

January 29, 2026

Basil Clarke
Warden
The County of Simcoe
1110 Highway 26
Midhurst, ON L9X 1N6

Re: Toronto Regional Real Estate Board Submission on Simcoe County's 2026 Budget

Dear Warden Clarke and Members of Simcoe County Council,

On behalf of the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB), representing more than 70,000 REALTOR® Members serving the Greater Toronto Area, including many in Simcoe County, we are pleased to submit the following comments on the County's 2026 budget. Our members are uniquely positioned to observe the direct impact of municipal fiscal policy, housing market dynamics, and community livability.

TRREB applauds the County's strategic focus on housing supply, infrastructure readiness, and economic competitiveness in the proposed \$1.042 billion budget. The proposed 3.5 per cent increase in the County portion of municipal property taxes is balanced and underscores a disciplined approach to the budget considerations.

We welcome all efforts to expand new housing development, including investments in affordable housing through the Simcoe County Housing Corporation developments in Barrie, Collingwood, Wasaga Beach, and the launch of the new 10-year affordable housing and homelessness strategy.

Simcoe Residents are Concerned over Housing Affordability

A recent 2025 Ipsos survey commissioned by TRREB shows that Simcoe County residents are anxious about rising unaffordability pressures.

- 83 per cent of Simcoe residents say municipalities are not doing enough to make housing affordable — among the highest levels in the GTA
- 94 per cent of Simcoe residents agree the government needs to do everything possible to improve affordability
- 94 per cent of Simcoe respondents are worried about the next generation's ability to afford a home
- Only 3 in 10 believe governments are doing a good job addressing housing affordability
- A substantial majority believe the current housing mix does not reflect local needs.

These perceptions indicate that the regional and local governments can take additional steps to ease these pressures.

Recommendations

Some initiatives that could provide tangible steps toward addressing acute affordability challenges, supporting population growth, and meeting broader provincial housing objectives include:

1. Development Charges (DCs) – Mitigating Barriers to Supply

DCs remain a cornerstone of growth-related funding. However, escalating DC rates risk pricing out ground-related and multi-residential projects alike.

We encourage Council to preserve and explore enhancements to any first-time buyer or equivalent rebates for new homes, particularly those aligned with contributions from senior levels of government. This will help improve housing affordability.

Council should also explore per-square-foot DC charging to better incentivize units with larger square footage and more bedrooms, thereby meeting the demand for more diverse housing forms, including family-friendly missing middle housing.

2. Infrastructure & Transportation Investments – Unlocking Housing Potential

Investments in critical infrastructure, including major road projects and community support, are essential for enabling growth and densification. These will enhance connectivity, support economic development, and create opportunities for transit-oriented and mixed-use communities.

By fostering accessible and livable communities across Simcoe County, these projects will directly support the County's goals for sustainable growth and affordable housing supply, making homes more attainable for essential workers, young families, and diverse households while aligning with provincial mandates. The outcome will be improved integration of housing-enabling planning in development areas to expedite approvals for missing-middle, affordable, and multi-residential units.

In summary, TRREB advocates for a 2026 budget approach that balances fiscal prudence with bold action on housing supply, affordability, and infrastructure readiness. We are available to partner with Simcoe County through ongoing dialogue and data sharing.

Thank you for your continued leadership in building complete, prosperous communities across Simcoe County.

Sincerely,



Daniel Steinfeld
President