

THE 1019 REPORT

COVERING THE 1,019 SQUARE KILOMETRES OF VAUDREUIL-SOULANGES

VOL. 6 NO. 24 - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2025

COTEAU DU LAC

NEW ELECTORAL MAP MAKES NO SENSE: MAYOR **P3**

HUDSON

TAXES TO GO UP BY 4.5 TO 5.6% NEXT YEAR **P11**

VAUDREUIL

TAXES TO TAKE 4.6% HIKE IN 2026 **P11**

READERS SPEAK OUT

WE NEED TO KEEP OUR DOCTORS **P9**

MRC spending to go up 10% next year

BRENDA O'FARRELL
The 1019 Report

The MRC Vaudreuil-Soulanges will increase its spending by 10 per cent next year, according to its \$44.17-million operating budget for 2026 approved by the regional council last Wednesday.

The regional authority will see its revenues raised by fees charged to the 23 municipalities in its territory climb 15.6 per cent next year, hitting \$20.7 million, an increase of about \$2.8 million from the \$17.9 million levied in 2025.

The MRC will also invest \$1.7 million next year in its plan to build a compost treatment centre, which it estimates will be in operation by 2028. The MRC last Friday finalized the purchase of the site for the \$35.5-million project, the largest in the MRC's history. The 13-acre tract of land near the former Amazon warehouse in an industrial park in Coteau du Lac, was bought for \$13.97 million.

The MRC, which is responsible for recycling and other waste collection, regional urban planning, economic development and ensuring a variety environmental regulations are met, will see its spending on watercourse management more than double in the coming year. The budget to maintain these waterways will increase by 105 per cent next year to reach \$2.6 million, up \$1.34 million from the \$1.275 budgeted for 2025.

See MRC, Page 11.



Have a holly jolly...



Madeleine Langlois, The 1019 Report

This old gent says it all. As 2025 nears its end, it is our hope at *The 1019 Report* that you enjoy a merry Christmas and have a peaceful holiday time.

Future of Hudson GMF now up in air Doctors weighing tentative deal

JOSHUA ALLAN
The 1019 Report

After announcing its closure two weeks ago, the fate of the Hudson Medicentre is now unclear after the federation representing the province's family doctors and the Quebec government struck a tentative deal last week.

The doctors at the GMF Hudson clinic continue to deliberate next steps in view of the agreement, which proposes to overhaul Bill 2, removing its heavily-criticized coercive measures and increasing input from doctors, with the goal of improving access to health services across the province.

"We are still talking with the docs to see if it changes anything and if it changes people's minds who are leaving," states a message from Dr. Tara McCarty, a family physician and co-owner of the GMF Hudson. No further details were provided.

See GMF HUDSON, Page 4.
Also see: Tentative deal 'a start,' Page 5



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These are just some of the people who are showing their support for community journalism.
Each week, we will spotlight others. We hope you follow their lead.

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Michel Caron, Vaudreuil-Dorion (renewal)
William Caluori, Rigaud (renewal)
Steve Fennell, Rigaud
Charles Beauchemin, St. Lazare
Ronald Donais, Pincourt (renewal)

Derek van Gameren, Vaudreuil sur le Lac
Geneviève Lachance, St. Lazare (renewal)
Jessica Chevrier, Vaudreuil-Dorion (renewal)
Ken Flewwelling, St. Lazare (renewal)
Jeanna McClintock, Hudson (renewal)

New electoral map for region 'illogical'

Coteau du Lac, MNAs, MRC oppose new riding boundaries

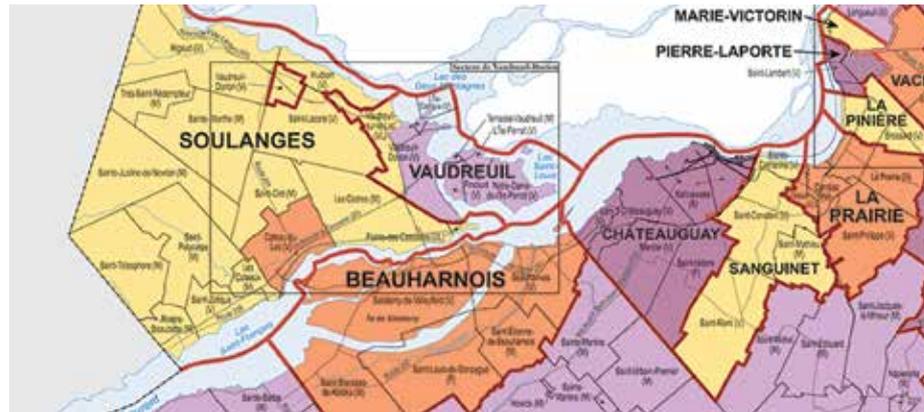
BRENDA O'FARRELL
The 1019 Report

The Town of Coteau du Lac is leading the charge to convince the *Directeur général des élections du Québec* to take a good hard look at its new provincial electoral map and allow the town of about 7,800 residents to remain in the Soulanges riding.

"It's illogical," said Coteau du Lac Mayor Andrée Brosseau, describing the proposed redistricting of the 125-riding provincial electoral map presented by Quebec's electoral commission earlier this month.

The proposal, a second draft of a new map that was first floated in 2023, was introduced for approval Dec. 2, one day after the Quebec Court of Appeal ruled that a law passed by the National Assembly in April 2024 calling for the revisions to be submitted for further study was unconstitutional, as it served to delay the independent commission's work.

According to the proposal, which would redraw the boundaries for several ridings for the 2026 provincial election, Coteau du Lac would be plucked from the riding of Soulanges, which covers the entire southern and western areas of the Vaudreuil-Soulanges region, and become part of the neighbouring riding of Beauharnois, across the St. Lawrence River, which includes the island of Salaberry de Valleyfield and municipalities to its south, notably the towns of Beauharnois,



Commission de la présentation électorale du Québec

The redistricting map of the provincial ridings removes Coteau du Lac from the Soulanges riding, adding it to Beauharnois, while transferring parts of the western area of the City of Vaudreuil-Dorion out of the Vaudreuil riding, adding them to the Soulanges riding.

St. Louis de Gonzague and St. Stanislas de Kostka.

In addition, the proposed riding map would also transfer parts of the western area of the City of Vaudreuil-Dorion out of the Vaudreuil riding, adding them to the Soulanges riding.

The 23 mayors in the MRC of Vaudreuil-Soulanges support Coteau du Lac's plea to remain in the Soulanges riding, said Patrick Bousez, prefect of the regional county authority, in an interview last week. The MRC council will adopt a resolution to that effect at its next meeting, Bousez said.

The Directeur général des élections is

tasked with reviewing the electoral map after every second election and is mandated to change riding boundaries to ensure that they maintain relatively equal number of voters.

The CAQ government introduced legislation to delay approval of the new map after it was discovered that the new configuration would eliminate two ridings — one in Gaspé and one in east-end Montreal, arguing it would reduce the Gaspé region's electoral clout. The proposed map would also create two new ridings — one in the territory known as Centre du Québec, between Montreal and Quebec City, and one in the Laurentians, north of Montreal.

Brosseau is pleading with the *Directeur général des élections* to maintain the status quo when it comes to her town, and keep Coteau du Lac in Soulanges.

"We strongly denounce this change," the town said in a public statement after council Dec. 9 unanimously approved a resolution calling the proposed change be put on hold, saying Coteau du Lac "naturally belongs" to the MRC of Vaudreuil-Soulanges.

Soulanges MNA Marilyne Picard added her voice to the local representatives opposed to the change in National Assembly on Dec. 9, saying: "Taking Coteau du Lac out of the Soulanges riding would dilute the MRC's political weight."

Arguing the town has strong economic, social and territorial ties with its neighbours in the MRC of Vaudreuil-Soulanges, Picard also pointed to the lack of any similar ties with the municipalities across the river in Beauharnois riding.

She also pointed to plans to develop a regional linear park along the Soulanges Canal, a waterway that cuts through four municipalities in Soulanges, adding reassigning Coteau du Lac to another riding would split the canal in three sections, "severing the spine" of the region.

Vaudreuil MNA Marie-Claude Nichols also opposes the changes. Aside from the redrawing of Soulanges, which she described as "incoherent," she said splitting the City of Vaudreuil-Dorion between two ridings does not serve voters.

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- Peter Hadekel, former columnist and editorial page editor at The Gazette

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DORION:

Jean Coutu, 253 Boul. Harwood
ESSO, 330 Boul. Harwood

ST. LAZARE:

IGA, 1869 Ste. Angélique
Brunet Pharmacy, Main shopping plaza
Dépanneur, 1831 Ste. Angélique
Sonic gas station,
836 Route de la Cité des Jeunes
Quincaillerie St. Lazare, 1704 Ste. Angélique
Pharmaprix, 1780 Ste. Angélique
Bonisoir/Esso, 2665 Côte St. Charles

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Tim Hortons, 445 Chem. de la Grande-Ligne,
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Crevier Libre service, 61 Rue St. Jean Baptiste

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Pétrole Leger, 100 Grand Boulevard
Ultramar Dép. du coin, 1151 Don Quichotte
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Lilo Groupe Maurice, 105 Don Quichotte
IGA Super Marche, 110 Don Quichotte
Pharmaprix, 10 Don Quichotte

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Maxi & Cie, 92 Boul. Cardinal Léger
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Metro Plus, 107 Boul. Cardinal Léger
Uniprix, 111 Boul. Cardinal Léger
Dépanneur Tabagie, 106 Boul. Cardinal Léger
Toyota Ile Perrot, 2100 Boul. du Traversier

GMF HUDSON: Gov't agrees to amend Bill 2

From Page 1

"There are a lot of moving parts and ongoing unanswered questions," Dr. Ioana Varlan wrote in another message.

