

City works to reduce potential 9.5% tax increase

Wetaskiwin city council will soon begin budget deliberations to determine the 2023 municipal budget. Before this takes place, council wants to make everyone aware of the potential of an approximated 9.5 per cent tax increase the community is facing, primarily due to the increase in RCMP costs of just over \$800,000.

The RCMP cost increase is the [result of an agreement](#) negotiated between the federal government and the RCMP's union in 2021, resulting in a total salary increase of 23.7 per cent over six years.

Based on an estimated 9.5 per cent tax increase, the average taxpayer can expect the following approximate property tax increase per \$100,000 of assessment:

Residential: \$90 per year, or \$7.50 per month

Non-Residential: \$180 per year, or \$15 per month

The preliminary draft budget will be presented at the regular council meeting on Tuesday, October 11 at City Hall at 9 a.m. The meeting can be attended both in-person and watched via live stream at <https://wetaskiwin.civicweb.net/portal/>.

We know that this is not the news the community would like to hear right now with rising costs for many. Unfortunately, the majority of this increase is beyond the City's control.

City's efforts to reduce costs

Due to these unplanned costs, the 2023 municipal budget will be a challenging one. Here are some steps the City is taking to reduce other expenses to help keep the tax increase as low as possible, given the circumstances.

- **Reviewing levels of service**

The City has been conducting service level reviews as part of the budget process — looking for efficiencies and opportunities to save money. Recent examples of this include the [Expression of Interest](#) for management of the Archives, as well as recent motions from council directing administration to look at alternative options for custodial services, airport operations, waste management, and transit services. Due to the tax decreases and budget cuts from previous years, there is limited room for cuts in other areas, meaning that levels of service need to be discussed and considered to help mitigate the tax increase.



- **Increased user fees**

Administration is looking at other communities similar to Wetaskiwin to compare our user fee rates to see if our rates fall in line, or if there is room for increases.

- **Priority-Based Budgeting (PBB)**

Administration has taken a strategic approach to planning and budgeting by establishing the [2023-2026 Corporate Business Plan](#) and adopting the process of [Priority Based Budgeting](#), which connects the City's resources to service levels — accurately capturing the costs of service delivery.

- **Other opportunities**

The City is always looking to save money — whether through finding efficiencies or generating revenue. The City welcomes and encourages sponsorship and advertising to assist in the provision of City services, programs, and events. Recent examples of this are the [Request for Proposal for Community Recreation and Facilities Naming Rights](#) — a policy to diversify revenue streams — and communications campaigns to discourage avoidable costs, such as the of cleaning up the excessive litter strewn about Wetaskiwin's Recreation Grounds. Administration also gathered unused inventory from City Hall and the Operations Facility and sold these items at an auction, helping generate revenue.

What you can do

Please get involved and share your ideas. City council wants to hear from the community on the 2023 municipal budget. Everyone is invited to attend the in-person budget engagement sessions scheduled for early November.

- **Wednesday, November 2, 2022 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

Topics: Safety and Community

Location: Fire Station 1 (5940 40 Avenue)

- **Friday, November 4, 2022 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

Topics: Environment and Economy

Location: Manluk Centre Multi-Purpose Room (4514 50 Avenue)

Those unable to attend these sessions can share their concerns with members of Wetaskiwin city council by connecting with them. For information on how to connect with council members, visit wetaskiwin.ca/council.

Write to your Member of Parliament

Your dedicated representative needs to hear your concerns. Reach out to our constituency's elected federal representative, the Honourable Mike Lake.





The federal representative for Wetaskiwin is:

Hon. Mike Lake

Member of Parliament (MP) for Edmonton-Wetaskiwin

Email: mike.lake@parl.gc.ca

Website: mikelake.ca

Facebook: facebook.com/MikeLakeMP

Twitter: [@MikeLakeMP](https://twitter.com/MikeLakeMP)

Constituency Office Phone: 1.780.495.2149

Financial Assistance

The following programs help those who need financial assistance paying their rent or property taxes, or in the maintenance of their home:

- [Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program](#)
- [Seniors Home Adaptation and Repair Program \(SHARP\)](#)
- [Rent Assistance](#)

We understand this is a lot of information to digest, especially with this difficult news. We wanted to share this information with you so we have an opportunity to collaborate on how best to deal with these unavoidable circumstances.

