

Tofino Ratepayers Association



May 16, 2023

Hello Tofino Ratepayers.

Getting away from Tofino allows a certain kind of objectivity. Upon my own return from a winter trip, I am viewing the Tofino tax situation with some fresh eyes.

When this organization was started there had been little insight on the part of the public or even Council itself into the woes that Tofino was facing. Increasing taxes, a community that was becoming increasingly more difficult to live in, the needs and costs of operating a mega tourist destination, housing shortages.... the list goes on.

But some things are starting to change. I wouldn't say that certain problems have been solved, but there is some progress.

The list includes some of the MRDT being diverted to support infrastructure development (sewage treatment). Did we get enough? Well no, but it is a start in the right direction.

Pay parking was successfully initiated at the beach, so that the tourists (not the locals) could contribute to the costs of running of the town. The current downtown parking debacle will hopefully sort itself out so that tourists, and not locals, can pay and further contribute to what it costs to run the town.

Just recently the Council has supported a "TAX SHIFT", whereby the Commercial sector will contribute a small increase in the proportion of property taxes collected. The logic and rationale are clearly and succinctly laid out by staff in their report (see attachment for details). I could not have put it better.

All of these changes (plus others) were put forward and supported by the Tofino Ratepayers Association four years ago.

Are we that persuasive a group?I see the perspectives and arguments of the TRP popping up frequently in the comments to council about the downtown pay parking.

I think it is just the reality and facts of life in Tofino that is imposing itself and causing increasing numbers of folks to come to similar conclusions.

Are we doing enough? No way!..... Can we do better.....Yes!

I believe a 1% sales tax on all commercial activity (groceries and other essential services excluded) could provide the money to address the need for more infrastructure...like more water.

I think it is really important that Tofino find a way to unleash the power of the private sector in solving some of our housing woes. We can't afford as taxpayers to continue to pay for this.

"Unoccupied by owner" Vacation Rentals are contributing to our housing problems and getting away with a property tax scam. They should be banned outright or at least pay commercial tax.

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The list goes onbut I am here today to announce some progress. I don't know whether your taxes this year will be up again? Or by how much?.... But, Tofino, take a brief bow then let's get back to work.

Cheers Jack Gillie