

# MAKING CENTS OF CITY SPENDING:

A GUIDE TO OWEN SOUND'S

# 2026

# MAYOR'S BUDGET



## CITY OF OWEN SOUND

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ONTARIO

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood, likely in Owen Sound, Ontario. The image shows a winding river or canal cutting through the town. The trees are in full autumn foliage, with many displaying bright yellow and orange leaves. Residential houses with dark roofs are visible throughout the scene. The image is partially obscured by a large blue geometric shape on the left side, which serves as a background for the text.

“The Strong Mayor framework may change the process, but it doesn’t change our priorities. This budget is responsible, transparent, and focuses on what matters most to Owen Sound.”

- MAYOR IAN BODDY







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# THIS IS OUR CITY

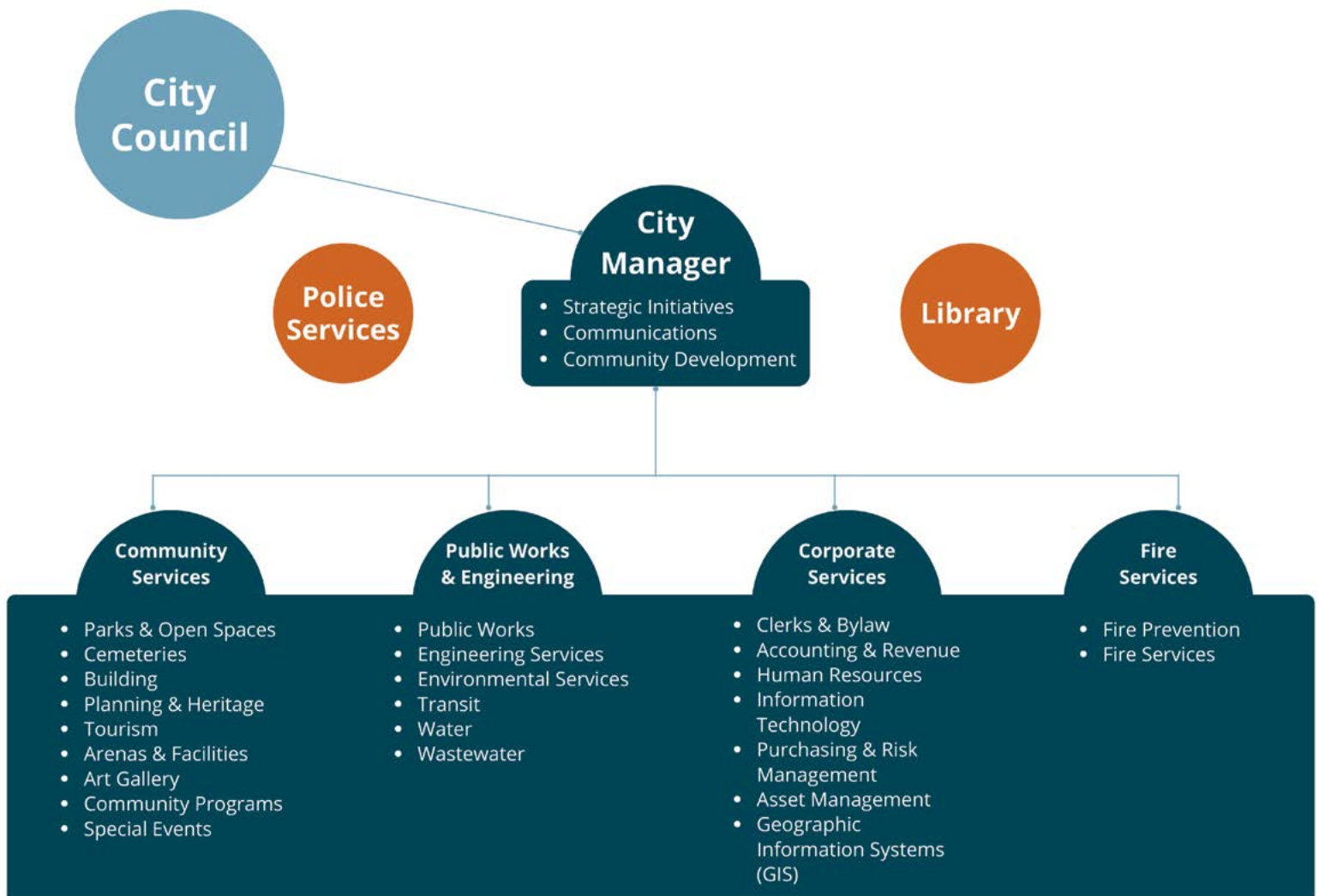
## OWEN SOUND, GREY COUNTY, ONTARIO, CANADA

Owen Sound is a lower-tier municipality in the County of Grey with a census population of 21,600 people and acts as a regional hub in a rural geographic area, with a daytime population expanding to more than 45,000 people.

