



JAMES M. CAHILL, MAYOR
THE CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

March 20, 2018

Dear Residents, Taxpayers, and Members of the City Council:

I have submitted the proposed budget for calendar year 2018 to the City Council for review and introduction. The proposed budget provides for total expenditures of \$94.5 million with a municipal tax levy of \$34.3 million.

This budget continues all the services and work provided for last year, while expanding our programming and services in a number of areas.

Included in our fiscal plans for 2018 is the next phase of our efforts to renew and re-energize our parks system as part of the City's Healthier New Brunswick initiative and the implementation of the New Brunswick Parks Action Plan. This comprehensive plan was compiled in partnership with Rutgers University; The Trust for Public Land; Johnson & Johnson; the City's Parks and Gardens Commission, and City residents and officials.

The Parks Action Plan provides a comprehensive review of all 272 acres of New Brunswick's public parks system and a Blueprint for Action, containing both long-and-short-term customized recommendations for each City park. This study helped identify the strengths of our parks system and potential areas for improvement and trends to consider to modernize our parks and to make them enticing and welcoming to all.

Some of our 2018 park initiatives include:

- In partnership with Unity Square, the plan design and community outreach for the complete renovation of Feaster Park.
- Brand-new and state-of-the-art fitness stations at Alice Jennings Archibald Park and Buccleuch Park, with specialized exercise equipment designed to target different areas of the entire body. Users will be able to plug their mobile devices into equipment to access software features, such as music and guided workouts.
- Major renovations to Kossuth Park on Harvey Street.
- Installation of two new spray parks at Joyce Kilmer Park and Alice Jennings Archibald Park, similar to the popular water features installed as part of our recently completed renovations to Recreation Park.

- Completion of the planning phase and the beginning of planning for the development of new park sites on Welton Street and Neilson Street.
- Design of complete renovations to War Memorial Park.
- Landscape and exercise trail improvements at the Senior Resource Center
- Various improvements throughout the City-wide parks system.

Road improvements in 2018 will include the repaving of Georges Road, Nichol Avenue and Joyce Kilmer Avenue. In partnership with Middlesex County, we are undertaking a redesign of the Easton Avenue, Albany Street and Spring Street Intersection near our downtown train station. Also in partnership with Middlesex County, we are nearing completion of the design and construction documents for the Livingston Avenue Road Diet and anticipate going out to bid for the reconstruction of Livingston Avenue later this year.

Our pedestrian friendly safety improvements continue with additional enhanced crosswalks to be installed on Remsen Avenue leading to Baker Park and at its intersections with Ward and Handy Streets; Livingston Avenue near our Middle School; Lee Avenue at its intersections with Comstock, Delevan, and Lawrence Streets; and two locations on Joyce Kilmer Avenue near the Greater New Brunswick Charter School.

Our historic older buildings need some attention. We will replace the roof at the New Brunswick Free Public Library; replace the roof of City Hall; and open the Buccleuch Mansion after completion of repairs and renovations later this spring.

The budget also provides for the hiring of twelve new Police Officers and five new Firefighters to bolster our public safety operations.

We will also improve our emergency vehicle fleet with the acquisition of a new firetruck – a 2000 gallon per minute Fire Pumper.

The City's commitment to renovations in our water system continues with upgrades to water mains on Somerset Street, Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Livingston Avenue, Quentin Avenue and in the Rutgers Village neighborhood.

Other improvements to our water supply operations include expanding our water audit and leak detection; the installation of backup generators at our D&R Canal pumping station and our water treatment and distribution plant to provide continuity of service in emergent conditions; and continuation of our water meter replacement program.

A \$3.5 million sewer main repair and upgrade program commenced last year continues in 2018 with an additional \$1.3 million, reducing the amount of infiltration and inflow into our sewer system and ultimately saving us money in sewer fees.

And the rehabilitation of abandoned properties in our City will get underway this year, returning these sites to our housing stock and providing new housing opportunities for our residents.

The proposed budget continues all past services and programs and accommodates new ones, including those discussed above, and provides for a tax rate increase of 4.7 cents, resulting in a tax increase of \$111 in 2018 for the average property owner, defined as the owner of a property assessed at \$269,590.

I hope you find this helpful in understanding the proposed budget and the issues, conditions and requirements sought to be addressed in 2018. We remain dedicated to providing the best possible services at the best possible cost.

The City Council, after introduction, will set a date for a public hearing on the proposed budget, expected to be held sometime in April. As always, your input and suggestions are welcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Cahill". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally below the word "Sincerely,".

JIM CAHILL