



The City of Nelson: Year In Review 2015



The scene from 2015

The City of Nelson looks back on the year that was — and what's to come.

For the City of Nelson and all its residents and businesses, 2015 was a remarkable 12-month run.

"It was truly a year of firsts for our City," says Mayor Deb Kozak. "You have a new council with your first woman as mayor. It's been the first time in over 30 years since dogs have been legal on Baker Street and we saw the renewal of Hall Street."

"All things in life have their triumphs and challenges and so it was for our City in 2015," says the Mayor. "Through everything, I've learned that there is nothing we can't meet head on as a community."

The year's premier accomplishment was Stage One of the Stores to Shores transformation of Hall Street. The project combined \$2 million in construction infrastructure renewal and \$1 million in improvements to improve and enhance the historic corridor to Nelson's famous waterfront.



"All of this was accomplished with reserves and grants — and no increase in taxation," says the Mayor. "And, we were pleased to employ the expertise of a local contractor."

The timing of the Stores To Shores revitalization perfectly coincides with the construction of Nelson Commons — which heralded the appearance of the first crane to grace Nelson's skyline in many years.

Community-wide reaction to the June wind storm was a very unexpected yet remarkable accomplishment.

"Our Fire and Police Departments responded immediately with Nelson Hydro and Public Works, and thankfully no one was injured," says the Mayor, who notes the City is still working with insurance companies and that repairs will be a part of this year's budget.

"The storm was some test for our new Fire Chief Len McCharles," Mayor Kozak says. "The entire city leapt into action to make Canada Day celebrations happen. Lakeside Park looked as if nothing had happened."

Still on the emergency services front... The Nelson Police Department will see change this year with the retirement of Chief Wayne Holland and the announcement of our new Chief, Deputy Chief Constable Paul Burkhart.

Another first for the community was the announcement of Stage Four Water conservation this past summer. The City put out the call to all residents and everyone responded immediately by reducing their water consumption.

"The City of Nelson's goal is to reduce domestic water use by 20 percent, and I'm happy to say we're half way there."

City staff are reviewing Nelson's water master plan, updating it and recommending direction to council this year.

Looking farther into 2016, and noting the world's rapid change, Mayor and council will be moving forward on Nelson's sustainability plans. Nelson Hydro is researching the feasibility of building a district energy system that will reduce the City's greenhouse gas emissions. A study will come forward in the next 12 months. Last month, Nelson Hydro announced it had reached its goal in solar panel sales.

"The solar garden will move ahead," says Mayor Kozak. "This news has sparked the interest and admiration of other communities across the country and they're cheering us on."

In 2016 the City will also turn its attention to the renewal of the 85-year-old Civic Centre. The Civic Theatre has begun its part with enthusiasm and great community support. The facility has served Nelson well and Council will be looking for the public's participation as it plans for the future of recreation in Central Kootenay region.

The public is also going to be asked to voice its thoughts on the future of the Railtown neighbourhood, which is next on the list for revitalization. The City is inviting locals to help fill in the details for the district, by visiting the Railtown website, launched this week.

"The neighbourhood holds so much potential for the future of our city," says Mayor Kozak, adding that the renewal projects began when the city recently removed the old market stalls from Cottonwood Falls Park. "Now we're working with the Eco Society, Rod and Gun Club and the Izushi Friendship Society to construct a better, more functional multi-use space."

Still in Railtown...being a community that honours its heritage, Nelson knows what to do with beloved, precious buildings.

"I don't think there was anyone happier than Council and I when Tom Thomson moved his desk into the restored CP Rail Station house and established it as the new home of the Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce," says the Mayor. "For the past 10 years, the City has worked with the Chamber to make this happen and it is a cause for celebration to see it become a reality."

Last year was indeed one of firsts for the City of Nelson — some challenges, some triumphs, but nothing that council and the community cannot handle, the Mayor adds.

"We're a small city with big heart and we are set to do great things in this term. Thank you to council, for your hard work, dedication and support in this first year. And thank you to all city staff who make Nelson work every day. Your efforts make us shine."



Stores to Shores: The people spoke

The most comprehensive upgrade and beautification program Nelson has seen since the famous 1980s revitalization of Baker Street happened last year. After three years of planning, and numerous rounds of public input like the open house seen here, the City of Nelson's Stores to Shores Downtown Revitalization Project was a roaring success.