Varlan, one of four co-owners of the GMF Hudson who had announced she was ceasing to practice in Quebec as of April, did not specify whether she would change her plans if the tentative deal is ratified by the province's family doctors. Earlier this month she sent a letter to her patients stating she was planning a "relocation and a reorientation" of her professional activities. Earlier this week, she declined to comment further.

The GMF Hudson, which serves 11,000 patients and is the only officially bilingual clinic in the 1019 region, had announced at the end of November that it planned to close its doors as of April. A press release stated that the clinic would be "no longer financially sustainable as a business" under Bill 2.

Plans to shutter the clinic were thrown into limbo last Thursday when the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec (FMOQ) and the Quebec government announced they had reached a tentative agreement. The deal promises to pause the implementation of Bill 2, which had been hastily adopted in the National Assembly on Oct. 25, and to introduce a series of amendments.

The agreement proposes to remove

many of the measures included in the law that had been decried by doctors across the province as coercive. The agreement also promises an additional \$434.7 million in funding for resources for family physicians. Bonuses are included if doctors are able to collectively add 500,000 patients to their practices, with no financial penalties if this target is not reached.

In a statement to *The 1019 Report* yesterday McCarty added: "The trust with this government has been entirely broken and it is difficult to take them 'at their word' and make decisions based on this, given the fact that they have blind-sided us in the past.

"It is important to note as well that there is nothing, *nothing*, in this new agreement that actually helps us improve access and care for our patients. Essentially the government created months of anguish to bring us back to the status quo of last April."

FMOQ members now have until Friday, Dec. 19, at 9 a.m., to vote either in favour or against the agreement. A simple majority is needed for the agreement to be ratified.

If the agreement is approved, the Quebec government has until Feb. 28 to amend the law to reflect the terms of the deal.

TRICYCLE

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Mom of abandoned girl sent to psych hospital

FREDERIC SERRE
The 1019 Report

A LaSalle mother found not criminally responsible three months ago of abandoning her three-year-old daughter on the side of an Ontario highway last June failed last week in her attempt to be sent home. Instead, she was ordered to spend an additional six months in a psychiatric hospital.

The woman, 34, parked her SUV at the fireworks outlet off Highway 20 in Coteau du Lac on June 15 and asked an employee to call police, saying she had lost her daughter, launching a dramatic

20-hour search. The case made international headlines when, three days after her disappearance, the child was found exhausted, hungry, but safe near Casselman, Ont., on the side of Highway 417.

Transfer ordered

Last Wednesday, a judge with the *Commission d'examen des troubles mentaux* — an independent provincial government adjudicator — ruled that while the mother has made significant progress in dealing with her mental-health issues, she still has more work to do and ordered her transferred from the Philippe Pinel Institute in

Montreal's east end to the Douglas Institute in Verdun.

"I think you are taking steps to make things better eventually," said commission judge Michel Rivard to the woman during the hearing. "You have to prove yourself, and it will be a long road, but you have the ability,"

The mother, who cannot be identified due to a court order, thanked Rivard, adding: "I think this will suit me better because of language, the location (of the hospital) and the fact that I am not a violent patient, and I don't need to be in a hospital with such tight security meas-

ures."

In September, the mother was found not criminally responsible of unlawfully abandoning her child and criminal negligence causing harm. Quebec Court Judge Bertrand St-Arnaud determined that the mother was suffering from an episode of mixed mania with psychotic symptoms when she pulled up to the fireworks outlet. This prevented her from distinguishing right from wrong, he said. Both the defence and the prosecution agreed with St-Arnaud's verdict, who was basing it on a detailed psychiatrist's report.

Bill 2: Tentative deal 'a start,' regional doctors' rep

JOSHUA ALLAN
The 1019 Report

The agreement struck last week between the Quebec government and doctors on Bill 2 is a step in the right direction, but it will be a long road ahead to rebuilding the relationship between the province and the medical community, said the president of the 1019 region's doctors' association.

"It's a start," said Dr. Sylvain Dufresne, head of the Association des médecins omnipraticiens du Sud-Ouest (AMOSO), which represents physicians based in the southwestern section of Montréal.

"Of the several doctors who've contacted me, there are some who are very happy, because they're finally relieved," said Dufresne of the agreement. "But there are others who are unsatisfied, who want

more concrete measures, a more specific distribution of funds."

Last Thursday, the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec (FMOQ) and the Quebec government announced they had reached a tentative agreement on Bill 2, the province's controversial overhaul of how doctors are paid. The agreement promises to suspend the provisions in Bill 2 until Feb. 28, giving the government time to work with the FMOQ to introduce several amendments to the law.

The deal proposes eliminating the more coercive measures of the law, including penalizing doctors who don't meet ambitious patient targets.

Also proposed is \$434.7 million more in funding as well as an additional \$74.9 million for doctors if 500,000 new pa-

tients are enrolled in their practices. Penalties for doctors who do not take on more patients would be eliminated.

For Dufresne, while the agreement is a positive sign, the past month and a half has left a bitter taste in his mouth.

"This law, which was passed under gag order, the MNAs who voted in favour were far from knowing our reality," he said, pointing out Soulanges MNA Marilyne Picard, who had supported the law in October, despite later demonstrating a lack of familiarity with the specific provisions within the legislation and their potential consequences.

"They preferred to follow the minister's words, who doesn't even know the difference between a radiologist and a radiation oncologist," he added, referring to a gaffe in the original bill, tabled by Health Min-

ister Christian Dubé, which had confused the two roles.

"I think it shows so clearly that these people are far from the front line, far from our reality," Dufresne added.

The Vaudreuil-Soulanges region has already lost at least two doctors — young physicians based in Vaudreuil-Dorion — who have left the province's health network, Dufresne said.

"I sincerely hope that these people will reconsider their decision," he said. "I'll try to meet them and try to convince them that the future is with us, in the Vaudreuil region."

The agreement between the FMOQ and the government is being put to a vote among FMOQ members. The result is expected to be announced on Friday.

Happy Holidays

L

PETER SCHIEFKE
Member of Parliament
Vaudreuil

Editorial

A tale of timing, deadlines and reclaiming agency at Christmas

Why is it that some years you find yourself more excited about Christmas than others?

The ebb and flow of the enthusiasm for the holiday sways. One year, the yuletide period is filled with anticipation and a lightness of spirit, while other years, the festivities are weighed down in dread, an almost mournful sadness. The reason for this, I have come to believe, stems from the reflective nature of the holiday. It's a quality that reveals itself gradually more and more as the years of adulthood progress.

Contributing to this reflective nature of the occasion, of course, is timing. With Christmas arriving at the end of the calendar year, it provides a sort of punctuation that marks the completion of another chapter. And it is, after all, tradition to reflect when something comes to a close. We are hard-wired to measure the march of time, to celebrate beginnings, commemorate completions, mark milestones. At a minimum we always acknowledge our advancement through time each year on our birthdays.

At the end of a year, however, we look back in a more qualitative, rather than quantitative way. We assess what has happened, think about those who were a part of it with us, wonder about how it all happened, whether it was well planned or unfolded merely by happenstance. This time of year transforms itself into a place, the perfect location, the clearest point from where to look back.

But Christmas is not the end of the year, not the exact ending. In some ways, it serves as a deadline, which we all rush to meet. We have to get all our shopping, baking, work and decorating done by Christmas. We have to get to where we are going by Dec. 24, make sure the gifts are wrapped, the food is prepared, the parties are planned. The deadline creates the hustle and bustle, controlling the frantic pace at which we race to make it all come

together. It focuses our mind on the tasks to be accomplished, the extra effort required, the added exertion expected, the extra something-something to make that special someone's wish come true. It generates the push that propels us to create a little magic, mark the moment, all the while providing the pull that draws us in, draws us back, draws us closer. Even the procrastinators among us, blitz and scramble to cross the Christmas finish line.

When the day finally arrives everything that has come before it fades into the out-of-focus parts of the background. The wider world disappears for the moment and Christmas fills all the space.

Then, suddenly, despite all the anticipation or the dread that was its prelude, it is gone. This is when, in the quiet that is left in its wake, you find the most exquisite gift of the season — that undefined period just before the real end of the year — that week between Christmas and New Year's. It is the only week on the calendar that comes without schedules, commitments or expectation. It is also the time to begin to look forward, and reflect in an aspirational way.

Not much fanfare surrounds this wondrous week, which is perhaps part of its charm.

This last sliver of the year is when time slows. It slips into a luxuriously unhurried pace that will, hopefully, at one point, make you forget what day of the week it is. If something does arise, there are no questions asked as you simply dismiss it and say you will deal with it in the new year.

It is an unwrapped gift, a grace period to regain your bearings, reset your frame of mind, reclaim a sense of agency, and maybe take a nap. Indulge in all its low-key splendor.

Merry Christmas. And here is wishing that you let your heart be light.

Brenda O'Farrell, Editor-in-chief



Letter to the editor

Maybe this election something will come of plan for Highway 20

The discussion about routing thru-traffic off Harwood Boulevard suspiciously seems to pop up whenever a provincial election looms ("Plan for Highway 20 bypass in Dorion takes step forward," *The 1019 Report*, Dec. 3).

The talk has, as stated in the article, started some six decades ago, more or less coinciding with the connection of what was then known as the 2&20 with the new Highway 40 at the west of the town, increasing the traffic density. But in that era much of the inter-city freight was handled by the railroads. Now, slow-to-accelerate trucks prevail aggravating the problem a hundredfold. It has been worsened in the last two decades despite the creation of Highway 30 that was supposed to be the east-west transport corridor.

