

COMMUNICATION 135193

Received from: Trisa McConkey, CPA, CGA, Treasurer
Addressed to: Council
Date: December 10, 2024
Topic: 2025 Budget Approval

SUMMARY:

Staff has prepared the enclosed draft Budget for 2025 which requires an 8% increase in tax rates.

COMMENT:

The 2025 budget working papers were circulated to staff in July so that Staff could prepare their departmental budgets based on previous 10-year Capital Plans, the Strategic Plan, and the Asset Management Plan. Direction was provided by Treasury staff with respect to payroll, lease, and insurance expenditures.

Since the original submissions were received, Managers met to refine the amounts requested by deferring or removing over \$5 million in projects, and Council spent a full day reviewing departmental budget requests and making changes. At the November 26, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting, staff presented the last version of the budget to the public for comment. The public presentation, and a link to recordings of the previous budget meetings with Council were posted on the Town's website and advertised through social media with an invitation to provide comments to the Treasurer up to December 5, 2024.

The final budget request is for a levy of \$16,687,130 from taxation for 2025; a 10.4% increase over the 2024 tax levy of \$15,083,860. Of the \$1,603,270 increase, 2.4% or \$367,000 will be covered by growth leaving a real tax rate increase of 8%.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

The Treasurer has provided responses to residents for all comments received. Responses to suggestions about changes to services, closing recreation facilities, or other opinion-based comments have not been addressed as these items should be, or have been, debated by Council. Responses provided for some of the more technical questions are shown in green italics within the comments below. Comments are shown in the order they were received.

1. We just want to say that we know you will probably get a lot of negative e-mails and comments about this tax increase, but we know that a lot of these costs are out of the hands of the town council and their staff and we appreciate all of the hard work they do for our community.

2. I am a homeowner in Carleton Place and am a retired senior. The increases in the 2025 police costs seems very steep. It seems to be excessive. Has the town given any consideration on mitigating this. I also wondered what is the total amount for accessibility upgrades, is it \$20,000 or more?

We have \$20,000 for an Aqua Mat at the beach if we can find a grant to help, Council approved an accessible bench on Coleman (\$5,000 funded from taxes) and the creation of accessible washrooms at the Arena (180,000 funded through development charges).

3. This is truly going to make it difficult for people on fixed income, or with a family with many little mouths to feed. I'm not talking about other neighbours, (as LSeccaspina stated) I'm talking about THIS town. 8% increase plus the recent increase in water tax as well is honestly insulting to CP population. Seriously we are not funding a failing transportation system like Ottawa, CP doesn't even have one! Town council has to get back to the table and look at other revenue streams, streamlining services. How about trying a smaller increase now...let ppl adjust, budget then another smaller increase in lets say 6 months. There are many ways make this affordable. This is about our town of Carleton Place, not others! And after doing some research, there are NO towns around that have had such a whopper of an increase. the highest seen is 2.9% NOT 8% plus increase in water taxes as well. This cannot be allowed to pass. Please fix this.

Among many other efforts to keep costs low and attract additional revenue, more than \$5 million in capital projects just to maintain the assets citizens use every day were deferred to keep the increase as low as possible this year.

Under the Municipal Act we are required to set one tax rate for the entire year.

All small-town municipalities in Lanark County are proposing increases higher than this. Most are double digit increases.

4. I read with disappointment the 2025 Budget Presentation posted to the Town's website. Excluding the OPP Increase, the Budget has been pitched to residents as representing a 3.9% increase in tax revenue to the Town. However, with a 2.4% increase in revenue due to growth, in reality (again, excluding the OPP increase), the Budget would see revenues from ratepayers to the Town increase 6.3% over 2024 levels.

It's probably obvious to say that there are three ways to balance a budget: i) increase revenues; ii) reduce costs / expenditures; or iii) a combination of both. In

reading the Budget Presentation, there is not a single reference to a budget cost or expenditure from 2024 having been reduced for 2025. If households are able to reduce their costs with much more limited budgets, it would seem that a Town / corporation with a \$15 million budget should be able to find something to cut, but that doesn't seem to be the case in Carleton Place.

