

# COUNCIL BRIEFS

## Summer Edition 2022

### MAYOR'S MESSAGE

We are 3 months away from the Municipal election in October. This will be the first election in 16 years that I will not be involved in.



As I reflect on the past 16 years, I am amazed at all of the changes that have occurred in our City. Some of the changes include:

- Construction of Stride Place;
- Kelly K and Meighen Ave Subdivisions;
- Over \$1 billion in investments in new industries;
- Establishment of Heritage Square East;
- Establishment of the Portage Community Revitalization Corporation (PCRC);
- Establishment of Portage Regional Economic Development (PRED) in partnership with the RM;
- Expansion of Active Transportation – Fisher Avenue & Crescent Lake paths;
- Expanding partnerships with the RM and First Nations;
- Downtown sidewalk renewals;
- Major infrastructure upgrades in sewer and water;
- Removal of parking meters;
- Saskatchewan Avenue West redevelopment; and
- Construction of the new Causeway.

I have had the good fortune of working with 4 very progressive, committed Councils, a dedicated staff team (who set the gold standard for Public Service), and our very capable partners.

All the success our City has seen would not have been possible without the support and hard work of countless citizens, who contribute so much to our quality of life every day.

As I look towards October, I would say that having a vibrant, progressive community depends on all of us being involved wherever the opportunities present themselves. Portage has a lot of very capable people, and I would encourage them to consider serving our community on Council.

Past Councils have set us up for success through initiatives such as the tax sharing agreement with the RM. Hopefully we have set the table so that our next Council can make the most of all the opportunities before us. I expect our next Council will enjoy even bigger successes in the future.

I want to thank you for allowing me to serve and contribute a little bit to our community's progress. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as your Mayor.

Thank you, Merci, Miigwech  
Mayor Irvine Ferris

#### FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS

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.

#### CITY HALL

97 Saskatchewan Ave E  
Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 0L8  
(T) 204-239-8309  
(E) [info@city-plap.com](mailto:info@city-plap.com)  
(W) [www.city-plap.com](http://www.city-plap.com)



**COUNCILLOR BRENT BUDZ**

Chair of Finance, Legislative & Property Committee  
[bbudz@city-plap.com](mailto:bbudz@city-plap.com)

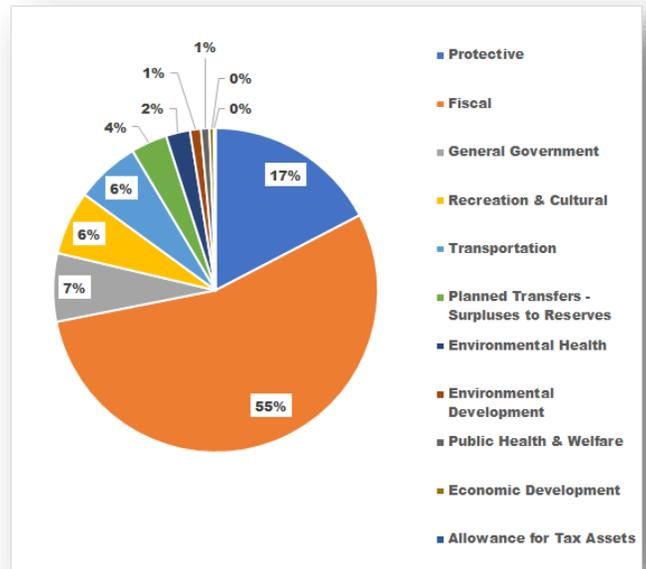
The sounds and sights of economic growth in our City continue in 2022. There are many housing and commercial property builds underway in the City and the redevelopment of Saskatchewan Ave West continues. The replacement of the utility infrastructure between 4th Street West and Elm Street is expected to be completed in 2022. The land drainage infrastructure towards Crescent Lake is in progress. Updating the paved avenue, installing climate-friendly infrastructure (paths, greenery), sidewalks and parking spaces begins in 2022 from 4th Street West and westward as the utility infrastructure is completed. While having a major traffic artery in our city under construction can be challenging, the finished project will add considerable value to our City. This project is expected to be completed by 2024.

