

City to finish year in better fiscal health with Safe Restart funding

Dec. 16, 2020 — Today’s announcement from the Province of Ontario, providing a total of roughly \$2.7 million in funding, will ensure the City finishes the year in good financial health, while providing a buffer for COVID-19 impacts on 2021 operations.

Today the Province announced allocations under the federal-provincial Safe Restart — Phase 2 program. In total \$2.05 million was allocated under Phase 2 to St. Catharines, based on the City’s year-end 2020 financial forecasts submitted as part of its application in early November.

The amount aligns with the 2020 year-end forecast submitted and the assumptions made in the development of the 2021 budget; specifically, that funding would be coming from upper-tier governments and that the City would not carry an operating deficit into 2021 with this assistance.

“The announcement of the second phase of Safe Restart Agreement funding, is positive news for the City and critical to support our community as we continue our fight against COVID-19, and our recovery efforts,” said Mayor Walter Sendzik. “Thank you to the provincial and federal governments for their support. We will come back stronger by working together as partners.”

Beyond the Phase 2 funding the Province announced an additional \$299-million funding allocation for Ontario municipalities in 2021, with \$726,000 directed to the City of St. Catharines. This further funding will be utilized to offset impacts of the pandemic in 2021, notably further revenue losses that will be realized under tightened restrictions should Niagara move into the Red-Control or Grey-Lockdown levels of public health measures under the Ontario COVID-19 Response Framework.

“These two funding announcements made today will allow the City to close out 2020 in healthier fiscal situation and position the City well to weather the temporary impacts of further control measures in 2021,” said Director of Financial Management Services and City Treasurer Kristine Douglas, adding, “the 2021 funding allocation will assist the City in ensuring that essential services continue to be provided to our residents without the need to further increase taxes.”

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