I submit that in times of fiscal challenge, the focus of a municipal government must be on providing the necessities, or the "must haves". These would include, for example, roads, sewers, drinking water, fire protection, by-law enforcement and garbage removal. In trying times, I submit that it's incumbent on the Town to review expenditures on all of its "nice to haves" - things that in a perfect world with an unlimited budget, everyone would want to have, but in trying fiscal times, are things that we can live without. For example, it seems clear from the report on the pool that this asset is or will turn into a money pit without other government relief. So close it down. Why as well does the Town need to have any involvement with the Canoe Club or that building, which no doubt caters to the needs of only a tiny proportion of the citizenry. Same goes for Moore House and the Museum. Eliminating just the *increased* budgeted costs for these last three items (i.e., not the pool, for now), would cut 1.5% off the tax increase.

From my perspective, Mayor and Councillors are elected to make the hard decisions - to make cuts to non-essential services so that the essentials are well provided. To publish a draft budget that adds new costs and expenditures on top of new costs and expenditures from the year before, and expects ratepayers to make up the difference, is grossly irresponsible. To compare Carleton Place's taxes to other municipalities is simply a red herring fallacy - it diverts attention away from the Town and Council's apparent refusal to make necessary cuts. Taking 8% more of resident's income means citizens have 8% less to pay for food, clothing and shelter (since most don't get cost-of-living wage increases, or increases of that magnitude).

I wish I could run my own budget the way the Town does - just keeping adding stuff on and get somebody else to pay for it - but it doesn't work that way for me and it shouldn't work that way for the down.

I would like to address your statement that "not a single reference to a budget cost reduced for 2025". Prior to the full day of Management presentations to Council, staff recommended more than \$5 million dollars in deferred or removed projects most of which were to maintain the assets currently enjoyed by residents. Council supported these recommendations, and they were cut from the 2025 budget. This was the 2nd year of cuts in this magnitude. As a result, we currently sit with a backlog of necessary maintenance projects totalling over \$10 million that are now

scheduled for 2026. Obviously, Council and Staff will again need to make some tough decisions for 2026. Continuing in this fashion will eventually require tax funding or a reduction in services to address. In addition to these cuts, Council debated the entire budget and removed another \$130,000 in costs for 2025.

5. I would like to state that whilst I understand the continual need for growth, it seems that taxes continue to rise at approximately 4% per annum. Whilst this does not seem much, incrementally it can make a huge difference to households. Particularly those whose budget is either fixed or those whose budgets do not allow for much flexibility.

I would ask that all persons involved in developing the plans take this into serious consideration, as it could cause penury to many, indeed perhaps resulting in them being unable to live in their homes.

Are there other ways of either minimizing increases or looking for cuts in the town budget?

Among many other efforts to keep costs low and attract additional revenue, more than \$5 million in capital projects just to maintain the assets citizens use every day were deferred to keep the increase as low as possible this year.

6. Is there a detailed breakdown of the services provided for: a) the \$2,400,530 cost for current police service, b) the \$3,022,802 cost for projected police services, and c) \$622,272 price increase. Of these amounts, is there a detailed breakdown of the costs and services provided specifically for the town. Not a summary of services provided in total since some of the services provided, not sure of which services and the associated costs are provided to the county.

The Town's contract in 2024 was \$2,400,530 and for 2025 is going to be \$3,022,802. The main reasons for this increase include:

- a. *a new collective agreement was negotiated resulting in general salary year-over-year rate increases of 4.75% (2023), 4.5% (2024), and 2.75% (2025 and 2026) and, effective September 1, 2024, many OPP detachment front-line constables and sergeants will be receiving an additional 3% front-line patrol premium.*
- b. *An increase in the number of residential units/commercial properties in Town of 279; in 2024 our total was 5,557 and in 2025 our billing will be based on 5,836 properties.*

7. I saw that comments are open following the 2025 budget announcement. I really

have nothing to say about it – besides sharing my hope that you're not getting an earful 😊. The current administration/council is doing a great job and I'm more than happy to pay my share. Thank you for your continued dedication and contribution to our community.

8. Thank you for one of the easiest budget presentations I've ever had the pleasure of reading and listening to! It is perfect for financial luddites like me.

I do have a couple of questions however:

In the past 5 years how much have CP taxes gone up each year?

Increases to CP tax rates for the past 5 years:

2020 1.8%

2021 1.97%

2022 1.97%

2023 2.29%

2024 3%

You have separated out the OPP cost and introduced a 4 percent increase due to the 26 percent contract increase, but what would the actual property tax increase be if the OPP increase was folded into the municipal tax increase?

