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Mayor promises to cut proposed tax on residents' concerns

Whitby Mayor Elizabeth Roy released a statement promising to reduce the proposed property tax rise for 2026 after residents expressed concern about the tax increase in face of high cost of living.

Her amendments would bring the proposed tax increase from 3.99 per cent to 3.49 per cent.

The budget adjustments come at the cost of:

Removing \$500,000 of incremental contribution to the Growth Reserve Fund.

Reducing the Council Education Budget by half for a savings of \$21,000.

Increasing lease revenue by \$160,000, and

Removing 12 summer student positions in 2026 for a savings of \$180,829.

"Any further reduction to the proposed tax increase would come at a real cost — cuts to programs and services," said Mayor Roy.

"I have worked closely with town staff to explore every possible option to reduce the impact on taxpayers, including what it would take to achieve a zero-per-cent increase. Moving in that direction would require additional discussion and direction from council," she added.

Significant Pressures

Whitby faces significant financial pressures driven by high inflation, rapid population growth, aging infrastructure, and the ongoing impacts of provincial downloading.

The proposed budget is to prioritize investments needed to support Whitby's growth, maintain the infrastructure, and deliver the high-quality services expected by residents.

The mayor added: "There is no new staffing included in the proposed 2026 budget and town staff have identified \$2.5 million in expenditure reductions, some of which will result in service level impacts."

New revenue sources are also being looked at to offset the decrease in property tax

such as a 4 per cent Municipal Accommodation Tax on hotels and motels introduced in 2024, which resulted in \$600,000 in revenue in the first 12 months. The town also secured a record \$56 million in grants in 2024.

The mayor's proposed 2026 budget, which builds on the draft budget released by town staff on October 27, was.

A Plan to Protect Ontario

Minister of Finance Peter Bethlenfalvy released the 2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review: A Plan to Protect Ontario, which supports the government's plan to protect Ontario by building a more competitive, resilient and self-reliant economy by cutting red tape, investing in infrastructure, supporting workers, improving services and making life more affordable.

"With tariffs taking direct aim at Ontario workers and communities, it has never been more important for the government to deliver on its plan to protect Ontario. We continue to make historic investments in highways, transit, health care and all the other services our communities rely on, so we can build for our growing province. We are doing this all while keeping costs down for families and helping to unleash Ontario's full economic potential," said Minister Bethlenfalvy. "We are able to take unprecedented steps to protect Ontario thanks to our commitment to fiscal prudence, which has put Ontario's finances in the strongest position they have been in over a decade."

Highlights of the 2025 Fall Economic Statement include:

Rebating the full provincial portion of the HST for first-time home buyers of most new homes. Subject to passage of federal legislation, Ontario's new rebate would eliminate the full 8 per cent provincial portion of the HST for first-time home buyers on qualifying new homes valued up to \$1 million, saving home buyers up to \$80,000 off the cost of a new home when combined with existing provincial relief.

Delivering on its plan to protect Ontario workers, businesses and communities from the impacts of U.S. tariffs, through the development of Ontario's Tax Action Plan. This work will focus on updating Ontario's personal and corporate income taxes to encourage and attract more business investment, help improve Ontario's competitiveness in the G7 and lower costs or provide relief for individuals and families in the years and decades to come. An update on the Tax Action Plan will be provided in the 2026 Ontario Budget.

Investing an additional \$100 million in the Ontario Together Trade Fund (OTTF) to further help small and medium-sized enterprises diversify into new markets and strengthen trade resiliency. This brings total program funding to \$150 million over three years, starting in 2025–26. The increased support will enable businesses affected by U.S. tariffs to pivot production, forge new sales partnerships and expand interprovincial trade.

Helping Ontario manufacturers and processors lower their costs, innovate, and become more competitive by introducing legislation to enhance and expand the Ontario Made Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit (OMMITC). This includes proposing to temporarily enhance the tax credit rate from 10 per cent to 15 per cent and expand access to the tax credit as a 15 per cent non-refundable version to corporations that are not Canadian-controlled private corporations (CCPCs). In addition, the government is now proposing to amend the OMMITC eligibility criteria for investments in machinery and equipment to provide greater flexibility for businesses.

Investing \$1.1 billion over three years to extend home care services and the Hospital to Home (H2H) program. The government's investment includes \$982 million to strengthen critical home care services and more than \$170 million to enhance and expand the H2H program. These investments will ease pressures on the health care system and hospitals, helping ensure people receive the right care in the right place.

Supporting sectors affected by U.S. tariffs through the \$5 billion Protecting Ontario Account. In August, the government launched the initial \$1 billion of the Protect Ontario Financing Program (POFP), which is already supporting Ontario-based businesses directly impacted by higher tariff rates in the steel, aluminum, copper and auto sectors by helping them keep their doors open and keep workers on the job. The government is now developing the second and third streams, to be supported by the remaining \$4 billion. These streams will fortify Ontario's economic resilience, fuel innovation, and fast-track high-growth firms to sharpen Ontario's global edge.

Continuing to invest in the province's most ambitious capital plan, with planned investments totalling more than \$201 billion over 10 years, including over \$33 billion in 2025–26. This plan will help keep workers on the job in the face of economic uncertainty caused by tariffs.



WE WILL REMEMBER

11TH NOVEMBER

Remembrance Day is a time to honour the courage and sacrifice of those who fought for Canada's freedom and dignity. They stood for truth, integrity, and the right to live in a country governed by principle, not fear. As we reflect on their legacy, may we remember that freedom is not just a gift — it is a responsibility it must be guarded, preserved, and lived out with the same courage they showed on the battlefield. - Councillor Lisa Robinson "The People's Councillor"

