

## Telephone Town Hall to engage public on 2020 budget

**Oct. 15, 2020** — St. Catharines City Council and City staff will be calling out to residents to gather opinions and ideas about the 2021 operating and capital budgets.

Mayor Walter Sendzik, Councillor Mat Siscoe, the chair of the City's Budget Standing Committee, and City staff will answer questions about the 2021 draft City budget during the annual Telephone Town Hall on Wednesday, Oct. 28, from 7 to 8 p.m.

Now in its sixth year, the Telephone Town Hall operates similar to a radio call-in show, except instead of individuals calling in, the City will call 30,000 households and ask residents to participate. Residents will be randomly called. Anyone who wants to register in advance to participate in the call, or to request not to be called, can do so at [www.stcatharines.ca/BudgetTalk](http://www.stcatharines.ca/BudgetTalk) or by calling Citizens First at 905.688.5600. Those wishing to have their number added or deleted from the call list must do so before Tuesday, Oct. 27 at noon.

"This year's public input process for the City budget is more critical than ever," said Coun. Mat Siscoe, chair of the City's budget committee. "As we continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, it has put additional stress on the City and our residents. We need to hear our residents' thoughts so we can move forward in a responsible way."

The City also has a budget engagement tool on [www.EngageSTC.ca](http://www.EngageSTC.ca). The EngageSTC budget tool is an opportunity to learn more about the budget; see how familiar residents are with the budget process; and a forum for residents to share ideas or ask questions. The page will be used as an ongoing opportunity for residents to learn more about the budget process and share their feedback as the budget evolves.

Budget meetings, being conducted as General Committee this year, are also open to the public. They will be streamed live on the City's YouTube, and residents are welcome to submit correspondence or delegation requests regarding items on the General Committee agenda. Visit [www.stcatharines.ca/bsc](http://www.stcatharines.ca/bsc) for more details. The City also holds a statutory public meeting at City Council, prior to approval, allowing residents to share additional input.

"The impact of COVID-19 will be long lasting, and we have some difficult decisions ahead," said Mayor Walter Sendzik. "We need to hear from residents what is most important, so we can move forward with recovery and meeting the City's current and future needs in an affordable, sustainable way."

Visit [www.stcatharines.ca/BudgetTalk](http://www.stcatharines.ca/BudgetTalk) for more about the Telephone Town Hall and other budget information.

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