



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, November 16, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mayor provides update on Council's first year in office

(Barrie, ON) – Today marks one year since the Mayor and Council were sworn in for the 2022-2026 Council term. On Dec. 3, 2022, Council held a strategic planning session with the new Council and established their Strategic Priorities for this term of Council. This afternoon, Mayor Alex Nuttall provided an update to media on the progress made in the last year toward these five priorities.

“As soon as we were elected, we got straight to work and I’m proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish in only our first year as a Council,” said Mayor Alex Nuttall. “We are working closely and collaboratively with our Provincial MPPs and Federal MPs and city staff to ensure we are focused on a Team Barrie approach to achieving the best outcomes for Barrie across all three levels of government.”

Some highlights of the last year include:

Affordable Place to Live

- Council approved the City of Barrie’s pledge to the Province to help address the housing gap by facilitating 23,000 new housing units by 2031. Since January 1, 2023, the City has had 1,850 starts –which exceeds our annual target of 1,687 by more than 10%.
- Significant progress made in addressing chronic homelessness in Barrie. Council allocated funding to local organizations that provide much-needed support and shelter to those in need.
- Partnered with the County of Simcoe to open a Cooling Centre and Warming Centre at The Gilbert Centre - 80 Bradford St. and the temporary overnight shelter at 20 Rose Street.
- Continued consultation on the new Affordable Housing strategy, which is expected to come forward to Council next month.
- In partnership with the County of Simcoe, Council made a significant investment into the Rose Street Affordable Housing project. Upon completion, the City is forecast to have invested approximately \$40 million or 20% of the total cost of this important project.

To help increase the supply of housing, Mayor Nuttall announced this afternoon that Council has made the following properties surplus:

- o H Block- 50 Worsley Street (excludes John Edwin Coupe Park, Library and parking lot)
- o Sperling Drive- 29 and 35 Sperling Drive
- o Portion of 48 Dean Avenue (excludes Library and parking lot)

“All of these sites combined could support a significant number of housing units,” said Nuttall. “Generating funds from the sale of these lands will have an added benefit to our community by increasing capital to support additional priorities for the city while keeping taxes low.”

Community Safety

- Addressed the Central North Correction Centre prisoner drop-off at Barrie's bus terminal, ensuring the safety of our community and downtown. By partnering with the Province of Ontario on this pilot project, the City has been able to provide additional options to help individuals successfully transition out of the correctional system.



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- To address speeding and aggressive driving, Automated Speed Enforcement will be live later this year. Along with community policing efforts, speed enforcement cameras are a useful tool to help us keep everyone safe.
- City ranked the safest city in Canada, Barrie was also recently recognized as being the country's lowest on the Violent Crime Severity Index, according to a Statistics Canada report.

Thriving Community

- New 21,000-square-foot inclusive playground opened at Painswick Park. The playground enables kids of all ages and abilities to play side-by-side and was made possible thanks to the generosity of Canadian Tire Jumpstart.
- In the last year, service was increased at Recreation Centres by returning weekend hours in the summer to the community centres.
- An additional day of free transit for seniors each week was added. Seniors can now ride for free on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- A new transit network for Barrie was approved with no increase to cost. The new network will include improved frequency, reduced trip times, better access to employment areas, coverage to new areas of the city and improved travel freedom for riders.
- Approved the proposed Waterfront Master Plan which includes the construction of a new multi-use field, the relocation of the Navy League Sea Cadets, and the planting of 1,000+ new trees on our beautiful shoreline.
- In addition to the 1000 trees along the waterfront, an improved ecological offsetting policy was approved aimed at planting more trees within our city limits. The policy will help protect, preserve, and enhance Barrie's forests by allowing the City to use money collected from the Tree Removal Permit process to plant more trees on city-owned land. By reinvesting in ecological restoration, we are ensuring a more sustainable and resilient city for generations to come.

Infrastructure Investments

- Council has been working on making significant investment in roads. This year, a total of \$128M was invested in infrastructure improvements and new road construction projects in Barrie. There were 16 road construction projects as well as 9.2km of roadways paved as part of the road resurfacing program.

"We are committed to fixing Barrie's roads, upgrading our infrastructure, supporting active transportation, all to make it easier to get around the city," added Nuttall.

For a complete list of road projects, visit www.barrie.ca/Roadwork.

Responsible Governance

- Approved a 0% increase to the City Hall portion of the City Budget for 2023 and kept our promise of investing in infrastructure.
- Maintained 'AA+' credit rating for another year according to the latest S&P Global (S&P) report. S&P's 'AA+' credit rating confirms that Barrie's economy remains strong, and we continue to make the necessary investments to support our growing community while providing confidence to residents and business owners.
- Ensuring accountability and transparency by approving the Lobbyist Registry that will take effect Jan. 1, 2024.



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“As I reflect on the past year, I’m proud of what our Council has been able to accomplish as a team in such a short amount of time, said Nuttall. “But while it’s important we celebrate these achievements; we must also acknowledge that many challenges are still ahead of us. As a Council, we are focused on our priorities and will continue to build a city we can all be proud to call home.”

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