

Wasaga Beach NEWS

September 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE CAO

As we approach the end of this term of Council, it is a good opportunity to reflect on how much has changed in our community over the past four years – and on the work that happens behind the scenes to turn priorities into results.

At the beginning of this term, Council established 84 strategic priorities based on what residents said mattered to them. Today, 100 per cent of those priorities are complete, ongoing or underway.

That is an important milestone for our organization, and one I am very proud of.

Council sets the direction, but it takes people across the organization to move that work forward. Behind every funding announcement, construction project, partnership and service improvement are staff developing plans, preparing budgets and business cases, working with other levels of government, solving problems and keeping projects moving.

We have seen the results of that work throughout this term.

Construction is underway on Wasaga Beach's first high schools, creating more than 2,100 student spaces in our community. The new K-12 Catholic School and Community Hub will also include childcare, a community theatre, track and field facilities and opportunities for post-secondary learning.

We have worked to bring healthcare closer to home by reopening the medical clinic and after-hours clinic, recruiting three new family physicians and supporting expanded access to primary care.

A new 288-bed peopleCare long-term care home is moving forward, while the reconstruction of Beach Drive is creating a more climate-resilient waterfront and putting the infrastructure in place to support future investment and development.

We have also welcomed major private investment, including Costco, a Marriott hotel along Beach Drive, and more.

At the same time, we have continued investing in parks, trails, roads, sidewalks, recreation programs and community facilities.

Since 2023, approximately \$506 million in major public and private investment has been committed to projects in Wasaga Beach. Those investments are expected to support more than **1,700 jobs**. That's record breaking in this community.

Our Vision Statement is supported by 5 **Strategic Pillars for Change** and 84 **Implementation Actions**.

SEPTEMBER 2026 UPDATE

100%

OF ACTIONS ARE COMPLETE OR CURRENTLY UNDER WAY.

COMPLETE

Pursue complete neighbourhoods

INCLUSIVE

Build a community where residents are happy, healthy & safe

OPPORTUNITIES

Diversify the economy & create jobs

WELL-RUN

Strive for excellence in customer service & corporate culture

GREEN

Demonstrate leadership in responding to climate change

Fall/Winter

PROGRAM REGISTRATION

wasagabeach.com/recreation



Continued on page 2

The longest freshwater beach in the world.



Investment at that scale does not happen by accident. It reflects four years of planning, strong business cases, strategic partnerships and an organization that is ready to act when opportunities emerge.

That same approach is helping shape the next chapter for Wasaga Beach through Destination Wasaga.

The Destination Wasaga Master Plan is creating a clear, long-term vision for this community's waterfront and downtown — one that protects the beach and natural environment, improves public spaces, strengthens our tourism economy and creates greater certainty for future investment.

We are already seeing what that kind of planning can generate.

Earlier this year, the Town went to market to explore interest in a potential signature aerial attraction. That process has since led to a Letter of Intent with Doppelmayr Canada to explore potential gondola and aerial transportation opportunities, along with discussions with Ecotrek about nature-based attractions.

These are still early conversations, and no gondola, route or attraction has been approved. But the interest itself is important. When a community has a clear vision for its future, it gives potential partners and investors confidence to take a closer look.

That is the kind of momentum we want to carry forward.

At the same time, big projects and major announcements are only part of the story.

Every day, Town employees are delivering the services residents count on.

They plow and maintain our roads, operate water and wastewater infrastructure, inspect buildings, review planning applications, care for parks, trails, beaches and facilities, deliver recreation programs and community events, respond to fire emergencies, enforce municipal by-laws, issue permits and answer questions from residents.

Behind those frontline services are employees managing our finances, technology, communications, workforce and day-to-day operations.

And all of that work has continued while staff have taken on some of the largest and most complex projects in Wasaga Beach's history.

That is what I am most proud of.

As CAO, I get to see how much work goes into the things residents see — and how much goes into the things they may never see. I see staff working across departments, finding solutions, adapting to new challenges and stepping up when something needs to get done.

So, as we mark the progress made on all 84 Term of Council priorities, I want to thank our staff for the role they have played in getting us here.

There is a lot to be proud of when we look back over the past four years, but our focus is also on what comes next.

WASAGA™

FALL & WINTER

Festivals & Events Lineup

OCT
03-04

Mayor's Charity RAM Rodeo
Trade in your flip flops and sunglasses for boots and spurs

NOV
01

Pumpkin Trail
Walk the woods through hundreds of glowing jack-o-lanterns

NOV
11

Remembrance Day
Recognizing those who served in support of their country

NOV
27-29

Holiday Kick-off Weekend
Get into the spirit with the Santa parade, tree lighting & holiday market

 wasagabeach.com/events

There are new schools to open, Beach Drive to complete, new healthcare and long-term care services to welcome, businesses and investment coming to town, and a Destination Wasaga vision that we will need to turn into action.

While we prepare for a new season, staff remain laser-focused on the fundamentals: delivering good service, managing public resources responsibly, planning for growth, and supporting decisions that will serve Wasaga Beach well over the long term.

Andrew McNeill
Chief Administrative Officer



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Be the first to know! Subscribe to receive email updates sent directly to your inbox or cell phone.

 wasagabeach.com/subscribe



NEWSROOM

Catch up on all Town news you might have missed:

Wasaga Beach Unveils Master Plan to Become One of Canada's Great Waterfront Destinations

Destination Wasaga Master Plan will help the town transform into a vibrant, sustainable and globally recognized four-season destination.