Total tax rate increase for 2025 is proposed to be 8%

Did I understand correctly that the education portion of the property tax is remaining the same in 2025?

Yes, the province has held education rates static for the 2nd year in a row

When does the county usually announce its budget and set its tax rate?

The County is working with their Council now. I believe their next budget meeting is tomorrow evening. We all set our actual tax rates in the spring (usually May) after the County passes the Tax Ratios for all Lanark County Municipalities.

9. Quick question; If I understand correctly, you are proposing an 8% increase in taxes for next year, with inflation at around 2%?

Among many other efforts to keep costs low and attract additional revenue, more than \$5 million in capital projects just to maintain the assets citizens use every day were deferred to keep the increase as low as possible this year.

Additionally, a few years ago when inflation was more than 7%, Council chose to use reserves to keep that year's tax rate at 1.97% as they felt it was an especially tough year for residents. We now need to make up for some of that shortfall to get back on track and ensure the future financial sustainability of the Town.

10. I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed budget allocations and tax increases for our town. I believe these proposals do not adequately serve the best interests of our community, and I would like to address several specific issues.

Prioritizing Accessibility Over Vanity Projects

It is troubling to learn that funds are being allocated for projects such as statues and monuments while the town claims it cannot afford to accommodate disabled residents or invest in necessary accessibility improvements. Our community should prioritize inclusivity and accessibility for all residents over superficial projects. I urge the council to redirect funds from these vanity projects towards making our town more accessible.

Equitable Tax Structure

The current tax structure appears to unfairly burden residents while not adequately accounting for the impact of businesses on our infrastructure. Businesses contribute to increased traffic from vehicles and trucks, which accelerates road wear and shortens the lifespan of our infrastructure. It is only fair that businesses bear a larger portion of the tax burden to reflect their impact on our town's resources. I request that the council review and adjust the tax structure to ensure businesses contribute their fair share.

OPP Contract and Financial Accountability

The burden of the OPP's retroactive pay increase should not fall solely on taxpayers. This significant financial obligation, which amounts to \$622,270, seems to stem from mismanagement. In the private sector, such costly errors would likely lead to serious consequences for those responsible. I urge the council to consider measures such as internal cost-cutting or hiring freezes rather than simply passing this cost onto residents. Those responsible for this oversight should be held accountable, and I encourage the council to explore ways to cut costs within its own operations.

Library Funding vs. Sports and Culture Tourism

The decision to invest in sports and culture tourism while underfunding our library is concerning. Libraries are vital community resources that foster strong community ties and provide invaluable support to residents. I strongly recommend reallocating funds from tourism initiatives to invest in a more robust, inclusive library that can better serve our community's needs.

Recommendations:

Halt spending on non-essential decorative projects and redirect funds to accessibility improvements.

Restructure the tax system to ensure businesses pay a larger share based on their infrastructure impact.

Implement internal measures to address the financial impact of the OPP contract increase without resorting to tax hikes.

Prioritize library funding over sports and culture tourism initiatives.

Review new development approvals to ensure developers contribute adequately to expanding infrastructure needs.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the council to reconsider the proposed 8% tax increase and focus on a budget that prioritizes the needs of all residents, ensures equitable contributions from businesses, and invests in critical community resources like our library. I would also like to reference a recent article in Orillia Matters dated December 1st, 2024, which quotes Pierre Poilievre, leader of the Conservative Party of Canada: "Municipal governments, don't ever let them bullshit you; they're bursting with cash, and they're wasting it all."

Considering these comments, I am concerned about how municipal funds are being managed. Mr. Poilievre's insights into municipal finances lend weight to my concerns about potential mismanagement within our town council. I believe it is essential for us as taxpayers to demand accountability in how our money is spent. I have copied our MP Scott Reid on this email as well; he has previously pledged his support to Mr. Poilievre and will certainly support Mr. Poilievre in stopping municipal financial mismanagement.

Mr. Poilievre supported by Mr. Reid as a member of Parliament have together pledged to stop "greedy, money-hungry municipal politicians,"

Thank you for your attention to these pressing matters.

"Equitable Tax Structure"

In 2024, the commercial tax rate was 1.842928 times more than a residential property and the industrial tax rate was 2.531635 times more than a residential property.

