



## Council Encourages Continued Comment on Municipal Taxation

March 12, 2014

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PORT HOPE, ON . The second phase of a two-stage community consultation on Municipal Taxation is underway and taxpayers are being asked to submit their feedback by March 21, 2014. Comment sheets are available at [www.porthope.ca](http://www.porthope.ca), Town Hall, Canton Municipal Office and the Port Hope Public Library Garden Hill branch.

The first phase of consultation included a survey mailed to all Port Hope taxpayers and all comments received were provided to Council. Council considered all feedback when determining which Municipal services would be considered as potential special services for discussion at four Open House sessions.

The sessions were held in both Wards on March 5 and 6, 2014, facilitated by Nigel Bellchamber and well-attended with more than 280 taxpayers from across the Municipality participating. There were many positive comments and detailed discussion around potential variants to the Area Rating formula put in place at amalgamation. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and many acknowledged that a common plus special services approach, compliant with provincial legislation, would likely be a reasonable framework for Municipal taxation. Discussion focused mainly on what services should be considered as special services and how a revised tax methodology may be implemented.

Councillor Rick Austin, Chair of General Government and Finance stated, "The Open House sessions went very well. Many attendees were able to get clarification on how a special service can be designated and from the general comments we heard, it seems many people left with a greater understanding of the matter. Community input has been a key element of the review process and we encourage the public to send us their feedback."

Under the proposed common plus special services approach, Municipal facilities and services are considered common to all ratepayers and taxed at the same rate for all ratepayers. Where a service is identified as being provided at a different level or available only in a definable benefitting area, it can be deemed a special service and paid for through property taxes only by those receiving the service.

It is important to note that any change to the Municipal tax allocation model does not generate additional taxes for the Municipality as a whole. It is revenue neutral and only changes how the total levy is apportioned to taxpayers. Additionally, only the Municipal portion of the property tax bill would change; County and Education tax rates are the same for both Wards and are not affected by any change to the Municipal tax rate.

The review of Municipal taxation has included several opportunities for community input and public feedback remains a vital component of the process. We encourage residents to submit comment sheets by March 21, 2014 to be included in a report to Committee of the Whole on April 1, 2014 for consideration and potential Council direction at that time.

Detailed information on Area Rating is available at [www.porthope.ca](http://www.porthope.ca) including the Open House presentation and display boards and comments sheets.

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