

## Aurora looking at 2.2% tax increase in 2026

Aurorans could see a less-than-forecasted tax increase in the year ahead.

On Monday, Mayor Tom Mrakas tabled the Town's proposed 2026 Budget ? with a proposed tax increase of 2.2 per cent, down from the 2.9 per cent initially estimated for the coming year through the Town's multi-year budget plan.

The initial budget, which will be subject to further discussions around the Council table, includes a 0.6 per cent increase for Town operations, 0.6 per cent increase for Central York Fire Services, and a 1 per cent increase to capital reserves.

Should the Budget ultimately pass at a 2.2 per cent increase, residents who own a home assessed at \$800,000, can expect to see the municipal portion of their tax bill increase by \$56.94.

?I heard from many of you loud and clear over the past year: the cost of living is rising, you've been tightening up your family budgets, and you expect your government to do the same,? said Mayor Mrakas in a statement. ?With your feedback in mind, this budget keeps the tax levy increase moderate ? protecting residents' pocketbooks ? while continuing to invest in the services, facilities and infrastructure that make Aurora one of the most desirable communities in Ontario.

?We all know that the past few [years] have not been easy. Families have been dealing with higher costs at every turn ? groceries, gas, mortgage rates and so much more. That's why I made it my top priority to bring forward a budget that protects residents from unnecessary increases, while ensuring we don't compromise the future of our Town.

?Working closely with the CAO, finance team, and department directors, we achieved that balance by finding efficiencies, reducing discretionary spending, pausing non-essential projects, and implementing a temporary hiring freeze for 2026 ? with no new staff positions added.

?That decision sends a clear message: we're doing more with what we have. We are respecting taxpayers by focusing on productivity, not payroll, and ensuring every dollar goes towards improving service delivery, not expanding bureaucracy.?

Since Aurora received Strong Mayor powers from the Province of Ontario, along with dozens of other municipalities, municipal budgets are now presented by the Mayor.

In his statement, Mayor Mrakas acknowledged calls from some quarters in the community, as well as motions around the Council table to deliver a zero per cent tax increase for 2026. Such a move, however, would have long-term impacts despite short-term appeal, he said.

?As we look ahead, this budget continues that same philosophy ? putting residents first, managing your tax dollars wisely, and making decisions that build on the strong, stable foundation we've created together,? he concluded. ?Aurora continues to be recognized as one of the best places in Canada to live, work, and raise a family. That's not by chance ? that's because of the choices we've made and the priorities we've set.

?I want to thank our dedicated staff, our finance team, my Council colleagues, and the many residents and businesses who provided input. Your ideas helped shape this budget into a plan that truly reflects Aurora's values and Aurora's vision. This is a budget for people, guided by principle, and focused on progress. And it ensures that Aurora remains strong ? today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.?

Budget deliberations begin November 3.

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