



United Counties of
Leeds and Grenville
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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2022

The highlights of the regular United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Council Meeting held on Thursday, March 24, as well as the Committee of the Whole and Joint Services Committee (JSC) meetings held earlier this month, are listed below.

Counties Council Approves 2022 Budget: The Council for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville has voted to approve the 2022 budget with a 2.39% tax rate increase over 2021.

The United Counties will collect \$43.3-million from property taxpayers this year. The approved budget provides for total expenditures of \$112-million. Capital expenditures account for \$56.6-million.

"The 2022 Budget is a step toward building solid asset and financial planning that will prioritize infrastructure investment," said Counties Chief Administrative Officer Ray Callery.

"The budget increase focuses on affordable housing, paramedic service response and transportation infrastructure," he said. "These advancements will be delivered with a greater awareness of accessibility, communication and climate change challenges to position the Counties to support sustainable community growth and development," added Mr. Callery.

The Province-wide assessment did not occur again in 2022. The average residential property, not on water in Leeds and Grenville, is assessed at \$215,000. The approved budget will increase the Counties taxes on the average residential property by \$18.99.

"With the hard work of staff, Counties Council has been able to approve a 2022 Budget that reflects the financial challenges of a post COVID-19 economy," said Warden Roger Haley.

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"It increases the ability of future Councils to ensure infrastructure needs can be achievable. Facing a possible double digit increase in taxation, I am very pleased at the level of cooperation amongst elected officials to finalize a fiscally prudent and responsible budget," the Warden said.

For more information contact Counties Chief Administrative Officer Ray Callery at 613-342-3840, ext. 2301, or Treasurer Pat Huffman at 613-342-3840, ext. 2468.

Ontario Renovates and Secondary Suites to increase Affordable Housing: Counties Council has approved the Secondary Suites Program.

The Ontario Renovates Secondary Suites Program, funded through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), is intended to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for low-income households in Leeds and Grenville. It is a sub-component of the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)

Funding is provided in the form of a 20-year, interest-free forgivable loan to eligible homeowners based on the cost of approved work items and HST, payable up to \$25,000. Major repairs required to create a secondary suite can include plumbing, electrical, framing and insulation, drywall/fire separation, kitchen and bathroom fixtures and cupboards. Soft costs such as drawings and specifications, applicable taxes, building permits, legal, appraisal and inspection fees are included.

The project is designed to help homeowners create a secondary suite or garden suite within Leeds Grenville, including the separated municipalities of the City of Brockville, Town of Prescott, or Town of Gananoque.

Only one applicant per address will be considered. Applicants must own the project property as their sole and principal residence for the duration of the affordability period. Funding is provided in the form of a forgivable loan to create a secondary suite on the property. The applicant's household income and assets are not subject to income or asset limits.

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Maximum funding for accessibility repairs is \$5,000 and is in the form of a grant so repayment is not required. Accessibility repairs are modifications to a unit to reduce physical barriers related to housing and reasonably related to the occupant's disability. Examples include, but are not limited to, ramps, handrails, chair and bath lifts, height adjustment to countertops, cues for doorbells/fire alarms.

Rents must be charged at or below 80% of the CMHC Average Market Rent (AMR), or Alternate Average Market Rent (AAMR), as applicable, for the Service Manager area for the entire loan forgiveness period.

The Leeds and Grenville Landlord Secondary Suites Program is another method of advancing affordable housing in this area. The Leeds and Grenville Landlord Secondary Suites Program, funded by the Counties, is intended to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for low-income households in Leeds and Grenville through the creation of a secondary suite on the property of an existing residential rental unit. Funding is provided in the form of a 15-year, interest-free, forgivable loan to small landlords based on the cost of approved work items and HST, payable up to \$25,000.00. A small landlord is defined as an individual or corporation that owns and rents up to ten residential units that are subject to the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006. Tenant eligibility includes the criteria that income must be at or below the 60th Income Percentile, \$45,500.00 for Leeds Grenville.

For more information contact Manager of Social Housing Chris Morrison at 613-342-3840, ext. 2328 or Director of Community and Social Services Alison Tutak at 613-342-3840, ext. 2305.

In-person Council Meetings will commence in April: Counties Council has approved a return to in-person Council meetings effective in April, with temporary measures such as practicing social distancing, which restricts occupancy numbers.

As such, all Council and Committee meetings that are not a closed meeting, under relevant provisions in the *Municipal Act*, will continue to be livestreamed. Meeting agendas and videos are posted on the Counties' website. The Counties is committed to

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openness and transparency. Members of the media and public are welcome to submit any questions during or following a meeting to the County Clerk.

Council Chambers will reopen to the media and public in June 2022. This schedule is subject to public health guidelines and workplace protocols, which will be reviewed regularly. For more information contact Interim County Clerk / Manager of Legislative Services Lesley Todd at 613-342-3840, ext. 2454.

Upcoming meetings: The Joint Services Committee is on Tuesday, April 5th; the Committee of the Whole meeting is on Wednesday, April 6th; the Planning Advisory Committee is Tuesday, April 12th and Counties Council is on Thursday, April 21st. All regular meetings begin at 9 a.m. in the Council Chambers at 25 Central Avenue, Brockville. For more information, contact Interim County Clerk / Manager of Legislative Services Lesley Todd at 613-342-3840, ext. 2454.

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Media inquiries:

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