Wasaga Beach Signs Agreement to Explore New Aerial Attractions and Ropeway Solutions for Destination Wasaga

Town to explore aerial transportation opportunities with Doppelmayr Canada Ltd. and Gondola Ventures, while advancing discussions with Ecotrek on new nature-based attractions

Saddle Up! Tickets Now on Sale for Wasaga Beach Mayor's Charity RAM Rodeo

Second annual rodeo and Hootenanny Fall Festival returns October 3-4 with professional rodeo action, family fun, line dancing and a Two-Step Social under the stars

Wasaga Beach Welcomes \$506 Million in Community Investment over Four Years

Council advocacy, government partnerships and shovel-ready projects help unlock major public and private investment

 wasagabeach.com/news



Source: CTV Barrie coverage of Memories of Summer

MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Vote In-Person or Online

WASAGA BEACH
VOTES



Online voting starts October 1, 2026

October 5	10AM - 4PM	RecPlex
October 14	2PM - 8PM	RecPlex
October 17	10AM - 6PM	Wasaga Stars Arena
Election Day October 26	10AM - 8PM	Wasaga Stars Arena

 wasagabeach.com/election

COUNCIL ADVOCACY

Council continues to advocate for Wasaga Beach at all levels of government. At the 2026 AMO Conference, Council and senior staff met with provincial representatives to advance Destination Wasaga priorities, including new beachfront parking and transportation infrastructure, a year-round multi-use, purpose-built performance venue on Beach Drive (Dardanella 2.0), and new investment in the four-season potential of Wasaga Beach Provincial Park.



 wasagabeach.com/advocacy

ASK STAFF

Making Town information easier to find and understand is a priority. That's why the Town launched Ask Staff — a short video series giving residents clear, straightforward answers directly from Town staff.

From roads and parks to taxes, by-laws, events and major projects, the series helps residents get the facts from the people who know the work best.

If you have questions about something happening in Town, go to the source. Watch for new episodes on the Town's social media channels and YouTube, or send your question to: askstaff@wasagabeach.com



 **SUBSCRIBE**

@townofwasagabeach.official

ASK STAFF

Question: What is driving tax increases?

The biggest drivers of tax increases are costs the Town has limited or no control over, combined with the cost of maintaining the services and infrastructure residents rely on.

- **Inflation:** The cost of fuel, utilities, construction, materials, insurance, and contracted services has increased significantly since 2023. Like any household, the Town pays more to deliver the same services.
- **Property assessment freeze:** Ontario has not reassessed property values since 2016, so municipalities are using values that are now a decade old. For Wasaga Beach, this has created about 1.5% to 2% of additional tax pressure in 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026. For example, in 2026, the tax increase would have been approximately 1.00% without the freeze vs. 3.01% with the freeze.**
- **OPP policing:** Policing is a major municipal expense outside the Town's control. In 2026, Wasaga Beach's OPP costs increased by about 11% — more than double the average annual increase in previous years — and increases of this scale could continue for the next few years. In 2025, Council successfully lobbied the Province for \$1 million to help offset this huge increase, and the Town continues to advocate for a more sustainable, long-term solution.
- **A heavily residential tax base:** About 92% of Wasaga Beach's tax base is residential, meaning homeowners carry almost all of the cost of municipal services. The long-term solution is to grow the commercial tax base so those costs are shared more broadly. That is why the Town is focused on attracting major investments such as the **Marriott** hotel and **Costco**, and advancing **Destination Wasaga**, to bring **new employers and commercial assessment** to the community.
- **The new arena and library:** The Town is paying for operating costs for the arena and library with approximately 50% of those costs raised from taxpayer funding. The debt and the ongoing capital requirements are almost 100% taxpayer funded.

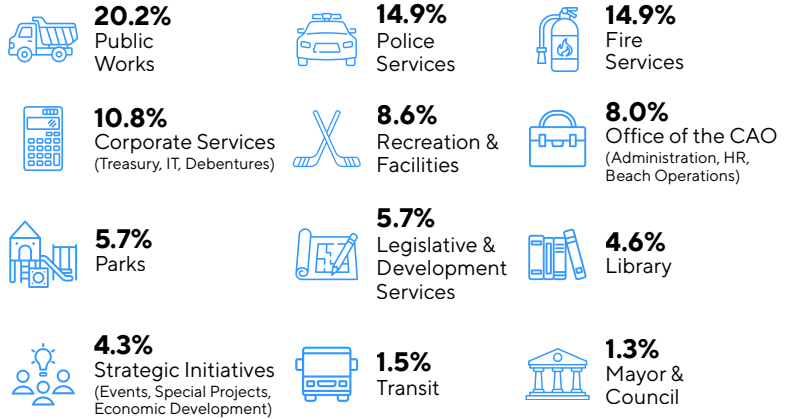
Question: How much have taxes gone up this term?

By year, the largest increases over the past four years came in 2023 and 2024. Since then, the annual increase has declined to 3.96% in 2025 and 3.01% in 2026.

- **2023: 5.9% ***
- **2024: 5.6%**
- **2025: 3.96%**
- **2026: 3.01% ****

*In 2023, the tax increase was driven by several factors, including inflationary pressures on materials and construction costs, compensation adjustments, and the additional operating, labour and debt associated with the new arena and library.

Question: Where do my taxes go?



This graphic illustrates how only 61 cents of every tax dollar you pay comes to the Town.



Question: Is it true that Wasaga Beach still has one of the lowest tax rates among comparable municipalities in Ontario and this region?

Yes.

 wasagabeach.com/budget

Question: Is it true that the Town is in discussions with the Province about funding a year-round destination anchor and performance venue along Beach Drive, referred to as Dardanella 2.0?

Yes!

This is an important part of the Town's new Destination Wasaga Master Plan, which has been funded 100% by the Ontario government. The Town is seeking provincial and federal funding for this proposed project.

 wasagabeach.com/imagine