Owen Sound employs staff in the areas of City Manager's Office, which includes Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness, Communications and Community Development, Community Services, Corporate Services, Operations, which includes Public Works and Engineering and Water/Wastewater, and Fire Services. City of Owen Sound Police Services and the Owen Sound & North Grey Union Public Library are governed by separate boards which are funded in whole and in part by Owen Sound taxpayers.



# CITY STAFFING STRUCTURE





A yellow John Deere snowplow is shown from a front-three-quarter view, clearing a snowy road. The plow is equipped with bright headlights and a blue emergency light on top. It is pushing a large pile of snow to the right side of the road. The background shows a dark, overcast sky and some bare trees. The plow's logo is visible on the front grille.

# THE CITY'S ROLE IN SERVICES

Municipal governments in Ontario spend billions each year to provide the public services that meet the important needs of Ontario residents. The municipal government receives its power from the provincial government. The city or town council decides on by-laws that deal with issues concerning their community such as public parks, libraries, local police and fire services, garbage removal, and public transportation.

Municipal governments raise most of the money for financing these services from the property taxes paid by residents and businesses in the local area. Additional funding comes from user fees such as facility rentals, for example, and some funding comes from provincial government grants.

In the City of Owen Sound, councillors are elected at large, meaning all councillors represent the entire municipality. In Ontario, the head of a local (lower or single

tier) municipal council is either called the mayor or the reeve.

What about Grey County Council? The head of a county council is called a warden. The county council is composed of designated elected members from the lower tier municipalities. The county council itself selects the warden from among its mem-

## 444: CURRENT NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES IN ONTARIO

Depending on its size and its history, a local municipality may be called a city, a town, or a township or a village. They are also referred to as “lower tier” municipalities when there is another level of municipal government like a county or region involved in providing services to residents.

Owen Sound is a lower tier municipality, where as Grey County is upper tier. See the image on this page that helps define which level of government is responsible for which service or program for its residents.

### MUNICIPAL – LOWER TIER

- Municipal road, sidewalk and bridge maintenance
- Snow removal
- Parks and playgrounds
- Community centres and arenas
- Protection services: fire, police, building and bylaw

#### CITY OF OWEN SOUND

- Planning and development
- Library and Art Gallery
- Cemeteries
- City Transit
- Water and wastewater
- Property Taxes



### MUNICIPAL – UPPER TIER



#### COUNTY OF GREY

- Housing and social services
- Paramedic services
- Long-term care
- Child care services
- County road maintenance
- County courts
- County transit

### PROVINCIAL



#### PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

- Highways
- Schools and post-secondary education
- Provincial courts
- Health care
- Environment
- Agriculture

### FEDERAL



#### COUNTRY OF CANADA

- Post Office
- Border services and immigration
- Military
- Supreme Court
- Foreign affairs and policy



# **UNDERSTANDING STRONG MAYOR POWERS FOR THE CITY BUDGET**



# MAYORAL POWERS UNDER THE MUNICIPAL ACT, 2001

The Mayor has special powers and duties under Part VI.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001, which took effect in May 2025. These include powers to:

- appoint and dismiss senior managers (either by the Mayor or their delegate)
- create committees of council, assign their functions, and appoint their chairs and vice-chairs (either by the Mayor or their delegate)
- propose the city's budget (subject to council amendments, a Mayoral veto, and a council override process)
- submit matters for council's consideration if the Mayor believes it supports a provincial priority
- veto bylaws if the Mayor believes it supports a provincial priority
- direct city staff in writing

The Mayor must exercise these powers in writing and make them available to the public, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The 2026 budget reflects my commitment to keeping taxes as low as possible while addressing the growing financial pressures of delivering a strong, safe, and sustainable City. I committed early in this process to holding the budget increase at or below 5.5 percent, and I am pleased to confirm that this budget meets that commitment.

The 2026 budget builds on the strong foundation this Council has established together; it maintains high-quality services, invests in infrastructure that supports residents' daily lives, and plans responsibly for future needs. It continues our shift toward a service-based budget model, where service levels drive financial requirements. This enables clearer alignment among community expectations, Council decision-making, and long-term financial sustainability.

