

Proposed 2026 Operating Budget Community Handbook



The Budget and You

The City of Thunder Bay welcomes input from citizens on the 2026 Budget:

Pop-Up Information Booths

Thunder Bay Country Market
CLE Grounds – Dove Building
Saturday, January 17, 2026
8am-1pm

Winter Fun Day
Marina Park
Sunday, January 25, 2026
2pm – 4pm

This January, City staff will be popping up around the City during budget deliberations. This is a new, in-person opportunity for citizens to make inquiries and provide feedback on budget-related items.

A survey will be available on www.thunderbay.ca/getinvolved from January 16 to January 29, 2026, to gather feedback on the proposed 2026 Operating Budget.

Important Budget Dates:

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE
Friday, Jan. 16	View the proposed 2026 Operating Budget and the Community Handbook	At the Office of the City Clerk -1st Floor of City Hall or visit www.thunderbay.ca/budget
Friday, Jan 16 to Thursday, Jan 29	Operating Budget Survey available for comment	www.thunderbay.ca/getinvolved
Thursday, Jan. 22	Long Term Financial Overview, 6:30 pm	Council Chambers, City Hall
Monday, Jan 26 Wednesday, Jan 28	City Council reviews the proposed 2026 Operating Budget, 5:00 pm	Council Chambers, City Hall
Tuesday, Feb. 3	2026 Budget scheduled to be ratified by City Council, 6:30 pm	Council Chambers, City Hall

Council Meetings are broadcast live on Rogers TV (formerly Shaw Spotlight) Channel 10 & 105 on Ignite TV, or Tbaytel Digital TV on Channel 110, and video streamed live and archived at www.thunderbay.ca/councillive.

More to say? Email the Budget team at your.budget@thunderbay.ca!

What are the Components of the Budget?

The Budget is much more than dollars and cents. It directly impacts you through the services you use and is a tool to realize the community's goals. Each time you call the police, your garbage is collected, your roads and sidewalks are plowed, or you visit the library, you are witnessing tax dollars at work.



The City regularly faces the challenge of determining the right balance of services to meet the needs of today and tomorrow. Each year, we look at the services we provide, how much they cost, and how they are paid for. Recent inflationary pressures have significantly impacted these costs.

The City strives to foster an inclusive community, focused on service excellence, collaboration, and providing opportunities for a high quality of life.

The proposed 2026 Tax-Supported Operating Budget includes spending of \$412.2 million. The tax levy required to support the operating budget is \$227.4 million. With the \$23.0 million capital tax levy approved in December, the Total Municipal Tax Levy is \$250.4 million; an increase of **4.0%** compared to the previous year.

The proposed 2026 Rate-Supported Operating Budget includes spending of \$66.5 million and is comprised of Waterworks, Wastewater (Sewer), Solid Waste (Landfill), Prince Arthur's Landing – Boater Services and Municipal Parking Services.



What City Council CAN do.

To set the annual budget, City Council must balance the following:

- Services – Should some services be decreased or eliminated? Which ones? Should some new services be introduced?
- User fees – What user fees should be increased and by how much? Should new user fees be applied to other programs and services?
- Municipal tax levy – To what degree, if any, should the Municipal Tax Levy be raised to fund the services City Council and the community want to increase, reduce, or maintain?

What you, the Citizens, CAN do.

Give your opinion and feedback. Complete the survey below or complete it online at www.thunderbay.ca/getinvolved. This process gives you the opportunity to provide your input to City Council.

\$125
Fire Rescue



Skilled fire suppression, emergency and rescue services delivered from eight stations.

\$22
Long-Term Care



Quality long-term care with 150 beds, programs, and nursing services.

\$1
Child Care



Operation of four child-care centres fostering safety, growth, and well-being.

\$101
Public Works

Maintenance of roads, bridges, sidewalks (including snow removal, sanding and salting) drainage systems, traffic signals and streetlights.

\$47
SNEMS



Responsive, professional ambulance and emergency care provided in Thunder Bay and across the district.



\$33 **Solid Waste & Recycling**

Garbage and recycling collection, landfill management, and waste diversion programs.