Yet, the administration of the since amalgamated Vaudreuil-Dorion seems to put more effort (and funding) in improving the Vaudreuil part of the municipality than the Dorion part. Even the low-cost idea of signage that restricts trucks to the

right lane, as done by Valleyfield, was scoffed at.

Since that time Dorion has not maintained a safety zone beside the tracks, nor has any government legislation advanced such a safety zone, even after the Lac Mégantic tragedy. Now there is construction in the way.

What was missing in the report was what will happen to the perpetually constipated stretch of Highway 20 on Île Perrot. To cure this traffic problem there will be the need to eliminate the traffic lights, for a service road on each side, and underpasses at Boulevard du l'Île, Don Quichotte, and Perrot Boulevard, like now exists at Cardinal Léger Boulevard. There, along that run, the corridor fortunately still exists. What does not exist seems to be the will of the provincial government to fund such important work. Perhaps that could become a campaigning issue?

**Alfred Epstein,
Les Cèdres**

SUBMIT A LETTER

If you would like to submit a letter to editor for publication, please email your comments to bofarrell@the1019report.ca.

Please include your full name, address and phone number. Only your name and the municipality in which you reside will be published if your letter is selected for publication. Let's get the conversations started.

THE 1019 REPORT

Brenda O'Farrell
Editor-in-Chief
bofarrell@the1019report.ca

Marc Beaulieu
Director of Sales and Marketing
mbeaulieu@the1019report.ca

Mike Lague
Senior Account Representative
mikelague5@gmail.com

Jody Kydd
Business development
Jody10191510@gmail.com

Elisa Shepherd
Senior Account Representative
elisa10191510@gmail.com

Adam Starkey
Graphic Designer
astarkeymontreal@gmail.com

Contributors:

- Dylan Adams Lemaçon
- Joshua Allan • Denise Duguay
- Madeleine Langlois • Peter McCabe
- Terry O'Shaughnessy
- Frederic Serre • Tom Whelan

Newsroom: 514-246-2981

Advertising: 514-823-9779

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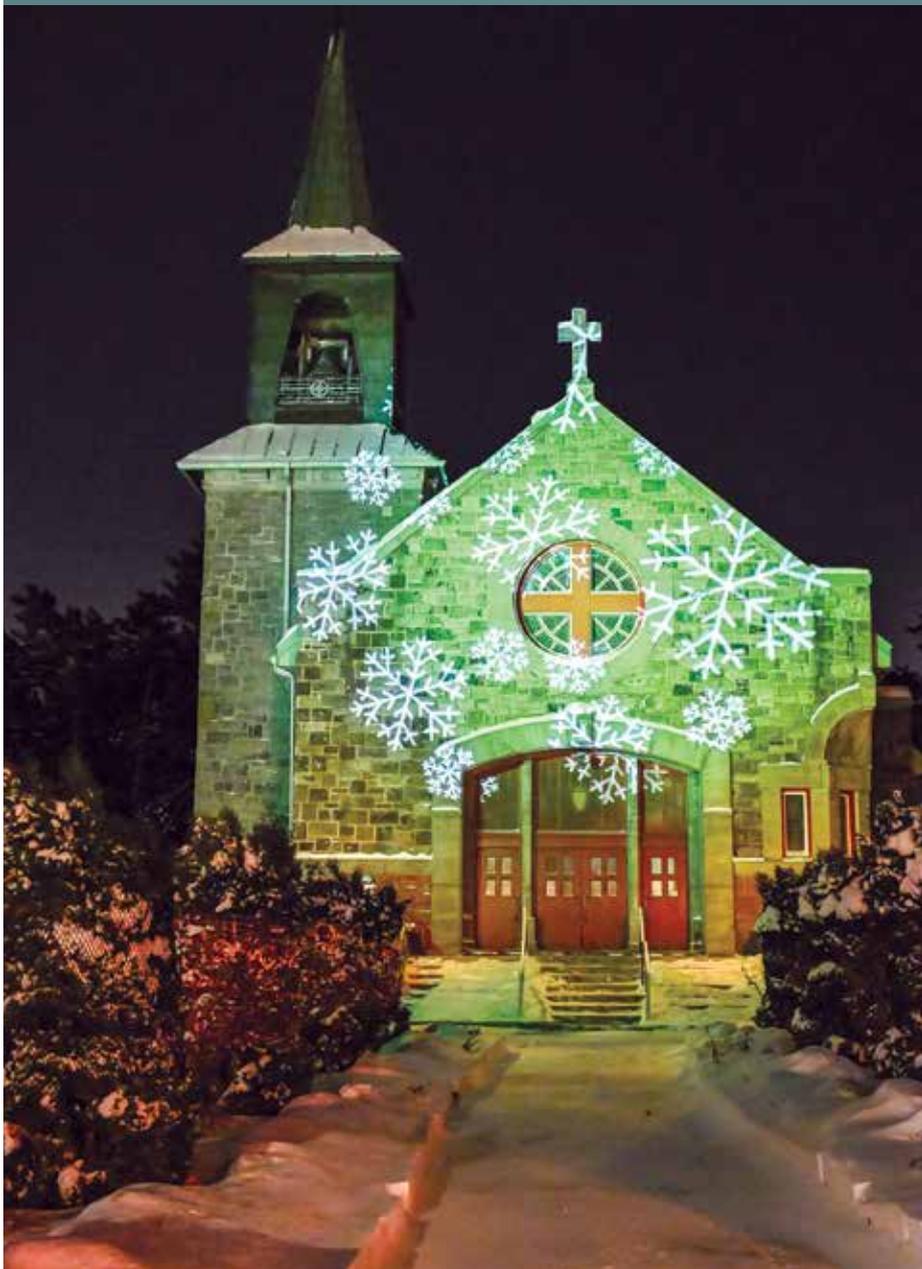
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FACT:

\$127.4 million

That is the amount of the City of Vaudreuil-Dorion's 2026 municipal budget. The figure represents \$6.5 million more in spending next year compared with this year, an increase of 5.7 per cent. With a population of about 47,000, the number of residents in the city has more than doubled in the last 25 years.

Sources: City of Vaudreuil-Dorion and StatsCanada



Madeleine Langlois, The 1019 Report

It's almost Christmas: The images of snowflakes swirling, projected on to the façade of the church in St. Lazare, light up the night as the Christmas season brightens the entire village area in the town. And when the real snow falls, as it has often done in recent days, you can almost feel the holiday magic in the air.

Are we losing our ability to be decent and kind?



Tom Whelan

Have we lost our moral compass?

It seems as though every day, I hear another story of someone doing something to someone that is pretty despicable, with little regard for the consequences or repercussions of their actions.

Sure, we all hear the absolutely horrible stories in the news that leave us shaking our heads. But, I'm talking about the little day-to-day things that people seem to do without regard, seemingly, without the slightest thought for those around them.

The other day, one of my colleagues recounted a story of how she was sitting in her car at a red light, when another car rounded a corner far too quickly, slid on the slippery road, and rammed directly into her. The driver who did the ramming simply backed up and took off. Didn't check to see if the person in the car they just hit was injured. Didn't even stop to take a look at the damage they caused. They simply left.

Forget the unlawful aspect of their actions. It is a criminal offence to leave the scene of an accident without ensuring that the other party is uninjured. What about the moral implications? When did we stop caring about one another? It happens more often than one would think.

Granted, the example of the car accident is fairly extreme. I don't think I know anyone who would have such blatant disregard for someone else. But we all see smaller versions of thoughtless behaviour almost every day. Just talk to a server in a restaurant or someone whose job puts them on the business end of a mop on a regular basis. There are plenty of examples of people unaware of their surroundings who are probably saying to themselves: "That's a them problem, not a me problem."

How many times a day does a server in a restaurant walk up to a table with a smile on their face only to encounter someone who doesn't even bother to look up and

just rattles off their order?

Do you think the workers in the food court enjoy cleaning up messes left behind on tables without the slightest effort to tidy up just a bit?

And what about the individuals who leave discarded coffee cups, or any other type of refuse, sitting on a public bench or the window ledge of a building? They seem to have the attitude of "Oh well, there are people paid to look after that." That may be. But don't you think it would be a far sight better if that was a small part of their job and not the norm?

Being thoughtful and polite doesn't cost anything, except maybe, a few seconds. What happened to Canadians taking pride in our heightened level of politeness?

Maybe I'm being overly sensitive or perhaps just expecting too much. I know

I've been guilty of being off in my own little world and missing an opportunity to lend a hand somewhere.

Perhaps, especially at this time of year, it would be a good idea to stop and take a look around. Hold a door. Stop and

let someone cross a street. Oh, and if you are the pedestrian in that situation, try to pick up the pace a bit, if you can. Even better yet, don't flip off the person who is desperately trying to merge in traffic. Remember the movie "Madagascar?" The leader of the penguins used to counsel his team, "Just smile and wave boys. Smile and wave."

Anyway, if I didn't hold a door for you or walked by while you were struggling with packages, I'm sorry.

And please allow me to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy Christmas and nothing but health and happiness in the new year.

Tom Whelan is a veteran broadcaster who can be heard weekend afternoons on CJAD 800 AM. He can be contacted by email at info@the1019report.ca.

QUOTE

"It's the only federalist party we have. It's the only party that is really devoted to human rights and individual liberties, which was the basis for its foundation and its main tenants."

– Former federal and provincial cabinet minister Clifford Lincoln in an interview with *The 1510 West* last week, referring to the embattled Quebec Liberal Party and why it needs to solve its problems before it's too late.



**HAPPY
Holidays!**

The members of the council and all the employees of the MRC de Vaudreuil-Soulanges join me in wishing you Happy Holidays!

May this holiday season and the coming year be marked by health, happiness and peace.

