

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



DRYDEN



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

We would like to acknowledge we are located in the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and Métis people of Treaty Three. The Anishinaabe are the original caretakers of this land and called this place Paawidigong, meaning place of the rapids which is now known as Dryden.

This land is important to the people of Migisi Sahgaigan (Eagle Lake First Nation), Waabigonii Zaaga'igan (Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation), as well as the Métis people of the area and the residents of Dryden.



OUR VISION

Dryden is recognized as a vibrant, safe, healthy and inclusive community with a diverse economy, providing an exceptional quality of life.

OUR MISSION

To deliver sustainable municipal services and infrastructure with courtesy, integrity, transparency, and fiscal responsibility.



Council Members City of Dryden

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Mayor Jack Harrison | 1st term |
| Councillor Bill Latham | 1st term |
| Councillor Bryan Tardiff | 1st term |
| Councillor Martin MacKinnon | 4th term |
| Councillor Catherine Kiewning | 1st term |
| Councillor Ritch Noel | 1st term |
| Councillor Michelle Price | 2nd term |



A Message From The Mayor

On behalf of the Council, it is my pleasure to present the 2023 Annual Municipal Report for our city, Dryden. This report is not only to share information with our residents regarding the city operations but also to celebrate our collective accomplishments from the past year, as well as highlight some of our upcoming initiatives. The information you will find in this report all ties back to our Strategic Plan and Guiding Principles, which serve as our compass.

Since the election, 2023 was the first full year that our new Council has now served our community. Looking back, on behalf of the Council, I can say it was an honour to serve our community and to become involved in a leadership role in the place we live and cherish.

I believe strongly that Council's role is to see our Vision fulfilled in our community, and we do that through implementing our Mission. I would like to touch on a couple of these related areas.

Community safety is paramount for our citizens to enjoy living, working and playing in our city. This past year was also the first full year of policing operations contracted to the O.P.P. We appreciate the dedication of the leadership and officers who are serving our city exceptionally well through their diligence. In 2023, our IT Department implemented CCTV Cameras in remote locations, which can be utilized by the OPP in solving crimes.

This past year we were able to honour and celebrate alongside local First Nation communities the 150th Anniversary of the signing of Treaty #3. It was important to mark this anniversary in our city, as Treaty #3 opened the opportunity for settlement in this area, which became instrumental in the birth of our community. In November, the City of Dryden hosted Kaniigan Shkamowaat Shagaswayiitiwuk (Dryden Leadership Meeting where Tobacco is Exchanged) with area First Nation Communities' Leadership to continue to strengthen our relationships with our neighbouring communities and look for opportunities to collaborate together for the good of our communities.

A diverse economy will strengthen our fiscal sustainability, and there has been keen interest in our area in the mineral resource sector as well as the nuclear industry for the storage of spent nuclear fuel bundles. The Council and staff leadership are engaged with the front runners in terms of their development to be prepared in the event a positive decision is made to move ahead with a project in our area.

In closing I want to sincerely thank the hard work and dedication of Council, committee and board members, volunteers, local businesses and organizations, and municipal staff that are making our community what it is; a vibrant, safe, healthy and inclusive community with a diverse economy, providing an exceptional quality of life.

A Message From The CAO

As we begin working our way through the new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on our collective journey through 2023 and share some important highlights. Our city has faced challenges, celebrated achievements, and worked tirelessly to serve our community. I would like to take this opportunity to address critical aspects that define our commitment to progress and excellence.

Our greatest asset is our dedicated workforce—the individuals who keep our city running smoothly day in and day out. Their safety and wellbeing are paramount. In the past year, we have made strides in this area such as forming our Operational Management Steering Committee in late 2022 and allowing this group of frontline managers to focus on employee safety across the organization. We have also implemented a new employee safety portal to ensure employees have easy and efficient access to the data they require. Despite our continued focus on employee safety, injuries are still occurring, and this is unacceptable. Our goal is to be an injury free workplace and we will continue to strive to reach this goal.

Our commitment to service excellence remains unwavering. Our dedicated teams have diligently maintained roads, parks, and public facilities. We have ensured safe drinking water, repaired our transportation network, upgraded playgrounds, and ensured safe spaces for all including providing top tier fire protection services. We have actively sought employee and public feedback through surveys and community events.

