



2022 Budget – Our City. Our Future.

Draft Budget and Business Plan

Question and Answer Session with Members of Council and Staff

Date: November 25, 2021 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Members Present: Councillor Hamilton, Councillor Adshade, Councillor Liggett, and Mayor McGarry.

Staff Present: David Calder, Deputy City Manager; Ashton Patis, Chief of Staff; Dave Bush, Deputy City Manager – Corporate Services; Hardy Bromberg, Deputy City Manager – Community Development; Kate Hyde, Budget Analyst; Katie Fischer, Deputy City Manager; Sheryl Ayres, Chief Financial Officer; Usama Seraj, Budget Analyst; Victoria Terella, Supervisor of Financial Planning; Yogesh Shah, Deputy City Manager – Infrastructure Services; Briar Allison, Council Committee Services Coordinator

Budget Section / Page Reference	Council Member	Question	Answer
Budget Overview	Councillor Hamilton – City-wide Employment	Are there any COVID-19 employment gains in the City?	Unsure. Staff will confirm with colleagues from Economic Development and report back.
	Councillor Liggett – Hiring of Staff	Are we looking to hire more in the Fire Department? Hiring more in by-law?	No new FTE hires at the moment, however we are hiring ten replacements due to retirement. One part time to full time conversion, and an extra compliance officer.

		Mayor's office addition, office budget increase?	The Mayor's Office addition is a Communications and Correspondence Administrative Assistant 1-year contract, relating to constituent inquiries and correspondence. As it relates to constituent inquiries to Council members it does not fit within the Corporate Communications division. Cost is \$85,400 including benefits.
Operating Summary			
Water Summary	Councillor Hamilton – Smart Metre System	How much longer for the smart metre system implementation? Any before and after data from the old and new system?	Continuing to work with properties who have not yet switched to the smart metres. Update can be found on City's website (https://www.cambridge.ca/en/your-city/smart-water-meters.aspx). After full implementation is complete, we can look at before and after analysis.
	Councillor Adshade – Tax Increase	If we don't go ahead with the proposed 2.39% increase how will that impact operations and finances? Would we just be pushing the increase down the road?	2.39% is lower than originally forecasted in the long range financial plan, which had forecasted annual revenue increases of 3.9%. This is mainly as a result of efficiencies and improved inflow and infiltration. If we lower the increase, it will put pressure on future years. To achieve an even further lower rate increase we would reduce capital reserve fund contributions, which would affect future budgets and have future implications to the rate.
Capital Summary	Councillor Liggett – Storm Ponds	Storm water management- the City has 86 Storm ponds. About 5 years ago it was a concern that these ponds are not maintained. How can we get them all up to date?	Not all city owned ponds require extensive maintenance as some of them are new and in good or very good condition. Since 2016, through the prioritized condition assessment, the City identified 12 ponds for rehabilitation. Rehabilitation of 7 ponds are completed and 2

			<p>additional pond rehabilitation is proposed to be completed in 2023 and 2024. Remaining ponds are regularly inspected and monitored. Further Pond condition assessment work is proposed in 2024 to identify and prioritize work for remaining ponds. The dedicated funding for stormwater management program will provide sustainable funding to complete these works in a timely manner. Capital project to establish dedicated funding for Stormwater Management program is proposed to be initiated in 2022.</p>
	Councillor Hamilton – Infrastructure Deficit	Can you please give more information on what a special infrastructure levy is?	<p>Our asset management plan details a \$92 million infrastructure gap. To help address these gaps, other municipalities have implemented a capital levy ranging between 1-2%, that provides funding for repair and rehabilitation of assets. This is dedicated funding and can free up capital funding so we wouldn't necessarily have to issue more debt for projects such as the Preston Aud. Pages 80-84 of the budget provide a good overview of these challenges and more information on a special infrastructure levy.</p>
	Councillor Adshade – Bridge Lighting	Regarding lighting up the bridges (which is currently unfunded in the budget) when can we complete that project?	<p>Each budget year staff do a priority exercise regarding the unfunded capital forecast section and we will consider it in future years. Or if Council feels this is a higher priority than some other projects that have been funded, it could be exchanged.</p>

	Councillor Liggett – Climate Change	Regarding climate change risk management, what are we doing and should we be looking at this more frequently?	<p>In 2019, there was a plan done that assesses the risk, and the planning for risk management was conducted in 2020. This is done on a five-year cycle.</p> <p>Annual exercise with emergency planning meeting was on November 24, 2021. We are well prepared to respond to all emergencies. Hazard identification work trends in other municipalities is done as well.</p> <p>This topic is being discussed at AMO and Big City Mayors as well. Infrastructure needs is one of the top things discussed.</p>
	Councillor Liggett - Library	Do we expect the Library's budget to be allowed to proceed at what they need?	<p>Library staff have expressed that they are working well with city staff and appreciate their collaborative relationship. We have not been putting restrictions on them; we provide them with the budget guidelines as approved by Council and ask them to work within those guidelines same as we do with all other City divisions. Library budget is very reasonable, City staff are not suggesting any cuts in their budget.</p>
Reserves	Councillor Hamilton – Affordable Housing	Pg 90, affordable housing reserve fund, what is that for? Will the city be able to see where that money is allocated? Who has final say?	<p>These funds came through density bonusing and other negotiations with developers. They are to be used to create additional housing units. They are City funds and Council has the decision on where the funds will be spent. Parameters and a more detailed policy to come surrounding this area. Building affordable housing is a Regional responsibility, so the City would not be directly</p>