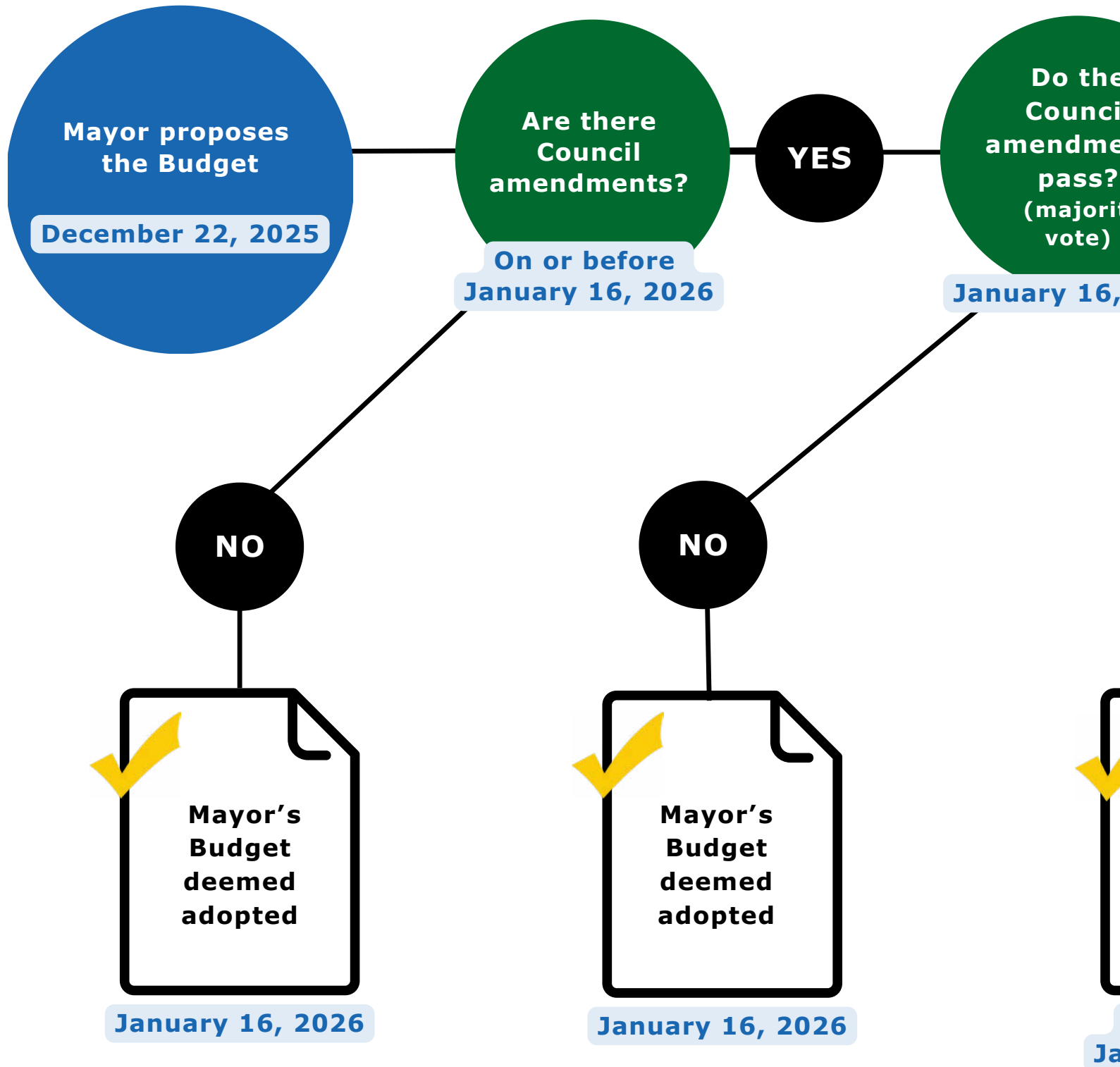
I also want to acknowledge Council's careful and deliberate approach to implementing the Strong Mayor powers. We have prioritized education, legal guidance, and transparency to ensure that procedural changes support good governance. The updated budget process outlines clear timelines, responsibilities, and decision points so that Council, staff, and the public understand how the Mayor's Budget is reviewed, amended, and ultimately adopted. These updates honour the intent of the provincial framework while preserving Council's authority in key areas.