Part VIII of the Municipal Act, 2001, covers the requirements that all Ontario municipalities must follow to levy taxes. This Part begins with S. 307 that states the

following:

Taxes to be levied equally

307 (1) All taxes shall, unless expressly provided otherwise, be levied upon the whole of the assessment for real property or other assessments made under the Assessment Act according to the amounts assessed and not upon one or more kinds of property or assessment or in different proportions. 2001, c. 25, s. 307 (1).

For further details on this mandated process, you can find the Act here [Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25 | ontario.ca](#)

“Developers should be required to contribute adequately to infrastructure needs.”

The Town requires new developments to construct and provide all necessary infrastructure within that development's boundaries to the Town at no cost. In addition, for those items that service more than individual developments, the Town collects development charges to fund those needs. We are currently updating our development charge By-law and there is a meeting this Thursday at 6pm if you are interested in more information.

11. I have lived in Carleton Place for almost four years now and am considered one of the 'transplants' from Ottawa.

Living in one of the newer neighbourhoods in town, I can tell you that an 8% increase means approximately \$500-\$600 per year out of my family's pocket and not the \$176 used in the budget presentation (which I'm sure placates some but the reality of pending MPAC reassessments is a real concern). The property tax on my address is already \$7,200 per year so affordability to call Carleton Place home is already in question.

My comments on the increase are as follows:

1. What additional services do we get from the OPP for the additional 26% in fees?
2. How does the province's proposal to provide \$77M in funding to rural communities to help offset OPP increases factor into the budget? This was announced after the budget presentation to the public.
3. Given the planned growth in Carleton Place, primarily through new housing developments, how will such a large tax rate facilitate that growth? It may deter some from moving here, in my humble opinion.

Do new home builders view the cost to live in CP prohibitive in starting new developments?

Finally, what is the commercial increase for 2025?

The 8% proposed increase is on the Municipal portion of your taxes not on County or Education. If you paid \$7,200 in taxes in 2024, your home would be assessed at \$552,737 (in 2016 values). Therefore, an 8% increase on the Municipal portion will be approximately \$332 not \$500-600.

12. The increased OPP cost is due to a retroactive wage settlement for OPP staff and due to the increase in the number of properties we are billed for. There are no additional services.

13. Council will discuss the funding announcement during their meeting on December 10th.

14. If you owned a home in 2024 in Ottawa your assessment for the same home would be higher but for illustration, let's assume the assessment is the same. Your taxes in Ottawa for 2024 would have been \$7,206. In Perth they would have been \$8,247 and in Smiths Falls they would have been \$10,774. Please refer to page 23 of the public presentation posted on our website for other comparisons of similar sized municipalities in Ontario. You will find that Carleton Place is one of the most affordable where taxes are concerned.

Additionally, at an assessment value of \$552,737, your home is in the top 1.6% of homes in Carleton Place in terms of value. Therefore, 98.4% of homeowners pay less. Most, much less.

All tax rates must increase by the same percentage as prescribed by the Municipal Act, 2001.

When the Province approved MPAC to reassess all the properties in Ontario, all properties are likely to increase by about the same amount so your proportionate share of the tax burden in Carleton Place should not change significantly. Please see the chart below that shows your tax bill (other than perhaps for Education) will not change just due to the new assessment. You can also find this chart on page 19 of the public budget presentation.

	<i>CURRENT Assessment 2016 Values</i>	<i>Assessment Increase 33%</i>
<i>Lower Tier (Town) Levy Requirement *</i>	<i>\$11,000,000</i>	<i>\$11,000,000</i>

<i>Upper Tier (County) Levy Requirement *</i>	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000
<i>A-Total Municipal Levy Requirement</i>	<i>\$17,000,000</i>	<i>\$17,000,000</i>
<i>B-Total Weighted Assessment</i>	<i>\$1,592,499,700</i>	<i>\$2,123,332,403</i>
<i>C-Tax Rate (A/B)</i>	<i>0.01067504</i>	<i>0.00800628</i>
<i>D-Property Value</i>	<i>\$300,000</i>	<i>\$400,000</i>
<i>E-Municipal Property Taxes (C*D)</i>	<i>\$3,203</i>	<i>\$3,203</i>
<i>*Municipal levy requirement is determined by budget set by Council</i>		
<i>Provincial (Education) Taxes are rate specific so they WILL increase in a hot housing market unless the Province changes the rate</i>		
<i>F-2023 Rate</i>	<i>0.00153000</i>	<i>.00153000</i>
<i>Provincial Property Taxes (D*F)</i>	<i>\$459</i>	<i>\$612</i>

15. Good morning! I'm writing regarding combined annual tax increase of 8%. The increase is unaffordable for a lot along families in CP including ours as the times are tough in job market and the paycheck is not going up at that rate. I'll request to review the increase and keep it more affordable and reasonable for the people. The other nearby cities' taxes are not going up at this rate and they have considerably more services provided. The increase in car thefts, increase in home break-in's doesn't even justify the increase in tax. Please reconsider the increase in tax to make it more affordable.

