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MEDIA RELEASE

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Summerland Council Priorities to Get Underway in 2020

The District of Summerland will be engaging with the community on strategic priority projects throughout 2020 in support of Council's Strategic Plan. In 2019, Council's Strategic Plan was created to focus on six areas of priority for their term: Infrastructure Investment, Good Governance, Community Resilience, Alternative Energy, Active Lifestyle and Downtown Vibrancy. Priority projects brought forward for Council's endorsement at their meeting on January 13th to commence in early 2020 include the development of a process for a Downtown Plan; the creation of a new Summerland Community Health and Wellness Centre; and, to support the need for increased affordable housing in the community, planning is underway for the District to host an Affordable Housing Forum.

The **Downtown Plan** will commence with asking the community what their vision is for the future of Summerland's Downtown Neighborhood. A clear understanding of residents' and business' vision for Downtown is critical to building a successful and vibrant downtown community. Early visioning with the community will be undertaken in the first Quarter of 2020 to provide direction for the planning process and to clearly identify what issues need to be addressed, building upon historical work to create actions and solutions for future implementation.

The **Summerland Community Health and Wellness Centre** process will commence with determining how a multi-organization partnership could work to develop a joint use facility in the community. The process requires significant public engagement with Summerland residents and businesses to provide direction for future health and wellness needs in the community. Strategic partner organizations involved in the proposed process include the District of Summerland, School District 67, Penticton Indian Band, Interior Health and the South Okanagan Similkameen Division of Family Practice.

The Summerland **Affordable Housing Forum** will facilitate discussion between the District, local organizations, non-profit and market housing developers, and housing providers. Key topics to be addressed at the forum will include:

- The District of Summerland's role in supporting housing.
- The Provincial Government role, through BC Housing/Housing Hub, in supporting housing needs in communities.
- The development industry's role in providing new housing.
- Financing affordable housing projects.
- Examples of specific affordable housing case studies that could be seen in Summerland in the future.

“Staff has worked diligently to bring forward these initiatives, each of which fits into at least one of Councils 2019-2022 strategic priorities,” Summerland Mayor Toni Boot said. “I am looking forward to participating in the upcoming community conversations. Council thinks these are important projects that not only address identified gaps in our community but increase livability and community resilience at the same time. However, if Summerlanders don’t agree, we need to hear that.”

District CAO, Anthony Haddad said, “Staff are committed to working with Council and our community through the development of these priorities. Investing in our downtown, community health and wellness amenities and creating a wider variety of housing in our community will benefit the community long term. We need to hear from our community, we need to listen and make sure our plans and projects build on the great work that has been completed to date and create actions to set our community up for success into the future.”

To find out more about each of these priority projects for 2020 the District will be hosting an Open House on February 12, 2020. More information on this event will be forthcoming over the next couple of weeks.

For further information on the Downtown Plan, Summerland Community Health and Wellness Centre and Affordable Housing Forum – see the detailed Council reports at <https://summerland.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx>

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For more information: www.summerland.ca
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