



# City council approves 2023 budget

**Monday, November 28, 2022 (Wetaskiwin, Alberta)** — City council approved the 2023 municipal budget with an overall increase of 5.7 per cent during its [regular November 28 meeting](#).

The 2023 operating and capital budgets total \$43,439,950. The operating budget, which covers the City's costs for programs and services (e.g., maintenance of roads and facilities, parks, police and fire services), comes in at \$39,195,510. The capital budget was approved at \$4,244,440 and covers new purchasing, construction, and replacement of assets, including roads, neighbourhood and alley renewal, and facilities.

Based on the adjustment of 5.7 per cent, for every \$100,000 of assessment, residential property owners would see an increase of approximately \$4.57/month, or \$54.84 annually. For non-residential properties, the estimated increase is about \$9.13/month (\$109.58 annually).

“During an incredibly difficult budget deliberation, council was able to make good decisions based on the feedback we heard from those who attended the public budget consultations,” said Mayor Tyler Gandam. “Thank you to those of you who took the time to be there and offer your input on the City's priorities moving forward. Public engagement is a vital part of the work we do, so it's also important to note that all council meetings are open to the public — including budget deliberations — and that we welcome your input and feedback anytime throughout the year.”

Ahead of Monday's approval, council participated in two public budget engagement sessions on November 2 and November 4. These in-person sessions allowed community members to share their thoughts on the proposed budget with focus on the topics of economy, environment, safety, and community. Council followed up the sessions with three days of public budget deliberations at Wetaskiwin City Hall, November 7 to 9.

A priority-based budgeting approach was used to help determine funding allocation for capital projects and services in accordance with the City's guiding strategic documents: the [50-Year Community Vision, 2022–2032 Council Strategic Plan](#), and the [2023–2026 Corporate Business Plan](#).

“Administration is optimistic that the approved budget will meet the community and infrastructure needs,” said City Manager Sue Howard. “The budget was deeply affected by several factors out of the City's control, but this budget will allow the City to continue to provide for the services the community expects.”


Inflation played a significant role in the development of the 2023 budget. The budget was developed with a focus on continuing to provide services to the community while accounting for rising costs of living and global inflation, however, the City's tax-supported operating budget has not been increasing in line with inflation recently. Over the past five years, the rate of inflation has far outpaced the tax rate change; the net overall change in the tax rate from 2018 to 2022 was 4.07 per cent, while inflation grew 16.8 per cent (see chart below).



## Residential Tax Rate vs. Household Inflation

Despite the sharp increase to household inflation (as determined by the Consumer Price Index) over the past few years, Wetaskiwin's residential tax rate has only slightly increased. Skyrocketing costs — largely due to inflation — leave the City with only two choices: **reduce levels of service, or significantly increase the tax rate.**

Fiscal Year	Tax Rate (residential)	Tax Rate Change	Inflation (as of July)
2018	8.999	--	3.5%
2019	9.610	+3.25%	1.3%
2020	9.379	-2.41%	0.9%
2021	9.659	0%	3.7%
2022	9.971	+3.23%	7.4%



Visit [wetaskiwin.ca/budget](https://wetaskiwin.ca/budget) for information about the 2023 proposed municipal budget and how to share your thoughts.

Another non-negotiable factor that impacted the budget was the increase in overall RCMP costs. In 2021, the RCMP's union [negotiated an agreement](#) with the federal government which included a salary increase of 23.7 per cent over six years. For Wetaskiwin, the new agreement, in addition to other factors, has led to an increase in RCMP costs of just over \$800,000.

Despite these obstacles, council trimmed from the budget where it could. Several upcoming projects will be funded via grants and reserve funds. Council also approved a motion to use \$364,075 from the stabilization fund to reduce the tax rate by a further 2.25 per cent, from 7.95 to 5.7 per cent.

Other highlights from the budget include:

- Asphalt crack sealing (\$40,000, funded by infrastructure reserve): crack sealing on paved roads and asphalt trails. The smallest cracks can easily turn into larger cracks, craters, or dangerous potholes. Done properly and frequently, asphalt crack sealing extends the life of asphalt roads and reduces the amount of maintenance required.
- Sidewalk rehabilitation and curb ramps (\$325,000, funded by Municipal Sustainability Initiative grant): rehabilitating sidewalks and installing curb ramps between 53 and 55 Streets.
- Cost-of-living adjustment (\$465,500, funded by tax): cost-of-living adjustment for City employee salaries to address the competitiveness of our employee compensation, to improve recruitment and retention, and remedy the impacts of inflation and the rising cost of living in Alberta. Administration recommended that the adjustment be four per cent of this year's 7.4 per cent inflation.
- Parks infrastructure and maintenance program (\$15,000, funded by tax): replace infrastructure to enhances the safety of park users. There are many trash receptacles, benches, picnic tables, signs, railings, stairs, docks, fences, lights, and other park infrastructure that require maintenance or replacement due to end of life.

For more information on the 2023 budget, visit [wetaskiwin.ca/budget](https://wetaskiwin.ca/budget).





Residents are encouraged to share their thoughts on the levels of service provided by the City by reaching out directly to council. Contact information for mayor and council is available at [wetaskiwn.ca/mayor-council](http://wetaskiwn.ca/mayor-council).

### **About the City of Wetaskiwin**

Wetaskiwin is a secure, connected, and inclusive community, home to a diverse population of 12,594 people. Located only 30 minutes south of Edmonton International Airport, the City of Wetaskiwin provides a high quality of life through ample recreation opportunities, diverse cultural activities, and a modernized, business-friendly downtown.

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