

Greater Sudbury City Council passes 2011 budget

The City of Greater Sudbury tonight approved the 2011 municipal budget with a 3.5 per cent tax increase.

The City faced a number of financial pressures in developing the 2011 budget, such as approximately \$8 million in additional costs resulting from contractual obligations, OMERS, and increased investment in Fire, Police, Pioneer Manor and the Greater Sudbury Housing Corporation.

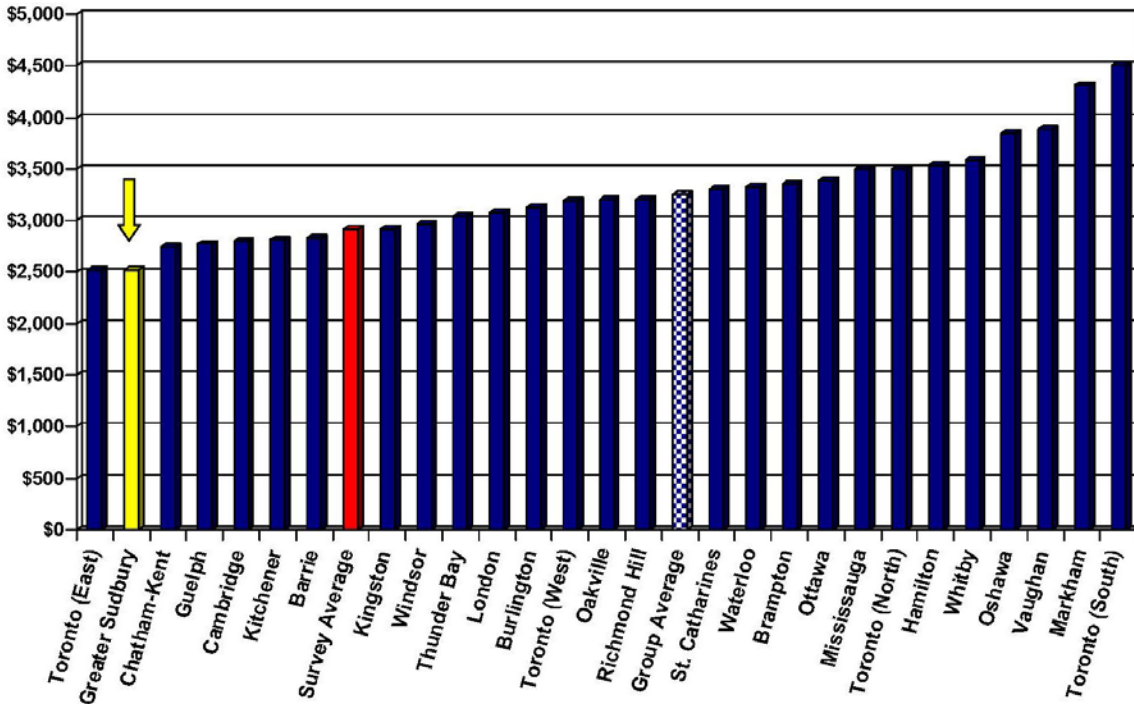
As part of the 2011 municipal budget, City Council invested in a number of key areas, including public safety, environmental health, social services, sustainable infrastructure, healthy community, and enhanced quality of life for residents. Funded projects range from repairs to an arena parking lot to improve usability, to significant investments to reduce the spread of Eurasian Milfoil in eight area lakes. Some of the budget's highlights include:

- A capital investment of \$38.6 million has been made to rehabilitate local road surfaces, bridges, culverts and sidewalks in 2011.
- A one-time \$750,000 increase has been added to the summer maintenance budget in 2011 for improved upkeep and protection of roads and related infrastructure.
- A \$174,000 pilot project has been approved to test the effectiveness of Milfoil Weevils in reducing the spread of Eurasian Water Milfoil in eight area lakes.
- Funding for the first year of a four-year plan to develop the Junction Creek Waterway Park has the support of Council with a \$75,000 investment.
- In 2011, \$35,871 will be invested in pavement markings, signs and wide curb lanes to encourage bicycles as a mode of transit.
- Continued support for emergency shelter services will provide top-up funding of \$705,000 in 2011.
- The physician recruitment and retention program, which has attracted 31 general practitioners and provided incentives to 28 specialists since its inception in 2008, will receive \$400,000 and the City of Lakes Family Health Team will receive \$30,000 for a Chelmsford clinic.
- Funding of \$250,000 has been approved in 2011 and in 2012 to hire five police officers over the next two years.
- In all, improvements to parks and playgrounds received \$470,000 in one-time funding.
- Transit services will receive funding to enhance ridership growth initiatives and permanently phase in Sunday routes.

Work on the 2012 municipal budget will begin shortly, with a Council retreat to discuss priorities, policies, and potential efficiencies and savings.

A BMA study comparing Greater Sudbury to other municipalities with a population of over 100,000 people presented the following chart of relative property taxes in 2010 for a residential detached bungalow. The full study can be found online at the City's website:

http://www.greatersudbury.ca/content/dept_cfo/documents/2010_Comparison_Sudbury100000.pdf



For more information about the City of Greater Sudbury's 2011 municipal budget, please visit www.greatersudbury.ca

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Background on the 2011 Municipal Budget

The municipal budget also incorporates the City's share of the outside Boards' budgets, including Greater Sudbury Police Services, the Sudbury & District Health Unit, and the Nickel District Conservation Authority.

The municipal budget includes both a capital and an operating component:

- The capital budget is dedicated to one-time expenditures and projects such as road construction, building upgrades and acquisitions, vehicle renewal and replacements. The Finance Committee of Greater Sudbury Council approved a capital budget of \$90 million for the 2011 tax year.
- The operating budget is dedicated to day-to-day operations, including programs and services in more than 30 diverse sectors such as policing, public health, recycling and leisure programs.

An overall rate increase of 5.1% per cent on water/wastewater bills was approved for 2011, approximately the equivalent of an extra \$60 for a typical household using 360 cubic metres of water per year. The rate increase provides an additional \$875,000 of capital funding, in addition to the \$840,000 of Sustainable Capital Asset Management Program (SCAMP), which sets funds aside for repair and maintenance of capital infrastructure. The water/wastewater capital budget was reduced by \$2.3 million in 2010. The 5.1% rate increase approved by the Finance Committee ensures that vital repairs can be made to the city's aging infrastructure.

The impact of the 3.5 per cent municipal tax increase varies within the city, dependent on levels of fire and transit services. The following applies the municipal increase to an average property assessed at \$169,320 for the 2011 tax year (\$152,880 in 2010):

- The former City of Sudbury, served by full-time firefighters and urban public transit, would see a tax increase of 3.7 per cent or \$86.
- Valley East, served by a blend of full-time and volunteer firefighters and commuter public transit, would see a tax increase of 3.4 per cent or \$73.
- Properties served by volunteer firefighters and commuter public transit would see a tax increase of 3.1 per cent or \$64.
- Properties served by volunteer firefighters, but receiving no public transit service, would see a tax increase of 3.1 per cent or \$61.

For a property assessed at \$200,000 in 2011, those same areas reflect increases of:

- 3.7 per cent or \$102;
- 3.4 per cent or \$86;
- 3.1 per cent or \$76; and
- 3.1 per cent or \$73.

All increases to the tax rates are subject to property tax policy finalization, which will occur later in April. The final tax bill is scheduled for distribution in May