



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **2026 County of Simcoe Budget approved by Council**

**Midhurst/November 25, 2025** – Following collaborative discussions and careful consideration, on November 25, 2025, County Council has approved a \$1.042 billion budget, which maintains existing service levels while delivering strategic, fiscally responsible investments that support growth, modernization, and community well-being.

Developed in alignment with Council priorities, and with a clear focus on delivering value in today's challenging financial climate, the approved budget positions the County of Simcoe for long-term resilience and success, while minimizing impact on taxpayers.

"This budget reflects County Council's steadfast commitment to fiscal responsibility and prudent stewardship of taxpayer dollars while facing rising demand for the County's critical services," said Warden Basil Clarke. "By balancing the need to invest in critical infrastructure, housing, and community supports with careful financial management, this responsible approach positions Simcoe County to grow sustainably while protecting the services and supports that matter most to our communities."

Recognizing its impact on more than 530,000 residents, the budget includes key investments across 20 vital service areas, including infrastructure, housing, emergency services, and community supports.

Key investments include:

- Major road construction projects (CR 4, CR 21, CR 22), bridge upgrades.
- Continued implementation of the Lake Simcoe Regional Airport Strategic Plan, including the Runway Extension project.
- Launch of the new 10-Year Strategy with funding for rental units, supplements, secondary suites, and supportive housing.
- Simcoe County Housing Corporation developments in Barrie, Collingwood, and Wasaga Beach, alongside continued support for third-party affordable housing projects.
- Further work on the Simcoe Village Campus Redevelopment in Beeton.
- Continued rollout of Community Paramedicine and Models of Care.
- Implementation of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, supporting the creation of 978 new licensed childcare spaces through a cost-based funding model.

The approved budget includes a 3.5 per cent increase (2 per cent for operating and capital and a 1.5 per cent for asset management) on the County portion of their municipal property taxes in 2026. This represents an impact of approximately \$10.86 per \$100,000 across the region, based on the 2016 property assessment. \$237.4 million of the County's \$745.1 million operating revenue budget comes from Simcoe County residential property taxes and the remaining amount from other revenues and funding streams.

The County's strong financial position is reflected in its AA+ long-term issuer credit rating from S&P Global Ratings, a leading provider of independent credit assessments and market insights.

**2026 Budget Highlights include:**

Total County operating and capital expenditures for 2026: **\$1.042 billion** (*\$745.1 million operating and \$297 million capital*)

- LTC Homes and Seniors Services \$216 million
- Paramedic Services \$89 million
- Community Support and Wellbeing \$101 million
- Community Housing \$114 million
- Housing and Homelessness \$69 million
- Early Learning and Child Care System Management \$151 million
- Transportation and Engineering \$82 million
- Solid Waste Management \$83 million

Attached to this news release is the [link](#).

County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at [simcoe.ca](http://simcoe.ca)

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# 2026 COUNTY BUDGET OVERVIEW

## RESPONSIBLY MANAGING YOUR SERVICES

The 2026 County of Simcoe budget includes a total of \$1 billion in operating and capital expenditures. The total revenue is \$909M with a taxation levy amount of \$237.4M.

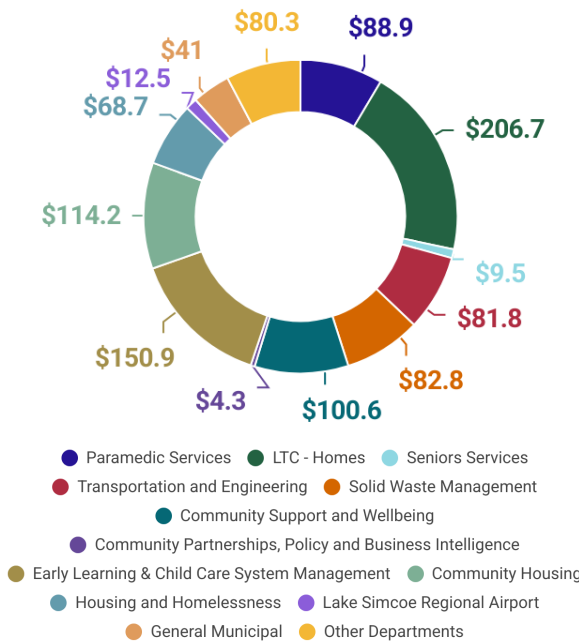
The budget has been prepared to address key ongoing needs and strategic initiatives. It includes a 2.0% tax increase to maintain operating service levels and keep pace with cost increases that can't be covered by growth. Also included is a 1.5% asset management increase.