I am in regular contact with other Lanark County Treasurers, and most are proposing double digit increases for 2025.

16. As Carleton Place council proposed to increase over all 8%(4% tax+4% OPP) tax increase is not something any residents of this town expected. It's been consistent to increase 2% taxes every year and that being normal to everyone. We inflation and current economic situation, it would be burden to the families. People can't survive with the increase so the tax four times than they expected.

I am not in favor of the tax increase to 8% over all.

Among many other efforts to keep costs low and attract additional revenue, more than \$5 million in capital projects just to maintain the assets citizens use every day were deferred to keep the increase as low as possible this year. Last year, a similar amount of projects was deferred, and Council used some reserves to artificially keep the tax rate low. Additionally, a few years ago when inflation was more than 7%, Council chose to use reserves to keep that year's tax rate at 2% as they felt it was an especially tough year for residents. We now need to make up for some of that shortfall to get back on track and ensure the future financial sustainability of the Town.

17. I'm writing this morning to voice my displeasure and opposition to the proposed tax increase of 3.9% for the fiscal 2025 year. The amount of this increase will only further place residents in Carleton Place into undue financial hardship. Also, the home price this is based on is absolutely insane. There is not one house in Carleton Place that one can purchase for \$293k. This would mean that the majority of people will see a \$30/per month, on average, tax increase. This is not feasible for the majority of the population in this current financial climate.

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Taxes are based on assessed value not current market value. Assessed value is currently based on what market value would have been in 2016, or 9 years ago, well before the recent housing boom. One half of the residential properties in Carleton Place are assessed lower than 295,000 for 2025 so most people will not see an increase of \$30/month.

19. I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed municipal tax increase for 2025. While funding essential public services is important, it is unacceptable to continue relying on taxpayers to bear the financial burden—again. This pattern of passing costs onto residents is a lazy, short-sighted solution that must end. It's time for the municipality to take responsibility and aggressively cut inefficiencies and eliminate waste within its operations.

Year after year, hardworking residents are left to shoulder rising costs of all municipal services, be they essential or not. Meanwhile, meaningful accountability for reducing spending or improving efficiency is ignored. This approach is not only

unfair but completely unsustainable, especially in today's challenging economic climate.

A tax increase will hit the most vulnerable members of our community—low-income families, retirees, and small business owners—the hardest. These groups are already struggling to keep up with rising living costs. It is unjust and irresponsible to ask them to pay more without first making every effort to reduce government waste.

Far too often, bloated budgets and unnecessary “nice-to-have” initiatives drive up costs, creating the illusion that tax increases are unavoidable. They are not. Council and staff need to lead by example and conduct an immediate, transparent review of municipal operations. Where can waste be eliminated? What services can be streamlined? Are there redundant programs or departments that could be consolidated? The answers to these questions can and must be found before asking residents for another dollar.

This community deserves a leaner, more accountable government that prioritizes essential services and fiscal responsibility over convenience and excess. I strongly urge council to reject this tax increase and take real steps to achieve financial sustainability without placing an additional burden on residents.

It's time to act decisively and put the community first.

Among many other efforts to keep costs low and attract additional revenue, more than \$5 million in capital projects just to maintain the assets citizens use every day were deferred to keep the increase as low as possible this year. Last year, a similar amount of projects was deferred, and Council used some reserves to artificially keep the tax rate low. Additionally, a few years ago when inflation was more than 7%, Council chose to use reserves to keep that year's tax rate at 2% as they felt it was an especially tough year for residents. We now need to make up for some of that shortfall to get back on track and ensure the future financial sustainability of the Town.

In addition, there are mechanisms to assist those residents who are dealing with sickness or extreme poverty. Please see slide #31 of the public budget presentation for details.

