

# NEW FEATURE IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES

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## Here's an expanded version, closer to 1,000 Tax Burden: Are Municipalities Failing Ontarians?

By Dale Jodoin

In today's fast-paced world, where high prices leave many struggling, homelessness is increasing, and more people are fighting to keep their homes, you'd think municipalities in Ontario would do everything possible to keep property taxes low. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Instead, municipalities and cities are handing out significant pay raises to their workers while refusing to cut unnecessary spending or streamline their operations. This is pushing many Ontarians to the brink of financial despair.

This year, some municipalities have imposed property tax hikes of up to 10%, with predictions of another 10% increase next year. These growing tax burdens make it harder for homeowners to keep their properties and leave renters with less hope of ever affording a home. This raises an important question: How can local governments claim they want to build affordable housing while implementing policies that make life unaffordable for so many?

The strain of rising taxes hits everyone, but it's particularly hard on those already struggling to make ends meet. For seniors on fixed incomes, young families saving for their first home, and low-income workers barely getting by, these increases aren't just numbers—they're the difference between stability and losing their homes. While the federal government has long been criticized for heavy taxation, municipalities are now following suit, further squeezing Ontarians at the local level.

### Contradictions in Local Governance

One of the most baffling contradictions is the way municipalities talk about affordable housing. They often announce ambitious plans to create new developments for working-class families or those who need affordable options. Yet at the same time, these municipalities are implementing policies that make housing less affordable for everyone.

For example, rising property taxes are making it harder for landlords to maintain or lower rents. Homeowners, especially those already on tight budgets, are being forced to make tough choices between paying their tax bills or other essentials like groceries and heating. For people trying to enter the housing market, these costs can make the dream of homeownership even further out of reach.

### The Case for Smaller, Leaner Government

A key problem is that many municipalities and cities in Ontario have grown bloated over the years. Layers of bureaucracy, overlapping services, and excessive spending on salaries for municipal workers have created an unsustainable system. Instead of trimming the fat and working to become more efficient, many local governments seem content to pass their costs onto taxpayers.

Take the Durham Region as an example. Oshawa, Whitby, Pickering, and Ajax are all separate municipalities within the same region. Together, they have a combined population of over 500,000 people. If these municipalities were to merge into a single city, they could pool their resources, eliminate duplicate services, and save taxpayers millions of dollars. A unified city could also make smarter, region-wide decisions about housing, transportation, and infrastructure. Such a merger would mean fewer managers, fewer city halls, and less administrative overlap. This streamlined approach could result in significant savings, which could then be used to reduce taxes or invest in much-needed community services. Yet, there seems to be little interest from local governments to even explore this idea. It raises the question: Are our leaders truly interested in making life easier for their residents, or are they too focused on maintaining the status quo?

### The Impact on Families

For many Ontarians, rising property taxes aren't just an inconvenience—they're a crisis. Families already facing skyrocketing grocery prices, higher utility bills, and increasing costs for childcare are now being hit with tax hikes they can't afford. For some, this means cutting back on essentials, while for others, it means falling behind on their bills or even losing their homes. The issue isn't just about the numbers on a tax bill; it's about the real-life consequences for people. Seniors who have worked hard their entire lives and paid off their homes are now being forced to sell because they can't afford the taxes. Young families are giving up on the dream of homeownership because they can't keep up with the rising costs. And renters are seeing their monthly payments climb because their landlords are passing on the burden of higher taxes.

### Affordable Housing vs. Affordable Living

Ontario's municipalities frequently tout their commitment to building affordable housing. While these efforts are important, they mean little if the overall cost of living continues to rise unchecked. Building new homes is only part of the solution. Ensuring that people can afford to live in the homes they already have is just as critical, if not more so.

Affordable housing shouldn't just be about constructing new buildings. It should also involve policies that keep people in their current homes, whether they own or rent. This means tackling rising property taxes, lowering utility costs, and finding ways to reduce the financial burden on families.

### The Path Forward

So, what can be done? There's no single solution, but a few key steps could make a big difference: Merging Municipalities: As mentioned earlier, consolidating smaller municipalities into larger ones could lead to significant cost savings. By reducing administrative overhead and eliminating duplicate services, municipalities could operate more efficiently and pass the savings on to taxpayers. Cutting Excess Spending: Municipalities need to take a hard look at their budgets and find ways to cut unnecessary spending. This could mean freezing pay raises for municipal workers, reducing the number of managers, or eliminating programs that don't deliver value to taxpayers.

Prioritizing Essential Services: Local governments should focus on funding the services that matter most to residents, such as affordable housing, public transportation, and infrastructure maintenance. Non-essential spending should take a backseat.

Engaging Residents: Municipalities should involve residents in the budgeting process, giving them a say in how their tax dollars are spent. This could help ensure that spending aligns with the priorities of the community. Advocating for Change: Local governments should work together to advocate for changes at the provincial and federal levels, such as increased funding for affordable housing or reforms to the property tax system.

