

Gatineau ups fees, fines to deal with infrastructure backlog

2.9% tax increase includes dedicated funds to deal with infrastructure backlog

By Kate Porter, [CBC News](#)
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Gatineau city councillors voted on a series of budget recommendations Thursday that will see the city increase parking fees, help create a district of artist workshops on Montcalm Street, and wage its yearly battle to balance its books.

One day after their [Ottawa neighbours tabled their 2017 draft budget in one hour](#), Gatineau councillors were wrapping up four days of deliberations over their 2017 spending plan.

Overall, Gatineau intends to spend \$577 million, raised almost entirely through property taxes.

The city plans to raise property taxes for property owners by 1.9 per cent in 2017. A further one per cent tax increase would be dedicated entirely to trying to deal with Gatineau's growing backlog of infrastructure projects.

Faced with the pressure to catch up with road, sewer and other infrastructure work, Gatineau councillors voted to put off other projects, such as a new main library.

The city has also had to find savings to deal with a capital deficit. That pressure is declining year after year, but still posed a \$2.8-million challenge for 2017.

Fees, fines rising

To deal with that added pressure, Gatineau councillors voted to raise various fees and fines:

- Hourly rates at parking meters will increase from \$2 to \$3 per hour, which could raise an extra \$500,000 for the city while also encouraging residents to use public transit.
- The fine for driving in a transit lane will increase from \$149 to \$246.
- The fine for dumping snow on a public road will increase from \$149 to \$271.
- The rental rate for the foyer at the renovated Théâtre de l'île jumps from \$50 per day to \$100 per day for cultural groups, and from \$100 to \$350 for other for-profit users.

Councillors voted to waive fees for residents who bring waste to its ecocentres for recycling. Similarly, recycling pickup fees are to be waived in 2017 for schools and child care centres.

During debate, some councillors suggested the city should focus on roads and pipes, but in the end council approved \$108,000 to help artists and encourage them to set up workshops, especially along Montcalm Street near Brewery Creek.

Gatineau's budget is scheduled for final approval on Dec. 6.