Those insights have shaped our decisions, and we are committed to transparency and accountability. Despite many challenges, our departments have continued to streamline processes, maintain acceptable wait times, and improve service quality within the confines of current budgetary restraints. We will continue to innovate and adapt to meet evolving needs.

As stewards of public funds, we take fiscal responsibility extremely seriously which is supported by our budgetary decisions being transparent and aligned with community priorities. We have invested wisely in essential services while minimizing waste. We have explored new revenue streams to reduce reliance on property taxes. By fostering economic growth, we can sustainably fund our initiatives. We have tracked key performance indicators rigorously. Our commitment to data-driven decision-making ensures that every dollar spent benefits our residents.

As I look forward to 2024, I want to express my gratitude to our exceptional city employees, dedicated leaders, and engaged community members. Together, we have overcome challenges and celebrated victories. Let us continue to build a resilient, compassionate, and thriving city—one that we are all proud to call home.

Thank you, and may the year be filled with progress, unity, and shared achievements.

Sincerely,

Roger Nesbitt

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Inclusion

- Community leadership honours, welcomes, and accepts all people, hearing their diverse voices and working to strengthen cultural relationships and building community inclusiveness
- Encompasses efforts to ensure that programs and services are accessible to all
- Engagement and communication efforts reflect diverse community needs

Community Pride

- Well-maintained properties, assets and infrastructure are appealing to residents and visitors
- Civic engagement informs policy and planning through interactions with municipal leadership
- Volunteerism and community leadership is present

Quality of Life

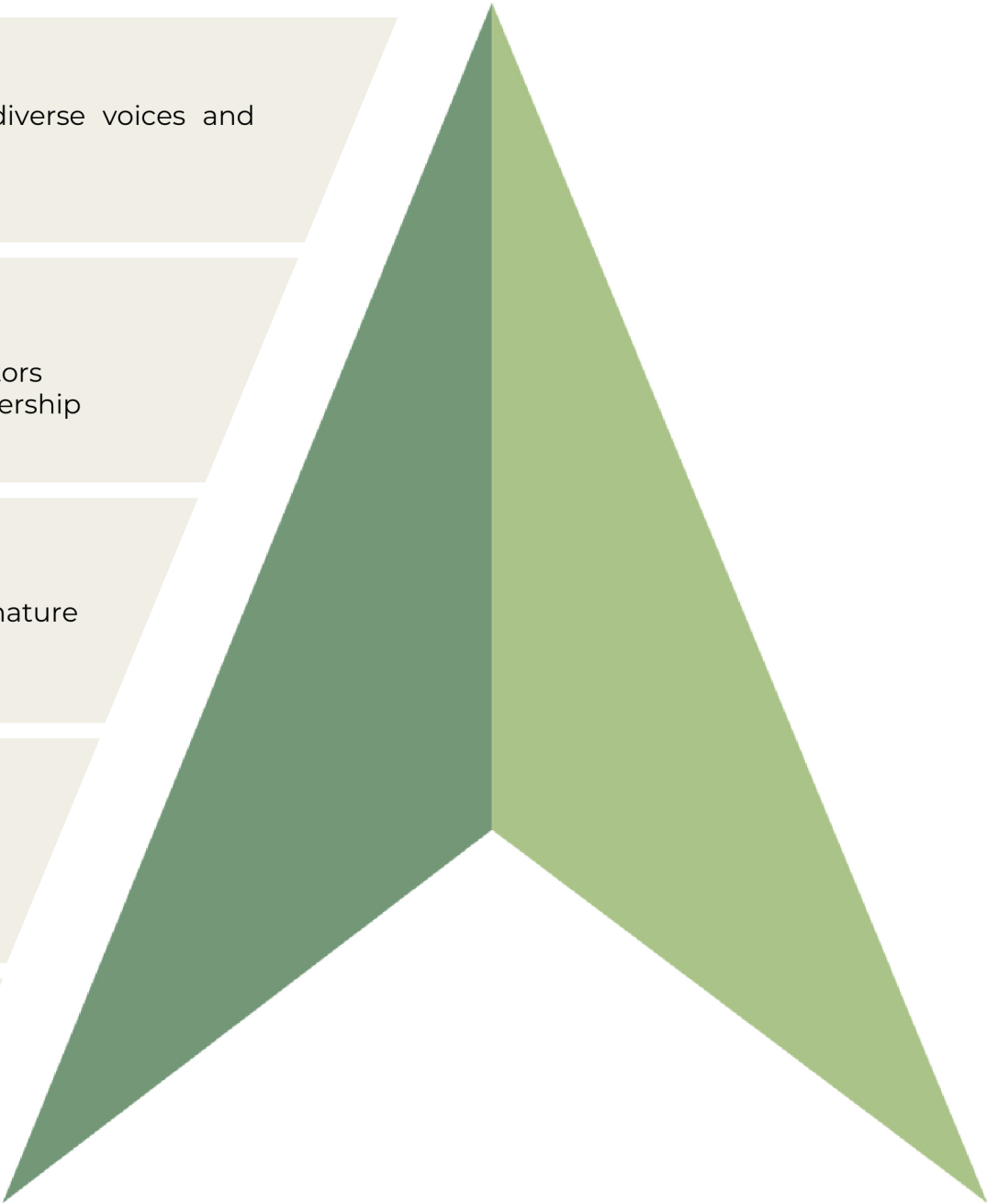
- Champion environmental stewardship, protecting our natural beauty and our access to nature
- Maintain alignment with community values and priorities
- Ensure that all decisions consider how quality of life will be impacted or enhanced

