



Women's Eyes on the Draft City Budget 2014 What matters for our communities?

City Council needs to protect and enhance the programs and services that keep our community healthy, housed, cared for and moving – recreation, housing, child care and affordable transit. City Council must bring forward a balanced budget for 2014 that sustains the social services that help us all live our lives productively.



Municipal governments get the money they need for their budgets in a number of ways:

- Property taxes
- User Fees (developers, transit, recreation, water, sewage, garbage)
- Transfers from the federal and provincial governments

The municipal government has the power to set the level of property tax and user fees. They must negotiate with the other levels of government for funding transfers.

Our current City Council promised to raise property taxes no more than 2.5% a year between 2011 and 2014 to keep it close to the rate of inflation. The increase in the 2014 draft budget is only 1.9%.

2014 Budget Process and Timetable

On Wednesday, October 23, 2014, City Council tabled its 2014 draft operating and capital budgets. To make your views known on the City Budget, you may contact your City Councillor by phone or e-mail; or you can present a five minute deputation at the committee below that is responsible for the area of services that concerns you.

Committee / Commission / Board budget meetings

- Tuesday, November 5 - Finance and Economic Development Committee
- Wednesday, November 6 - Transportation Committee
- Thursday, November 7 - Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
- Tuesday, November 12 - Planning Committee
- Tuesday, November 19 - Environment Committee (tax and rate supported)
- Wednesday, November 20 - Transit Commission
- Thursday, November 21 - Community and Protective Services Committee
- Monday, November 25 - Police Services Board

Wednesday, November 27

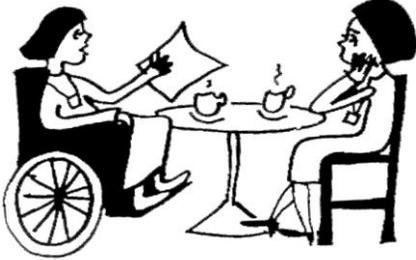
- Council consideration of (vote on) 2014 draft tax and rate supported budget.

For more information, visit Ottawa.ca.

Affordable Housing	Draft budget proposes	Our Concerns	Sample Messages
<p>The waiting list of the Social Housing Registry of Ottawa remains close to 10,000 individuals, including families with children. In 2012, over 7,000 individuals, including 1,531 children, had to make use of emergency shelters.</p> <p>In 2011, this Council made a commitment to put \$14 million per year towards affordable housing and poverty reduction. The City recently introduced its Ten Year Plan to build a “city where everyone has a safe and affordable home in the neighbourhood where they choose to live.”</p> <p>The City has an extensive report, approved by the previous Council, containing 16 recommendations on how to reduce poverty in Ottawa.</p>	<p>The 2014 Draft Budget commits to continuing the allocation of \$14 million to the Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan.</p> 	<p>There is an urgent need for quality, affordable housing in Ottawa. There are too many individuals and families whose opportunities and abilities are severely limited by poverty.</p> <p>The \$14 million allocation towards Housing <u>and</u> Poverty Reduction, while important, is just a drop in the bucket if we are to effectively address these issues in our City.</p> <p>The Federal Government, in recent years, has cut its funding national affordable housing initiatives.</p> <p>The Province is moving slowly on its Poverty Reduction Strategy.</p> <p>Has this Term of Council benefitted from the extensive work and knowledge behind the Ottawa Poverty Reduction Strategy that was approved by the previous Term of Council? Is this Council willing to commit itself to pursuing the 16 recommendations that are still very relevant to Ottawa’s low-income communities?</p>	 <p>It is crucial that the City and concerned residents work together to pressure both the federal and provincial governments to commit the funds necessary to effectively address the problem of affordable housing in a timely manner.</p>

