

What will your \$130 buy you?

By Brock Weir

In approving the 2015 Municipal Budget last week, Council underscored how this money would be used within Town Hall over the next year.

According to the Town, the 2015 Budget will fund number of new initiatives moving forward, including building on Aurora's Bronze Certification with Excellence Canada with a goal towards silver with the non-profit organization that promotes ?organizational excellence? across the country.

Funding will also support the continued development of Aurora's new Sports Plan alongside, and in conjunction with, the Town's revamped and updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Also in the development stage is a ?new, comprehensive zoning bylaw? and possible IT collaborations with Newmarket.

A long-proposed Public Arts Policy is also expected to take a step forward towards development, according to the Town, as are ?enhanced recreational services for youth.?

Residents can also expect to see changes in how they are see their property tax and water bills with the implantation of a new paperless billing system.

Additional highlights include:

- ? \$2 million to reconstruct Industrial Parkway South from Wellington Street to Industry Street
- ? \$2 million for roofing at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex
- ? \$1.8 million for the reconstruction of Bluegrass Drive and Steeplechase Avenue
- ? \$1.2 million for the reconstruction of Vandorf Sideroad
- ? \$1.4 million for the repaving of the parking lot at the Aurora Community Centre
- ? \$720,000 for improvements on Child Drive
- ? \$400,000 for water meter replacements
- ? \$387,000 for a new accessible playground at Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park
- ? \$385,000 for new fleet vehicles
- ? \$300,000 for an overpass on Hartwell Way
- ? \$200,000 for a new Community Improvement Plan

?I am pleased to see our new Council has kept Aurora on the prudent financial path established last term by investing in critical areas and constraining spending where needs were less pressing,? said Mayor Geoff Dawe in a statement. ?As our focus shifts to multi-year planning, we will have an increasing ability to strategically manage our budgets annually and over the long-term.

?Multi-year budgeting will be a crucial tool as we, like many communities across Ontario, grapple with increased costs associated with emergency services. While I am committed to continuing to provide quality fire protection to our residents through an enhanced Fire Master Plan, I fully intend to work with our Council and Newmarket Council to manage these significant costs in a sustainable and strategic fashion that does not adversely affect other programs and services.?

Aurora and Newmarket are served by the Central York Fire Services which is, in turn, governed by the Joint Council Committee, comprised of elected officials and municipal employees from both Towns. While Aurora is a funding partner in the arrangement, Newmarket is the fire department's ultimate approval authority.