

# COUNCIL BRIEFS

Winter Edition  
2021-2022



## Mayor's Message



As we look back on 2021 and remember all of the challenges and successes our city saw over the past year, I have a greater appreciation for the character of our people. Time and time again, I have seen the citizens of Portage la Prairie step up and meet the challenges of the past year. Being good citizens and helping our neighbours despite uncertainty, controversy and fatigue.

As a new year begins, we know that we will continue to face challenges and problems, but we will also be given great opportunities.

In 2022, we will see the largest investment in our city's aging infrastructure in our lifetime. This investment will position our region to diversify our economy by attracting new industry. It will also provide more reliable services to our citizens and prepare our community for extreme weather events caused by climate change.

Reconciliation is the responsibility of every Canadian and every community, including ours. Reconciliation is about building relationships that will benefit all.

Over the past few years, we've seen a record number of new housing starts and met a lot of new people that have chosen Portage la Prairie as their home. The new census numbers will be released in February, and we expect that the population of Portage will show a significant increase.

This coming year will see the construction planning for our new hospital get underway. This major project is the result of years of advocacy and fundraising by area businesses, citizens, and the Portage and District Hospital Foundation.

These are only a few of the possibilities for the year ahead.

Happy New Year!

Mayor Irvine Ferris

Photo credit:  
John Nielsen, provided by PRED



**Councillor Melissa Draycott**  
**Community Services Committee Chair**



2021 proved to be a difficult year for many. Even through the unpredictable landscape of Covid-19, the Portage Community Revitalization Corporation continues to be an incredible resource for people within Portage la Prairie and the surrounding areas. The staff and the Board of Directors at PCRC work to support community members through a growing list of programs and services. As we move into 2022, PCRC will continue its important work in the community.

The Urban Indigenous Vaccine Clinic may have been one of the most recognizable programs offered through PCRC this past year. The Clinic began in March 2021 through a partnership with Southern Health and the Government of Manitoba. The Vaccine Clinic is open to all members of the community, offering a culturally safe space for First Nations, Metis and Inuit people, while being respectful and sensitive to the beliefs and needs of the community. Non-Indigenous people are also able to receive a Covid-19 vaccine at the Urban Indigenous Immunization Clinic. The Clinic will continue through the month of January on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11am

to 6pm at the Herman Prior Centre. Book an appointment by calling 204-595-1666 or 1-844-626-8222.

Communities Build Youth Futures is a 5-year pilot project from the Tamarack Institute that is continuing into 2022. This project looks to improve the lives of underrepresented youth aged 15-30 while focusing on youth engagement, mental health, education and employment.

Various programs through the Urban Indigenous People's Coalition, Ask Auntie, Wawokiya and the Local Immigration Partnership will continue in 2022. These initiatives work to break down barriers that community members are facing, improve access to services, and increase connections within the community. PCRC works to create an inclusive community that respects and values the diversity that exists in the City of Portage la Prairie. The Council of the City of Portage la Prairie values the work that the Portage Community Revitalization Corporation does within our community and looks forward to continuing our partnerships through 2022.

**Youth Councillor**  
**Jessica Ramachandran**

My name is Jessica Ramachandran. I am a grade 11 student at Portage Collegiate Institute, and I am the Youth Member of Council for the City of Portage la Prairie for 2021/2022.

I enjoy involving myself around the community and have volunteered at a few places including Recreational Opportunities for Kids (ROK), Portage Learning and Literacy Centre (PLLC), and the Portage Family Resource Center (FRC). Over the summer, I also worked at the Portage Community Revitalization Corporation (PCRC).

My goal for this year, as Youth Councillor, is to be an effective voice and liaison between the council members and the youth of our city. I want to get more youth involved in the issues that are occurring in our community and I want to make their opinions and possible solutions heard. I would also like to hopefully organize a few community events if Covid-19 allows.

If any of the youth of Portage la Prairie have questions, ideas, or concerns for the council, feel free to approach me. I wish everyone a safe and happy new year!



Council Meetings are live streamed on the [City of Portage la Prairie YouTube Channel](#).

**Councillor Sharilyn Knox**  
**Public Safety Committee Chair**



When we look at what makes cities or communities desirable to live in, there are a few common factors like a strong economy, affordability, accessible health care, as well as low crime rates. The City of Portage la Prairie knows the importance of community safety and crime reduction. An important role of the City’s Public Safety Committee is to mobilize key stakeholders and develop local action plans. Many services and programs contribute to creating safer communities. Government and non-government organizations, police and correctional services all have strategies and programs to reduce crime.

The City of Portage la Prairie has issues similar to other communities in our province and in our country. Our high crime levels have been attributed to poverty, problems with the delivery of public services, and wealth disparity. These issues require a systematic approach and there are many organizations and agencies working together in our community to find solutions.