The City has included provisions in the 2022 budget for retroactive RCMP unionization costs. We remain hopeful that municipal association lobbying efforts will result in the federal government absorbing these costs. Unfortunately, the future annual increase in operating costs of our City policing services of \$500,000 has required an increase in property taxes for 2022.

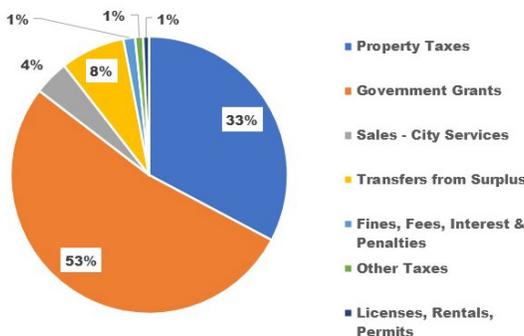
Our City and region is a wet industry centre with several large industries in this sector located in our region: Roquette, Simplot, McCain, and NutriPea. These industries are expanding which has required the City to expand utility services. The first City facility expansion will be at the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) with other facilities to follow in the coming years. The WPCF expansion is to improve effluent standards set by the provincial government. Your City Council remains committed to our vision “to be an inclusive healthy community which strives to maximize the opportunities and quality of life for its citizens”.

**2022 General Fund Expenditures**

Services	Amount
Fiscal	\$21,416,000
Protection	6,811,000
General Government	2,676,000
Transportation	2,516,000
Recreation & Cultural	2,494,000
Planned Transfers – Surplus to Reserves	1,416,000
Environmental Health	942,000
Environmental Development	424,000
Public Health & Welfare	332,000
Economic Development	174,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$39,201,000</b>
Allowance for Tax Assets	66,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$39,267,000</b>



**2022 General Fund Revenue**



Source	Amount
Government Grants	\$20,673,000
Property Taxes	12,866,000
Transfer from Reserves & Accumulated Surplus	2,952,000
Sales – City Services	1,601,000
Fines, Fees, Interest & Penalties	538,000
Other Taxes	361,000
Licenses, Rentals, Permits	276,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$39,267,000</b>

## Mill Rate

	Municipal	School	ESL
2021	19.421	12.768	8.809
2022	20.240	12.635	8.713

## 2022 Capital Projects (Over \$300,000)

Projects – General Fund	Amount
Saskatchewan Ave W – Phase 2 (General Infrastructure & Design)	\$29,615,000
Downtown Sidewalks	650,000
Accessibility for City Hall	425,000
Grader, net of trade-in	320,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$31,010,000</b>

## 2022 Capital Projects (Over \$300,000)

Projects – Utility Fund	Amount
Water Pollution Control Facility - Upgrade	\$10,000,000
Saskatchewan Ave West – Phase 1 Utility	5,050,000
Utility Building at Operations Yard	4,983,000
Poplar Bluff Reservoir	3,815,000
McKay Reservoir Roof Replacement	1,200,000
Sewer Jet Truck	312,000
Watermain Renewals	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,660,000</b>



Youth Member of Council  
Jessica Ramachandran  
[youthcouncil@city-plap.com](mailto:youthcouncil@city-plap.com)

Keep abreast of news and events through our Facebook, Twitter accounts and our YouTube channel.



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



<https://twitter.com/CityofPortage>



### COUNCILLOR RYAN ESPEY

Chair of Transportation & Waterworks Committees

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This fall another election for City Council is upon us. By all indications there will be at a minimum, four new councillors filling the seats in the City of Portage la Prairie council chambers. The question now is, should you run?

Do you have a current issue with how things are being done? Do you think you can do as good or a better job than those around the table? Are you passionate about our city and just want to be a part of ensuring prosperity? When I first ran for council in 2010 all of the answers to these questions were a resounding “yes”.

A friend of mine from a different municipality recently announced his bid for council in that municipality. When I asked why he is running he had some answers, but others struggle to answer as they have not yet figured out their “why”. This answer should be clear and if it is a simple one issue campaign, you might want to think about what you will do after that issue is solved, or you figure out why it must stay the same. It’s a four-year term and you will need to make decisions on polarizing issues. Keep this in mind if your background is in the private sector.