Sincerely,



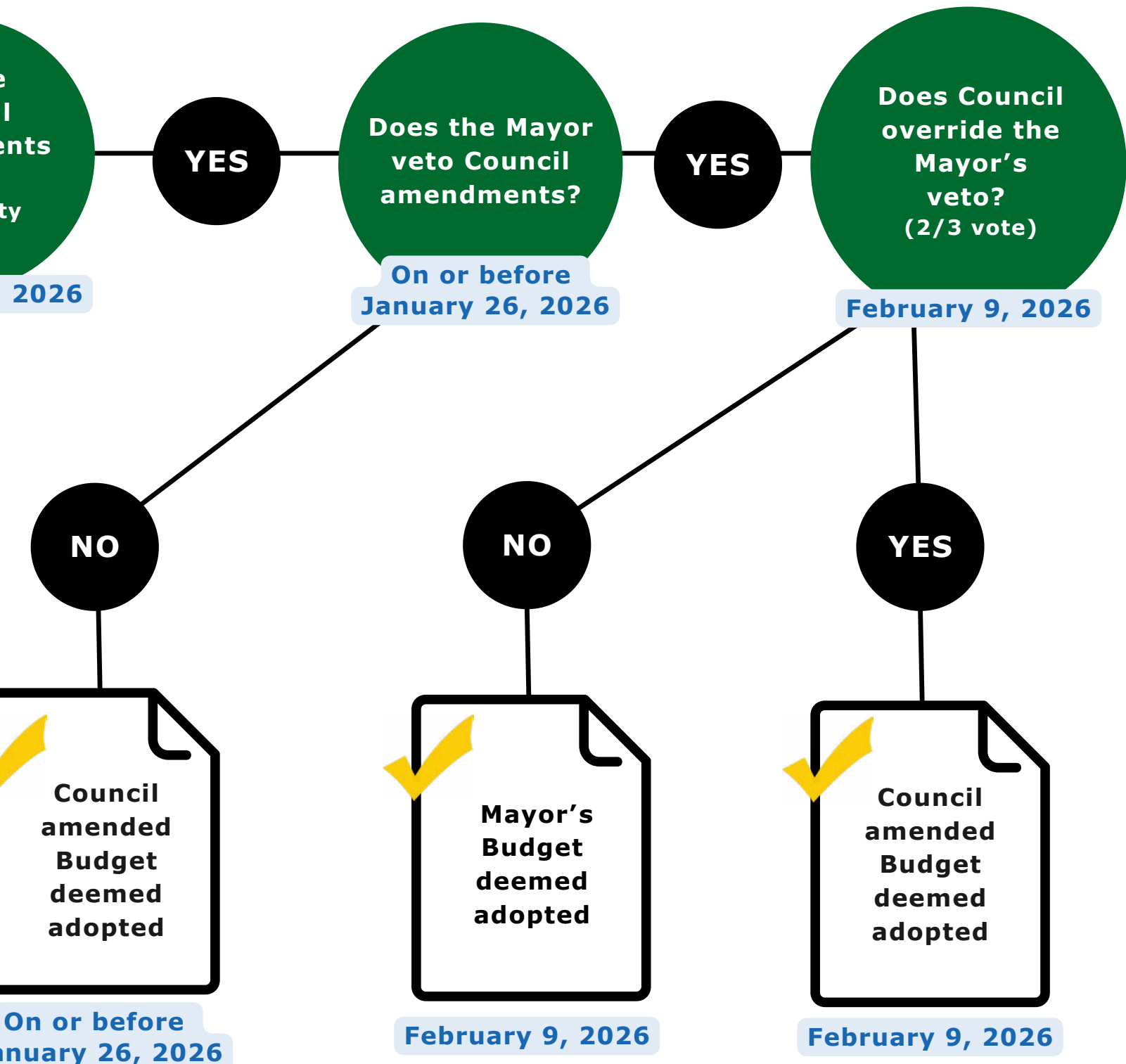
Mayor Ian Boddy

# CITY OF OWEN SOUND 2026





# MAYOR'S BUDGET PROCESS



# HOW MUCH DO I HAVE TO PAY IN PROPERTY TAXES?

The amount of property taxes a resident pays is based on the value of the property they live in. Tenants pay a portion of their landlord's property taxes through their rent. The property value is determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporate (MPAC) - not the City.

The taxes are calculated by multiplying the assessed value of a property by a tax rate. There are three parts to the tax rate:

1. The municipal tax rate, set by the City of Owen Sound
2. The municipal tax rate, set by the County of Grey
3. The education tax rate, which is set by the provincial government

For illustrative purposes, the chart below shows property tax calculations based on a sample tax rate of 0.15%. Owen Sound's tax rate will be set in April of 2026.