What a storm!

June 29, 2015 will be remembered as the day Nelson was struck by one of the most severe summer storms the city has ever endured. Winds topped 100 kilometres. Sheets of rain whipped sideways flooding the city's streets and parks. Trees toppled. Power lines snapped. But it was the days that followed the wind and deluge that might well be more historically noteworthy...

Dogs back on Baker

It was big news for Nelson dogs and their owners. Last spring, the City's Animal Regulation and Control Bylaw was amended to allow folks' four-legged friends back into the City's downtown, Baker Street included. "We heard from many, many businesses about this, and tourists too," said Mayor Deb Kozak, "and there's widespread agreement that the no-dogs-on-Baker rule is well, funny as it sounds, for the dogs."



What a save!

Within a day and a half of the summer's wind storm, like much of the City, Lakeside Park's landscape of debris was chopped down, swept up and trucked away. Only 36 hours after the winds abated and the deluge stopped, hundreds joined a Canada Day celebration in the heart of a park that only a few days before had been in the eye of the storm.



The City of Nelson: Year In Review 2015



Stores to Shores:
Then and now
From IODE Park to the start of Hall Street's 300 block, the results of the eight month-long Stores to Shores project spoke for themselves. The project combined \$2 million in construction infrastructure renewal and \$1 million in improvements to improve and enhance the historic corridor to Nelson's famous waterfront. "All of this was accomplished with reserves and grants — and no increase in taxation!!"



Art of the matter
The City of Nelson rolled out the third rotating instalment of public art, as part of its on-going downtown sculpture program, which started in the Summer of 2013. "This is a very affordable way to increase public art in the city," said Mayor Kozak. "It's popular with folks who live here and those who come to visit from around the world, and beautifies and enlivens the entire downtown core."



Saving The Civic
After 80 years of sports and culture glory, the Civic Arena underwent a significant upgrade. Opened in 1935, the beloved building got a new coat of paint, safer bleachers and more parking. "We're basically doing everything we can to keep the Civic open and protect it," said the Mayor.



Forest renewed
The City continued its urban forest renewal efforts with the removal of Queen Elizabeth Park's old, towering Lombardy poplars. The dying trees had reach heights of 120 feet. The trees are being replaced with fast growing Columnar Oaks, which will grow to 70 feet at full maturity.



A broadband boost
With over 50 businesses, government buildings and educational institutions already hooked up to the City's new fibre service, the Nelson Broadband Project, led by Allison Sutherland, put out the call for clients interested in increasing the capacity and speed of their on-line networks and Internet traffic. Want to connect or get a quote? Click on www.nelsonbroadband.com.



Hail the Chiefs
Nelson Police Department Chief Constable Wayne Holland (right) announced his retirement in August. The City of Nelson and the Nelson Police Board named Deputy Chief Constable Paul Burkart, who joined the Nelson Police Department in 2000, as Nelson's twenty-first Chief Constable.



All smiles for solar
Nelson Hydro and EcoSave Program Coordinator Carmen Proctor met and exceeded their 150 Solar Panel pre-sale target, securing the construction of the City's solar array this spring. "The target was met by the community. It was from people who were motivated and genuinely passionate about solar and this opportunity towards the renewable energy future that is on the minds of so many," said Proctor.



Busload of thanks
City of Nelson and Nelson Transit celebrated Transit Driver Appreciation Day in March. Nelson Transit has nine regular part time drivers and seven casual part time drivers. They drive nearly 850 kilometres within Nelson city limits every day, and carry an average of 843 riders per day to or from 85 different stops in town.



Water wisdom
A severe drought forced the City to implement strict water restrictions over the summer and fall. With the assistance of Public Works & Utilities Director Collin Innes, Nelson Fire Chief Len MacCharles and a new Water Ambassador, the City's Water Conservation Strategy was struck — with a permanent aim at reducing our water use by 20 percent from here on. More info? Click on watersmart@nelson.ca.

What's in store for this year?
City of Nelson prioritized issues for 2016

Mayor Kozak and Council are focusing on:

- Infrastructure upgrades and renewals including **roads, sidewalks** and **facilities**
- Continued **fiscal management** of costs as well as generating **new revenues**
- Working with the Regional District of the Central Kootenay on **shared service improvements**
- **Health** and **safety**
- **Emergency** management **preparedness**