\$40 **Parks**

Endless opportunities for fun and relaxation in one of the 129 active parks or on the 55km of paved recreational trails.



\$118
General Government

Essential corporate services including finance, legal and realty, as well as support for the City Manager, the Mayor and Members of Council.

\$51 **Transit**

Safe, affordable, and accessible transportation options, provided through conventional transit and Lift+ service.



\$29

Growth & Development

Community planning, building inspections and permitting, and enhanced investment in growing the municipal tax base.



\$55
Recreation & Culture

Welcoming facilities, exciting events and inclusive programs for residents.



How does the City spend money?

For every **\$1000** in property tax paid, residents receive...

\$62 **TBDSSAB**

Essential social services like housing & homelessness, childcare and delivery of Ontario Works throughout the district.

\$10 **TBDHU**

Public health services, disease prevention, health education and evidence-based care for 153,000 residents in the district.



\$11 **CEDC**

Investment attraction, local business growth, tourism industry support and robust marketing aimed at drawing both visitors and new talent to the city.



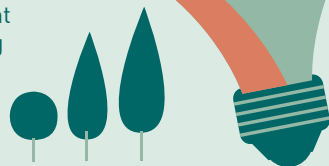
\$1 **Other ABCs**

Vibrant local shopping areas, community events, and an improved quality of life in local Business Improvement Areas.



\$3 **LRCA**

Ten well-maintained conservation areas offering outdoor recreation opportunities, and regulation of development in areas prone to flooding and erosion.



\$28 **Libraries**

Four neighbourhood branches offering books, programs, resources and meeting spaces to inspire learning, creativity, and community connection.



\$222 **Police Services**

Safety and community well-being through crime prevention, law enforcement, victim support, public order maintenance, and emergency response.



\$33
Debt Servicing

Interest and principal payments on outstanding municipal debt.

\$8 **Licensing & Enforcement**

Issuing licences and permits, responding to animal-related concerns, and investigating and enforcing municipal by-laws to support our community.

Your Water/Wastewater Bill

The City also operates the waterworks and wastewater (sewer) systems, meeting mandated provincial standards in accordance with long-term financial plans. The plans balance a sustainable water system, affordable rates and a progressive water rate structure that benefits those who conserve. Your water and sewer services are paid for through your water bill.

How Your Water/Wastewater Bill is Calculated



There are two components to proposed water rates for residential customers:

1. “Fixed Rate” of \$354.05 a year for single detached residential properties
2. “Volumetric” charge for water used of \$2.124/m³

For the average Thunder Bay household, the proposed 2026 water rate equals a \$22.62 annual increase, or 3.0% over 2025 rates, with total costs for water services averaging \$2.13 a day.

Wastewater (sewer) charges will equal 90% of the total water fixed cost and volumetric charge. For the average Thunder Bay household, the combined water and wastewater proposed increase equates to an increase of \$43.04 per year.

Solid Waste (Landfill)

The minimum charge for a trip to the Landfill remains at \$10 and is applicable on loads up to 120kg. Tonnage charge for loads over 120kg will increase 3.0% to \$94.65/tonne. A 200kg load of waste will cost \$0.55 more than in 2025.



Proposed 2026 Operating Budget – Have Your Say!

1. Have you looked at the Proposed 2026 Operating Budget?

Yes

No

2. Do you find the operating budget easy to understand?



No, I found it difficult to understand



Neutral/Unsure



Yes, it was easy to understand

3. What would make it easier?

4. Which statement is closest to how you feel about the 2026 Budget?

- Keep taxes as low as possible, even if some services are reduced
- Maintain current services, even if costs increase
- Invest more now to improve the city long-term
- Not sure/need more information

5. What is one thing you would like the City to spend more on? (For more information about the categories, please see infographic on page 3 of the Community Handbook)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Rescue | <input type="checkbox"/> Long-Term Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Works |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Superior North EMS | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid Waste & Recycling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> General Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transit | <input type="checkbox"/> Growth & Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation & Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> TBDSSAB |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LRCA | <input type="checkbox"/> TBDHU |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other ABCs (BIAs etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> CEDC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Debt Servicing | <input type="checkbox"/> Libraries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Police Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Licensing & Enforcement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer Not to Answer |