Home Assessed Value by MPAC	Residential Tax Rate	Property Tax Total
\$200,000	0.15%	\$300
\$300,000	0.15%	\$450
\$400,000	0.15%	\$600
\$500,000	0.15%	\$750

## Owen Sound has multiple tax rates for different types of properties.

This includes:

- Residential (single-family structure available for non-business purposes)
- Multi-residential (seven or more self-contained residential units)
- Commercial (used for retail, food service, office or other general commercial uses)
- Industrial (may include warehousing, light manufacturing or other general industrial uses)
- Farmland (any tract of land devoted solely to agricultural purposes)
- Managed Forests (receive designation through an application for this tax class)

For more on property types, visit [mpac.ca](http://mpac.ca)

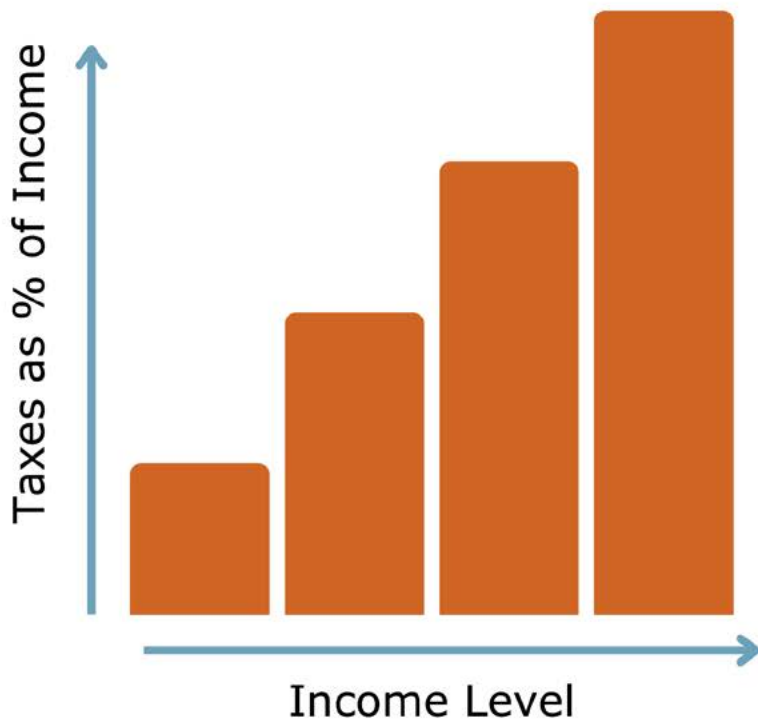




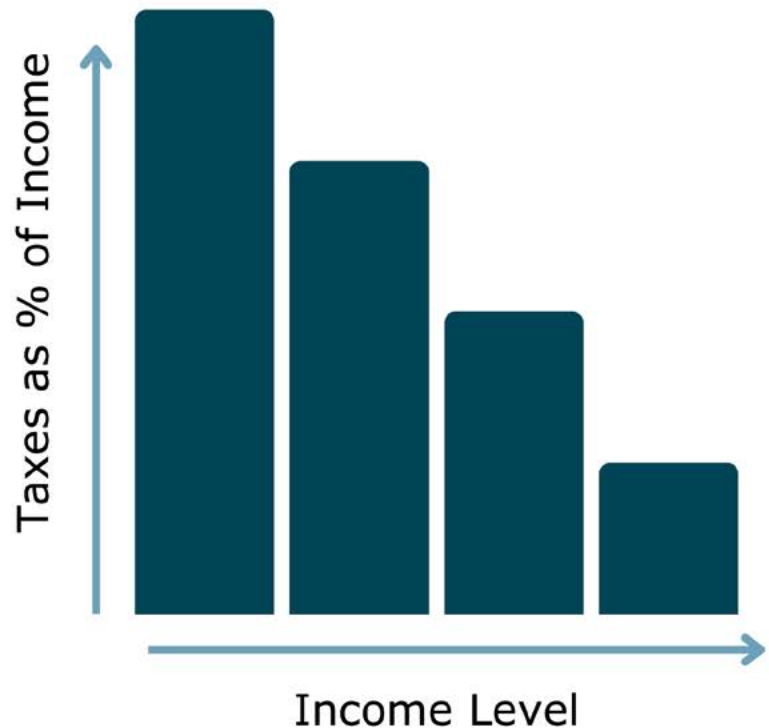
# WHY DO CITY TAXES NOT REFLECT THE CITY'S AVERAGE INCOME?

Property tax is a regressive tax - it is not linked to one's income. Property tax rates are uniformly applied. This does disproportionately impact lower-income residents and adds to the overall cost of housing. This is why Owen Sound continues to strive to find the best balance between services offered and affordability for citizens and continually looks to the province for other possible streams of revenue.

