



Niagara-on-the-Lake Council Finalizes 2021 Budget

For Immediate Release

January 28, 2021

-Niagara-on-the-Lake- At a Special Council Meeting on Wednesday, January 27, 2021, Town Council approved the 2021 Budget with a final Operating Budget of \$37,327,452 and a Capital Budget of \$10,404,287.

	Operating Budget	Capital Budget
2021 Approved Budget	37,327,452	10,404,287
\$ Budget Change from 2020	(126,000)	10,537
% Budget Change from 2020	(0.3%)	0.1%
\$ Levy Increase	440,621	N/A
% Levy Increase After Growth	2.12%	N/A

The Operating levy was set to \$13,126,772. For the average homeowner with an assessment of \$533,482, this is an increase of approximately \$29.67/annually on their tax bill. A storm levy of \$456,998 was also approved, which is a 4.5% increase from 2020. As a result, residents who live in an urban area will see an extra \$3.25/annually on their tax bill, in addition to the \$29.67/annually as stated above.

“The original draft budget began with a proposed 7.68% levy increase. Council requested that Town Staff and the Audit & Finance Committee look for savings and bring down the proposed increase to 3%,” stated Lord Mayor Betty Disero. “I am thrilled to see that despite the financial challenges our community faced in 2020, resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve managed to maintain a balanced budget for the Town, with minimal increase to our taxpayers.”

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s annual budget covers a wide range of services that support Town operations and deliver programs and services required to maintain the high quality of life enjoyed in our community. The Town’s budget is made up of both the Operating and Capital Budgets that are designed to address programs, services, asset management, infrastructure, Council objectives, and more. Town Staff prepare the budgets and Council approves them.

The Operating Budget provides funding for the day-to-day operations of the Town. It is the Operating Budget, as approved by Council, that sets the tax rate. Examples of Operating Budget items include recreation programs, parks, fire services, planning and development, administrative services, roads and sidewalk maintenance, winter operations, library services and more.



Significant drivers of the 2021 budget increase are associated with insurance premiums, legal fees, salaries, and a reduction in various revenues due to COVID implications.

Council approved the development of a Heritage Tax Rebate Program which is a financial tool for municipalities to help property owners maintain and restore their properties for the benefit for the entire community, today and into the future. The existing Heritage Incentive Program will continue to run in parallel with this new initiative. Additional details will be provided in the coming days.

The Capital Budget offers large scale investments in tangible amenities, facilities, and infrastructure. The Capital Budget is funded from tax revenues, reserves, development charges, debentures, and grants. Examples of Capital Budget items include roads resurfacing and replacement, major upgrades or renewal of facilities, construction of parks and amenities, etc.

A few of the approved 2021 Capital projects include the Niagara Nursery School Addition, Concession 6 Road Resurfacing, and Niagara Stone Road (Line 3 to Line 4 Road) Watermain Replacement.

Municipalities were hit particularly hard in 2020 as they managed service continuity for essential services and infrastructure during COVID-19. While financial pressures for municipalities in 2020 were somewhat alleviated through the historic Safe Restart Agreement and Social Services Relief Fund, it is anticipated that health risks will remain for some time. Economic activity is not expected to return to pre-COVID-19 levels until at least 2022.

"Council recognizes the financial hardships many local families and businesses have experienced this past year so approval of a 2021 budget with minimal impact to the taxpayer was of the utmost importance to Council. I am sincerely hopeful that better days are ahead," added Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

"Thank you to the Town's Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer, Kyle Freeborn, Town Staff, Council, and the Audit & Finance Committee for their commitment to our local taxpayers throughout this budget process," stated Marnie Cluckie, Chief Administrative Officer. "There is no doubt that 2020 was a challenging year and that 2021 will also be a time of some economic uncertainty. For this reason, our team worked diligently to present a reasonable budget that maintains core services and upholds the needs of the community while minimizing the impact to taxpayers."



Niagara-on-the-Lake's property tax bill includes levies for the Town, Niagara Region, the Province of Ontario (for education purposes) and the Niagara Health System. At this time, despite budget approval, the total impact on residents' tax bills can not yet be determined. Stay tuned for further budget communication tools, which will be available in the coming weeks.

For more information, please contact:

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