



REPORT ON THE 2024 OPERATING BUDGET

Dear Fellow Citizens,

In accordance with section 474 of the *Cities and Towns Act* and on behalf of Town Council, I am pleased to submit to you Town of Mount Royal's Report on the 2024 Operating Budget.

This year, the municipal administration has prepared a budget that includes a property tax increase of 5.94% for residential taxpayers who own an average single-family home assessed at \$1,941,400 in the 2023-2024-2025 property assessment roll.

Townies have, of course, been at the centre of our decision-making, even as we have had to contend with a difficult economy and challenging environmental issues.

With that in mind, the priorities for our 2024 operating budget are to:

- Provide the best possible services to citizens by maintaining a balance between citizens' ability to pay and their level of satisfaction;
- Focus on what is truly essential for citizens;
- Maintain a balanced payroll while remaining in compliance with the Town's collective agreements and policies. Job positions will be created and personnel added only when necessary to meet an obvious need or when doing so will have a positive impact on the offer of services to citizens;
- Move forward with concrete measures to protect the environment;
- Take action to limit the impact of climate change – downpours, ice storms and high winds, for example – on the Town's critical sectors;
- Protect the urban forest cover;
- Review the noise nuisance by-law;
- Ensure the safety, accessibility and fluidity of traffic across the Town and around construction sites, implementing effective solutions for physical disruptions, road signage and communications;
- Implement the recommendations of traffic studies, particularly around schools;
- Optimize the fluidity and expansion of the bike path network on Town territory;
- Limit citizens' tax burden by aiming for a 2024 tax increase based on forecast inflation;

- Manage the Town's finances in a realistic manner sustainable over the long term.

Accordingly, the Town's 2024 operating budget totals \$130,149,000, up 4.79% from the 2023 budget, primarily due to the following factors:

- A total increase of \$1,972,200 (2.88%) in the aliquot share paid to the Agglomeration of Montreal for general expenditures, water purchases, water service, first responder service, the arterial road system debt, funding investments eligible for grants, financing the deficits from previous fiscal years and the contribution for expenditures related to downtown Montreal;
- Local expenditures rose \$3,947,610 or 7.19%. This increase is mainly attributable to:
 - ✓ an increase in payroll;
 - ✓ higher costs for external contracts, largely due to economic factors;
 - ✓ higher debt servicing costs;
 - ✓ implementing environmental measures, most notably for disposing excavated soil.

Property taxes, compensation in lieu of taxes and water billing, which remain our main sources of revenue, total \$106.9 million or 86% of overall revenue. It should be noted that the water consumption tariff rose 3.85% and water system fees increased \$5.

For its part, revenue from services provided and from local sources is budgeted at \$15.7 million or 13% of total revenue. We note that the registration fees for most of the sports and recreation programs have increased 5% to 10%. The fees for permits issued by Urban Planning and Development have also been revised upward. The Town is also diversifying its sources of revenue by introducing fees for issuing public domain occupancy permits.

Faced with the slowdown in the real estate sector, we have been prudent with our forecast of revenue from transfer taxes on immovables. Interest income, on the other hand, is up.

Revenue from government transfers totals \$1.8 million or 1% of total revenue.

Lastly, to reduce the financial impact of the budget increases on residents' tax bills, Council has decided to use \$4.4 million of the accumulated surplus to cover the increase in the aliquot share paid to the Agglomeration and to fund local expenditures.

In conclusion, we remain firm in our commitment to deliver quality services to Townies in keeping with the values of our municipality. Despite the challenging economic times, we have put forward a responsible budget that will allow us to meet citizens' needs, carry out projects and support environmental initiatives. Rest assured that we will continue closely monitoring expenditures in fiscal 2024, the goal always being to maximize the return on every dollar collected from taxpayers.

Peter J. Malouf
Mayor