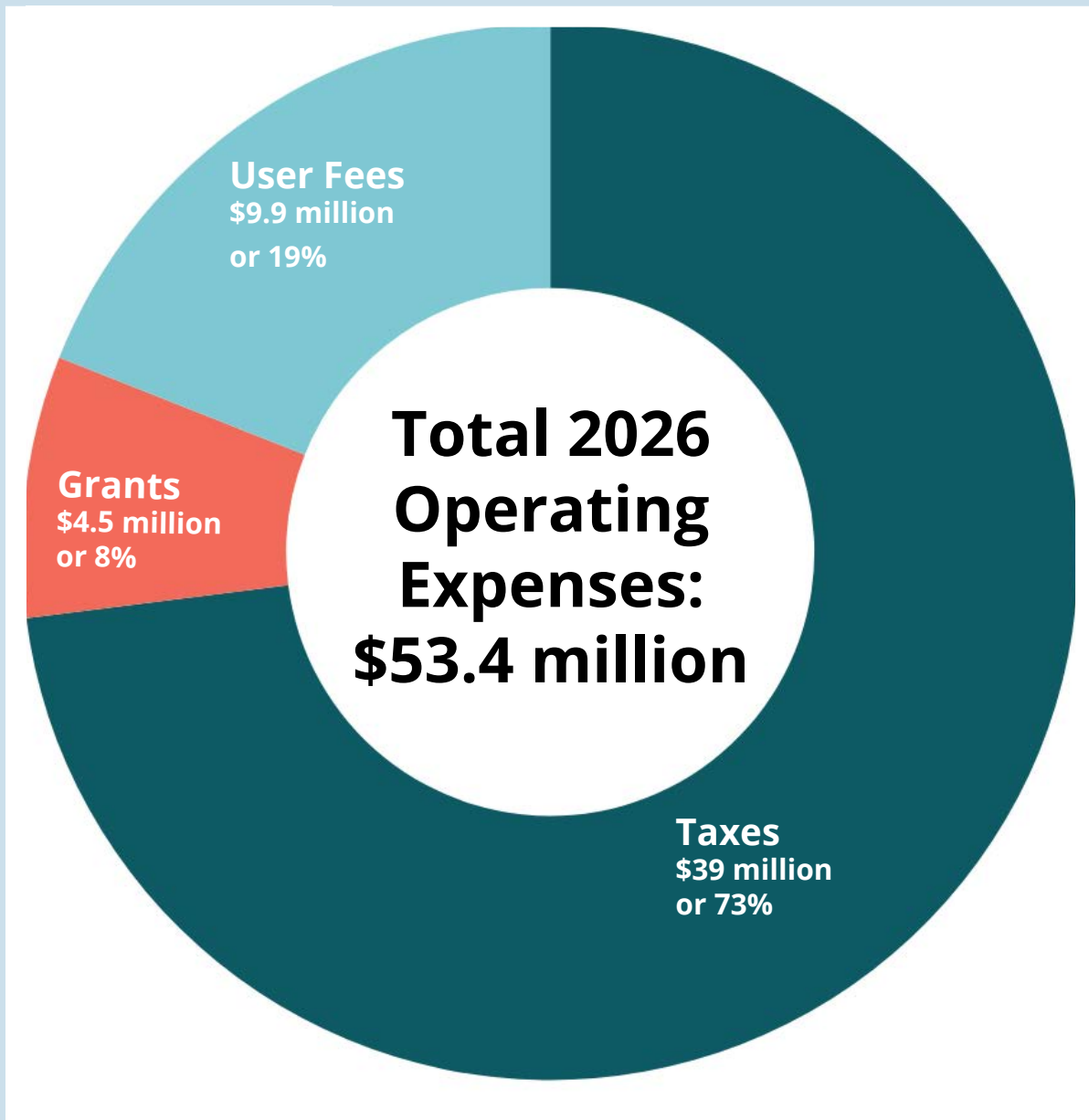
## Progressive Tax



## Regressive Tax



**PROPERTY TAX IS  
A REGRESSIVE TAX**



## 2026 OWEN SOUND OPERATING BUDGET

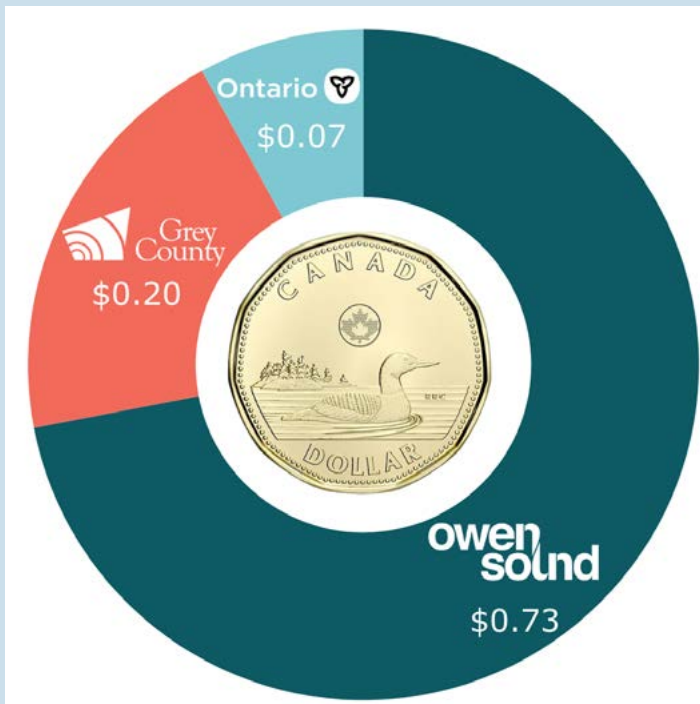
The total operating expenses for 2026 are \$53.4 million, but total tax levy required is \$39 million, or only 73% of City expenses.

The difference between what will be spent and what is required