



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Standard & Poor's maintains City's 'AA' credit rating

(Barrie, ON) The City of Barrie has maintained its 'AA' credit rating according to the latest report from Standard & Poor's (S&P). This report is issued annually from S&P, a financial services company that offers services including credit ratings, data analysis and equity research to both the private and public sectors worldwide.

"S&P's 'AA' credit rating confirms that Barrie's economy is strong and will continue to support the future of our city. Council and City staff are dedicated to building a solid financial foundation and this rating shows that we have done just that in the eyes of the credit agencies," says Mayor Jeff Lehman. "The City's credit rating directly affects property taxes. Our budget process coupled with our long-term fiscal policies has helped maintain this solid credit rating, which means ultimately that our taxes are lower because of it."

The report attributes the 'AA' rating to the city's strong economy, healthy liquidity position, and strong financial management. The stable outlook reflects Standard & Poor's expectations that Barrie's economy will expand healthily, and its liquidity position will remain more than sufficient over the next two years.

The report also highlighted the City's strong financial management practices, strong political consensus in passing budgets, and transparency in its financial statements. "S&P's positive rating reflects our outlook and future financial position. Council and City staff will continue developing long-term affordable plans to ensure we maintain this solid performance level," says Craig Millar, Director of Finance and Treasurer.

Report Highlights

"Barrie, in central Ontario, is a regional urban growth center and benefits from high average household income in line with that of the province and a growing and diversifying economy. We estimate the city's GDP per capita to be in line with that of the province, at about US\$44,000 for 2014-2016. The city's population has increased healthily, and greater employment opportunities brighten growth prospects. To accommodate growth, Barrie is focusing on intensification as it continues work on the development plan for annexed lands."

"The city's economy continues to diversify into different sectors, in particular health care and financial services. In addition to a number of data and regional banking centers, Barrie has attracted new manufacturers (several in the auto parts sector) and health care service providers, and continues to work with the Georgian College and Lakehead University to increase postsecondary education options."

"We believe that Barrie's creditworthiness benefits from the quality of its financial management, with generally strong political consensus in passing budgets without major amendments or delays and prudent financial policies and practices that demonstrate good transparency and disclosure. Financial statements are produced annually and on time, and are independently audited with no qualifications. Barrie also produces a one-year detailed and a two-year forecast operating budget; and a one-year detailed and four-year forecasts capital budget, both approved annually."

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