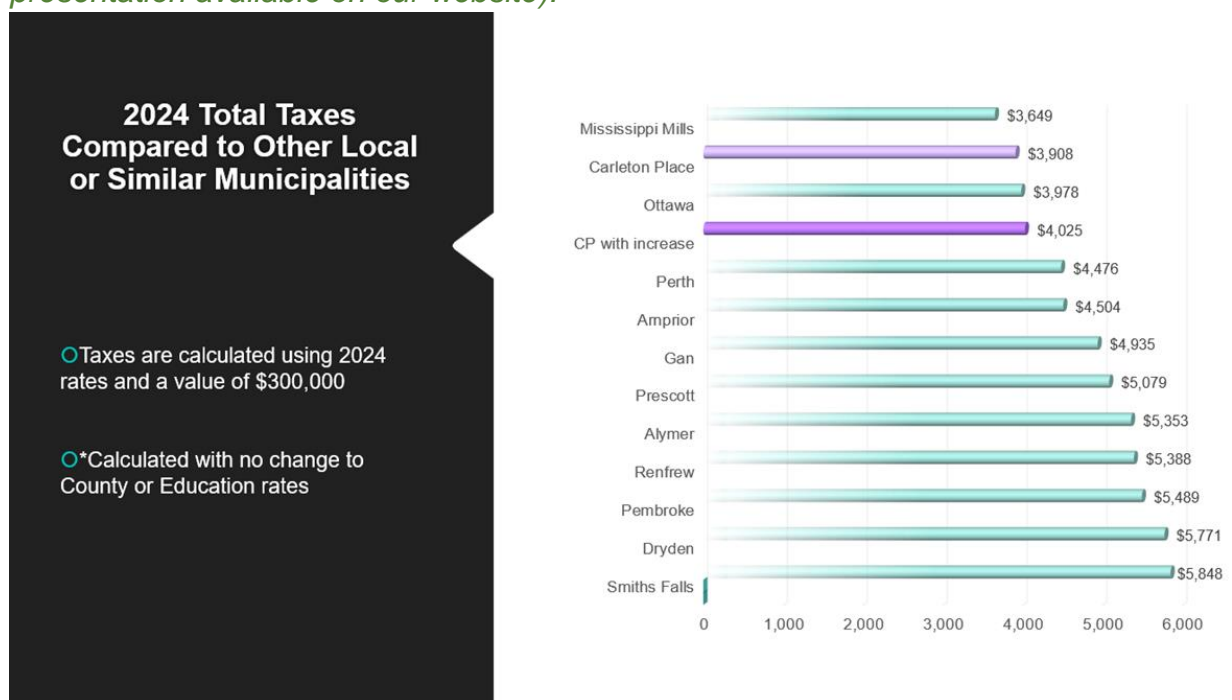
20. As per the website below, I would like to raise severe concerns and complaints with further increasing taxes in Carleton Place.

Carleton Place is already charging higher percentages on property taxes than other municipalities in Ontario and a further increase WITHOUT any gains for residents is completely unreasonable and presents a financial burden to residents.

I also question the data behind the median house value. There was a TOWNHOUSE on our street that sold for \$650,000 in the last month. That's more than 2x of the presented number. Similarly, uniform is selling new builds for 700,000+ without a fence, basement or any design upgrades.

The proposed tax hike makes Carleton Place significantly less attractive for current and future residents and will reduce our home values.

Carleton Place has one of the lowest taxes when compared to similar sized and/or local towns. Please refer to the chart below (slide 23 in the public budget presentation available on our website):



Regarding your comment regarding the median value in Carleton Place, taxes are based on assessed value not current market value. Assessed value is currently based on what market value would have been in 2016, or 9 years ago, well before the recent housing boom. One half of the residential properties in Carleton Place are assessed lower than 295,000 for 2025

21. I wanted to share my concern with the already unaffordable tax rates for Carleton place. We moved to CP from Barrhaven in 2021 to a newer build suburb home about 300sq feet larger on a similar lot to what we had. Taxes were not assessed yet when we moved. We were paying \$4,000 annually in Barrhaven so we conservatively budgeted taxes would be about \$5,500.00. Turns out I am paying \$8,200 annually. Add in daycare costs for our young ones and life in CP is unaffordable to the point we are exploring moving back to Ottawa. We need that additional \$4k to cover groceries, kids sports etc. for some reason I pay 50% more

than everyone I ask in the town of CP. it is already at an unreasonable level, and now increasing substantially with the new OPP contract. It's just too challenging to live here. There is no benefit for my family to be in CP with the new housing cost being basically the same as Ottawa, but taxes being double. I just don't get it.

