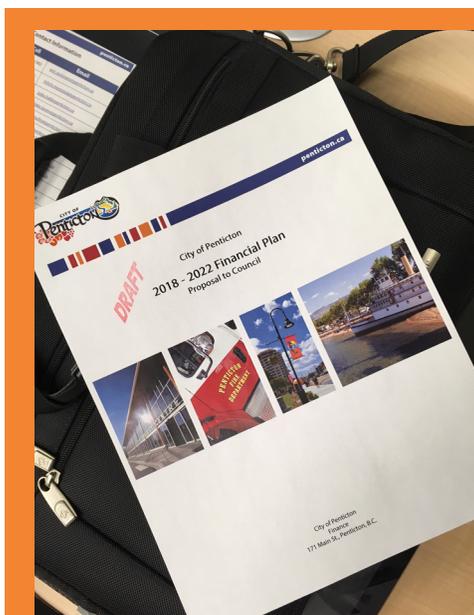
"This is another big step in improving our financial processes. Last year, we introduced a five-year financial plan that was easier to understand and this year, we are improving the rigor and transparency of our recommendations on which capital projects to advance," says Bauer.

### The Big 6

There are six key criteria that will drive decisions on how our dollars are spent.

-  Public health and safety
-  Regulatory requirements
-  Environment (risk or enhancement)
-  Finances (risk or enhancement)
-  Asset replacement and maintenance of service levels
-  Strategic investment and community needs

Some of the criteria are considered more important than others such as the need to protect public health and safety or the need to meet government regulations. Once the need or opportunity has been scored, the results will be weighted in order to create the list of priorities.



### Budget talks coming up

November is budget month. Work on a draft budget is underway. Watch for opportunities to learn more about the upcoming budget and capital projects, and how you can provide feedback at [shapeyourcitypenticton.ca](http://shapeyourcitypenticton.ca).



## Function meets form: Rain Gardens in the 100 Block of Main Street

Whether you were visiting the Farmer's Market or simply strolling downtown, you may have noticed some new garden beds installed this year throughout the 100 Block of Main Street as part of the downtown revitalization project. What you may not have noticed was that while these beds were designed with aesthetics in mind, they also provide a very important ecological function.

Rain gardens are uniquely designed to have the aesthetic appeal of a garden while being able to efficiently and naturally filter contaminants from excess storm water and rain events. Rain gardens are a concave depression with perennial plants that were carefully selected for their hardiness and ability to tolerate drought and absorb excess water, filter contaminants and be low in maintenance. The grasses are ornamental species that are resilient to salt and other pollutants. These installations are an example of Low Impact Development projects taking place throughout Penticton and the South Okanagan.



When excess water travels down the street and sidewalks, it is diverted into the rain gardens along with any rubbish from the street. The rubbish collects near the entrance of the rain gardens for easy and efficient clean up. The surplus water then temporarily ponds throughout the garden as it slowly infiltrates through sandy porous soil and into the ground below. This not only diverts runoff from the storm water system, but allows natural bacteria in the ground to break down and decompose any oil and pollutants from the roadway. By allowing contaminated runoff to be naturally filtered through the plants and soil, it helps protect the aquatic and shoreline habitat of our lakes and streams.

Sustainable installations such as rain gardens are important for the ecological function they provide by filtering contaminants, recharging water tables, and diverting runoff from the storm water system. They require much less maintenance and cost in comparison to installing traditional storm water catchment systems, and divert potentially harmful pollutants from our natural waterways.

Looking to visit the rain gardens, or become inspired to create one on your property? You can visit the 100 Block of Main Street, or visit [www.rdos.bc.ca](http://www.rdos.bc.ca) for a comprehensive guide book on the importance of rain gardens and for design plans to construct one of your own.

### 10 Plants Featured in the Rain Garden

- Heavy Metal Switch Grass
- Red Switch Grass
- Paprika Common Yarrow
- Silver Blue Dwarf Mint
- Little Spire Russian Sage
- East Friesland Meadow Sage
- Little Goldstar Blackeyed Susan
- Citrine Coreopsis
- Sunfire Coreopsis
- Ruby Star Coneflower