
Orillia Council approves 2019 budget

For immediate release (Feb. 4, 2019) – Orillia Council approved a 2019 budget that invests in core infrastructure, strategically positions the City for the future and supports the community.

The City's operating budget of \$58.2 million includes strategic investments in information technology and winter control to improve service delivery, and a capital budget of \$30 million that focuses on addressing infrastructure needs, fleet improvements and planning for future growth. Orillia residents will see a 3.25 per cent on their municipal property taxes in 2019. This means an increase of \$39.65 for every \$100,000 worth of assessment.

"We've heard loud and clear that Orillia residents want us to invest in core services and this budget certainly does that by adding resources to our winter control operations, ensuring our fleet is in good working condition now and into the future, and addressing essential infrastructure needs," said Mayor Steve Clarke. "This year also saw an unusually high demand for financial support from the City. Thanks to a surplus and increased growth assessment in 2018, we had the unique opportunity to say yes to a few of these groups that contribute significantly to the wellbeing of our community, which is a worthwhile investment. The City's financial footing is the most solid it's been in years and is only expected to get stronger moving forward."

Highlights of the 2019 budget include:

- Assessment growth of approximately \$1.2 million, which is \$450,000 higher than budgeted in the previous year; a positive trend the City anticipates continuing in 2019.
- Council contributed an additional \$1.2 million to reserves representing 2.15 per cent of the overall budget. Replenishing the City's reserves funds existing capital projects and saves for future capital projects.
- Added four tradespeople to improve winter control operations in the Roads and Storm division. These staff will be cross-trained to work in the Collection/Distribution division for water and wastewater operations in the off-season.
- Made strategic investments in information technology to enhance cyber security and set the foundation for innovative ways to use technology to improve service delivery.
- Supported community groups including \$15,940 to the Child Advocacy Centre Simcoe/Muskoka-Orillia, \$150,000 to the Mariposa Folk Festival (over three years along with waiving of fees), \$500,000 towards a CT scanner for Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital, \$150,000 towards Mariposa House Hospice capital costs, and \$150,000 to the Sharing Place Food Bank for the purchase of a new facility. Various conditions apply to some of the grants.
- Widening West Ridge Boulevard from Bass Lake Sideroad East to Hunter Valley Road to a five-land standard to accommodate growth and traffic in the area (\$2.7 million).
- Reconstructing Front Street South from Queen Street East to Colborne Street East. The project involves replacing underground servicing and the installation of a trunk sanitary sewer (\$6.5 million). This is the first phase of the overall project that will see the reconstruction of the Front Street and Neywash Street corridor from Queen Street East to Laclie Street.
- Servicing the Inch Farm lands to accommodate residential growth in the area and put into production employment lands for the City of Orillia (\$3.6 million).

Council raised residential stormwater rates per 30-day period by \$1.06 in 2019 and 2020 (additional \$12.60 per year) and industrial and commercial stormwater rates per 30-day period by \$11.61 in 2019

and 2020 (additional \$141.26 per year). Council also approved water and wastewater rates that will see an increase of approximately \$45 (6 per cent) annually to a typical Orillia home using 160 cubic metres of water. These changes will bring Orillia closer to a full cost-recovery model for water and wastewater.

For more information on the 2019 budget, visit orillia.ca/budget.

The City of Orillia is a city of 31,000 people in the heart of Ontario's Lake Country on the shores of Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe. Visit our website at orillia.ca.

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