The budget focus is on the resources necessary to maintain or improve existing crucial County services during economic / inflationary challenges.

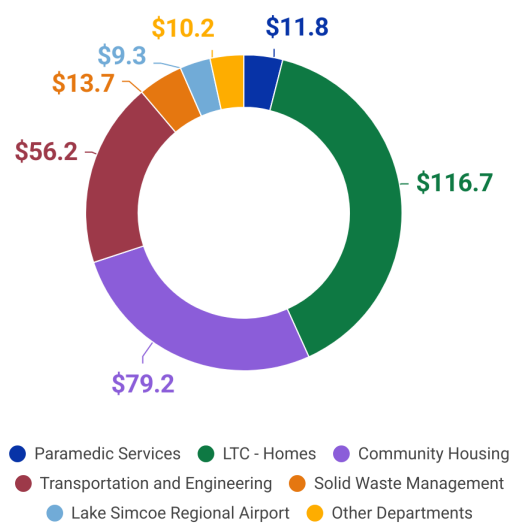
Because significant growth in the region impacts demand for all County services, we continue to work closely with our community and municipal partners to ensure residents receive the best value for their regional tax dollars.

The County continues to invest in housing in 2026, after recently approving its new 10-year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Strategy in November 2025. The new framework integrates the Simcoe County Housing Corporation Development Master Plan, the County's Attainable Housing Strategy and the County's 10-point Homelessness Prevention Strategy through partnerships in supportive and transitional housing, rental development, modular builds, infill through secondary suites and garden suites, affordable homeownership, and rent supplements/housing allowances. Work continues on

**Total County Expenditures**  
\$1B Operating and Capital



**County Capital Expenditures**  
\$297M



the new 220-unit Rose Street development in Barrie, 30-unit modular affordable housing development in Collingwood, the addition of an extra storey (including 10 additional units and added accessibility) in Penetanguishene, and design work in Wasaga Beach for a proposed 100-unit seniors affordable housing development to be brought to Council for approval. The County will continue to invest significantly in building up affordable homes across Simcoe County.

After creating over 2,000 new licensed child care spaces in 2025, 2026 will include targeted system growth of 978 new licensed child care spaces, bringing the County's five-year total to 4,995 new spaces created since 2022.

The budget directs additional

spending in Health and Emergency Services, including resources for Paramedic Services to address demand, including the completion and occupancy of the Waubashene Paramedic Station and the construction of the South West Barrie Paramedic Post to optimize response time performance. Funds directed in Long-Term Care and Seniors Services continue the construction and occupancy of the redevelopment of the Simcoe Village Campus.

Major road projects for 2026 include County Road 4 (Yonge Street), County Road 21 (Innisfil Beach Road) and County Road 22 (Horseshoe Valley Road) with related road, bridge and intersection components.

County Council will also continue its major community financial investments and

commitments to local hospitals and post-secondary education institutions.

Because significant growth in the region impacts demands for many municipal and community needs and services, County Council continues to make strategic non-mandated investments in our communities, while maintaining a strong long-term financial outlook.

For 2025, the credit rating firm Standard and Poor's Financial Services LLC, provided the following rating for the County of Simcoe: affirmed AA+ credit rating. The rating reflects Standard and Poor's assessment of the County's economy and budgetary performance, that the County's major construction projects will pressure its liquidity position and require additional debt.