One focus we currently have is looking at our issue of prolific offenders in our community. We have listened to our citizens and our business community and heard their concerns. After reaching out to the Provincial Government’s Justice Department earlier this year, myself and our City Manager Nathan Peto have been representing the City of Portage la Prairie in meetings with members of the RCMP Division D and members of the Department of Justice on a joint committee to discuss concerns regarding prolific offenders and general crime issues in our community.

The objectives of the joint committee are to identify prolific offenders in our community and focus joint resources to deter future offenses. To investigate methods to mitigate crimes related to retail businesses in our community and to strengthen coordinated efforts for community mobilization to assist those in need of addictions treatment, housing, and social assistance.

Although we have a long road ahead of us, this joint committee has made progress. Our local RCMP Detachment and the Province of MB Justice Department have coordinated to identify prolific offenders in the community and have sought to link these community mobilization initiatives, addiction services, and other community support measures. They have a formal reporting system between the RCMP and the Crown to ensure accurate and prompt information is shared regarding the impact of prolific offenders in the community. And, the Crown has agreed to review the community impact of prolific offenders and their effect on our community when recommending sentencing.

Every citizen of Portage la Prairie has the fundamental right to feel safe in their community. Recognizing that these challenges cannot be solved in isolation, we, as a Public Safety Committee, will continue to work with and support agencies and organizations working towards a common vision of a safe and healthy community.

**2022 COUNCIL MEETING DATES**

Monday, January 10, 2022	Monday, June 13, 2022
Monday, January 24, 2022	Monday, June 27, 2022
Monday, February 14, 2022	Monday, July 11, 2022
Monday, February 28, 2022	Monday, August 8, 2022
Monday, March 14, 2022	Monday, September 12, 2022
Monday, March 28, 2022	Monday, September 26, 2022
Monday, April 11, 2022	Tuesday, October 11, 2022
Wednesday, April 27, 2022	Monday, October 24, 2022
Monday, May 9, 2022	Monday, November 14, 2022
Tuesday, May 24, 2022	Monday, December 12, 2022

Meetings begin at 6:00pm unless posted otherwise.

City Council has returned to holding virtual Council meetings until further notice. As always, meetings can be live-streamed or watched after the fact on the City’s YouTube channel.

If you wish to speak at a scheduled public hearing, please pre-register by 3:00pm on the day of the meeting to receive a link. You can pre-register by calling 204-239-8337 or emailing [info@city-plap.com](mailto:info@city-plap.com).

Delegations are still required to register on the Wednesday prior to the meeting.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

Animal Control Officer/Bylaw Enforcement	204-239-8326
Garbage/Recycling	204-239-8346
Property Taxes	204-239-8308
Streets/Sidewalks	204-239-8346
Water & Sewer Billing	204-239-8370

\*Check your phone book or our website for a complete listing.

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(T) 204-239-8309  
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Keep abreast of news and events through our Facebook and Twitter accounts.

 <https://www.facebook.com/cityplap>

 <https://twitter.com/CityofPortage>

## CITY HALL CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

The City is committed to maintaining essential services for our citizens while balancing the health and safety of our employees and the public. We continue to closely monitor the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and update our response to the rapidly changing situation.

Out of an abundance of caution and in light of increasing Covid-19 numbers and transmission rates, City Hall was closed to the public as of Wednesday, December 29, 2021. This closure will remain in effect until further notice.

Other City facilities, including the Operations Department, Water Treatment Plant, Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the Fire Department have remained closed to the public throughout 2021 and will continue to do so until further notice.

The Fire Department is always accessible to the public in the event of an emergency, however, if your inquiry is of a general nature, please contact them by telephone at 204-239-8340 or email at [firehall@city-plap.com](mailto:firehall@city-plap.com).

The City of Portage la Prairie offers e-services and online options to ensure uninterrupted access to services. For all other inquiries please call the general line 204-239-8309.

Please visit the City's website under "Latest News".

## CITY COUNCIL



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204-239-8333  
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Deputy Mayor Brent Budz  
Chair: Finance, Legislative &  
Property Committee  
[bbudz@city-plap.com](mailto:bbudz@city-plap.com)



Councillor Melissa Draycott  
Chair: Community Services  
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Councillor Sharilyn Knox  
Chair: Public Safety Committee  
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Councillor Ryan Espey  
Chair: Transportation Committee  
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Councillor Preston Meier  
Chair: City Planning & Economic  
Development Committee  
[pmeier@city-plap.com](mailto:pmeier@city-plap.com)



Councillor Wayne Wall  
Chair: Waterworks Committee  
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