Over my past 12 years on council, we have accomplished a lot. Industry has grown, population has increased, taxes are being reigned in, and we are tackling issues like Saskatchewan Avenue West which was a decades old topic of debate. It also turns out that many people appreciate a good roundabout. This scratches the surface of issues that we have taken on and continue to take on. Many large decisions remain on the horizon.

I look forward to seeing the candidates’ names popping up and the excitement that is generated by a municipal election.

Best of luck to you all.

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## COUNCILLOR SHARILYN KNOX

Chair of Community Services & Public Safety Committees

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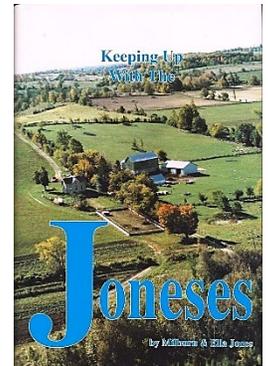
When I form an opinion on something, I always ask myself two things:

1. Is this a credible source of information?
2. Do I have all the information necessary to make a thoughtful, informed opinion?

I read this book called “Keeping up with the Jones”, published in the mid-nineties. In the book it says “Sharilyn Dawn Finley was born May 8, 1972 and is a Lifeguard and Swimming Instructor for the City of Brandon. She received her coaching certificate for the Olympics”. Wow – the Olympics!? That’s pretty impressive. The reason I tell you this is that I am Sharilyn Finley, and guess what – I never received my coaching certificate for the Olympics!

For the most part, the article was correct, except for the part about the Olympics. The reason I tell you this is someone could argue that “I read it in a hardcover book – it MUST be true”. Well, it’s not, it’s a funny example of how things can be misconstrued and from there misinformation continues. It reminds me of when people say, “I read it on social media” and they just assume it’s the truth when in many cases, it simply is not.

This same scenario is true regarding information we hear about what’s going on in the City of Portage la Prairie. I encourage everyone to ensure they are getting their information from credible sources. The City of Portage la Prairie has a very informative website which includes information on current projects, by-laws, etc. Our City Staff are also another great resource as well as members of Council. Please reach out if you want to know something or even if you have a concern about “something you read online”. If we don’t have the information or answer for you, we will gladly do our research and help you out. It is our job as elected officials to make sure you have accurate, timely information at your disposal. My one bit of advice about “information” is that not everything you read on Facebook is true and I encourage everyone to make informed decisions and seek out the proper information from relevant sources.



## COUNCILLOR PRESTON MEIER

Chair of City Planning & Economic Development Committee

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Having to navigate the current construction in our city is understandably a challenge at times and takes us out of our normal day-to-day driving routine. On the other hand, nothing gets me more excited than to see shovel to the ground on the Saskatchewan Ave West project which is finally seeing the upgrades it needs to support our growing city. A \$26,000,000 project, which should be completed in 2024, will bring a whole new feel to what we have currently experienced for many years.

Economic development is tough to measure as we sometimes consider only brick and mortar buildings as a metric tool and it is important to understand that it is much more than that. Our Portage Regional Economic Development team (PRED) has been experiencing tremendous investor requests from all over and has been doing an incredible job of positioning Portage la Prairie and the Region as the place to be.

Let us keep reminding ourselves of all the amenities we do have. Island Park, Crescent Lake, walking paths, a new hospital coming soon, great schools with some of the most dedicated teachers in the province, Stride Place and Rotary Republic Park to name just a short few. Many community groups are taking it on themselves to update areas of our city – Parks Committee with the interactive fountain, the Junk Yards Dogs redo of the old garbage dump hill, Sunset Palliative Care with the Memorial Park on the island and the Rotary Club of Portage la Prairies rejuvenation of the Duck Pond as some examples.

Although I could go on and on – City Planning and Economic Development is and always will be a fluid process. Changing as we go. To quote our Mayor – let us keep our foot on the gas pedal and continue to work together to let Portage la Prairie be all it can be.

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