Safety

- Actions and planning place people and community safety at the centre of all decisions
- Safe, shared use of community spaces is promoted as an element of quality of life

Regional Leadership

- Reflects Dryden’s focus on being the regional hub
- Commitment to innovation and knowledge-sharing
- Build and maintain effective local and regional partnerships



COMMUNICATIONS & OUR PEOPLE



The City of Dryden respects our employees and our citizens and is committed to open, responsive, and transparent communication.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUPPORTING COMMUNICATIONS & OUR PEOPLE

- Completed multiple public by-law education campaigns including business licensing, parking control, wildlife feeding, pet waste, property standards, the Trap, Neuter, and Release program (TNR) through Second Chance Pet Network, as well as other by-law amendment public education.
- The City of Dryden implemented various improvements to its internal and public facing websites to enhance internal and public communications.
 - 88,432 City website visitors vs 85,458 in 2022
 - 561 Facebook page posts vs 340 in 2022
 - 2,861 FB followers in 2023 vs 2,307 in 2022
- Published the 3rd edition of the Trailblazer Magazine, a visitor guide that showcases all that Dryden and the surrounding area have to offer.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee held multiple events including: smile cookie campaign, holiday skate, employee appreciation BBQ, employee family swim, Christmas dress up, and many other events to promote DEI across the organization.
- The DEI Committee conducted the following Cultural Awareness Training:
 - Walk-a-Mile Training, achieving a 92% employee attendance rate
 - Mohawk Residential School Virtual Tour, achieving a 61% employee attendance rate
- Through a DEI and safety focused lens, the City enhanced our employee orientation and created a comprehensive employee handbook for all new hires, helping to make our new team members' transition easier and more welcoming.
- Numerous engagement sessions were held to allow for public/business/indigenous/and industry input on a multitude of projects including the Outdoor Event Centre Conceptual Design, Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Food Hub Feasibility Study, and the Official Plan.

COMMUNITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



The City of Dryden will celebrate its diversity and inclusiveness, while ensuring our doors are open and all who enter are welcome.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUPPORTING COMMUNITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

- The City participated in the Grand Council Treaty #3 event held in Dryden honouring the 150 year anniversary of the signing of Treaty No 3. The City of Dryden Council also recognized this significant event through a Proclamation.
- The City of Dryden Working Circle presented the Leonard Skye Building Bridges Award to Ms. Sherry Paquin, who was presented a Star Blanket during the Dryden High School Pow Wow. This award is presented annually from the Working Circle.
- With support from the Working Circle, Dryden municipal leadership hosted the 1st Kaniigan Shkamowaat Shagaswayiitiwuk (Leadership Meeting where Tobacco is Exchanged) consisting of leadership from area First Nation Communities including Waabigonii Zaaga'igan Anishinaabeg (Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation), Migisi Sahgaigan (Eagle Lake First Nation), Obishikokaang (Lac Seul First Nation), Wabauskang First Nation, as well as Dryden municipal leadership. This was a historic meeting for Dryden and our First Nation neighbours.
- A significant number of city employees participated in National Indigenous Peoples' Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation events.
- The Dryden Museum hosted the MIIJIM: TRADITIONAL FOODS OF THE LAKE OF THE WOODS ANISHINAABEG Exhibit that came from the Lake of the Woods Museum and gave insight into the food and land from an Anishinaabe view.
- The Dryden & District Museum and Dryden Public Library together increased accessibility of the Dryden Observer newspapers by digitizing them. The Museum is setting up the site that will allow patrons to access the files in 2024.
- The MyLift transit service made 4,076 trips, transported 2,682 patrons, and traveled 23,772 kilometers. A new transit vehicle was purchased in 2023 as well.