If you owned a home in 2024 in Ottawa your assessment for the same home would be higher but for illustration, let us assume the assessment is the same. Your taxes in Ottawa for 2024 would have been \$8,257. In Perth they would have been \$9,474 and in Smiths Falls they would have been \$12,378. Please refer to page 23 of the public presentation posted on our website for other comparisons of similar sized municipalities in Ontario. You'll find that Carleton Place is one of the most affordable where taxes are concerned.

Additionally, at an assessment value of \$635,000, your home is in the top .07% of homes in Carleton Place in terms of assessed value. Therefore, 99.3% of homeowners pay less. Most, much less.

You may wish to refer to MPAC's website called MyProperty where you can compare your assessment to your neighbours and if you believe it to be too high you can submit an appeal to MPAC to have it reduced. One half of the residential properties in Carleton Place are assessed lower than 295,000 for 2025.

22. Via this email, I wish to provide a few comments from my side on the proposed tax increase of 8%.

1. The property taxes are already higher in CP compared to other municipalities including the city of Ottawa.
2. The enormous increase in OPP contract is not fair at all with a small town like CP. Even though we have seen an increase in crime, this increase of over 20% is quite unjustified. Since the province is now covering some of this cost, the 4% increase from this cost should be done away with.
3. Since the inflation and cost of living has increased dramatically in the last few years, the 8% tax increase will be very difficult for the homeowners.

With these, I request to minimize the tax increase to 4% or lower.

Carleton Place has one of the lowest taxes when compared to similar sized and/or local towns. (see chart from comment #17 above)

Council will consider OPP funding at the meeting on December 10th.

You mention inflation. The Town has experienced the same level of inflation and needs to increase taxation to maintain the services it provides. Among many other efforts to keep costs low and attract additional revenue, more than \$5 million in capital projects just to maintain the assets citizens use every day were deferred to keep the increase as low as possible this year. Last year, a similar amount of projects was deferred, and Council used some reserves to artificially keep the tax rate low. Additionally, a few years ago when inflation was more than 7%, Council chose to use reserves to keep that year's tax rate at 2% as they felt it was an especially tough year for residents. We now need to make up for some of that shortfall to get back on track and ensure the future financial sustainability of the Town.

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I also question the data behind the median house value. There was a TOWNHOUSE on our street that sold for \$650,000 in the last month. That's more than 2x of the presented number. Similarly, uniform is selling new builds for 700,000+ without a fence, basement or any design upgrades.

The proposed tax hike makes Carleton Place significantly less attractive for current and future residents and will reduce our home values.

Same answer as #11 above.

24. There is an article "Ontario Offsetting OPP Cost Increases for Small and Rural Municipalities - Provincial investment would support police and community safety" in the CP Scoop.

Is CP eligible to apply? If so, it could help reduce the increased taxes recently discussed for the 2025 budget.

Are there other areas that can reduce spending, like the plants that adorn Bridge Street each year and the maintenance for them? While these are pretty, I am sure they come with a price. Although that price is just a drop in the bucket, it is just an example where costs elsewhere might be cut.

My opinion is that our taxes are quite high compared to other municipalities of similar size and even somewhat to Ottawa, although Ottawa has a transit system and hospitals with CT and MRI scans, as does Pembroke and recently Almonte.

I do not claim to be an expert to municipal taxes or accounting but am quite concerned about the higher taxes proposed.

Council will be considering the OPP funding at their meeting on December 10th and your suggestions for changes to services either have been or will need to be considered by Council.

Also, same answer as #17 above.

25. I am writing with regards to the recent budget presentation for Carleton Place. With the new news about Ontario offsetting OPP cost increases for small and rural municipalities, could we avoid the 4.1% increase in Tax due to OPP cost.

Council will consider OPP funding at its meeting on December 10th.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2025 budget as presented requires an 8 % tax rate increase after growth has been taken into consideration. Depending on County and School Board rate changes, and property assessment changes, this increase in the municipal tax rate may result in either a higher or lower overall tax rate for taxpayers.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT the 2025 budget be approved based on an 8% tax rate increase for municipal purposes.