			building housing ourselves with these funds. Funding could be used as a contribution to the Region, building costs or additional land. More details on the reserve fund and its intended use is on page 348, and was approved in 2019.
	Councillor Hamilton – Tree Planting Councillor Liggett – Tree Planting	Replacement tree planting reserve fund - what work are we doing here and is more capital funding needed? Do the funds also get used to replace vandalized trees? And are we hiring in Forestry to get back to full complement?	The original focus was on planting, but now focused on overall canopy management. Plan to plant two or more trees based on the size that was removed. Will be reviewing and updating the tree preservation by-law in 2022 and will review an updated formula to be included in the bylaw. Working on getting back to full complement in Forestry. New announcement on hiring of staff expected next week. Also of note within the City's new Sponsorship program is the ability to sponsor trees. And the City has partnered with REEP and the tree planting program for subsidized costs.
	Councillor Liggett – Election	Regarding the Election reserve fund, will we be hiring a contract staff for running the election?	Contract position for running the election is standard.
	Councillor Hamilton – Public Art	Public art reserve fund - Where does that money get used?	Arts and culture advisory committee makes the suggestions and recommendations. They are able to purchase art and make recommendations, and Council gets final decision. Current art policy is to be reviewed in 2022. Subcommittee deals with public art and run competitions.
KPI	Councillor Hamilton	Pg 97. Asset management is not trending well, has a red status; why?	This reflects our infrastructure gap. Need to build reserves in order to fund projects, look at special capital infrastructure levy.

Business Plans			
Mayor & Council	Councillor Liggett	New contract position? Where will they sit?	Looking at most cost-effective location and hybrid model. Facilities have done an initial walkthrough.
City Manager	Councillor Liggett	Gapping but hiring at the same time? Is that counter intuitive?	Gapping means a vacancy in the position. It is caused by the recruitment process which can naturally take upwards of 2 months to fully recruit a position, which results in the position being vacant during that time.
Corp Services	Councillor Liggett – Security	We stopped contracting out for downtown security; are we monitoring the downtown core?	Yes. 24/7 by-law and downtown core supervision and expansion. No longer require private services.
	Councillor Hamilton	I don't see the project for the audio/visual changes to council chambers? What about ongoing operating costs?	Project is already underway. Ongoing operating costs are covered within tech services budget.
Corp Enterprise	Councillor Liggett – Green Wall at City Hall	Green Wall rebuilding as is? Or taking it out? Does it use grey water?	Upgrading the infrastructure and replacing the plants. Grey water from the roof, self-sustaining. Part of LEEDS gold certification.
Comm Dev	Councillor Liggett	Where are we at with Preston Bridge design project can we pause? And Pinebush/Branthaven? How is our Community Ambassador Team doing and do they have the resources they need? Ambassador	Going through Environmental Assessment (EA) process now. If we proceed with the design that could create a design-ready project that could be eligible for potential funding so would not recommend pausing the design. Would rather delay construction than design. 9.69 FTE in CAT. Continue to assess the need and workload, can pull from the parks area and provide support as needed. 7 bodies currently.

		program has huge workload	
Infra Serv	Councillor Liggett	Gypsy moths?	Education campaign but not provide the chemical to residents.
Corp Exp			
Library			
Water Utility	Councillor Liggett – Smart Metres	Tail end of smart metres, have the residents complied?	For the current batch of 81 properties, 20 properties are left. Dealing with a handful at a time. They are receiving final notice of shut off. Issuing a certain number at a time to manage.
	Councillor Hamilton	Sewage system and new pumping station in Galt- when?	Time in-line with private sector development. Designed, building permit issued, construction is underway as of now.
Capital Forecast	Councillor Liggett - Heritage	Underpass in Soper Park (tunnel), heritage masonry needs to be done right East Galt heritage district study? When do we go to the public for the committee of adjustment?	Detailed sheet on page 311. Currently underway so not part of next years budget. End of October to be completed.
	Councillor Hamilton	What happens if projects get left unfunded? i.e. dog park project? Would make sense to do the project now	Have to identify location first, use existing city lands, public engagement where the dog park will go, pre planning work can be done in 2022 so that once funding is identified and project gets approved in a later year it can be ready to go.
Appendices	Councillor Liggett	Where are we with laneway reconstruction and repair?	Identified and prioritized some for 2022 Pg 298.