### A Call to Action

At a time when so many Ontarians are struggling, it's more important than ever for municipalities to step up and show leadership. This means making tough decisions, cutting unnecessary spending, and finding innovative ways to reduce costs. It also means listening to residents and putting their needs first. While there's no easy fix, one thing is clear: the current path isn't sustainable. If municipalities don't take action, more families will be forced out of their homes, more seniors will face financial hardship, and more young people will lose hope of ever affording a place to live. Ontario's leaders must remember that their job is to serve the people—not the other way around. It's time for municipalities to prioritize affordability and create a future where everyone has the chance to thrive.

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# FREE FEATURE

TITLE

PROUDLY SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES LIKE ...

## 2024 Festive RIDE Results: 105 impaired taken off the road

DRPS completed its sixth and final week of the 2024 Festive RIDE program, stopping more than 1,600 vehicles and charging 19 drivers with impaired driving offences.

This year 105 drivers were removed from our roads for impaired driving – a choice they made, police said adding: "A choice that jeopardizes the safety of everyone."

This represents a nearly 20 per cent increase over last year. That being said, over 16,000 vehicles were checked, proving the majority of the drivers are following the rules and regulations.

This week, the RIDE team was joined by DRPS Auxiliary officers who assisted on the RIDE line. On New Year's Eve our team checked nearly 500 cars for sobriety and noted that a high number of these drivers were designated drivers or ride share services.

The 2024 Festive RIDE final totals are as follows (with the 2023 Festive RIDE final totals in brackets).

- Vehicles stopped - 16,227 (12,682)
- People given Roadside Breath Tests - 1145 (533)
- People received three-day suspensions for registering a WARN 102 (40)
- Novice driver received a 3-, 7- or 30-day licence suspension 16 (19)
- People were charged with Impaired Driving Offences - 105 (87)
- Impaired/Exceed/Refuse Charges laid - 154 (130)
- Other Criminal Code Charges 47 (64)
- Charged with various Highway Traffic Act offences - 1214 (972)
- Drug Offences - 17 (3)
- Provincial Cannabis Act Charges - 15 (11)

As the 2024 Festive RIDE program comes to a close we remind the public that our officers work 24/7/365 and are always focused on road safety and reducing impaired driving, police added.

Note: Under the Ontario Highway Traffic Act, anyone charged with a criminal impaired driving offence will have their driver's licence suspended for ninety days and their vehicle impounded automatically for seven days.

# TAKE THE THREE SECOND TEST!!!

- Turn to any page in this newspaper.
- Look at any ad for the count of three. Then turn page.
- Tell me what you remember of that ad or page?
  - Can you recall product?
  - Can you recall phone number?
  - Can you recall what was advertised?
  - Can you recall address?
  - Can you recall company name?
  - Can you recall any pictures?
  - Can you recall any logos?

If little or nothing. You just proven why **BUS ADVERTISING, BILL BOARDS, ELECTRONIC ROAD SIDE SIGNS** do not work.

**WHY:** - Normally when people are driving they are constantly looking around for all kind of safety reasons. Three seconds tends to be the rule for determining decision making. When looking at a bus. People look for safety first then what is actually on the bus. This compounded with the fragmented artwork due to windows and doors. The average person does not truly see the ad. They notice a bus in motion and maybe the color. Not the messages on it. Much like when you turned the page. You could retain some minute detail but not the whole message.

**On a billboard.** The key to advertising is simplicity. More than two points. The readers will not be able to retain any information. Therefore the sign will be rendered useless.

**Electronic road side signs** - Same principle. The high color and light affect in many cases even though appealing. It is also very confusing for the mind to retain any information.

Priority is the wow factor of the brightness, (one second). Then word recognition (two seconds). Finally, understanding of what the eye has just witnessed.

These form of advertising do not generally work and can be very costly. The key or purpose for these forms of media to have an impact. It relies on respecting the three second rule.

What this means is that the message has to be contained and clear as for bus advertising. Many try to put too much in a bus that has windows and moving doors. This making the ads look like a badly composed ransom note.

For Electronic road side signs and signs in general. Most advertisers again do not respect the three second rule. Drivers, walkers do not sit there and read signs. They glance and move on. If a service or product is needed. It is highly speculated that they will not have a pen and paper ready to take down the advertisers information.

**Online advertising/social media.** Online/social media advertisement operates on a three click rule. If your viewer fails to go to the particular interest in three clicks. Viewer will just move on and or 'x' it off. Look at the number of 'Likes'.

### Then what is the answer?

Newsprint advertising has gone through some major transformations in the past 15 years. Those, that failed to adjust have fallen, declared bankruptcy. The bottom line is that newsprint advertising has decades of proven success.

**WHY:** People like to have information in their hands. Easy access and simple. Anyone can turn a page. Not everyone can find an online site and or afford internet.

Information in news print is reliable and comes from a source known in the community.

Social media has become nothing short of a public toilet. Everyone uses and abuses it. From entities pretending to be reputable companies to the many fraudsters.

Online information has become unreliable and manipulative as it plays on people's weaknesses.

There is no value in no cost. With news print. You pay for a subscription to be assured to have reliable information.

Advertisers, they get what they pay for. **VALUE.** As newsprint may change but never go away.

**YOU ARE READING DURHAM NEWSPAPER**  
**DURHAM'S ONLY IN PRINT**  
**History In The Making**

