

A sensible approach to the budget

EDITORIAL

Caledon council is faced with approving a fiscally reasonable budget while ensuring work is done to enhance the community.

For every dollar of property tax collected, just 39 cents stay with the town. The Region of Peel keeps 31 cents and school boards collect 30 cents.

At this time, residents face a 2.66 per cent property tax increase when the budget numbers and a tax levy are accounted for - prior to Tuesday's meeting.

Homeowners of a house valued at \$590,000 may see an additional \$131.82 to their property tax bill.

The proposed budget features funding to expand the Caledon East Community Complex, Town Hall and Provincial Offices, \$18.2 million in the road's capital program, \$2.4 million in the bridge capital program, money for the official plan review for the 2041 visioning and money to phase in public transit among many other initiatives.

One of the main issues, throughout budget meetings, that councillors have heard is that residents want roads to be fixed. Nobody wants to drive on gravel, sand or fall in pot hole damaging their expensive car.

The budget has the town spending millions on roads to ensure residents have a smooth ride, however all the funds can't be spent on one specific area. The town only has enough money to spend and it needs to be allocated to projects all across the area in each and every ward.

The budget numbers the town has may seem staggering but the town needs to ensure that money is spent in by law enforcement, snow clearing, road maintenance, recreation facilities and programs, parks and trails, library services, infrastructure projects, fire and emergency services and many more.

Yes, roads are important. I for one drive a Subaru Impreza that's quite low to the ground. I cringe every time I drove over a pot hole hoping my suspension is okay (I thought about installing coilovers to lower my car but I won't be doing that anymore).

I, like many other residents, want roads to be fixed in the community. However, roads can only receive enough money. Town staff and councillors are trying to ensure you continue to enjoy the services already provided while embarking on new programs to keep up with the growing population in the municipality.

Caledon is only growing at this point. You have areas such as Mayfield, Caledon East and Bolton that continue to see an influx of new families. New resources need to be allocated to these new residents while those in Palgrave, Alton and Inglewood, among others, are not neglected.

A town only has enough money to operate a municipality. It can receive money by either raising your property tax bill or cutting services. Residents may be more upset if services are cut to favour others so the only logical approach is to raise taxes. That's why it's important that councillors and town administration study the proposed budget carefully while ensuring residents receive the same services and can look forward to new programs or fixtures. They're already looking at efficiencies by trying to cut back on the town hall expansion and giving firefighters more members to serve you in case of emergency.