## Social and Community Services

### Community Support and Wellbeing

2026 Expenditures: \$101M

The Community Support & Wellbeing Department delivers essential social and human services across Simcoe County, including the cities of Barrie and Orillia. Its core mandate is administering Ontario Works, which is projected to maintain a monthly caseload of approximately 8,107, integrated employment services, and person-centered supports to foster self-sufficiency. Beyond Ontario Works, the department connects individuals and families to health and community resources, food security programs, and critical benefits such as dental, vision, and funeral assistance.

Housing stability remains a key focus, with the Housing Retention Program designed to prevent or end homelessness by offering financial support to secure or maintain affordable housing, and the Temporary Family Shelter Program, where the County manages intake and access to this program. In addition, the County provides strategic leadership for the Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub. Finally, the department oversees Emergency Social Services, delivering responsive social and emotional support during significant emergencies.

In 2026, the County will expand its reach in community settings to deliver low-barrier, inclusive services and strengthen health-sector partnerships for coordinated, person-centred supports. Key priorities include driving innovation in social assistance and integrated employment services with MCCSS and Serco Canada/EmployNext, and advancing the HART of Simcoe County initiative—completing Year One goals and launching Year Two with a focus on enhanced service pathways, permanent housing solutions, and broader service access across Simcoe County.

### Community Housing

2026 Expenditures: \$114M

The County of Simcoe is the sole shareholder of the Simcoe County Housing Corporation (SCHC). The Simcoe County Housing Corporation provides Rent geared to income (RGI) and affordable housing units across Simcoe County. With a focus on mixed income complete communities, affordable housing projects are geared towards families, seniors as well as integration of community support services. The capital budget includes: affordable housing rental developments in Barrie (Rose Street) and Collingwood (Birch Street), smaller scale projects in the Midland area, pre-design activities for an affordable housing seniors project in Wasaga Beach (possible construction start in 2027), and the operating budget focuses on asset management to maintain existing aging infrastructure.

### Early Learning and Child Care System Management

2026 Expenditures: \$151M

As designated by the province, the County manages local early years system and related funding. It supports more than 225 licensed childcare programs, 31 EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations, Special Needs Resourcing Programs, and the federal-provincial Canada-Wide Early Learning & Child Care program locally.

Licensed Child Care Fee

Subsidies support eligible parents requiring child care and/or developmental programming for children with unique needs. Service providers receive assistance from the County and funded professional learning and development opportunities.

In 2026, the County will continue building up futures through the Early Learning and Child Care service system plan.

The plan focuses on ensuring the availability of inclusive and accessible early learning and childcare experiences, the Early Learning and Child Care workforce is sustainable and thriving, and works towards ensuring cohesive, proactive sector planning to build a strong Early Learning and Child Care system that benefits children, families and communities.



### Housing and Homelessness

2026 Expenditures: \$69M

As the provincially legislated Service System Manager and federally designated Community Entity for homelessness prevention, the County of Simcoe is responsible for mobilizing funding to support local providers in reducing homelessness. Guided

by Housing First principles, investments prioritize immediate access to permanent housing, while recognizing that individuals with complex needs may require additional supports.

The County employs a coordinated, systems-based,

and data-driven approach, anchored by a Coordinated Access System and Quality By-Name List. In 2026, it will advance the 10-Point Homelessness Prevention Strategy, focusing on enhanced data transparency, digital encampment tracking,

standardized governance, expanded rapid rehousing, and renewal of the family shelter program. The budget also expands rent supplements, introduces a Housing Opportunities Fund, and begins transitioning to a modernized, choice-based housing model.

## Health and Emergency Services



The design and construction of the redevelopment of the Simcoe Village Campus in Beeton continues in 2026 (rendering above).

### Long-Term Care And Seniors Services

2026 Expenditures: \$216M

The County of Simcoe provides a broad range of long-term care and seniors services to residents living throughout the region, supporting more than 1,200 seniors. They include four long-term care homes, supportive housing, retirement living, assisted living, affordable

housing, life lease suites and garden homes, adult day programming, and an entire suite of home support services. This vast diversity of programs and services addresses a wide spectrum of needs that support residents to age in place and assist in a seamless transition

for individuals as they move across the continuum of care from the community to long-term care. Operating results include staffing to comply with new Ministry requirements.

