

## King budget maintains service levels, comes with a 3.49% tax hike

King Township Council adopts 2026 municipal budget that maintains current service levels with a minimal 1.5% increase to the operating budget. Both the Township's Capital and Operating Budgets were formally presented and, in accordance with legislation under Strong Mayor Powers, have now been deemed adopted. The overall tax rate includes a previously-approved 1.99% increase for asset management, to comply with provincial legislation, and a 1.5% increase to the operating budget, for an overall increase of 3.49%. The estimated blended tax rate, which combines the Township's portion with York Region and School Board taxes is 3.10%. This translates to an approximate \$125 increase for the Township's portion of the rate on a home assessed at \$1 million. This increase is one of the lowest in the Greater Toronto Area announced to date and supports the continued delivery of high-quality programs, services and infrastructure for residents. The adopted budget reflects King Township's commitment to maintaining current service levels while addressing the challenges posed by inflation, legislative changes and contract price increases. The total 2026 operating budget is \$74.7 million and the capital budget is \$16.5 million. The budget is presented through the service-based budgeting model, emphasizing transparency and alignment with community needs. King Township's 2026 budget organizes expenditures into six service areas: Governing King: Overseeing the Township through Council, legal services and risk management. Greening King: Maintenance and development of parks and trails and enhancing sustainability through waste diversion programs and climate change initiatives. Keeping King Safe: Providing fire, emergency, bylaw, traffic calming and animal services. Maintaining King: Ensuring the upkeep of roads, sidewalks, streetlights and public facilities. Planning and Growing King: Supporting development, building permits and business growth. Serving King: Offering recreation, library, heritage and cultural programming and events, as well as licensing services. The service-based budget allows residents and business owners to see exactly how funds are allocated to specific services that directly impact their daily lives, making it easier to understand the value they receive for their tax dollars. It also supports the Township's Corporate Strategic Plan (2023-2026), ensuring resources are directed to meet critical priorities. Cost and performance for each service is tracked, making it easier to identify improvements, allocate resources according to community needs, and lower spending—all of which can enhance service quality for residents. Service expectations are measured and reported annually and can be viewed at [king.ca/ServiceProfiles](http://king.ca/ServiceProfiles). The 2026 service-based budget process included several efficiency measures to offset cost pressures and minimize the tax rate increase, including: Reviewing fees and charges across all departments. Implementing new service fees to cover rising costs. Adjusting overhead chargebacks for building and utility-funded services to ensure these services pay their fair share of general overhead costs. Increasing investment revenue through portfolio management. Reviewing and updating service contracts to reflect current pricing models. The 2026 budget emphasizes King Township's commitment to delivering essential services and infrastructure investments. Highlights include: Enhanced snow removal and road maintenance. Continued investment in parks, trails and sustainability initiatives. Improvements to fire and emergency services. Support for recreation programs and cultural events. The 2026 Budget Book, which provides detailed information on the proposed spending plans and revenue sources by service area, was published online at [king.ca/budget](http://king.ca/budget) on October 28. The community was invited to provide their feedback on the budget to help shape financial priorities during a Public Open House, held on November 12 at the King Township Municipal Centre. The event featured visual displays of proposed service priorities and funding, with the Senior Leadership Team on-site to answer questions. In 2025, King Township became one of the few municipalities in the GTA to adopt a service-based approach (rather than the traditional department-based budget that focuses on organizational structure) to help citizens better understand costs associated with local services to residents. King Township received the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the last four years including the 2025 budget for its efforts to be transparent and accountable. The 2026 Budget is the Township's first under the provincial Strong Mayor legislation, which was expanded to King effective May 1, 2025. In accordance with the legislation, the Mayor has the duty to propose the municipal budget and in-year amendments, subject to council amendments and a separate mayoral veto and council override process. For more information on the 2026 budget process, email [treasury@king.ca](mailto:treasury@king.ca), or visit [king.ca/budget](http://king.ca/budget). To receive updates on King Township news, follow the official corporate social media channels on X and Facebook and Instagram, subscribe to the King eNewsletter or visit [king.ca](http://king.ca). King Township's 2026 budget reflects a no-frills approach, focusing on maintaining the high-quality services our residents rely on while keeping increases to a minimum. By holding the operating budget increase to just 1.5%, staff have delivered a responsible plan that balances fiscal discipline with the needs of our growing community," said Mayor Steve Pellegrini. Daniel Kostopoulos, CAO, added: "The 2026

budget demonstrates a practical, service-first approach. With a modest 1.5% operating increase layered on the previously approved 1.99% for asset management to meet provincial requirements, King Township is maintaining current service levels, protecting critical infrastructure, and investing where residents see the most value. The Township's service-based budgeting model strengthens transparency and performance, ensuring every dollar is tied to outcomes from snow clearing and road maintenance to parks and recreation services while staff continue to offset inflationary and contract pressures through targeted efficiencies. Councillors supported the budget and the methods to keep it sustainable and lessen the burden on taxpayers. Councillor Jennifer Anstey said This year marks King's first budget under Ontario's Strong Mayor Powers, but Mayor Pellegrini was committed to the same process as before. The result was a no-frills budget that maintains service levels while keeping tax increases as low as possible. Staff delivered a responsible budget that reflects rising costs for wages, fuel, winter maintenance, insurance, and essential capital work while adding no new tax-funded staff positions. Assessment growth and savings from the provincial recycling transition were fully used to reduce the tax burden. Councillor David Boyd said staff did an excellent job keeping the increase down, despite significant pressures such as inflation, rising labour costs and increased maintenance expense. We must continue working to reduce the blended tax increase, as the same inflationary pressures, like higher electricity and fuel costs, impact households across our community, Boyd said. Councillor Debbie Schaefer pointed out this was a very difficult decision. The Budget shows that there were 14 proposals from staff for initiatives which would improve services and or ultimately reduce costs. As a councillor my challenge is not whether I think the ideas are good or not, but rather what is the best answer if one wants our budget to be sustainable. By this I mean it needs to make sense beyond the first year. Understandably we are influenced by fact that many are taking steps to reduce living expenses. That encourages short term planning, she said. Generally this Council has made decisions thinking of the long term. Best example is the fact that in the budget there are funds for the Asset Management Plan. To clarify we are thinking about the need to maintain our current assets: pipes and facilities. She noted that 1.99% of the 3.74% increase is for asset management for the next 15 years. I believe that a number of the proposals from staff are very worthwhile and if it wasn't for a target of the lowest possible property tax increase, I would be recommending implementation, she said. Schaefer added that Budget 2027 will be assessed by newly elected council members.