



TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH FRONTENAC

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For Immediate Release

January 28, 2021

South Frontenac Council Approves 2021 Budget

At its regular meeting on January 26, 2021, South Frontenac Council approved its 2021 operating and capital budgets for the Township, adopting a financial plan for the year that maintains or enhances existing services, funds numerous capital projects and advances a number of priorities from Council's [2019-2022 Strategic Plan](#) – all while delivering an average tax payer increase of 1.5%.

In keeping with its vision of being “*Natural, Vibrant and Growing – a Progressive Rural Leader*”, the 2021 budget continues the Township’s focus on modernizing its operations, investing in its infrastructure, addressing emerging needs such as housing and climate change, and showing regional leadership by offering new or enhanced services for our residents.

Although South Frontenac didn’t experience the same sort of financial challenges as many urban municipalities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing cost of winter control and waste collection activities, coupled with no phase-in tax assessment this year, still posed challenges for the 2021 budget.

“Despite the many pressures facing the municipality going into 2021, I am proud that Council was able to adopt a budget that not only meets our operational and capital needs moving forward, but also takes into consideration the financial impacts that have been felt by residents and tax payers,” explained Mayor Ron Vandewal. “Our constituents are our first priority, and although we cannot address the social, physical, and mental hardships felt by residents during the pandemic, finding a balance between providing the desired services and respecting household incomes is always the goal of staff and Council,” said Vandewal.

In recognition of the financial hardships some residents and businesses experienced in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Council took the significant step of allocating \$250,000 in the 2021 budget to upcoming targeted relief programs.

“While a low tax rate benefits all ratepayers in South Frontenac, this additional targeted funding is intended for those who need it the most,” continued Mayor Vandewal. “Township staff will be working with local agencies in the coming months to identify the best way to get this funding into the hands of those most adversely affected by the pandemic.”

The final budget represents \$36,700,009 in operating and capital expenditures and reserve transfers, requiring \$20,615,543 to be raised from taxation. As a result, a property with the average assessed value of \$271,013 will see an increase of \$24.40 (1.5%) on their 2021 Township tax bill.

“Council and staff have worked hard over the years to approve responsible budgets while contributing sufficient funds to our reserves so we can address infrastructure needs and growth pressures when the time comes.” said Neil Carbone, Chief Administrative Officer. “The 2021 budget reflects that ability, with significant investments in our roads, fire and emergency services and recreation facilities, while at the same time maintaining valued programs and enhancing our service delivery in areas such as building and winter control.”

The Township’s overarching strategic priorities set in 2019 include; 1) Positioning South Frontenac as a regional leader, 2) Promoting and supporting growth that meets the community’s needs while maintaining the integrity of our natural environment, 3) Ensuring the organizational capacity to deliver cost effective services in a changing world, and 4) To be a catalyst for the creation of vibrant and complete communities.

In support of these priorities, the 2021 budget approves investments in the following:

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- A new Fire Department Fleet plan which will reduce costs while improving access to private lanes for medical and other calls;
- Volunteer Fire Fighter recruitment;
- Road widening and upgrades to Carrying Place Rd, Bunker Hill Rd, and Deyos Rd;
- Significant upgrades to Hinchinbrooke Rd and Battersea Rd;
- Resurfacing of Sydenham Rd, and surface treatments on a number of other roads;
- Continuation of Battersea Downtown Revitalization with the installation of sidewalks;
- Investment in in-house winter control and roadside mowing operations
- Construction of a new Station 8 Fire Hall between Sunbury and Battersea;
- Upgrades and expansion of the current Storrington Centre in Sunbury;
- Funding for an upcoming Lake Study Grant Program;
- Accessible washrooms at Bowes Park;
- Resurfacing of courts at McMullen Park;
- Boat Launch upgrades at Bunker Hill/Deyos Rd;
- Frontenac Community Arena ice pad replacement;
- Completion of a Verona Housing Masterplan;
- Continuation of the Official Plan review process;
- Funding for future Climate Change adaptation and mitigation initiatives;
- Continued financial support for numerous community organizations and not for profit agencies.

Council also directed staff to develop an asset management plan and schedule for improvements to the Township's numerous gravel roads, to be brought back to Council later this year for consideration.

"Even with the pandemic, 2020 was a year where we accomplished a lot and went through some big changes – particularly in our Development Services Department where the Building and Planning Divisions took on new services and welcomed new staff and software," explained Mayor Vandewal. "With those resources in place, 2021 is the year when we turn our focus to other opportunities for modernization. Accommodating growth means providing opportunities for more meaningful public input into how our programs and services should evolve; as a result, communications and engagement will also receive additional focus in 2021."

Further information about the 2021 budget will be circulated to rate payers with their Interim Tax Notice in March. For more detailed information on the 2021 Budget, please visit our website at <https://www.southfrontenac.net/budget/>.

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