

Council approves 2019 County Budget

Bulky Waste Voucher program eliminated to achieve reduced levy

Cobourg, ON – January 30, 2019 – Council today voted to approve the 2019 Northumberland County Budget with an amendment to reduce the base levy increase to two per cent. Following debate about the proposed 2.5 per cent increase presented in December, Council reviewed options to reduce the levy by a half percentage point, and agreed to eliminate the Bulky Waste Voucher program to achieve this modified target.

“After careful review, we believe we now have a budget in place that supports planned projects and initiatives while being ever-respectful of the pressures on our ratepayers,” indicates Warden John Logel. “While Council faced difficult deliberation in arriving at this outcome, this decision allows us to preserve important long-term infrastructure and programing priorities that will deliver significant value to our community.”

Under the Bulky Waste Voucher program, each residence in the County could dispose of up to 100 kilograms of residential waste at no charge, one time annually; a value of approximately \$11.50. Eliminating this program will deliver the \$268,000 savings necessary to achieve the reduced base levy. The elimination of this program will take immediate effect; vouchers scheduled to be mailed out before the end of January 2019 will no longer be distributed.

County CAO Jennifer Moore points out that while this program will no longer be available, “With the introduction of the long-awaited organics collection program starting in September 2019, residents are likely to see off-sets in their waste disposal costs. People will have less waste going into their garbage bags, and so will be spending less on bag tags.”

The \$123 million County budget includes the two per cent base levy requirement, as well as a Dedicated Infrastructure Levy of 0.3 per cent for investments in the maintenance and rebuild of roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure. The estimated increase to a median household in Northumberland County is projected to be \$18—down from the \$24 originally forecast. This estimate is subject to change based on tax policy and information from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporate (MPAC), both of which will be finalized in the spring.

The County levy will fund approximately 50 per cent of the 2019 Budget. The County will generate the remaining 50 per cent of funds required through a combination of grants and subsidies from other levels of government, as well as revenue-generating activities such as property leasing and the sale of recycled materials from the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF).

Highlights from this budget include:

- Transition to two-stream recycling and the launch of a new organic waste (Green Bin) collection service.

- Advancements in the redevelopment of the Golden Plough Lodge long-term care home.
- Launch of detailed design for the new Campbellford Bridge.
- Completion of an affordable housing strategy, with a focus on increasing the supply of rental housing at a variety of affordability depths.
- Completion of a Natural Heritage System Master Plan to guide development in a way that preserves and enhances our natural environment for future generations.
- Development of a Digital Strategy to guide the County's digital transformation activities, as well as launch of a new corporate website.
- Ground-breaking and construction of the new Trent Hills Emergency Centre.
- Surface treatment for over 120 km of municipal and County roads.
- Upgrades to County social housing.
- Workforce development, attraction and diversity initiatives.

Final budget documents will be available on the County website as of Monday, February 4th at:
www.northumberlandcounty.ca/Budget2019.