Patrick Bousez
Prefect of the MRC de Vaudreuil-Soulanges and Mayor of the Municipality of Rivière-Beaudette



Colossal Canada Crossword

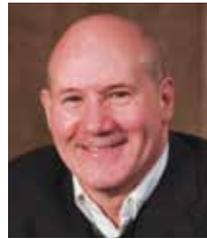
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Lives & Legacy

For more information call 514 823-9779
or email to Info@the1019report.ca

Quebec nationalists still fighting 1995 referendum



Andrew Caddell

In early 1995, I developed a communications proposal for my then-boss David Dignwall, who was the federal minister of Public Works. It involved a series of initiatives his department, Canada Post and the Royal Canadian Mint could take in advance of the Quebec referendum, expected that autumn. It was not dissimilar to a strategy employed by Ottawa prior to the 1980 referendum, with advertisements for prudent alcohol consumption saying “Non Merci!”

I proposed the new \$2 coin feature former Governor General Georges Vanier, instead of the Queen — a departure from tradition. I also suggested Canada Post issue a series of stamps featuring prominent Quebecers, and launch them in their birthplaces across the province. Also part of the package was advertising extolling the virtues of Canada and its history.

In the end, nothing was done by the Chrétien government. I was told, “the referendum will be a slam dunk for us.”

Of course, the “Non” side won by only 54,000 votes.

Now, the 1995 referendum is being fought again by Quebec separatists, furious at remarks by the former Citizenship and Immigration minister Sergio Marchi to the *Journal de Montréal* in November. Marchi described how his department hurried citizenship applications in Quebec on Chrétien’s recommendation.

He told the *Journal*: “I remember Jean telling me, ‘Look, I know we always have a backlog of citizenship applications, but do your best to move them along because the referendum is coming up.’”

The story outlined how 30,000 new citizens were processed in Quebec before October 1995.

The comments fed a firestorm by sovereignist media commentators and political leaders. Parti Québécois leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon declared: “This revelation is just the tip of the iceberg of this enormous fraud orchestrated by Ottawa.”

Despite separatist *Journal* owner Pierre Karl Péladeau’s best efforts to whip up anti-Ottawa sentiment, it seems to have died a natural death. For one thing, it’s not news: it was reported in *La Presse* by Chantal Hébert in 1996. The 2007 Grenier Commission on referendum irregularities determined “Operation Citizenship” was legal. After all, the applicants qualified to be citizens, and the referendum was a secret ballot. Who would know how immigrants voted?

The furor, however, serves as a dress rehearsal for the provincial election campaign next October. So, all the federal government’s supposed “crimes” in 1995 are being dredged up. Among them

the “Love-In” rally of a 100,000 people in Montreal a few days before the vote. But there are differences of opinion as to whether or not the rally swayed voters.

And while the message was “Quebecers alone will decide,” Canadians elsewhere felt they should have a say in the future of their country. In the pre-referendum period, Ottawa supported “pro-Canada” organizations, while the PQ government of the time spent tens of millions of dollars of public funds on propaganda. There were 18 regional consultations on separation, promotional advertising and each household received the “Future of Quebec Bill (independence legislation).” This was capped with a confusing referendum question and 86,500 rejected ballots, mostly in non-francophone ridings.

To ensure the next referendum would be fair, the Chrétien government in 2000 passed the Clarity Act based on a Supreme Court judgment in 1998. It called for a “clear question and a clear majority” before negotiations on separation took place.

However, St-Pierre Plamondon intends to ignore the Clarity Act, brandishing Quebec’s Bill 99. A 2021 court judgment on Bill 99, which says Quebec is sovereign within its own jurisdiction. But the law does not apply to ramifications for Canada as a whole if Quebec separates. This leads to a scenario where St-Pierre Plamondon undertakes a Unilateral Declaration of Independence in blatant contravention of international law, following a referendum victory for the “Oui.”

That is why he is promoting separation as “more efficient” for Quebecers, by taking back the \$90 billion they send to Ottawa, without acknowledging Quebec will have to pay more to be its own country. He repeatedly attacks Ottawa’s deficits, programs and its “colonial” attitude towards Quebec. It is why he and the nationalist media have dredged up accusations of cheating in 1995. It is all to tarnish Canada’s reputation.

At the moment, the Quebec Liberal Party is in disarray, due to corruption accusations and internal squabbles involving new leader Pablo Rodriguez. The PQ under St-Pierre Plamondon is expected to win next year’s provincial election, and there is no federal leadership for the “Non” forces, prior to a possible 2028 referendum.

Despite polls showing Quebecers’ attachment to Canada, I fear a “Non” will be anything but a “slam dunk.”

Andrew Caddell is a veteran journalist and columnist. He writes a regular column for The Hill Times, which covers Parliament and the federal government. He is president of the Task Force on Linguistic Policy, a grassroots group that was formed in the wake of Quebec’s Bill 96, which overhauled the province’s Charter of the French Language.

Readers speak out

We need to keep our doctors

Two weeks ago, as *The 1019 Report* reported the announced closing of the medical clinic in Hudson, along with the outrage expressed by a number of local doctors from across the region, editor-in-chief Brenda O'Farrell put out the call to readers: Tell us why this community needs to keep its doctors.

The aim was to raise a collective chorus to send a message to the provincial government that this community is demanding better than what Bill 2 would ravage on the local health-care system.

Readers were asked to complete the sentence:

“Vaudreuil-Soulanges needs to keep its doctors because

Vaudreuil-Soulanges needs to keep its doctors because without them our health will deteriorate causing many more patients flocking to our over-burdened hospital, thereby increasing the cost to the province's health insurance budget.

Steve Novakowski, Hudson

Vaudreuil-Soulanges needs to keep its doctors because otherwise a lot of us will get sicker and die.

Charles Kiraly, St. Lazare

Vaudreuil-Soulanges needs to keep its doctors because they are vital to our survival. As older citizens, we cannot navigate our future without our doctors.

Audrey and George Wall, Hudson

Vaudreuil-Soulanges needs to keep its doctors because we need access to family medicine to access screening for cancer and other serious illnesses before it is too late to cure them.

I am worried sick about losing my doctor in Hudson. I got the email. It is happening. Our clinic is closing. We waited months to have a doctor, and I am very nervous about the impact on the four of us.

If there is a march, we will go.

Jasmine St-Laurent, Hudson

Vaudreuil Soulange needs to keep its doctors because we have a lot of new families moving into our area — especially in Hudson. This includes a lot of seniors. Many of these seniors do not drive. To move our health care away from the local centre would be a travesty. The staff there have given years to developing a care network above and beyond any community I have ever known. Our government needs to do all possible to encourage our doctors to stay, even if it means totally scrapping the odorous legislation known as Bill 2.

Jane (Zettel) Blais, Vaudreuil-Dorion

Vaudreuil-Soulanges needs to keep its doctors because as a registered nurse of 40 years practice, I know only too well how valuable health care is.

Susan Fisher, Hudson

I have been without a family doctor for more than four years, and my wife has just been reassigned a new GP due to a retirement. The provincial government now has guaranteed we will never be able to get one, ever. This is a time in our lives that the need for a GP is even more important than ever.

Ken Magee, St. Lazare

My friend, 83, lives in Ville St. Laurent. She waited a few years for a doctor, and finally got one. She saw him a few times and now he's leaving.

Marlene Donegan, Hudson

Vaudreuil-Soulanges needs to keep its doctors because there will be a big new hospital in Vaudreuil with many patients and no doctors. How does that work?

My excellent family doctor is leaving Quebec because Bill 2 attacks family doctors and seeks to undermine good health-care practices.

The GMF where my family doctor practices will soon close its doors as a result of Bill 2.

At age 82, I need to see a family doctor every few months to manage a long list of health problems, to order tests and refer me to specialists. All this health care will now cease in my case.

All good doctors know that preventing disease is easier and less costly than curing it later on. Family doctors, now under attack by the Quebec government and (in many cases) planning to leave Quebec or retire, are the most essential for preventive care.

My granddaughter, who is 2½ years old, needs regular checkups and vaccinations to maintain good health. Under Bill 2, she will be labelled “green,” and no doctor will have time to see her for routine checkups. As a result, in the long term, she and her young friends will have more complex and more severe health problems requiring much more expensive and specialized hospital care.

People my age often have illnesses requiring the coordination of medical specialists in very different fields. A good family doctor is essential to set up and manage this coordination.

Donald Attwood, Hudson



Last month, doctors from the region voiced their concerns about Bill 2 with Alain Généroux, an aide to Quebec Health Minister Christian Dubé (left), while Soulanges MNA Marilyne Picard (with back to camera in foreground) listened.

Vaudreuil-Soulanges needs to keep its doctors because the CAQ government has a singular responsibility to care for and protect the citizens it represents. The GMF groups are designed to do that. Although they are not enough for the demand, that is the government's fault. Throwing the blame on the doctors for the mess of the medical system is childish, irresponsible and disgusting.

I quite frankly have never been so angry at a government in all of my 78 years.

Donna Ekins, Hudson

The Centre de santé et services sociaux de la Montérégie-Ouest (CISSMO) announced that the majority of doctors would remain in place at the Suroît Hospital despite the upcoming opening of a hospital in Vaudreuil-Soulanges. If we don't have our regional doctors to work at the new hospital when it finally opens, others from beyond will have to be drafted and, in all probability, will be unilingual French, and unable to properly converse with a large proportion of the population.

Alfred Epstein, Les Cèdres

Vaudreuil-Soulanges needs to keep its doctors because more people will die, plain and simple.

Dominique Gourdon, Notre Dame de l'Île Perrot

Stop the nonsense, Mr. Legault. It's time to get involved and negotiate in good faith. Bill 2 is a political failure and an insult to our doctors.