Capital projects include the full redevelopment of the Simcoe Village Campus.

### Paramedic Services

2026 Expenditures: \$89M

Paramedic Services provide land ambulance services at a Primary and Advanced Care Paramedic level of service, training programs, public education, Public Access Defibrillator program, and Community Paramedicine programs.

The 2026 budget includes costs associated with staffing, equipment replacements and upgrades related to emergency medical response to the region, including the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Annual call volume/responses are anticipated to be more than 101,000. Capital projects include facility development and vehicle and equipment replacements.

## Engineering, Planning and Environment

The Engineering, Planning and Environment Division consists of Transportation and Engineering, Solid Waste Management, Planning, Forestry and Transit.

### Transportation and Engineering

2026 Expenditures: \$82M

The 2026 capital budget includes construction and road maintenance projects totaling \$56M. Capital project expenditures include the continued construction of County Road 22 (Horseshoe Valley Road), County Road 21 (Innisfil Beach Road), County Road 4 (Yonge Street), construction of the Centre Line Bridge as well as a number of other road and bridge rehabilitation, and construction projects.

### Solid Waste Management

2026 Expenditures: \$83M

The Solid Waste Management department manages the waste management facilities and critical collection of curbside waste and diversion programs.

Capital project requirements are for site preparation and construction of the Organics Transfer Station, and site development/redevelopment of existing sites to improve customer service, and storage and processing capacity.

Additionally, expenditures include fleet additions and normal replacement of existing equipment that have reached the end of their reasonable service lives.



## Working together for the greater good

The County of Simcoe understands that strong community partnerships play a vital role in providing high-quality services to residents. In order to maintain and foster these established partnerships, the County provides strategic funding to other community impact services. Some strategic investments the County is proud to support in 2026 include:

#### Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

\$6.4 million

#### Simcoe County Hospital Alliance

\$3.0 million

#### Post-secondary capital support

\$1.5 million

#### Age Friendly grant

\$0.6 million



## How your tax dollars work

While the County's expenses are \$1 billion, they are offset by County revenues and funding from both provincial and federal levels of government. Residents will see a 3.5% increase on the County portion of their municipal property taxes in 2026. Overall, due to revenues and provincial funding, the County's actual tax requirement of \$237.4M is broken down as follows:

LEVY SUPPORT AREA	%*	(\$000s)*	PER \$100,000 RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT VALUE*
Community Housing	5.6	13,227	17.90
Community Support and Wellbeing	2.4	5,671	7.67
Community Partnerships, Policy and Business Intelligence	0.9	2,146	2.90
Early Learning & Child Care System Management	1.5	3,471	4.70
Housing and Homelessness	6.8	16,088	21.76
Paramedic Services	12.6	29,935	40.50
LTC - Homes/Seniors Services	7.4	17,584	23.79
Planning	1.8	4,391	5.94
Solid Waste Management	25.1	59,538	80.55
Transit	2.3	5,491	7.43
Transportation & Engineering	11.0	26,066	35.26
Economic Development	1.8	4,229	5.72
Lake Simcoe Regional Airport	0.9	2,172	2.94
Administrative & Statutory Support **	6.5	15,504	20.98
General Municipal Services ***	13.4	31,921	43.19
<b>Total Taxes based on Services</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>237,434</b>	<b>321.22</b>

\* All numbers are rounded

\*\* CAO, Clerks, Service Simcoe, Corporate Performance

\*\*\* SMDHU, MPAC, LSRA, Age-Friendly Grant, Hospital, Educational Support, Strategic land purchase

APPROXIMATE TAX INCREASE PER RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENT		
County Tax Rate Increase		
% Increase	\$ Increase	per \$100,000 assessment
3.5%	\$7.9M	\$10.86

NOTE: Actual Taxation impacts do not parallel assessment change because of Ontario's variable tax rate system. Tax rates vary by property class and assessment based on tax ratios, as well as local municipal and education taxes, which affect the distribution of the tax levy across classes. The numbers noted reflect the County's 2026 Budget Plan for illustration of the County's services and expenditure financing. This is based on the 2016 property assessment, not current rates.

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