A photograph of a lifeguard from behind, wearing a red t-shirt, a colorful patterned face mask, and a red fanny pack with 'LIFEGUARD' written on it. They are standing by a swimming pool with a brick wall in the background.

COMMUNITY SAFETY & WELLBEING

The City of Dryden places safety and wellbeing at the core of all we do.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SAFETY & WELLBEING

- The Dryden Fire Service (DFS) team members completed over 6000 combined training hours and responded to 225 calls for service. During 2023 the service saw 10 new recruits put into service as well as new equipment which included a new ladder/pumper apparatus. With a focus on employee health, DFS launched PeerOnCall Peer support application for firefighter mental health and trained 2 team members as Resilient Minds Instructors. DFS enforcement completed 68 fire inspections through the year. The team conducted the largest Smoke Alarm Campaign in DFS history as well as hosted 18 public education events throughout 2023.
- The City's Information Technology Department implemented CCTV cameras in strategic locations throughout the community with monitoring available to the OPP. Funding from the Provincial Government was used for this community safety project.
- Community Services installed emergency buttons throughout the Fitness Centre to increase patron and user safety. The department also secured funding to purchase 8 new spin bikes at the Fitness Centre, and collaborated with the Dryden Rotary Club to develop a new Community Garden. The Pool and Fitness Centre saw 69,768 visits in 2023, a 52% increase over 2022. Patrons logged 3,575 hours of arena and outdoor facilities program usage, an increase of 25% over 2022. Community Services staff secured sponsorships from many local businesses and organizations to provide free public programming at the Arena and Pool & Fitness Centre for March Break and the December Holiday Break.
- The Dryden Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants had no major non-compliance occurrences and no sewage by-pass events in 2023. Also, 100% of our water treatment test samples met the Ontario Drinking Water Standards.
- Public Works installed two automated pedestrian crossing systems in the community for increased student pedestrian safety, as well as hosted its annual Household Hazardous Waste Day.
- Municipal leadership met with numerous Provincial Ministers over the past year to address areas of concern and challenges to our community.
- Community Services organized and facilitated Canada Day 2023 Celebrations with Celebrate Canada Funding through Canadian Heritage.



ECONOMIC & INVESTMENT DIVERSITY

The City of Dryden recognizes and responds to opportunities that diversify our economy and positions the City to achieve a positive return on investments.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUPPORTING ECONOMIC & INVESTMENT DIVERSITY

- Community Development staff completed a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy for the City of Dryden. This included engaging with community stakeholders, the Working Circle and other indigenous peoples, industry, the general business community, as well as public engagement.
- A Covered Outdoor Event Centre conceptual design that included an extensive community engagement process was completed.
- The City supported local businesses through its Community Improvement Plan for a total project value of \$1,505,000 with a municipal financial contribution of \$20,500.
- Municipal staff processed 42 business license applications, doubling the previous year's total.
- The municipality adopted a new Official Plan in 2023 with senior government approval to come in 2024.
- The Dryden Trailblazer Tagged Fish Contest continued through 2023 with a total of \$50,000 in tagged fish. 2024 is expected to see \$75,000 in tagged fish in the Wabigoon chain of lakes.
- Initiated the My Trail Campaign to promote Dryden as a place to live, work and play – Blaze Your Trail in Dryden.
- Aaron Park upgrades were made including gatehouse renovations, electrification of 3 new campsites, and construction of a new washroom at the Pavilion.
- Municipal Accommodation Tax funds were used by the Dryden Trailblazers Tourism Association to contribute \$66,381 to support 13 tourism related projects: Northern Bands Hockey Tournament, We Run this City, Dryden Fall Fest, Dryden Snow Drag Racing, Dryden Walleye Masters, Ghost & Mavis Lake Trail Signage Renewal, Exploring Indigenous Science & Culture, First Nations Memorial Classic Baseball Tournament, and many more.