There's a lack of respect for the people of Quebec with promises that aren't kept and priorities in the wrong places.

The CAQ's performance leaves much to be desired. The merger of Transplant Québec with Héma-Québec demonstrates the CAQ's ignorance and desensitization to the transplant process.

Only a great man admits his mistakes.

Suzanne Constantin Igaz, Without a doctor again, St. Lazare

I am shocked and angry like many of us to see what a complete incompetent mess this CAQ government has made of Quebec ever since it took power. They definitely will not be re-elected, but to see them continue to dismantle our province with such incompetence seems to verge on criminality.

We, the taxpayers, not only pay these idiots, but we are paying them to destroy our vital rights and needs. And to think we will continue to pay them when they finally get kicked out as they will receive nice pensions.

As for the medical system, instead of opening more places to train doctors, bringing in foreign doctors and nurses and medial personal, they are driving our doctors, nurses and medical support staff out of our province. How can they be so stupid and incompetent?

Health Minister Christian Dubé, Premier François Legault and our local MNA Marilyne Picard are completely irresponsible and should all leave their government positions immediately.

Imagine 11,000 people without a doctor in the Vaudreuil-Soulanges area, and many of them elderly. It is just a crime to do this to the population.

How long do we have to bear this terrible abuse?

William McKenzie, St. Lazare

Vaudreuil-Soulanges needs to keep its doctors because pandemonium will ensue. There are 11,000 patients who need a family doctor in the Hudson area alone. If all our doctors leave, how is Bill 2 going to achieve its goal of everyone having a family doctor? This bill is a contradiction of common sense. Actually, it will become the laughingstock of the entire civilized world if it stands as is.

Gerald Blais, Vaudreuil-Dorion

We need our clinics and our doctors so much. Where else can we go?

Jocelyne Lambert, Hudson

Desjardins pledges \$100,000 to Hudson Village Theatre plan

DYLAN ADAMS LEMAÇON
The 1019 Report

Hudson Village Theatre has received a \$100,000 contribution from the Desjardins cooperative financial group to support its long-planned expansion project.

The donation was announced Saturday, the latest in the theatre's ongoing fundraising campaign to expand and refurbish its facility located in the old train station in Hudson.

The theatre's original fundraising goal was about \$2 million, a figure first established in 2018. Since then, rising construction costs have pushed the total projected cost of the project to \$2.9 million, said Elizabeth Corker, president of the

Hudson Village Theatre.

"We've raised about \$2.4 million so far," Corker said in an interview following the event, adding that the theatre still needs to raise between \$500,000 and \$600,000 to fully cover construction costs and provide a financial cushion in case of further increases.

Work will not begin until all funds are secured, which could push the start date to next fall, Corker said, adding that spring 2027 is more likely.

Saturday's announcement adds to a mix of public and private funding that has supported the project over the past several years. The federal government has committed a total of \$1.68 million to the ex-

pansion, including \$700,000 announced last September by Vaudreuil MP Peter Schiefke, in addition to \$983,046 previously announced in 2020.

Local fundraising efforts have also played a role. Corker confirmed that proceeds from the theatre's annual gala fundraiser, including events held at the Whitlock Golf Club, have contributed to the expansion project, with some funds also earmarked for improvements to lighting and sound equipment.

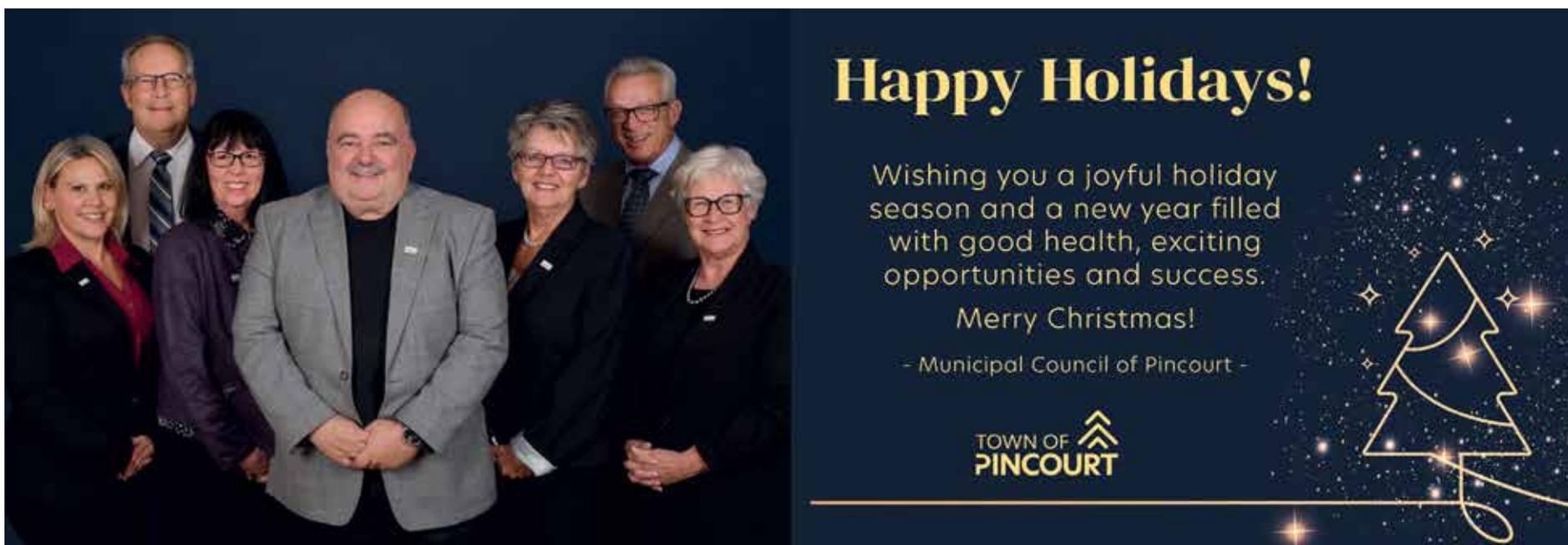
As she announced the latest donation, Corker became emotional while thanking Desjardins and the broader community for their continued support, highlighting the scope of the planned improvements,

which include new amenities such as a bar, kitchen, expanded seating and a mezzanine.

"The community is the ultimate beneficiary," she said.

François Paquin, president of the Caisse Desjardins de Vaudreuil-Soulanges, described the \$100,000 contribution as "much more than an investment in a space that we know too well, but a space that will be modern, versatile, accessible and made to bring people together."

Once complete, the expansion is expected to significantly improve the theatre's capacity and functionality.



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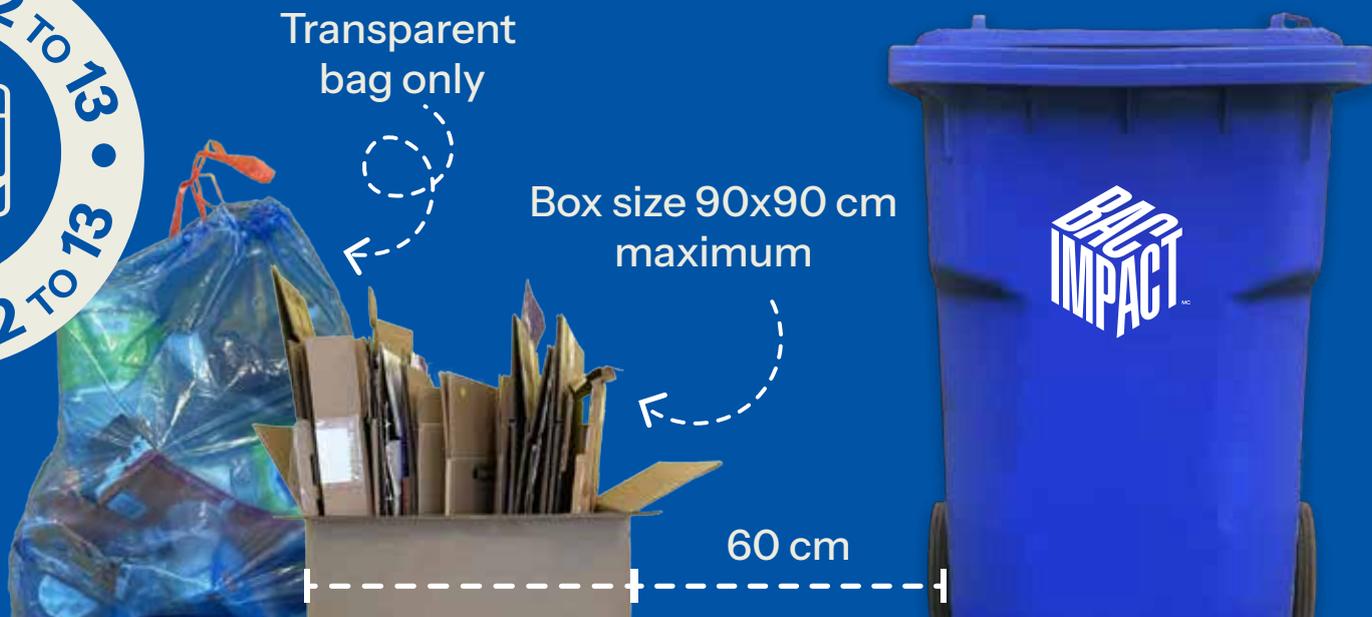
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60 cm



HUDSON

Hudson to see 4.5-to-5.6% tax hikes, rise in debt

BRENDA O'FARRELL
The 1019 Report

Residential property tax bills in Hudson will jump 4.5 to 5.6 per cent next year and the town's debt is expected to increase by \$8.7 million — or 41 per cent, according to the municipality's \$18.8-million budget for 2026 adopted Monday.

