

## Proposed tax increase remains at 3% after Tuesday budget meeting

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The proposed tax increase for residents through Caledon's 2025 budget remains at 3 per cent.

At a December 10 Budget meeting, Councillors had the chance to present amendments to Caledon's proposed 2025 budget. The amendments presented were discussed and voted on by Council.

A motion from Ward 6 Councillor Cosimo Napoli and Ward 2 Councillor Dave Sheen to fund requests from the Caledon Public Library (CPL) was passed. In addition to base operating budget increases, the following was approved: \$500,000 to expand library collections and materials; \$115,000 for library IT equipment; \$64,000 to improve access to the Inglewood branch of the CPL; \$90,000 for a new community librarian; and \$37,000 for library intern, co-op and summer students.

A motion from Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell regarding access gates and signage on the Caledon Trailway was also passed. Maskell said residents are being put at risk with the way the Caledon Trailway is currently signed.

\$175,000 was approved to purchase 16 new trail access gates, remove existing access gates, install the new access gates, and to purchase and install appropriate signage at all Caledon Trailway road crossings.

Maskell's motion said the new access gates will make the trail more accessible, and that the new signage will make trail crossings much safer for trail users.

A motion from Napoli to make a CPL reserve fund was unanimously supported.

Ward 2 Councillor Dave Sheen made a motion to expand Caledon's Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) camera program. It was passed, and Caledon will soon have eight ASE cameras, making it one of the municipalities in Ontario with the most ASE cameras per capita.

Ward 4 Councillor Nick de Boer submitted a motion to make an outdoor ice rink at the Palgrave Ball Park. He, and Regional Councillor Mario Russo, said Palgrave residents deserve action as they recently learned skating would no longer be permitted on the Palgrave Pond. This motion was passed as well.

Another motion from de Boer supported the Palgrave Tennis Club's request for assistance, and this motion was also approved.

Maskell made a motion asking that Caledon host an Earth Day event next year with ecoCaledon at a cost of \$20,000, and it was supported by his fellow Councillors.

Maskell also suggested that Caledon draw \$815,000 from its tax stabilization reserve to offset the cost of Councillors' amending motions. He said this use is exactly what the reserve was made for. His motion was passed.

After all amending motions from the meeting were considered, Caledon's tax increase was left at 3.29 per cent.

Russo suggested drawing \$550,000 from Caledon's tax-funded operating contingency reserve to bring the increase back to 3 per cent, the amount proposed when Caledon's 2025 budget was first tabled. Russo's motion was supported by Councillors.

December 17 will be Caledon's final 2025 budget meeting and the budget is expected to be approved that day.

Caledon's CFO, Rob Cummings, noted at the December 10 meeting that the Region of Peel's currently proposed tax increase sat at 1.83 per cent.