INFRASTRUCTURE



The City of Dryden is progressive in its efforts to maintain and strengthen our infrastructure to maximize our opportunity for growth.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Public Works conducted sidewalk and curb replacement in various areas of the community.
- Roadwork throughout 2023 consisted of:
 - Resurfacing Casimir Ave – Arthur St. to St. Charles St.
 - Additional applications of surface treatment on Thunder Lake Road
 - Asphalt paving on Memorial Ave – Duke St. to Arthur St.
 - Asphalt paving on Van Horne Ave – Victoria St. to Davis St.
- Dryden Cemetery improvements included asphalt paving and a new Columbarium installation.
- Public Works conducted significant storm sewer and sewer main lining operations.
- Public Works also completed water distribution system valve replacements as well as Water Treatment Plant filter piping and launders replacement.
- The Facilities Master Plan was completed and presented to Council. This report forms an important piece to municipal facility management and infrastructure investment planning.
- The City's Information Technology Department implemented a new fiber data network that will help to maintain a reliable data network infrastructure between municipal facilities.
- Volunteers at the Museum successfully completed in 2023:
 - Transferring all collections ledgers from 1964 to 2017 into the PastPerfect database to allow Museum staff to quickly identify and locate items in the Museum collection.
 - Created 34 new accessions into the Museum's collection.
- Dryden Regional Airport made improvements to groundside parking at the terminal as well as service road improvements for heavy trucks and equipment. These improvements were funded in part by NOHFC.

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Dryden operates in a fiscally responsible manner through established practices that ensure a sustainable future for our community and the City of Dryden.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUPPORTING FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

- The City continued to pay down debt in 2023 to the tune of just over \$800,000 and is on track to realize a significant operating budget surplus for 2023.
- \$41,204 increase in property tax revenue resulting from new construction.
- \$83,250 received from FedNor for the Food Aggregation & Distribution Hub Feasibility Study (Federal).
- The Dryden Signature Trail system was extended from the Van Horne Landing area to Laura Howe Marsh, along with the rehabilitation of the Wabigoon River Walkway Promenade. Both projects were partially funded through the NOHFC (Provincial).
- Community Museum Operating Grant of \$30,220 obtained for the ongoing operation of the Dryden & District Museum (Provincial).
- \$17,500 in R.I.D.E. grant program funding for implementing R.I.D.E. programs of sobriety checks (Provincial).
- DREAM donation of \$308,000 provided for the Dryden Arena Expansion Project. Continuation of the Recreation Centre Mechanical Retrofit and Expansion Project funded in part through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (Federal).
- The new Rotary Park Dog Park was opened with the help of volunteers and their fundraising efforts.
- Funding received for the restoration of the waterslide at the Pool & Fitness Centre from the DREAM Committee (\$5,000), Treasury Metals (\$5,000), We Run the City (\$1000), and Rotary Club (\$5,000).
- \$81,365 received from the Ministry of Canadian Heritage, the Museums Assistance Program, and the Digital Access to Heritage Component for the Digitizing the Local Newspaper Project (Federal). Private donations were made to the Museum for the Digitizing the Local Newspaper Project and the Air Ontario Flight 1363 Memorial Monument & Oral History Project.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUPPORTING FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY cont.

- The City of Dryden executed a Significant Neighbouring Community Funding Agreement for the 2023 Learn More Program with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) for 2023 that provided approximately \$1.2 Million in funding.
- Received \$150,000 under the Community Well-being Reserve Fund that helped fund the Dog Park (\$20,000), Project Hope (\$5,000) and an update to the Community Safety and Well-being Plan (\$8,000).
- In 2023, the City of Dryden entered into a Near Term Investment Funding Program Agreement with the NWMO and established a Reserve Fund. Money was drawn from this reserve to help fund a new Fire Aerial/Ladder Truck, Arena and Recreation Centre Upgrade, Fire Hall 1 and 2 upgrades, and Library and Airport Washroom renovations with assistance from other funders.
- In partnership with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks, completed a \$30,000 upgrade to the Gatehouse at Aaron Park.
- The Solicitor General provided the City of Dryden with a 5% rebate towards our policing costs in 2023 that amounted to a discount of \$271,732.
- Completed Blue Box Transition as curbside Blue Box pick-up was turned over to PRO (Producer Responsibility Organization). During the transition process the City was able to make an agreement with Circular Materials to store and load recyclable materials at the Highway #502 landfill.
- Celebrate Canada Funding of \$8,000 for Canada Day celebrations (Federal).