This means the owner of a single-family home with water and sewer services valued at \$871,966, will pay \$5,876 in municipal taxes next year. That is \$291, or 5.2-per-cent more, than in 2025. A house of the same value that is not on the sewer network will pay \$5,436, or \$247 more next year. This represents a 4.75-per-cent increase.

A home of the same value in the Whitlock area will pay \$6,851 in taxes next year, an increase of \$364, or 5.6 per cent, compared with 2025.

Owners of homes not connected to the municipal sewer and water systems and those in the Pointe à Raquette area in the west end, near the Rigaud border, will see tax increases of about 4.5 per cent compared with this year.

The basic residential tax rate for 2026

has been set at 48.02 cents per \$100 of property valuation, up from the 2025 rate of 46.62 cents. Most property valuations will remain unchanged from this year, based on the three-year valuation roll that went into effect last year.

"It's not a budget of sudden shifts or grand gestures," said Mayor Chloe Hutchison. "It reflects continuity and responsibility, balancing present needs with future obligations so Hudson remains strong and well cared for."

Overall, Hudson will increase its spending next year by \$1.12 million, or 6.3 per cent, compared with this year. The largest spending increase — 26.5 per cent — is expected in culture and recreation, where costs will hit \$2.5 million, up from this year's budget of \$1.99 million. Accounting for part of that hike is the department's administrative costs, which will ratchet up by 77.6 per cent to hit just under \$484,000. In 2025, administrative fees for culture and recreation were budgeted at \$272,500, but are expected to come in at \$296,600, according to the town's estimates.

Water costs — for both treatment of po-

table water and waste — will increase by 20.8 per cent overall next year, the budget figures show. This includes substantial increases of about 41 to 50 per cent to treat waste water from the town's residential sectors and a 32.7-per-cent hike to treat drinking water.

The town's contribution to the MRC Vaudreuil-Soulanges; the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal; and the regional transit authority, the Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain; will increase by 11.7 per cent to \$1.438 million next year. In 2025, fees to the regional boards were \$1.287 million.

The town's cost for the Sûreté du Québec will drop slightly next year to \$1.6 million, a 4.4-per-cent decrease from the \$1.7 million budgeted for 2025. Meanwhile, fees for public transit will increase 5 per cent, to hit \$368,700, a \$17,600 jump from this year's figure of \$351,100.

Snow-clearing costs will go up 10.7 per cent, to \$1.23 million, a jump of \$118,800 from this year's budgeted cost of approximately \$1.11 million.

The town also adopted its three-year

capital expenditures plan Monday. It outlined a total of \$34.5 million in spending from 2026 to 2028, including just under \$14.6 million next year. Projects for 2026 include the \$9.6-million acquisition of Sandy Beach, just over \$1.5 million for building renovations and maintenance and about \$1.4 million on road improvements.

The town's debt will climb to \$30.2 million by the end of 2026, up from \$21.4 million now. Although part of that hike includes a \$7.6-million loan bylaw to finance the purchase of Sandy Beach, which was approved by council in September, taxpayers will not see the projected estimate \$121 annual charge that had been outlined by the town on their tax bills until 2027.

While Hudson continues to await final approval of its loan bylaw for the purchase of Sandy Beach from Quebec, council has until March to decide if it will avail itself of a \$2-million grant from the CMM to offset the purchase price of the waterfront land. Quebec is expected to signal its approval of the borrowing bylaw for Sandy Beach by February.

VAUDREUIL-DORION

Average tax bill in Vaudreuil to go up 3.9% in 2026

DYLAN ADAMS LEMAÇON
The 1019 Report

The owners of an average single-family home in Vaudreuil-Dorion will see their property tax bill rise 3.9 per cent next year, according to the town's \$127.4-million budget for 2026, approved during a special council meeting on Dec. 8.

For an average residence valued at \$588,200, the municipal tax bill next year will be \$2,786, which represents a \$115 increase compared to this year, or just less than \$10 per month. An additional \$275 for the annual water tax will be added, the same as this year, bringing the total for the owner of an average house to \$3,061.

The tax rate was set at 47.36 cents per \$100 valuation.

The residential property tax covers all essential services, including collections, policing and regional contributions, with only the water tax added separately,

treasurer Marco Pilon confirmed.

The tax bills for 2026 will be based on the second year of the city's three-year property valuation roll, which will remain in effect until 2027. The total assessed value of all properties in Vaudreuil-Dorion, including residential, commercial and industrial sectors, has increased slightly to \$11.6 billion, an increase of \$250.7 million, or 2.2 per cent, from this year. This follows last year's adjustment, which saw a much larger 40.3-per-cent increase based on the new valuation roll. Overall, the triennial evaluation continues to provide a stable framework for determining municipal taxes while accounting for gradual changes in property values.

The city's overall spending in 2026 will increase \$6.85 million, or 5.7 per cent, compared with this year. Much of the increase comes from fixed expenses, which make up 85 per cent of

the total and include salaries and benefits, debt service, snow removal, waste management and policing. Altogether, these obligations account for more than \$110 million, while ensuring all current services for residents are maintained.

SQ costs steady

The cost for the Sûreté du Québec remains slightly above \$8 million in 2026, at \$8,078,000. Regional contributions to the MRC Vaudreuil-Soulanges, the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM) and the Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain (ARTM, which operates EXO commuter trains and buses) will reach just over \$9 million next year, up 8.9 per cent from this year, with the city's payment to the MRC alone hitting \$4.97 million, an increase of \$615,000, or 14.1 per cent, from this year.

Mayor Paul Dumoulin highlighted ex-

ternal pressures on municipal finances, particularly an 8.9-per-cent increase in the city's regional contributions.

"Despite these pressures, 2026 is a year where we can invest in storm-water management and flood protection measures," Dumoulin said. "Our priority remains to meet the needs of our citizens while maintaining responsible and rigorous management of public funds."

In addition to regular operations, the city plans to fund several major projects as part of its triennial plan, including: updating its sewage networks master plan, renewing its parks and green spaces plan, launching a strengthened cybersecurity system and refurbishing the tennis courts in Louise-Joseph Park

MRC: Cost of 911 service to jump 101.4% in 2026

From Page 1

The cost of clearing obstructions from waterways is also increasing, expected to jump by 54 per cent to hit \$171,000, an increase of \$60,000 from the \$110,850 budgeted this year.

"The 2026 budget reflects the clear vision of the members of the council — to act now to protect our territory and our residents against environmental challenges," said MRC prefect Patrick Bousez, who is also the mayor of the small town of Rivière Beaudette near the Ontario

border.

"The unprecedented investment in the maintenance of our waterways and the plan for a regional compost treatment centre are concrete examples of our long-term commitment," Bousez said in a statement. "We have a responsibility to anticipate the needs of the region and to put forward sustainable solutions."

911 costs jump

Among significant expenses that will see a significant increase in the MRC's budget are the fees it must spend for the 911

emergency service, which will increase by 101.4 per cent next year. The cost rises to \$568,870, a jump of \$286,370 from the \$282,500 spent this year, according to figures supplied by the MRC's accounting department.

The cost of running the regional municipal court will jump slightly next year to reach about \$2.2 million, up from \$2.06 million in 2025, an increase of about \$141,000, or 6.9 per cent.

The MRC will see an increase in the reimbursement for overcharged payments for services provided by the Sûreté du

Québec next year. A total of \$10.9 million is expected to be returned to the MRC, a 36.2-per-cent increase from the repayment of surcharges of about \$8.02 million in 2025. But this money is, in turn, distributed directly back to the municipalities in the region which are billed by the provincial government for police services according to a complex formula that regularly sees MRCs with high property assessments pay a disproportionately higher rate for SQ services.

Community Bulletin Board

NOTICE OF CLOSURE OF INVENTORY

(Newspaper Notice: CCQ, Section 795, Para. 2)

Notice is hereby given that Fritz Pierre, domiciled in his lifetime at St-Lazare, QC, died on May 9th, 2025. An inventory of his property has been made in accordance with the laws of the Province of Quebec. It can be consulted by interested parties, upon request, by writing to the liquidator at 2574 rue Du Bourgogne, St-Lazare, QC, J7T 2C1, Att. Léonie Pierre.



BEST WISHES
for a happy healthy and prosperous New Year!

MARIE-CLAUDE NICHOLS
DÉPUTÉE DE VAUDREUIL

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ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE DU QUÉBEC

TV WATCH REPORT

Here is a grab-bag of viewing for holiday break



Denise Duguay

Only one of these has anything to do with Christmas, and even that is more about death. The remaining viewing suggestions offer a variety of ways to soothe or celebrate as the holiday season overtakes our lives. Stay warm. And see you in the new year.

MY NEXT GUEST NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION (new Season 6 episodes premiere starting Tuesday, Dec. 16, on Netflix) If you haven't already, check out David Letterman's interview with Adam Sandler, which debuted Dec. 1. If you are not a fan of the host, a stalwart veteran of the talk-show wars, then check it out to see Sandler, only slightly promoting his new film, Jay Kelly with George Clooney (also on Netflix). There is fratboy scat-mouthed Sandler and serious actor Sandler, but here is cowed Sandler, fluctuating between trying to amuse his hero Letterman and marvelling, like any of us fans would, at being in the same space as Letterman. That should hold you until three new episodes drop, in which Letterman banter and gets occasionally serious with Michael B. Jordan, Jason Bateman and the influencer philanthropist MrBeast.

SAVE ME/SAVE ME TOO (series premieres Thursday, Dec. 18, on BritBox) The arrival of this 2018-22 U.K. series to the BritBox streaming app provides an opportunity to take in a spiky mystery in which an estranged father scrambles after being accused of kidnapping the daughter he hasn't seen in 13 years, more than half her life. It's also a chance to see an excellent cast that we know far better now: Lennie James (Mr. Loverman, Walking Dead), Suranne Jones (Gentleman Jack), Indeyarna Doinaldson-Holness (EastEnders) and especially Stephen Graham (Adolescence, A Thousand Blows) and Kerry Godliman (Whitstable Pearl, After Life).

