

For Immediate Release
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COUNCIL APPROVES AN “INVEST IN WELLAND” BUDGET WITH A 2.19% TAX LEVY INCREASE AND .13% DECREASE IN WATER RATES

Welland, ON – Council approved the City of Welland's 2018 Capital and Operating Budgets at last night's Council meeting. The budgets, which include \$13.46 million in capital spending, are focused on strategic investments in infrastructure, maintaining programs and services, and stimulating economic growth. Property owners will see a net tax levy increase of 2.19% on their 2018 tax bills, as a result of combining the city's 2.62% tax levy increase with the Regional and Educational tax rates. This means the average residential property assessed at \$210,000 will result in a property increase of \$71 starting in 2018.

Operating & Capital Budget Highlights:

- \$3 million - total in roadway investment
- \$1 million - design and drawings for new fire hall headquarters
- \$1.3 million - Edgar-Elgin area storm sewers/roadwork and sidewalks
- \$75,000 - canal trail improvements
- \$150,000 - green energy projects
- \$150,000 - ash tree removal due to Emerald Ash Borer infestation
- \$200,000 - Woodlawn Cemetery expansion – Phase Three
- \$390,000 - Memorial Park redevelopment – Phase One
- \$150,000 - asphalt patching
- \$930,000 - sidewalk replacement and missing links
- \$1.2 million - Aqueduct Street North roadwork
- \$150,000 - Pine Street road replacement

The 2018 Water/Wastewater Capital Budget will invest \$4,367,020 in wastewater projects and \$6,359,422 toward waterworks projects. City staff will continue to focus on building a sustainable water infrastructure in 2018 and prioritize sewer rehabilitation and watermain replacement. Users are now seeing the benefits of long-term investments in the city's infrastructure with a decrease in water rates beginning in the new year. The average 180 m³ residential water consumer will see a yearly decrease of .13% on their water rates.

Water/Wastewater Budget Highlights:

- \$375,000 - Margery Street sewer replacement
- \$2.4 million - Edgar/Elgin area sanitary sewer separation & waterworks
- \$750,000 - Nelles Road sanitary & watermain
- \$1 million - Prince Charles Drive sewer separation
- \$375,000 - Margery Street watermain replacement
- \$ 675,065 - Aqueduct Street North watermain replacement
- \$1.96 million – Cast Iron Watermain Replacement Program

The city's Budget Review Committee (BRC) was focused on the completion of the 2018 Budget process by mid-December in order to assist Welland city staff in initiating capital projects with the start of the new year.

"I'd like to thank staff for all of their hard work and Council for their active participation and thoughtful discussion," said Councillor John Mastroianni, Chair of the Budget Review Committee. "I can assure the citizens of Welland that Council is committed to financial sustainability and the 2018 Budget is focused on ensuring that our community continues to grow and prosper."

"The 2018 Budget protects core services, invests in infrastructure and strategic initiatives, and supports the increased growth and development we're experiencing in the City," said Welland Mayor Frank Campion. "The Budget Review Committee, working closely with staff, have achieved a balance between being fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars and making investments that align with the positive momentum and allow us to capitalize on new opportunities."

"Our City, as well as our organization, is experiencing a lot of change at a fast pace. The 2018 Budget meets our current needs but also makes investments to help us anticipate and respond to changes and trends in the future," said CAO Gary Long. "City staff are looking forward to implementing the budget's key priorities and capital projects."

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