from taxpayers is offset by grants, user fees, and other revenues as City Council and staff work hard to stretch every tax dollar as far as possible.





## HOW DO THE COUNTY AND PROVINCE COLLECT TAXES?



The City of Owen Sound collects taxes on behalf of Grey County and the Province of Ontario.

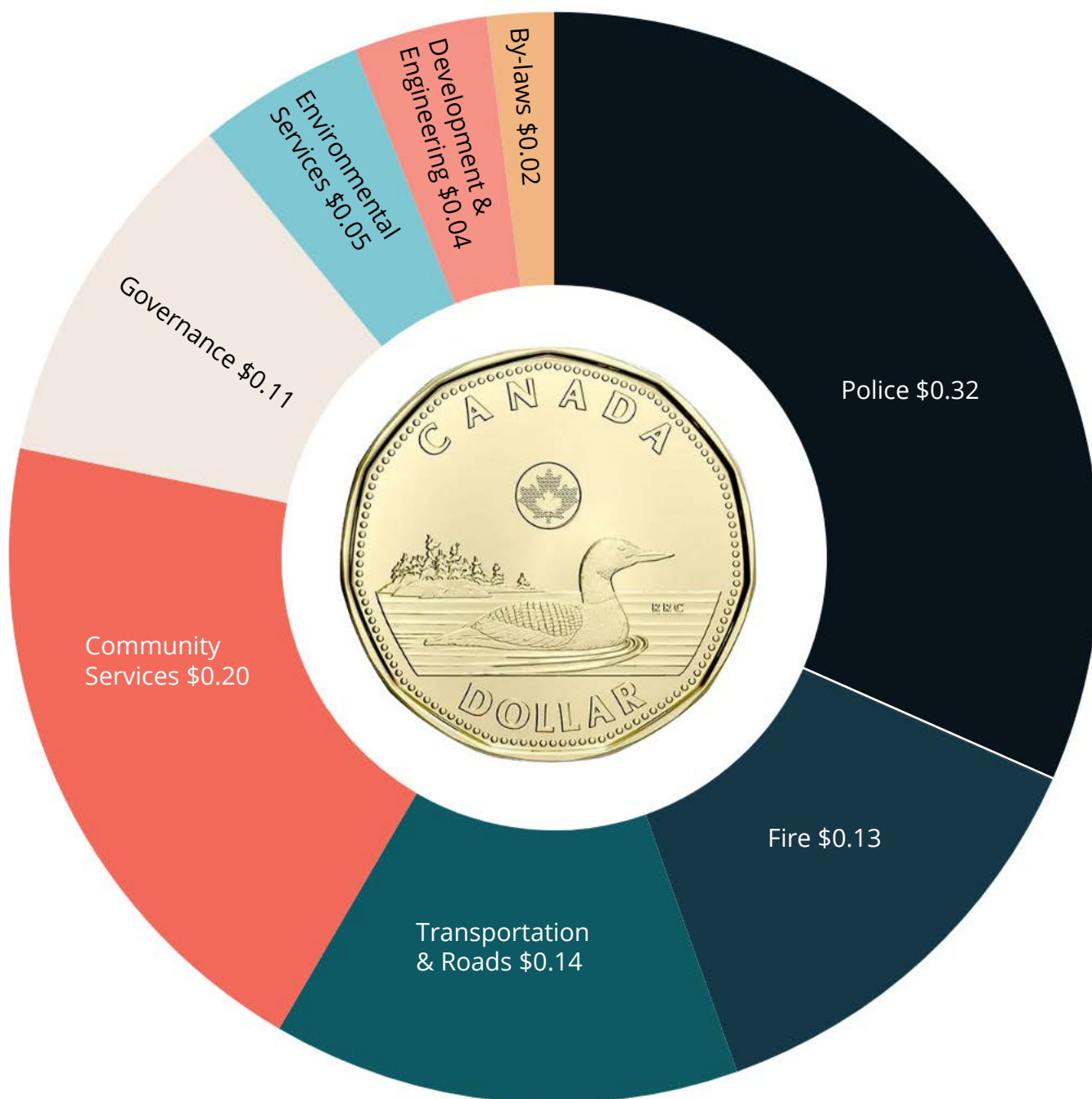
Of each dollar collected by the City of Owen Sound...

