

Investing in our roads, pathways and flood-mitigation infrastructure

With 75 per cent of the capital budget dedicated to infrastructure spending, this budget continues our commitment to maintain and upgrade roads, parks and water infrastructure, enhancing the mobility of residents and decreasing our flood risk.

Paving the way for better roads and vibrant communities

The City is investing \$51 million to resurface and preserve pavement on many roads. Ottawa's roads are battered by a wide range and fluctuation of temperatures over the past two years, so the City is increasing the pothole repair budget by seven per cent, up to \$9.8 million.

While the Elgin Street renewal will be in its final stages, the next major road construction project is the \$49-million Montreal Road renewal that will increase mobility for all road users and rejuvenate Vanier's historic core.

Investing in watermains, sewers and stormwater infrastructure

Protecting our waterways, reducing the risk of flooding and effectively distributing drinking water to homes and businesses are key investments for Draft Budget 2020. A \$49.3-million investment will repair and improve sewers, watermains and water distribution systems.

The Wet Weather Infrastructure Master Plan, with a \$4-million budget in 2020, will develop programs that manage the capacity of the sewer systems and reduce both risk of property flooding and impacts related to combined sewer overflows. Further flood-mitigation efforts include \$15 million to repair and replace culverts, including \$9 million for Ottawa's rural areas.

Upgrading parks and other City facilities

While budget investments will fund repairs to City parking facilities, upgrades to outdoor tennis courts, new lighting for parks and pathways, outdoor rink and pool equipment, and improvements to public works yards, each ward will also receive one-time funding of \$100,000 to upgrade recreation facilities and renew infrastructure in parks.

Improving winter operations

The past few Ottawa winters have seen unpredictable weather patterns, consisting of frequent freeze-thaw cycles and major snow and ice storms. The City maintains a vast network of roads – 6,000 kilometres – along with sidewalks, pathways and parking lots. The winter operations budget is increasing by \$5.6 million, for a total of \$78.3 million. Of the \$5.6-million increase, approximately \$2.9 million will go to sidewalk maintenance.

Supporting strong communities

The hallmark of any great city goes beyond its economic strength and growth. It is measured by how it provides for all residents – especially the most vulnerable – an equal opportunity to share and participate in the community’s growth, vibrancy and prosperity.

While past efforts and significant investments in affordable housing and homelessness solutions have helped us move forward, plenty of work and funding are still required. Draft Budget 2020 places a strong emphasis on people-first investments, making affordable housing and public transportation key priorities.

Investing in affordable housing and homelessness benefits all residents

Strong affordable housing and homelessness investment strategies help create a stronger, more resilient and sustainable economy – benefitting all residents. Greater access to suitable, affordable and supportive housing provides opportunities for people to improve their wellbeing, stability and community engagement. It also reduces the costs of health care, emergency services, corrections and other services associated with homelessness.

The draft budget continues past funding priorities by proposing an additional \$15 million to create more affordable and supportive housing. This is in addition to the \$31 million the City currently invests in community-based housing and homelessness programs and supports.

Increasing transit service

In September, the first stage of the O-Train Confederation Line opened, starting the beginning of a dramatic shift in how residents get around the city. Despite early growing pains, the O-Train Confederation Line now carries up to 10,700 passengers per hour in each direction, alleviating bus traffic from the downtown core. The line carried more than three million passengers in its first month of operation.

Draft Budget 2020 includes \$43 million to replace buses that reached the end of their 15-year life cycles and adds \$7.5 million to expand bus service to better connect customers to Confederation Line stations. This funding will be used to increase the number of standby buses at key locations and increase capacity on high-ridership routes, possibly adding more early and late trips. Service needs are being reviewed for Orléans routes connecting at Blair Station, Barrhaven routes connecting at Tunney’s Pasture Station and for service to National Defence Headquarters. Staff are also reviewing connections for fast-growing areas in Barrhaven South, Ottawa South, Stittsville, Kanata, Orléans and Richmond.

A \$2.85-million investment is also being made to enhance the customer experience at Transitway and O-Train stations, with another \$900,000 to improve bus stops and shelters and \$500,000 to add accessibility features.

Work continues on Stage 2, which will extend the Confederation Line farther east and west, and the Trillium Line farther south, with a connection to the airport.

Improving long-term care

Draft Budget 2020 invests an additional \$4.4 million in providing quality and professional services for residents in the City's long-term care homes.

Enhancing public safety

Ottawa is a growing city that covers a vast geographical area. The draft budget will fund an additional 14 full-time paramedic staff along with additional vehicles to better respond to medical emergencies.

The Ottawa Police Service will hire 30 additional officers to help protect the safety and security of our communities.

Investing in agencies that help others

The City is proud to have community partners and non-profit organizations that help support the many residents who need a helping hand. The budget maintains support to local agencies, investing \$24.5 million in community funding to help residents facing the greatest needs find the services they require – this includes a two-per-cent inflationary increase over 2019 worth \$475,000 and an additional investment of \$100,000 in project funding.