KUMAIL NANJANI: NIGHT THOUGHTS (Friday, Dec. 19, on Disney+); TOM SEGURA (Wednesday, Dec. 24, on Netflix); and RICKY GERVAIS (Tuesday, Dec. 30, on Netflix) These three comedy premieres will be a welcome mental break from the crush of either too much holiday merriment, too

much cooking (hey moms!) or just too much. Fans need no info other than dates, but if you're new to these three, judging by the trailers, Nanjani is probably the easiest to start with (or at least cleanest). Segura is the master of turning relatable, everyday life into gleefully disgusting comedy that will have you laughing in spite of your best effort at repulsion. Gervais is an acid bath of bitter candy coating a soft, big-hearted interior, we hope.

GOODBYE JUNE (streaming premiere on Netflix on Wednesday, Dec. 24, after limited theatrical run) Just in time for the holidays, when family stresses can be at an all-time high, comes a movie that wraps an end-of-life drama around a holiday movie about a fractured family. Better hydrate and buy extra tissues. Among the excellent cast is Helen Mirren (1923, MobLand), who plays the tart matriarch who wants to die on her own terms; Timothy Spall (Wolf Hall) as her husband; and joining him around the deathbed with sharp words and poetry-readings are Kate Winslet (Mare of Easttown), Johnny Flynn (Ripley) and Andrea Riseborough (Alice and Jack) and Toni Collette (Wayward).

COVER-UP (documentary premieres on Friday, Dec. 26, on Netflix) "People, for a lot of reasons, they talk. They talk to me. People want to talk about stuff they did that was wrong and stupid. All you had to do was just let their voice be the story." Investigative journalist Seymour Hersh's words in this new biography are a dramatic understatement. As a young reporter, he won a Pulitzer Prize for breaking the story of the My Lai massacre coverup. He also had a hand in reporting on Watergate and exposing abuses at the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib detention facility. Now 88 years of age, he is slower, but still at it, self-publishing on a very lively Substack page, subtitled, "It's worse than you think." A portrait of a master of the craft.

THE COPENHAGEN TEST (series premieres Saturday, Dec. 27, on StackTV) "The call is coming from inside the house!" This horror-movie plot hook is so enduring you don't need to have been around when it was popularized by When a Stranger Calls. This new series is a different kind of scary movie. Here, the danger is inside the brain of Alexander Hale (Simu Liu) a Chinese-American intelligence analyst whose brain has been hacked. Who can he trust? We are about to find out.



Courtesy Netflix

Helen Mirren and Kate Winslet star in the movie Goodbye June, which hits Netflix on Dec. 24.



Terry O'Shaughnessy

The act of bringing greenery into our homes at Christmas is a ritual honouring the natural world that is older than any organized religion.

With every tree and bough we tap into our inner pagan



Terry O'Shaughnessy

GONE TO GROUND

There is something about Christmas and our attachment to all its scented evergreens that reveals a remnant of our ancient selves, I think.

Just stand in the room when a real Christmas tree is brought into the house. Children are beside themselves with excitement. But it's the adults too who are somehow thrilled to be hauling the outdoors inside this way. Something in our bones seems to answer a very old call then. Maybe it's the bond with the land.

Christmas greenery and its ritual honour of the natural world is older than any organized religion. We've always shaped living boughs of cedar into wreaths, symbols of the unending eternal circle of life. We adorn whole spruces and pines with candles and lights to represent the elemental fire that will protect us with its warmth until the earth can come alive again in the spring. Christmas, I have always thought, is where we get in touch with our inner pagan. The one who up until only a century or two ago, lived completely in tune with the land.

As a gardener, I feel this connection. There I find the trace of my older self who once lived by the seasons, planting and feeding the soil, then harvesting and eating the fruits of it in a deep silent contract as old as time.

I once stumbled by chance across

a poem written by a young Canadian woman on display in one of London's greatest history museums, the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. She was from Glengarry, Ontario, and her name was Anna Gillis. In 1786 she arrived in Montreal after a grueling months' long journey from Scotland after her family farm was confiscated to allow the landowner's sheep to feed there instead. The same thing was happening all across the Highlands and so began the long trail of the many thousands of people made homeless by Scotland's Highland Clearances. Anna Gillis was one of them.

After a dangerous sail across the Atlantic, she then travelled over land through Quebec and Glengarry County's dense wilderness to build a new life. Her poem reveals just this kind of intrinsic bond with the land, even though it was an utterly new geography for her.

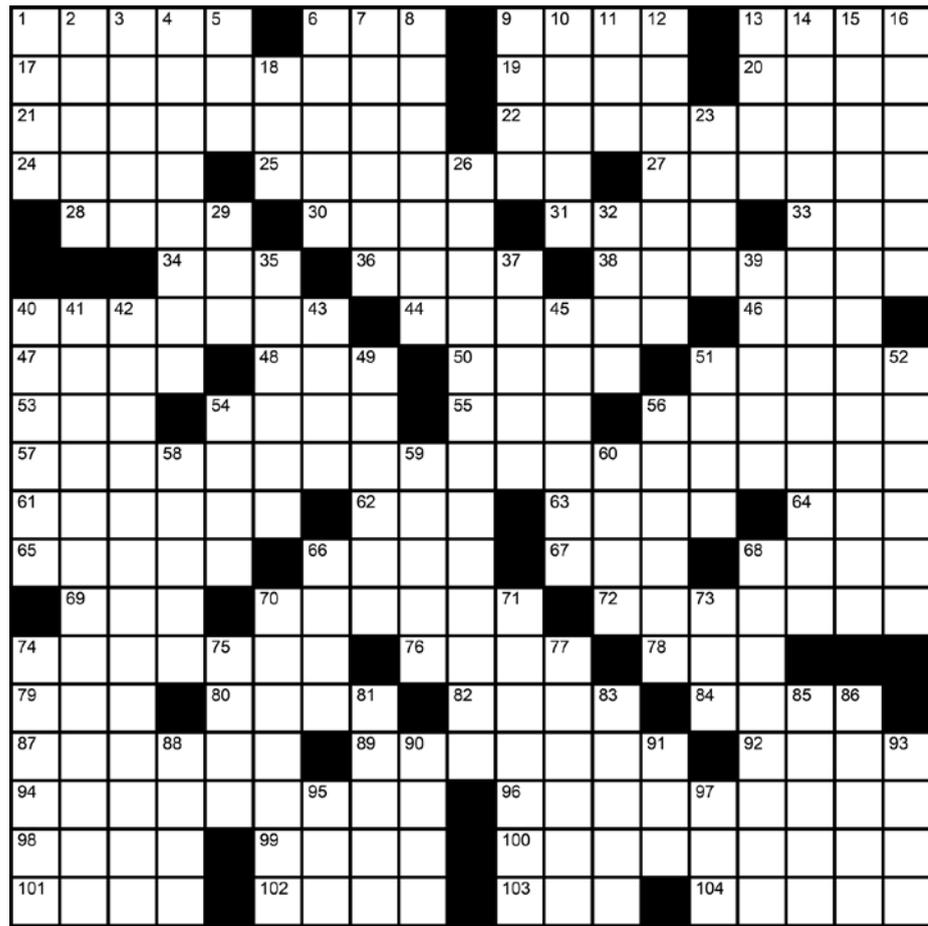
"Wheat grows abundantly," she marvels, "ready to harvest with only three months to bring it to full season." With further wonder she writes that "sugar may be gotten from a tree."

After cruel landowners and eviction, after an ocean crossing and the wilderness, her awed declaration that sugar could fall from the trees has always stayed with me. Her heartfelt "here we shall have berries and lack for nothing under the sun" is a celebration of the oldest connection on earth.

The one we get in touch with every Christmas when we bring the very land itself inside with us to honour the season.

THE 1019REPORT

Colossal Canada Crossword



SEE SOLUTION PAGE 8

ACROSS

1. Cinnamon or ginger, to Canadian chef Ricardo Larrivee
6. 'Arbor' add-on (Of trees)
9. Patrick __, Canadian figure skating great
13. Mil. movie ranks for Benjamin and Ryan
17. Head Coach of 2025 Grey Cup champions the Saskatchewan Roughriders: 2 wds.
19. Naturalness
20. Movies magnate Marcus
21. Saskatchewan-set sitcom: 2 wds.
22. La __ (Quebec City's fortress)
24. Spread-on-bread
25. Canadian potato chips flavour, All __
27. Outlined
28. Beatles' 'Pepper', et al.
30. Enough, to William Shakespeare
31. Drifting
33. "5th __. Girl" (1939) starring Ginger Rogers
34. Melissa __ der Maur (Canadian bassist)
36. Santa __ (Hot winds)
38. Czech composer Mr. Dvorak (b.1841 - d.1904)
40. Sales pitch lingo
44. __ of (Has a hint or flavour of)
46. Poetic contraction
47. 2011 novel by Canadian author Miriam Toews, Irma __
48. Curly's comedy colleague
50. Vietnamese cuisine soups
51. __ Faba (Fava Bean, scientifically)
53. UN agcy. for workers
54. Rope
55. Gibraltar, e.g.
56. ' ' __ Alberta
57. Global song rights company with a Canadian division 3 wds.
61. Mountain nymphs of ancient Greek mythology
62. __-la-la-la-la!
63. Reeeepeated leeeetter heeeere
64. Tokyo, once
65. Six, in Germany
66. __ Lake, Newfoundland
67. Classic comic strip, __ Abner
68. Prairies characteristic
69. __ Paulo, Brazil
70. Helpers
72. "Against __ (Take a Look at Me Now)" by Phil Collins
74. Dead Sea __
76. MDs
78. As per #70-Down, __ Lady Peace
79. Gladiator's 155
80. " __ miracle!" (Unbelievable!)
82. Songbird variety
84. Crime-fighting gr. in Batman comics
87. One waving for a taxi
89. Deny
92. Suffix to 'Right' (Justly upstanding)
94. Grizzly Bears, Raccoons and Coyotes as per their diets
96. Avalon __, in Newfoundland
98. Repeatedly requests
99. Ring up
100. Areas like Canada's national parks are what?
101. Massachusetts' motto opener
102. "On Bended __" by Boyz II Men
103. "Definitely!"
104. 'Cup' in a Chicoutimi cuisine