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY IN 2023

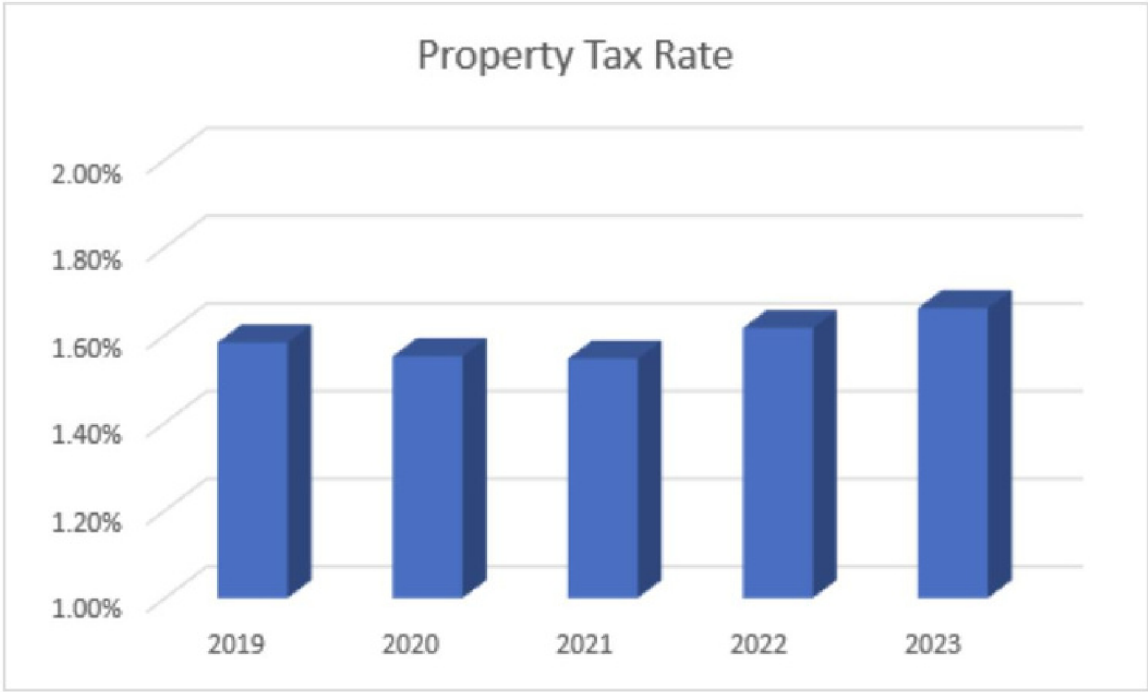
The City of Dryden received funding approvals totaling \$5,282,897 for 14 of the following projects:

- \$447,891 in funding for Trail Upgrades from NOHFC (Provincial)
- \$2,910,410 in funding for the Reconstruction of Grand Trunk Ave (Highway 17) from Leach Road to Cecil Ave from Connecting Links (Provincial)
- \$60,000 in funding for the Library Accessible Washroom upgrade from the Inclusive Community Grants (Provincial)
- \$75,016 in funding for Airport Upgrades/Renovations from NOHFC (Provincial)
- \$153,360 in funding for the Airport Terminal Washroom upgrade from NOHFC (Provincial funding of \$88,360) and Enabling Accessibility Fund (Federal funding of \$65,000)
- \$140,000 in funding for Capital Sidewalk and Curb Replacement from the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (Provincial)
- \$140,000 in funding for Surface Treated Road Capital Rehab from the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (Provincial)
- \$180,000 in funding for Storm Sewer Replacement from the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (Provincial)
- \$285,000 in funding for Underpass Retaining Wall Parging from the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (Provincial)
- \$146,775 in funding for Van Horne Landing Dock Repairs from NOHFC (Provincial)
- \$90,000 in funding for the Fire Hall 1 Rooftop Heating & Cooling Unit Replacement from NOHFC (Provincial)
- \$75,000 in funding for Storm Sewer Restoration from the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (Provincial)
- \$179,445 in funding for Hot Mix Patching - Extended Meter from NORDS (Provincial)
- \$400,000 in funding for Storm Sewer Lining from the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (Provincial)