The budget also commits an additional \$500,000 one-time funding to agencies as the City transitions to a new funding framework.

Arts and culture

Draft Budget 2020 adds an extra two per cent in direct funding to arts, heritage and cultural organizations, increasing total funding by \$255,000 for a total budget of \$10.7 million. These municipal arts and culture investments help cultivate a distinctive sense of place, fostering a shared identity and sense of belonging.

The City's theatre, cultural and arts services will see an increase of \$584,000 to upgrade customer service technologies and theatre equipment at Shenkman Arts Centre and Meridian Theatres. This funding will also help repair and maintain other cultural facilities and museums and preserve historical artifacts and art pieces.

Investing in the environment

The City is making the environment a priority in its funding, policy development, management and operations. Draft Budget 2020 includes key investments to preserve and protect Ottawa’s natural habitat – including our waterways – and reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Reducing transit’s environmental footprint

The opening of the first stage of the O-Train Confederation Line had a positive imprint on our environment. In addition to reducing the number of bus and car trips, the electric trains reduce carbon dioxide emissions and other particulate matter into our atmosphere. The line is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 110,000 tonnes per year. The annual monetary value of these environmental benefits is estimated at almost \$32 million.

A \$6-million investment for new electric buses will help further reduce the environmental footprint of OC Transpo.

Protecting our water and helping communities

Draft Budget 2020 continues to invest in maintaining our high drinking-water quality and effective stormwater management. These investments include \$8.5 million to modify and upgrade equipment at the water purification plants, \$11.7 million to upgrade sewage pumping stations and funding to assess and upgrade stormwater management facilities.

The draft budget also includes \$17.5 million towards ongoing rehabilitation of the City’s wastewater treatment plant, the Robert O. Pickard Environmental Centre. The upgrades would reduce the City’s greenhouse gas emissions and utility costs and allow the plant to provide full wastewater treatment during a sustained power outage.

Protecting air and land at Trail Waste Facility

Draft Budget 2020 includes environmental protection with capital funding for solid waste, including funding to complete a geomembrane at the City’s landfill to act as a barrier between contaminants and the ground (a \$22-million, multi-year project) and \$1 million towards a permanent methane gas-collection system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Conserving energy

Draft Budget 2020 proposes \$3 million per year for an increased energy conservation program to improve the energy efficiency of City buildings.



Draft Budget 2020 – Backgrounders

An affordable approach for responsible growth,
mobility and housing

Planting trees

The City will continue to invest \$1.5 million annually to plant 500,000 trees through this Term of Council, regenerating Ottawa's forest cover.

A revised tree by-law is also being developed to coordinate with the City's Urban Forest Management Plan, ensuring trees are considered in development and implementing new rules around replanting and protection.

Prudent financial management

The big differences between municipal government and federal and provincial governments are the number of revenue streams that fund their budgets and the impact on residents.

City services impact residents' basic household needs – from drinking water piped into your home to the snow plow clearing your street. Municipal governments have limited revenue, consisting primarily of property taxes and service fees, such as for water, transit and recreation.

These are key services that affect the quality of life of you and your family. Draft Budget 2020 strikes a balance between providing the level and types of services that residents expect and ensuring affordability for all residents

Part of this fiscal responsibility is being responsive to changes in the economic environment and possible budget pressures over the next year. Undefined funding from both levels of government and uncertainty about the full extent of new provincial legislation affect the municipal budget.

Maintaining solid credit

The City continues to have the highest possible credit rating, achieving AA by Standard and Poor's Rating Services and Aaa by Moody's Investor Services.

The City's credit ratings are based on several factors, including high levels of liquidity, a lower than average debt burden, a stable economic base, long-range planning and the economic outlook. The ratings reflect strong fiscal outcomes and prudent financial management.

The City's excellent credit rating helps investors and creditors measure the City's ability to meet its financial obligations. Excellent credit ratings mean that it is less expensive for the City to borrow money.

Committing to affordability for residents

The three-per-cent property tax increase proposed in Draft Budget 2020 balances affordability for residents and responsiveness to address inflationary costs and any other emerging budget pressures.

Narrowing the infrastructure funding gap

The Province will not double the provincial gas tax contribution to municipalities, as promised by the previous administration. That doubling was built into the City's Transit Affordability Plan.

In 2019, the City committed to use a portion of the one per cent citywide levy to invest \$9.8 million per year to narrow the infrastructure gap – the difference between what the City spends and what it needs to spend annually to maintain infrastructure in good repair. That one-per-cent infrastructure levy would have eliminated the infrastructure gap in five years, half the time as previously estimated.

To compensate for the loss of provincial gas tax revenue, the City will use the \$9.8 million, originally intended for the infrastructure gap, to now pay for transit capital investments. The City will use the \$58-million one-time federal gas tax funding to continue to invest in infrastructure over the next three years, committing \$20 million in 2020.

This innovative approach allows the property-tax increase to remain at an affordable rate of three per cent while continuing to fund renewal of infrastructure, especially roads.