



City of Saint John 2022 Gas Tax Funds – Quality of Life Investments



SAINT JOHN

July 22, 2021

Defining “Quality of Life”

Working definition of “Quality of Life” for the purposes of this exercise:

“Investments that fall within the responsibilities and authority of local government that contribute to the wellness, livability and vibrancy of our community. Quality of life investments should seek to bring people together, build connections and contribute to the enjoyment our residents experience through municipal assets.”



2022 Capital Budget Timelines

- July 22: Gas Tax Funds – Quality of Life Investments to Finance Committee for receive and file
- July 26: Gas Tax Funds – Quality of Life Investments to Common Council for receive and file
- September 2: Draft General and Utility Fund Capital Budgets to Finance Committee for receive and file
- October 13: General and Utility Fund Capital Budgets to Finance Committee for Approval
- October 18: General and Utility Fund Capital Budgets to Common Council for receive and file
- Nov 1: General and Utility Fund Capital Budgets to Common Council for Approval

Quality of Life Investments

- March 25, 2021 - the federal government proposed a one-time investment of \$2.2 billion that would help address infrastructure priorities in municipalities and First Nations communities. The funds would flow through the federal [Gas Tax Fund](#).
- The City of Saint John is set to receive an estimated amount of \$4,656,597 as part of this one-time investment. Investments can be made in 18 different categories

Public Transit

Wastewater Infrastructure

Drinking Water

Solid Waste Management

Community Energy Systems

Local Bridges and Roads

Capacity Building

Highways

Local and Regional Airports

Short-line Rail

Short-sea Shipping

Disaster Mitigation

Broadband and Connectivity

Brownfield Redevelopment

Culture

Tourism

Sport

Recreation



Quality of Life Investments

Background

- Capital investments are guided by several policies and align with various plan
 - Asset Management Policy
 - Capital Budget Policy
 - Debt Management Policy
 - Plan SJ/Play SJ/Move SJ/Central Peninsula Neighborhood Plan
- Focus of investments over past years has been renewal of assets due to the infrastructure deficit – Capital program is 85% renewal and 15% new per Capital Budget Policy
- Capital Budget Policy sets out prioritization of capital renewal based on asset management data
 1. Mandatory
 2. Risk of Failure
 3. Priority of Council
 4. Positive Financial Impact
 5. Discretionary



Quality of Life Investments

- Under existing policies, quality of life assets (recreation, parks, active transportation) are often ranked lower due to low risk of failure and consequences of failure.
- The revised Asset Management Policy addresses this by adding quality of life criteria as a consideration.
- As part of the one-time funding from the Federal Government and an additional funding as part of the 2022 General Fund Capital Budget it is being recommended that \$6,000,000 be invested in 2022 for assets considered under the quality of life criteria.
- Criteria established for quality of life investments using existing asset data, Financial policies, City priorities and various City approved plans.



Quality of Life Investments

Criteria Established for Quality of Life Investments

- Must comply with approved Financial Polices
- Subject to Council approval of Operating Budget
- Focus on providing quality of life throughout entire City
- Projects must be identified within an existing plan - Plan SJ, Play SJ, Central Peninsula Neighborhood Plan, Master Park Plan Etc.
- Projects guided by Asset Management data and criteria of 85% renewal/ 15% new
- Consideration for projects that offers the greatest use for the most people (diversity, access, engagement)
- Consideration for projects that provide greatest growth return potential
- Project completion by end of 2022
- Welcoming community - project aligned with population/growth strategies (i.e. Sense of belonging to the community)



Quality of Life Investments

Key considerations in assembling staff recommendation:

- Importance of green space and natural settings for Saint John residents;
- Contributing to the broader effort around Economic and Community Recovery from the public health pandemic;
- Investments across the geography of the City and
- Supporting the City's growth agenda.



Quality of Life Investments

Rockwood Park – \$1,800,000 - Rockwood Park, designated as a regional park in Play SJ, has undergone several phases as part of its Master Park Plan. It is being recommended that Phase 3 be approved. This will see investments into Lake Drive Bridge and Ponds, Interpretation Centre, Roadway and Trails.

Dominion Park - \$600,000 – Designated as a district park in Play SJ, this project would be in addition to the \$285,000 the City has earmarked for Dominion Park rehabilitation and support the implementation of the community’s recently developed Master Plan.

Market Place West - \$400,000 – There is a significant need to rehabilitate existing assets in this district park. Staff would also be seeking external funding partners for funding to increase the capital investment. This investment is part of the most current Master Plan and aligns with Play SJ.



Quality of Life Investments

Forest Hills Complex - \$400,000 – Forest Hills playground is a district playground and aligns with Play SJ. The plan would be to upgrade and replace much of the existing playground currently past its useful life.

Harbour Passage - \$700,000 – This proposed budget is an extension of Harbour Passage to Tin Can Beach. This investment aligns well with Play SJ, Move SJ, the Central Peninsula Neighborhood Plan and with current and future development opportunities.

Main Street North - \$400,000 – As part of the City's effort to create more active transportation options, this investment will create a protected bike lane on Main Street North. This investment would align with Move SJ, as well as an expectation that cycling demand would be reduced on Harbour Passage.



Quality of Life Investments

Art and Culture - \$100,000 – This budget includes a proposed investment in arts and culture to recognize the City’s diversity and continued efforts to become the most welcoming community in Atlantic Canada. Recommended investments to be brought forward at later date.

Sporting Enhancements - \$200,000 – As the City continues to grow its diverse population, there is a need to look at existing assets such as fields and ball courts. These assets need to be enhanced, supported or adjusted in order to support newer recreational offerings, to ensure the City is providing sporting opportunities for all members of the community. Recommendations brought forward will align with Play SJ.



Quality of Life Investments

Various Greening/Branding/Beautification Investments - \$350,000 – There is a need throughout the entire City to undertake more beautification and greening efforts. This would involve investing in greening medians, planting more trees, creating more pedestrian bump outs and more branding opportunities.

Loyalist Plaza - \$500,000 – As part of the Fundy Quay development underway, Loyalist Plaza will see complete rebranding and redesign. Public consultation has been undertaken for this project bringing forward ideas like installation of an Ice Pad as example. Final plans will be brought forward at a future meeting.



Quality of Life Investments

Little River Reservoir - \$50,000 – There has been significant investments over several years at this park as part of the Master Park Plan and Play SJ. An additional \$50,000 is being earmarked for various beautification investments at the park.

Design and Engineering - \$250,000 – This funding is for all the design and engineering needed for the various projects.

South Market Street - \$250,000 – This budget earmarks funding to convert South Market Street to a pedestrian priority street in coordination with development plans.



Quality of Life Investments

Conclusion

- Aligns with current policies and plans
- Projects align with criteria established
- Projects fit within Gas Tax Funding Guidelines
- Addresses the infrastructure deficit



Recommendation

- Staff recommend that the Finance Committee endorse the Quality of Life criteria established for the proposed investments and to receive and file this report as presented and forward a copy of the report and presentation to the next meeting of Common Council as a receive and file.



Questions