Childcare	Draft budget proposes	Our Concerns	Sample Messages
<p>There are 6,000 families waiting for a childcare space in Ottawa, whether full-fee, partial fee or fully subsidized.</p> <p>About 20% of children in our city can access a licensed childcare space. About 80% of Ottawa families that need affordable, accessible childcare cannot find it.</p> <p>The City has a legal obligation to manage and cost-share the local childcare system. The cost share is supposed to be a 20/80 municipal/provincial split. Due to chronic provincial funding shortfalls over the past 20 years, the current split is 27/73.</p> <p>The City is developing a Child Care Service Plan, as required by the province, to lay out how they will transition childcare services as full day kindergarten rolls out.</p>	<p>The city's childcare services are found in the Community and Protective Services budget. In the "Municipal Services" line of this budget (p64), there is a decrease of \$752,000. On the Salaries, Wages and Benefits line (p64), there is a decrease of \$590,000. It is also noted that a total of 9 full time positions have been cut from the City's childcare budget.</p>  <p>The illustration shows a family of four: a woman on the left holding a baby, a woman in the center holding a baby, and a man on the right holding a baby. A clock is visible in the background, showing approximately 1:50.</p>	<p>We understand that the decreases noted in the Draft Budget reflect the transition of responsibility for a number of childcare programs from the City to the School Board.</p> <p>How has the transition of responsibility for these childcare programs affected the number of licensed childcare spaces available for children who are not yet school-age?</p> <p>What are the specific ways in which the City's Childcare Service Plan will address the need to maintain or increase quality licensed childcare spaces for children not yet old enough for kindergarten.</p> <p>How will the move from centre-based to floating subsidies affect the availability of childcare spaces throughout the city?</p>	 <p>The illustration shows a person sitting on the floor, reading a book. There are several other books stacked on the floor next to them.</p> <p>The real issue is the need for adequate provincial and federal funding to ensure that all Ottawa families have access to affordable, quality childcare when needed. We want to see a City Council that is committed to working closely with the community to call on both the provincial and federal governments to provide more funding for childcare.</p> <p>Will the disappearance of 9 FTE positions affect the wait time to have fee subsidies approved for both parents and providers?</p>

Our City Buses	Draft budget proposes	Our Concerns	Sample Messages
<p>In his election campaign, Mayor Watson said that he would want to see transit fares rise by no more than the rate of inflation. The rate of inflation in 2012 was 1.3% and has been decreasing.</p> <p>In April 2011, the Ottawa Transit Commission committed itself to using the Equity and Inclusion Lens when developing transit policy to ensure that the transit system was as accessible as possible to all residents who need it.</p> <p>The Transit Commission has committed to keeping the ticket system until a way is found to make PRESTO accessible to people on low income and community organizations who need to reimburse participants for travel expenses.</p>	<p>The 2014 Draft City Budget proposed the following adult fare increases (beginning July 1, 2014):</p> <p>Cash: \$3.45 (1.5% increase)</p> <p>Presto: \$2.77 (1.8% increase)</p> <p>Tickets: \$3.10 (3.3% increase)</p> <p>Community Pass: \$40.75 per month (16.4% increase)</p> <p>It is unclear whether there is any money in the budget to address the findings of the Impact Study on Route Optimization.</p> 	 <p>We understand that the City is trying to encourage riders to use PRESTO system, rather than cash or tickets.</p> <p>However, the fare hike for tickets is well beyond the rate of inflation. It appears that the system is penalizing those who can least afford to pay more. It will also impact the budgets of the City's community service delivery partners.</p> <p>The Transit Commission is aware of the issues of accessibility to PRESTO for those on low-income and has committed to addressing those issues.</p> <p>A 16.4% increase to the cost of a Community Pass will pose a significant hardship to people coping on an Ontario Disability pension.</p>	 <p>We support the commitments made by the Mayor and the Transit Commission to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep <u>all</u> fare hikes to the rate of inflation • To ensure that Ottawa's transit system is accessible and affordable to all Ottawa residents who need it <p>We recognize the importance of working together to urge the provincial and federal governments to pay their fair share for affordable, accessible public transit.</p>

Recreation	Draft Budget Proposes	Our Concerns	Sample Messages
<p>If the City’s recreational programs are to be accessible to <u>all</u> Ottawa residents, it is essential that the fees are affordable.</p> <p>There is some fee assistance for low income families, but funds are limited.</p> 	<p>The 2014 Draft Budget proposes to maintain the freeze on recreation fees for the fourth year in a row.</p> <p>The Budget document also states that “maintaining recreation fees at 2010 levels requires mitigating measures to avoid over-expenditures, including cost-containment (reduced number of bus trips, visits to attractions, performances, etc.) and increased participant levels to maintain established cost-recovery targets”.</p> <p>The Budget also calls for “staff rationalization” – a reduction in staff in the Parks and Recreation department of 15.63 FTE</p>	<p>We commend Council for freezing recreation fees again this year. However, we are concerned that the quality of programs will suffer without an augmentation of the funds from elsewhere.</p> <p>It is low-income households that will be most affected by a decreased quality of programs as they cannot afford to pay the cost of private programs if they no longer find the City programs satisfactory.</p> <p>It is not clear how much money will be available for fee subsidies for low-income families.</p>	 <p>Accessible, affordable recreational programs help children to develop into productive adults and help adults to maintain their physical and mental well-being, thus helping to maintain a healthy, well-functioning city.</p> <p>I am happy to see that recreation fees are frozen again this year. At the same time, I would like to know that without additional funding is the quality of programs offered going to go down?</p>