

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

IN GOVERNMENT FINANCE



GFOA's Awards for Excellence in Government Finance recognize innovative programs and contributions to the practice of government finance that exemplify outstanding financial management. The awards stress practical, documented work that offers leadership to the profession and promotes improved public finance.

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2020 Winner for Exceptionally Well Implemented Best Practice



City of
Campbell
River

CITY OF CAMPBELL RIVER
CITY OF CAMPBELL RIVER FINANCIAL
STABILITY & RESILIENCY POLICY

The City of Campbell River, British Columbia, needed to move past its ongoing financial challenges, including the loss of a significant taxpayer when the local pulp and paper mill closed. There had also been years of volatile tax rates, with increases ranging from 1.7% to 13.6% from 2010 to 2015. This remade it difficult for the city to plan for the future or fund community needs. To promote responsible fiscal management, the city introduced its Financial Stability & Resiliency program, which was formalized into policy in 2019.

The overall policy has two objectives: 1) Develop guiding principles so that residents can look forward to predictable and stable tax rate increases; and 2) Support and guide decision making, continuity, and assurance in the city's financial management.

The program outlines many sub-policies that encourage responsible budgeting. These include a stipulation that the city will not produce a budget that has less than a 10-year horizon, a rule designed to ensure long-term planning. Also included are budget parameters that aim to maintain service levels, provide opportunities to enhance services, and encourage investment in critical infrastructure.

The policy prioritizes investment in critical infrastructure. A tax increase of 0.5% to 1% a year will be invested in the city's capital program. The policy includes similar policies regarding non-market changes, zero-base operating budget increases, and the city's reserve policy.

As a whole, the Financial Stability & Resiliency Policy ensures that the city can plan strategically plan stable tax increases (ranging between 2% and 3.5% a year) and base service levels on those changes. The policy provides more certainty about the city's ability to maintain services, fund ongoing cost increases, and plan for service enhancements by creating a framework that prioritizes affordability and continuous improvement.

GFOA Best Practices: Adopting Financial Policies and Long-Term Financial Planning