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY



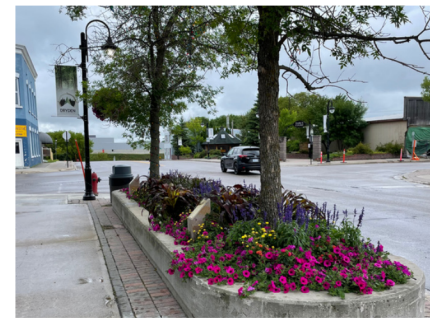
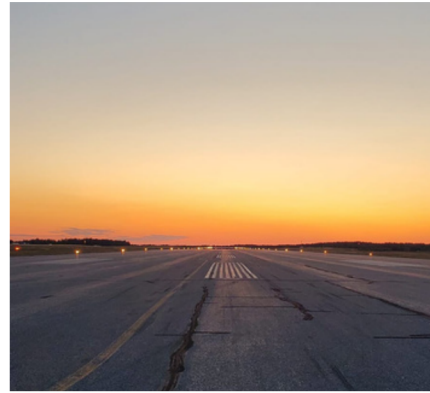
CITY OF DRYDEN 5-YEAR TAX RATE SUMMARY



We are proud of our achievements over the past five years. We were able to accomplish a lot while keeping tax increases at a minimum. We understand that you, the residents, are the ones who pay taxes, and we want to assure you that we take this responsibility seriously.

As outlined in our 5-Year Strategic Plan, we are committed to being fiscally responsible with the city's finances. We will continue to make sound financial decisions that prioritize the long-term health of our city, while minimizing tax increases.

2023 IMPROVEMENTS AND SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS



YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

The average household in Dryden contributed \$2,625 in property taxes to municipal services in 2023

Those taxes go a long way in providing the services our community needs.

Below is how it breaks down.



\$599
Corporate Services

Administration \$86
Human Resources \$53
Finance \$348
IT \$140
Provincial Offences (-\$28)



\$431
Infrastructure & Engineering

Public Works \$119
Fleet Management (-\$22)
Roads \$301
Storm Sewer \$47
Waste Management (-\$69)
Recycling \$17
Parks \$58
Facilities Management (-\$20)



\$755
Police & Enforcement Services

Police - Uniformed \$755
Police - Civilian \$1
Court Security (-\$16)
School Safety Guards \$7
Pet Control \$0
Parking Control \$8



\$594
Community Services

My Lift Transit \$8
Child Care \$15
Public Health \$54
Social Assistance \$17
Social Housing \$68
Home for the Aged \$117
Recreation Centre \$42
Outdoor Facilities \$10
Museum \$11
Library \$88
Cemetery \$7
Arena \$94
Pool & Fitness Centre \$64



\$256
Fire & Emergency Management

Fire Services \$141
Emergency Management \$3
Health & Safety \$16
Land Ambulance \$96



\$19
City Council



(-\$29)
Community Development

Building Inspection \$22
Planning & Development \$6
Community Development \$18
Special Projects (-\$75)

LOOKING FORWARD 2024>>>

- 2nd Kaniigan Shkamowaat Shagaswayiitiiwuk – Spring 2024.
(Neighbouring First Nation and Dryden Leadership Meeting where Tobacco is Exchanged)
- Comprehensive Zoning By-law review and update.
- Highway #17 Rehab from Cecil Ave to West Limit of City.
- Continuation of Dryden Signature Trail improvements.
- Mass marketing of the Tagged Fish Contest on Wabigoon Lake with \$75,000 of tagged fish waiting to be caught.
- Reopening of the Sandy Beach Golf Course. (formerly Eagle's Landing)
- Completion of the Recreation Centre Mechanical Retrofit and Expansion Project funded in part through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.
- Four fully accessible dressing rooms and a second level community multiuse space (funding from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program) are expected to be completed for the summer of 2024.
- Significant housing development to finish, with additional new construction starts planned in both the residential and commercial sectors.

BLAZE YOUR TRAIL

30 Van Horne Avenue
Dryden, ON P8N 2A7
Phone: (807) 223-2225



DRYDEN



www.dryden.ca