DOWN

1. Danish footwear brand
2. Combines resources
3. Imperfect, as merchandise [abbr.]
4. War memorial honouring soldiers
5. 1982: " __ in the Sky" by The Alan Parsons Project
6. Tidal bore
7. Burr-forming plant genus
8. Piano practice periods
9. Gospel singer Ms. Winans
10. Pacific Northwest culture in British Columbia
11. Prince Edward Island hrs.
12. Straightens up the house
13. __ bargain
14. British Columbia... Wells Gray-Clearwater's historic expanse-of-eruptions: 2 wds.
15. Jason Seaver for Cdn. star Alan Thicke on "Growing Pains": 2 wds.
16. Stockholm's country
18. Canadian comedian Gerry Dee's show, " __. "
23. "Darn it!"
26. Some birds found in Canadian wetlands: 2 wds.
29. Take to court
32. New York store, __ Fifth Avenue
35. Canadian black light theatre company since 1974, __ PEOPLE Players
37. __ Region (Location of the town of Norman Wells in the Northwest Territories)
39. __ Mountains (Range in Quebec)
40. Dispatch boats
41. Vancouver-born composer of the legendary "Hockey Night in Canada" theme song: 2 wds.
42. Creations of Inuit art: 2 wds.
43. Michael of fashion design
45. Decorative architectural support
49. Polished up the manuscript
51. Toolbox gripper
52. Specialized vocabularies
54. Wartime orders [abbr.]
56. Danny of "Do the Right Thing" (1989)
58. Google alternative
59. Rocky's boxing rival Apollo
60. Princess played by Carrie Fisher
66. Univ. treatise
68. Canadian military careers website, __. __
70. Genre for the Canadian band at #78-Across, __-__
71. Scooby-Doo's nephew, __-Doo
73. Heavily haul
74. Franz Schubert work: "Die __ Mullerin"
75. "Ray Donovan" star Mr. Schreiber
77. Extremely harsh
81. Jane Eyre is her governess
83. Taboos
85. Sulks
86. Mr. Hill of "The West Wing", and namesakes
88. Ms. Watier of Canadian cosmetics
90. Emerald __ (Ireland)
91. Quick humour
93. "Smooth Operator" single-named singer
95. Campaigned
97. Goaltender's structure

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PINCOURT

Municipal taxes to jump 4.2% in Pincourt

JOSHUA ALLAN
The 1019 Report

Municipal taxes in Pincourt will be going up by about 4.2 per cent next year, according to the town's \$34-million budget adopted last Wednesday.

For the owner of an average single-family home valued at \$537,822, that translates to a municipal tax bill of \$3,592, or about \$144 more than this year.

"Since 2021, our priority has been to protect our residents' wallets while im-

proving their quality of life," reads a statement from Pincourt Mayor Claude Comeau, who started his second term as mayor last month. "This budget reflects that commitment."

The residential tax rate for 2026 was set at 48.2 cents per \$100 of valuation, up 2.9 per cent from 2025.

The overall tax bill for the average house of \$3,592 includes \$2,592 in property tax, \$236 for water manage-

ment (+\$16 compared with 2025), \$305 for sewer management (+\$27), \$236 for waste collection (+\$11) and \$223 for several other minor charges.

Spending up 5.42%

Overall, the town's spending next year will hit \$34,087,600, which represents an increase of \$1.75 million, or 5.42 per cent, compared with 2025.

Pincourt municipal council also un-

veiled its three-year capital works program, a list of infrastructure improvements, that total just over \$23 million. Among the projects scheduled for 2026 are \$1.5 million for a "complete rehabilitation" of Leduc and Ouimet streets, as well as \$1.8 million for St. Patrick Street. The town also plans to spend around \$3 million to upgrade its water plant next year.

L'ÎLE PERROT

L'Île Perrot taxes to see 2.6% hike

JOSHUA ALLAN
The 1019 Report

Homeowners in L'Île-Perrot will see their municipal taxes rise by 2.6 per cent next year, according to the town's \$24.2-million 2026 budget, which was approved Dec. 9.

For the owner of an average single-family residence valued at \$486,209, the bill for municipal taxes will be \$3,631 in 2026, or \$92 more than in 2025. This bill includes property taxes along with charges for municipal services such as water, sewage and waste management.

The residential property tax rate for

2026 was set at 58.73 cents per \$100 of valuation.

Overall, the town will increase its spending in 2026 to a total of \$24,193,117, which represents an increase of \$878,709, or 4.04 per cent, compared with this year's budget. The hike in expenses is mainly due to increases in technical services, with scientific and engineering services topping the list.

The Town of L'Île Perrot's contribution next year to regional organizations like the MRC of Vaudreuil-Soulanges, the Sûreté du Québec, the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal and the Autorité

régionale de transport métropolitain will total \$3.6 million. This is a decrease of just over \$97,000 from 2025, due, in part, to what the city describes as a "change in the method used to budget for the SQ rebate."

In a statement issued last week, recently-elected L'Île-Perrot Mayor Marc Deslauriers described the budget as one that "strikes a balance between current needs and the investments required for the coming years."

Along with the budget, the city also unveiled its triennial capital expenditure program, which will see \$108.3 million

invested in various municipal projects from 2026 to 2028, including \$39.4 million next year alone.

Projects earmarked for 2026 include expanding and upgrading the city's wastewater treatment plant, improvements to the sewer network, upgrades to parks and green spaces. The town will also redevelop Grand Boulevard to improve traffic flow and safety.

The town also aims to spend \$26.8 million over the next three years to upgrade municipal buildings, most notably the Paul-Émile-Lépine community centre and the Guy-Godin library.



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2025 IONIQ 5

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weekly | months (260 weeks) | Example of selling price
with \$195 down

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^a0 payments (payment deferral) for 90 days is available on promotional finance offers of in-stock 2025/2026 Hyundai models. Payment deferral applies to only promotional finance offers on approved credit and proof of income may be required. If the payment deferral offer is selected, the original term of the finance contract will be extended by 2 months (60 days). Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. will pay the interest during the first 2 months (60 days) of the finance contract, after which the purchaser will pay all principal and interest owing in equal installments over the remaining term of the contract. Payments on finance contracts are paid in arrears. Down payments are not subject to the payment deferral offer and are due on the date the contract is signed. Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. reserves the right to amend or terminate this offer, in whole or in part, at any time without prior notice. Additional conditions and limitations apply. Ask your dealer for details. ^bFor finance contracts payable on a weekly and bi-weekly basis, purchasers who select the payment deferral offer may have to make their first weekly or bi-weekly payment sooner than 90 days from purchase. ^cHyundai Boxing Month Bonus price adjustments of up to \$1,000 available on select in-stock vehicles only, on lease, finance and cash purchase from December 5, 2025 to January 2, 2026. Price adjustments are applied before taxes. Offer is non-transferable and cannot be assigned. Model inventory for which the price adjustments are applicable may vary from dealer to dealer and from region to region. See your local Hyundai dealer for further details and applicable model inventory. ^dLease offer available O.A.C. from Hyundai Financial Services based on the following new vehicles: 2025 IONIQ 6 Preferred RWD Long Range/2025 IONIQ 5 Preferred RWD Long Range with an annual lease rate of 1.99%/4.49%. Total lease obligation is \$15,498/\$32,756. 104/260 weekly payments of \$110/\$125 for 24/60-month walk-away lease. \$4,095/\$195 down payment and first monthly payment required. Offer is non-transferable and cannot be assigned. No vehicle trade-in required. Lease based on 16,000 km per year; 12¢ per excess kilometer. Lease offer includes delivery and destination charges of \$2,050/\$2,050, fees of \$115 (tire tax of \$15 and air tax of \$100) and dealer admin fees of \$799. Registration, insurance, RDPRM, license fees, levies, charges and all applicable taxes are excluded. ^ePrice adjustments consist of the \$2,000/\$4,000 Quebec provincial government electric vehicle rebate program for qualifying residents and the \$7,000/\$5,000 Hyundai Bonus on all in-stock 2025 IONIQ 6/2025 IONIQ 5. See your Dealer for details. Offer available on select in-stock electric vehicles only, on lease, finance, and cash purchase until December 31, 2025. The \$7,000/\$5,000 Hyundai Bonus price adjustments are applied before taxes. The \$2,000/\$4,000 Quebec provincial government electric vehicle rebate program is applied after taxes. Offer is non-transferable and cannot be assigned. Model inventory for which the price adjustments are applicable may vary from dealer to dealer and from region to region. See your local Hyundai dealer for further details and applicable model inventory. ^fHyundai's Comprehensive Limited Warranty coverage covers most vehicle components against defects in workmanship under normal use and maintenance conditions. ^gThe Hyundai name, logos, product names, feature names, images and slogans are trademarks owned or licensed by Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. All other trademarks and tradenames are the property of their respective owners.



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1585 Hymus Blvd,
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