

IN GOOD COMPANY

By Mayor Geoff Dawe

As 2017 comes to an end, let's take the time to celebrate all the wonderful milestones and events of this year and look forward to all the new and exciting adventures in store for next year. As you celebrate the holidays with family and friends, please be reminded to drink and drive responsibly and if needed, use alternative means to reach home safely.

I am pleased to announce that Aurora Town Council has approved the 2018 Operating Budget. The capital budget was previously approved at the Council meeting on Tuesday, November 14. The combined approvals now represent a full endorsement of the overall 2018 budget. The Town's operating budget was approved at \$64.1 million.

Council and staff worked collaboratively to achieve Council's budget target of inflation, 2.1 per cent, plus 1 per cent for fiscal strategies to reduce reliance on unsustainable revenues and invest in infrastructure. The total 3.1 per cent increase to the tax levy translates to an additional \$75.61 of property tax on a home with an average assessed value of \$770,000.

This budget is efficient and takes budget pressures into consideration to ensure the Town continues to provide high quality, customer-focused service to our community. In our efforts to increase public safety, the Town has allocated more funding to Central York Fire Services in support of its new fire facility to be constructed in northern Aurora and for the replacement of older equipment. For more information on Aurora's 2018 Budget, visit aurora.ca/budget2018.

We are also once again supporting the Salvation Army Kettle Drive in Aurora. Why not consider manning a kettle at one of the designated locations until Friday, December 24 for a few short hours. Your help can really make a difference for individuals and families in York Region with serious financial difficulties. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact the Salvation Army Central York Region office at 905-895-6276 ext. 208. To make an online donation, please visit salvationarmycentralyork.ca.

Ring in the New Year at Family First Night on Sunday, December 31. Enjoy free hot chocolate, children's activities, free skating and swimming, magic shows and more at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex located at 135 Industrial Parkway North from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. New this year, in celebration of the end of Canada 150, there will be a special fireworks display at 9:15 p.m. For more information, visit aurora.ca/firstnight.

A reminder that as of January 1, 2018 some of the waste and recycling collection dates in Aurora will be changing. Please consult Aurora's Waste Collection Interactive Mapping application, submit your address and check if your collection date has changed. Visit aurora.ca/wasteandrecycling.ca for more details or to access the tool.

Also, our Town by-law states that cars must be off the road between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. between November 15 and April 15 annually. We thank you for your co-operation in keeping the roads free from parked vehicles during the prohibited times. For more information, please visit aurora.ca/snow.

Do you have an issue that needs attention or would like to ask a question? I invite you to contact my office to set-up an appointment to speak with me in-person by either emailing mayor@aurora.ca or calling my office at 905-726-4741. I am always happy to hear from you!

You can also stay connected through the Town's social media feeds, website, PlaceSpeak, Notice Board or the Aurora Matters newsletter. Don't miss my monthly radio spot on 105.9 The Region called Mayors in the Morning. This is a great way to help me connect with residents. Please email, tweet or call-in questions about our Town. To view the schedule, visit 1059theregion.com/mayors.

Have a wonderful week