

City continues investments in safe, affordable drinking water

Feb. 11, 2019 — With millions of dollars pouring into water infrastructure investments St. Catharines residents can continue to have confidence in the delivery of safe, affordable drinking water for years to come.

On Monday night, following a public meeting on proposed rates, City Council approved the 2020 Water and Wastewater Budget, earmarking roughly \$9.3 million in investments for the City's water and wastewater infrastructure. The 2020 investments represent the first steps in an updated 10-year water and wastewater financial plan.

“Clean, affordable drinking water is something every resident relies on, it is one of our core responsibilities,” said Mayor Walter Sendzik, adding, “by looking to the future, and planning for changes, be it growth or the impacts of climate change, we are ensuring residents will always be able to turn on the taps and remain confident in what comes out.”

The approved budget includes significant investment in infrastructure repairs and replacement, including \$6 million for watermain replacement and \$3.3 million for sanitary sewer infrastructure replacement.

Also included in the water and wastewater rates are amounts paid to the Niagara Region of \$34 million for the operation of their portion of the system. Overall the Regional cost represent 61 per cent of the annual water and wastewater budgets.

This year's budget will also see the completion of upgrades of household meters with the installation of the final 850 automated water meters through the ongoing Automated Meter Reading Project.

The investments fall in line with core pillars of the City's Strategic Plan, contributing to economic prosperity through optimized and effective maintenance of infrastructure and environmental stewardship through updated designs for sanitary sewers.

With investments into the long-term sustainability of the water system residents will see an increase to their bills in 2020. The average rate payer will pay an additional \$51 this year.

“We're moving forward on investments to our infrastructure as indicated in the City's 10-year Water and Wastewater Financial Plan approved by Council in 2019, not only to ensure safe affordable delivery, but also reasonable rate increases for our system

users,” said City Treasurer Kristine Douglas, adding, “the City’s water and wastewater rates are the second lowest in Niagara.”

- 30 -

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