



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Council endorses City's portion of the 2024 budget *Budget keeps spending down while investing in infrastructure*

(Barrie, ON) –Following several amendments to the proposed 2024 Business Plan and Budget, Council has approved the City's portion of the 2024 Budget. City Council froze spending on the City's Operating Budget for the second year, while continuing the contribution of 2 per cent for the Infrastructure Investment Funding levy. The funding is used to replace and renew roads, stormwater infrastructure and buildings.

"We know residents are continuing to face significant financial pressures heading into 2024. Council and staff worked hard to deliver a budget that focuses on affordability while maintaining the services our community needs and investing in infrastructure to support our growing city," says Mayor Alex Nuttall.

Some highlights in the budget include:

- New road construction including Bryne Drive South (Harvie to North of Caplan); Duckworth Street (Bell Farm to St. Vincent); and Bayview Drive New Transmission Watermain and Road expansion (Little Avenue to Big Bay Point Road).
- Construction of the new Allandale and Downtown Transit Mobility Hubs
- Construction of Fire Station 6
- Hewitt's Community Centre New Building Development – property acquisition
- Resources to transition the City of Barrie's blue box collection to the producers and implement the City's new waste collection contract (effective May 2024)
- Increased pruning, fertilizing, and watering for the City's 35,000+ street trees
- Funding for a new splashpad at Heritage Park
- Paving of Painswick Park parking lot

As part of the 2023 budget, Council approved an annual 2 per cent contribution for the City's Infrastructure Investment Funding (IIF) levy through to 2025. The IIF allows the City to fix more infrastructure while significantly reducing debt and saving residents millions of dollars. The 2024 investment translates to an additional \$94.36 annually for an average Barrie home.

Council also approved a 3.97 per cent increase to water rates and a 4.94 per cent increase to wastewater rates. For a typical Barrie home consuming 180 cubic metres of water annually, the water bill will increase to \$404 and the wastewater bill will increase to \$587.

"While the economic pressures the City continues to face are beyond our control, Council and staff are focusing on efficiency and innovation to help mitigate these pressures by reducing costs, saving time and improving services," says Mayor Alex Nuttall.

Examples of [efficiencies and innovation](#) at the City include:

- The Electric Ice Resurfacing Units project replaced two of the City's natural gas ice resurfacing units with electric units, eliminating 38 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually with 80 per cent energy savings compared to natural gas units. Approximately 1,820 hours are saved per year with reduced maintenance, along with an annual maintenance cost avoidance of \$12,000.
- The Smartpoint Water Meter Warranty Tracking project allows staff to read water meters remotely, which improved tracking and increased the information available to better manage the assets without disturbing customers with requests to access meters for manual readings. This process provides clarity on how the



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City manages \$7.2 million worth of assets and created approximately \$56,000 cost avoidance per year, knowing how much a warranty replacement should cost at any time.

- The City's mobile app, which was redeveloped to include 125 additional services/information pages compared to the old app. Staff achieved \$75,000 in cost avoidance per year by doing the work in-house.

The residential property tax bill is comprised of three parts: City services (constituting 57 per cent of the 2024 Budget), service partners, like the library, police and County of Simcoe (32 per cent) and education (11 per cent). Barrie City Council has direct control over the City services portion of the budget. City Council has limited influence over service partner spending requests, as these partners do not report directly to City Council, but rather Council has representation on the governance bodies they report to. City Council has no influence over the education component of the budget as this is determined by the Province of Ontario.

The service partner portion of the Budget will be presented to Council on January 17, 2024, and is expected to be approved on January 31, 2024.

For more details about the City's budget process, visit barrie.ca/budget.

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