

County of Brant – Mayor’s Presentation of the Proposed 2026 Budget

Message from Mayor David Bailey

I am pleased to present the County of Brant’s 2026 Proposed Budget. On May 1, 2025, the Government of Ontario expanded strong mayor powers to 169 municipalities, including the County of Brant, which has changed how the County considers and adopts its annual budget.



I believe that all major decisions affecting the County of Brant and its residents should be decided through the principle of majority rule amongst all

Council members, as elected to represent their wards. The preparation of the 2026 budget is no different. To this end, staff were tasked with bringing forward the Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review in a manner to get Council direction on significant projects and service level changes in advance of the preparation of the 2026 budget documents. The decisions made in December are reflected in the draft budget documents and I have determined to put forward no changes to the direction provided at that meeting.

The proposed tax levy increase for 2026 is 5.0% after assessment growth, 1% of which is an increase to the special levy for the New Hospital project for Brant/Brantford. This works out to an approximate increase of \$206 per year for the median residential property. Council does not take proposing a 5% tax levy increase lightly, however additional investments are necessary to maintain, repair and replace aging infrastructure and assets, to support our emergency responders and to meet the need for increased at-reach supports and services. Fulfilling a local contribution commitment towards the New Hospital Project is essential to the success of this project, which is a critical need for our community and represents a tremendous investment in our region.

The 2026 Proposed Budget will be presented at a Special Council meeting on January 22, 2026, 9:00 a.m. at the County of Brant Council Chambers. This session will include presentations from the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer, opportunities for questions and discussion and a review of next steps. Another special meeting is scheduled for February 5, 2026, 9:00 a.m. at the Council Chambers to consider any proposed amendments put forward by Council members.

Thank you to my fellow Council members. Your support and direction provided through the Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review is the backbone of the 2026 Budget and I look forward to meaningful discussion and debate if there are any proposed amendments put forward for consideration. Thank you to County staff, particularly the Budget Team and the Leadership Team, who have put incredible time and effort into this process and who strive to implement Council decisions and priorities in a cost and time effective manner. Your jobs are not easy and your professionalism and expertise is greatly appreciated.

It has been my pleasure to serve the residents of the County of Brant as Mayor for the past two terms. Over my tenure, the County has achieved many great things which benefit all residents and ratepayers. A few of these accomplishments are outlined on the following pages.

The County is the greatest place to live and I am grateful every day for the chance to make meaningful improvements to the community and to embrace future challenges and opportunities as they come.

Governance & Engagement

Following the COVID-19 Pandemic, County Council returned to a refurbished Council Chambers, featuring a classic, modern design and incorporating new technology and accessibility features to serve as a welcome environment for members of the public, staff and Council to engage in healthy debate and decision-making.



The County also invested in enhanced communications and engagement strategies. A redesign of Brant’s Website and the launch of the “Engage Brant” platform provide the opportunity for residents to stay informed, engaged and provide their input into County decisions. Residents are encouraged to subscribe to be part of the conversation and notified of updates.

Infrastructure

Each year, a significant portion of the County’s budget goes towards maintaining and improving infrastructure throughout the municipality. Over my tenure, the County has invested in new landfill capacity, undertaken massive servicing and traffic improvements along Rest Acres Road, made annual investments in gravel to hard surface road conversions and is currently embarking on significant upgrades to the St. George Water and Wastewater systems to promote the growth and health of that community. The Downtown Dig in Paris in 2025 and continued construction in the area for the next couple of years reflects a commitment to replace aging infrastructure and support our downtown core and its businesses for future generations. It was wonderful to see new businesses opening during construction and how the community came together to support special events and local businesses.

County Operations provide winter maintenance to over 2200km of roads each year in a coordinated and efficient effort to keep the travelling public safe and providing a level of



service that is held in high regard for all who live and/or travel through our community.

Emergency Services

Emergency services and support for our first responders are vitally important to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents and businesses.

Over the past two terms of Council, the budget has continued to support and expand these services through additional front-line resources for by-law, fire and paramedics. Investments in equipment and facilities, include a new Brant OPP detachment, refurbishment of fire stations and a new Paramedics Services Headquarters. Council has delivered on the demand for improved emergency services.



Recreation and Community Support



The County of Brant is home to a wide offering of recreation, leisure and community gathering facilities. As the community continues to grow, so does the need for increased and expanded offerings for services such as recreation programs, day care / after school care, summer camps and drop-in sports and activities. The County caters to enthusiasts of all ages, from those just starting on their “learn to swim” journey, through youth and young adult recreation and sport programs, to programming designed for adults and seniors to encourage a life-long sense of community and healthy living.

Each year, the staff and resources needed to continue to provide this wide offering comprises a significant component of the operating budget. Investments are also needed to maintain the County’s many leisure and sports parks, passive / natural recreation areas, trails and to maintain and operate cemeteries throughout the County to the standard and level befitting their purpose.

Capital investments are made each year to replace equipment / refurbish aging parks and to establish new parks and recreation offerings. The County has completed several significant projects for new recreation facilities, including the T.F. Warren Group Cainsville Community Centre in Cainsville, the Wilkin Family Community Centre in Paris and also to complete major updates / repairs at other facilities throughout the County.



Tourism & Community Enhancements



The three main downtown cores in the County (Paris, St. George and Burford) each offer unique and charming experiences that draw tourism and represent a source of pride for their communities and for this Council. As such, I am pleased that this

Council has invested in enhancements in the St. George Downtown Core, being the redevelopment of the corner of Beverly and Main Street and in the creation of the Burford King Street Parkette. These beautification projects are both practical and aesthetic advancements for the community.



Future-Ready Planning and Economic Development

County of Brant Council is incredibly grateful for and supportive of the varied and vital businesses that invest in this area. Having a healthy mix of industrial, commercial, home-based and agricultural-centric businesses is key to having a healthy community, with a well-balanced tax base, new job creation and “buy local” opportunities. Support for our business community and attraction of new investment starts with community planning. The County is now seeing returns on its investment with a nearly 400% increase in industrial / commercial development.



makes up this municipality.

Planning at the County of Brant is guided by Council’s Strategic Plan. Other key documents approved during this term of Council, include the Official Plan, the Long Term Financial Plan and the Climate Action Plan each of which strive to ensure that future generations of County residents and businesses experience all the benefits and beauty of the combination of rural roots and urban lifestyle that

Mayor's Budget Summary

	County Services	Local Boards	New Hospital Special Levy	Total Budget
Starting Point - Staff Prepared 2026 Budget Before Budget/LTFP Change Requests				
2026 Operating Budget	50,710,279	19,770,798	870,000	71,351,077
2026 Capital Budget	20,416,954	684,430		21,101,384
Budget Impact After Assessment Growth	3.24%	1.27%	0.05%	5.0%
2026 Budget after Long-Term Financial Plan Review				
2026 Operating Budget	49,075,459	19,800,257	1,680,176	70,555,892
2026 Capital Budget	21,217,254	684,430	0	21,901,684
Budget Impact After Assessment Growth	2.71%	1.29%	1.0%	5.0%
Mayoral Budget Adjustments				
Operating Budget	0	0	0	0
Capital Budget	0	0	0	0
Mayor's 2026 Budget				
2026 Operating Budget	49,075,459	19,800,257	1,680,176	70,555,892
2026 Capital Budget	21,217,254	684,430	0	21,901,684
Total Mayor's Budget Impact After Assessment Growth	2.71%	1.29%	1.0%	5.0%
Tax Increase on Residential Property Assessed at \$391,000 (2026 median)				\$206.28
Farmland (50 acres, no buildings) assessed at \$604,192				\$76.50