- .20** ...the County of Grey receives 20 cents for their programs and services
- .07** ...the Province of Ontario receives 7 cents for public education
- .73** ...and the City of Owen Sound keeps 73 cents of each dollar to provide services.

# WHERE DO CITY TAXES GO?

Of the \$0.73 of each tax dollar collected from residents, the City of Owen Sound works to be financially responsible while providing many core services.

Below outlines how the City breaks down one City tax dollar:



## **POLICE & FIRE**

Police and Fire services.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Arenas, parks, cemetery, River District, programming, Tom Thomson Art Gallery, tourism, events, and library programs and services, including Adult Learning Centre.

## **DEVELOPMENT & ENGINEERING**

Community development, engineering, planning and building.

## **BY-LAWS**

By-law enforcement, parking and animal control.

## **TRANSPORTATION & ROADS**

Construction and repairs to roads and sidewalks and public transit (conventional and mobility bus services).

## **GOVERNANCE**

Council, Strategic Leadership Team, and program support such as insurance, human resources, IT, health and safety, finance, procurement, service desk, tax billing and collection, and corporate facility management.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

Garbage and recycle collection, compost site, household hazardous waste events, source separated organics, stormwater network, drains and reservoirs.

*\*Water and wastewater are not included as they are 100% funded through a rate structure.*



# TOP WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH THE CITY OF OWEN SOUND

## Subscribe to City News

01

- Subscribe to the City's news releases at **OwenSound.ca/Subscribe** to receive a copy of each public notice or media release to your inbox

## Follow Social Media

02

- Owen Sound shares plenty of reminders, information and exciting events on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), and LinkedIn

## OurCity.OwenSound.ca

03

- An online community engagement platform that helps residents get informed, involved, and share ideas on City projects and initiatives
- The site includes polls, surveys, forums, maps and more to enhance two-way communication between the City and residents

## Council and Committee Meetings

04

- You can watch Council meetings every other Monday through Rogers TV or stream online at [OwenSound.ca/Meetings](https://OwenSound.ca/Meetings)
- Multiple Committee meetings available through [OwenSound.ca/Meetings](https://OwenSound.ca/Meetings)

*(click the desired meeting in the calendar or list for full details and streaming capabilities)*

# REPORT A CONCERN



Residents can report concerns to the City using an online form at [OwenSound.ca/ReportAConcern](https://OwenSound.ca/ReportAConcern) or by scanning the QR code above

Completing the online form is a convenient and efficient way to receive information or address any issues. City staff will respond to concerns based on priority.

Topics you can report on include:

- Animal Concerns
- By-law Complaints
- Garbage or Recycling Issues
- Playground Equipment Issues
- Pothole Issues
- Sidewalk Issues
- Snow Removal Issues
- Traffic Signal Issues
- Transit Service Issues
- Tree Issues
- Watermain Break Issues
- And more

While reporting, there is a chance to include a location, a brief explanation, and any photos that may help City staff to understand the issue better.



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## 2026 IS AN ELECTION YEAR

## ARE YOU ON THE VOTER'S LIST?

Make sure you are on the Voters List!

To confirm, register or amend your information:

- Until August 14, 2026, visit [RegisterToVoteON.ca](http://RegisterToVoteON.ca)
- Starting September 1, 2026, visit [OwenSoundVotes.ca](http://OwenSoundVotes.ca) or the Service Counter at City Hall.
- Those who are on the Voter's List will receive a Voter Information Letter in the mail.

The letters will be mailed out in October and will have voting instructions plus your unique PIN to log in to the election site or telephone election platform to vote.



# owen sound

where you *want* to live

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