

# Roads, bridges and west harbour focus of Hamilton's \$484M capital budget for 2021

**More than half of the money will go toward transit, roads, sidewalks, bridges and traffic**

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The part of Hamilton's capital budget that comes from local property taxes is increasing 0.4 per cent in 2021, or \$3.6 million. (Bobby Hristova/CBC)

Hamilton city council has approved a \$484.4 million gross capital budget for 2021, with an emphasis on transit, roads, bridges, sidewalks and traffic.

It comes as the pandemic has created "the deepest recession since the 1930s," according to the city.

The city release says the budget will also focus on affordable housing, the west harbour waterfront and the development of a business park near the airport.

It also says the investment in roads, bridges, sidewalks and traffic "have potential to contribute positively to the city's climate action goals."

The tax-supported capital budget means an "increase of approximately \$13 per year on the average residential property assessed at \$380,300," city spokesperson Michelle Williams said in an email.

The capital budget is just one of three budgets the city approves each year. It also approves an operating, which is typically most substantial tax hike, and the rate budget, which determines people's water rates.

The rate budget, approved in November, comes with an increase of about 4.28 per cent to people's water rates. That means average resident who spends \$785 each year consuming 200 cubic metres of water will see a hike of \$32.20. That takes effect next week.

The operating budget is typically approved in March.

In a media release about the capital budget, Mayor Fred Eisenberger says the city knows people are hurting.

"That's why we are holding the line on taxes as much as possible while at the same time maximizing the key capital investments in things like roads, bridges, sidewalks, transit and affordable housing which will create jobs and drive our prosperity forward," he said.

"We are supporting our economy and enhancing employment opportunities while maintaining our infrastructure to the best degree possible."

Here's how the money will be spent:

- \$192.9 million transit initiatives.
- \$114.2 million toward roads, bridges, sidewalks and traffic.
- \$39.7 million toward corporate, long-term care and recreation facilities.
- \$30.3 million toward housing initiatives.
- \$20.6 million toward parks, forestry and open space.
- \$13.9 million toward planning, economic development, tourism and culture.
- \$13.7 million toward outside boards and agencies.
- \$13.3 million toward fire and paramedic services.
- \$10.6 million toward central fleet vehicle and equipment replacement.
- \$9.0 million toward West Harbour strategic initiatives.
- \$8.0 million toward development charge exemptions.
- \$7.6 million toward information technology.
- \$6.5 million toward waste management initiatives.
- \$4.1 million toward other projects.