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March 9, 2021

[Pickering eyes lowest tax increase in 20 years](#)

Budget will come before council on March 22

by Kristen Calis

Pickering council is looking to pass the lowest property tax increase Pickering residents have seen in 20 years.

The owner of a single-detached home valued at \$612,000 will pay an increase of \$28.89 from last year.

The executive committee passed on Thursday, March 4, a current budget of \$70.8 million and a capital budget of \$73 million. It will come before council for final approval on March 22.

The total proposed tax increase to the City of Pickering's net budget is 1.45 per cent. When combined with the proposed increase for the Durham Region (1.99 per cent) and education portions of the tax bill, the overall tax increase Pickering residents will see on their bill is 1.54 per cent.

A slide provided by staff shows Pickering's levy increase is the second lowest of Durham's lakeshore municipalities, after Oshawa, which is reporting an increase of 1.41 per cent.

City treasurer Stan Karwowski said the city is asking residents to pay \$5.55 per day to help fund municipal services.

The budget was based on assumptions that the city will move to a "new normal" in the fourth quarter of 2021, and it is planning for events such as the Santa Claus Parade and Christmas tree lighting.

The city's rate stabilization reserve has been built up over several years and it has a projected balance of \$11.1 million as of Dec. 31, 2021.

"That gives us the strength and flexibility to meet today's demands and uncertainty in the future," Karwowski said.

After the meeting started, the city got word it's receiving an additional \$1.6 million in funding from the province. Pickering Mayor Dave Ryan confirmed staff will look for ways to employ those dollars in time for when the budget comes back for final approval.

Karwowski encouraged residents to take advantage of the city's [COVID-19 tax deferral program](#), which gives eligible Pickering residents whose finances have directly been affected by COVID-19, a three-month, interest-free property tax deferral this year.

“So far we’ve had 18 applications and 18 have been approved,” Karwowski said. “So the program is working and we’re targeting the people who need financial assistance today.”

The city also has a grant program for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities. Karwowski says the city has seen more people applying who are 80 and above.

PICKERING BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

1. The city will hire three new firefighters and plans to hire four more in both 2022 and 2023, when a new station is built in Seaton.
2. An additional \$51,000 will go toward bylaw enforcement to hire additional staffing needed for the waterfront and park areas from mid-May to Labour Day
3. An investment of \$121,300 will help Pickering become compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
4. To harvest Eurasian water-milfoil ([an invasive species taking over Frenchman’s Bay](#)), the city is investing \$50,000.
5. The city will spend \$85,000 to hire a diversity and inclusion consultant to facilitate the completion of a diversity and inclusion strategy.
6. The city plans to acquire land to help build a bridge that crosses Hwy. 401 from Notion Road to Squires Beach Road.
7. The city plans to build a new Pickering Heritage and Community Centre and is budgeting \$23 million this year to go toward the construction of the new multi-purpose facility that is anticipated to include a pool, seniors and youth rooms, and a library.
8. Consulting fees for a Seaton Community Centre are in the budget for \$70,000.
9. The city plans to acquire waterfront properties to the tune of \$3.1 million for future Waterfront Trail construction.

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March 7, 2021

[Durham municipalities are receiving more in provincial funding. Here is what each will get](#)

by Keith Gilligan

The coffers for Durham Region and its eight municipalities are a little fuller these days.

The provincial government announced it was providing \$500 million to municipalities to help with operating costs caused by COVID-19.

Durham Region will be receiving \$7.87 million, along with another \$8.2 million in Phase 3 Safe Restart Transit funding.

Regional Chair John Henry said in a statement, "On behalf of the Region, I am pleased that we will be receiving nearly \$7.9 million in 2021 COVID-19 Recovery Funding and \$8.2 million in Phase 3 Safe Restart Transit funding as part of the Province's latest relief funding announcement. As our focus turns to vaccination, restoration and recovery, we thank the province for their continued support that allows us to advance Durham Region's priorities — both today and in the future."

Oshawa will receive \$3.25 million and Whitby will get \$2.23 million.

Whitby Mayor Don Mitchell noted in a statement, "Our municipality is pleased to receive an additional \$2.23 million in funding, adding to the \$3.91 million in funding Whitby received last year from our federal and provincial partners. This investment will help us continue to offset the financial impact of COVID-19 on the town's finances, including increased cost of delivering essential services to our residents during the pandemic. It will also help us to keep important growth-related capital projects on track, such as new roads and recreation facilities."

Ajax will be receiving \$1.9 million and Clarington will get \$1.73 million.

In a four-part tweet, Ajax Mayor Shaun Collier stated, "I am pleased to share that Ajax will be receiving \$1.9 million from the province to support our 2021 operating costs. These funds will go a long way to ensuring the town continues to provide high-quality services to residents, while managing the unpredictable effects of COVID-19."

On behalf of Ajax Council, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to @PBethlenfalvy, @SteveClarkPC, @FordNation and @RodPhillips01 for today's announcement of additional funding to municipalities. (1/4)<https://t.co/LNq3dSXzRB>

Related content

Scugog to pocket another \$400K for COVID-19 costs

— Shaun Collier #StrongerTogether (@mayor_collier) March 4, 2021

"Our council has worked to ensure minimal burden on taxpayers during the 2021 budget process despite major revenue losses, so I want to reiterate my appreciation to both @FordNation and @JustinTrudeau for continuing to recognize our challenges and providing their support," Collier added.

Pickering will receive just under \$1.6 million.

Mayor Dave Ryan noted, "On behalf of the City of Pickering and its members of council, I want to thank the province of Ontario for this funding, which will help us deal with the continued impact of COVID-19. We have had to incur unplanned costs with respect to implementing key health and safety protocols and migrating to a virtual office business model. Additionally, we've experienced a significant drop in facility and program revenues. This new funding is very much welcomed and will be put to good use.

"As we enter into the second year of the pandemic, it's critical that we continue to deliver high-quality and meaningful programs and services to both residents and businesses, because community building remains one of our highest priorities," Ryan added.

Scugog Township will get \$429,360, while Uxbridge will get \$397,155 and Brock Township \$262,400.

"Municipalities are important partners in the fight against COVID-19," Peter Bethlenfalvy, the MPP for Pickering-Uxbridge, the minister of finance and president of the treasury board, said in a statement. "We know the global pandemic has created significant financial challenges for communities across the province. That's why we have been there with support from the very beginning. I encourage our federal partners to step forward with additional investments as all three governments work together to protect people's health and jobs."