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Prioritize new hospital in Ontario March 26 budget: Whitby

The Town of Whitby is calling upon the provincial government to prioritize the new hospital in the upcoming budget to be presented by Peter Bethlenfalvy, Finance Minister and Pickering-Uxbridge MPP on March 26.

“Ensuring access to quality healthcare services and infrastructure, like a new hospital, is critical to supporting resident’s quality of life as Whitby and Durham continue to grow,” said a town statement.

It pointed out that it has been nearly two years after the province announced the planning grant for a new hospital in Whitby.

“The town continues to do its part to help bring care closer to home for residents – working with partners to acquire the land for the future hospital. Lakeridge Health also continues to advocate for the capital commitment to move the project forward.

“In this year’s provincial budget, the town is asking the province to prioritize the new hospital project and required next steps – including project timeline, land, and capital commitments – to bring this much-needed facility closer to reality,” said the Whitby statement.

“Whitby is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, and our residents deserve infrastructure and

services that keep pace with that growth. Municipalities are being asked to do more than ever before, and we simply cannot continue to fund provincial responsibilities through property taxes. Closing the municipal funding gap and investing in critical priorities like a new hospital in Whitby are essential steps to protecting quality of life for our residents,” said Mayor Elizabeth Roy.

Whitby Mayor Elizabeth Roy has criticized the provincial budget for failing to address the “significant challenges” such as progress on the new hospital and the funding gap that the town faces.

“...while I recognize the complexity of the decisions before the provincial government, I am concerned that Whitby’s key priorities were not reflected,” the mayor said.

She said Whitby is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Canada, and “we are facing significant challenges that were not addressed in this budget”.

She gave the example of recent legislative changes that have resulted in a funding gap that impacts Whitby’s ability to deliver services and ensure it has the infrastructure to support its growing population. New Hospital

She pointed out that access to services like a new hospi-

tal, is critical to supporting healthcare close to home as Whitby and Durham grow.

“Nearly two years after the province announced the planning grant for a new hospital in Whitby, the town continues to do its part to work with partners to acquire the land. Lakeridge Health also continues to advocate for the capital commitment to move the project forward. We are asking the province to prioritize this project and move forward on next steps including project timeline and land, and capital commitments.”

“Ontario municipalities face a \$4 billion annual shortfall caused by provincial downloading, as well as a \$1.5 billion annual burden from social housing costs being placed on municipalities. Council recently supported my motion calling on the province to address the broken provincial-municipal funding system. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has also consistently called on the province to address this issue,” Mayor Roy said.

The mayor said she will continue to advocate for solutions that ensure Whitby is able to offer a strong quality of life to residents now and in the future.



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