

A Francis Administration:

A defining difference in the Francis campaign is our commitment to putting residents first through transparent, accountable government, starting with greater clarity around the true cost of city taxes and fees.

We will publish a comprehensive **City Hall Bill** that clearly shows residents the full cost of municipal taxation, fees, and charges. Residents deserve more than claims of “no new taxes” while facing new levies, such as the Asset Management Tax, rising utility bills, higher permit costs, and other fee increases that make it difficult to understand the true financial burden on households.

Through a **People-Based Budget** process, we will put residents’ needs first, eliminate costly legacy projects that no longer serve the public interest, and adopt a pay-as-you-go approach to spending. Our goal will be to keep tax increases at zero wherever possible, or as low as possible when increases are unavoidable, with every decision made through an open, transparent, and fully accountable public process.

1. Affordability and Taxes:

We need to look at the full cost of the City Hall bill facing residents and businesses and put an end to runaway spending. My plan puts residents first by investing in the priorities that matter most, reducing city debt, strengthening financial reserves, and ensuring every tax dollar is spent responsibly, transparently, and with accountability to the people who pay the bill. My plan will...

- Review the full cost of City Hall by conducting an annual review of the full “City Hall Bill” paid by residents and businesses, including property taxes, user fees, utility bills, permit charges, licensing fees, and all other municipal fees, to ensure costs remain affordable and fair.
- Ensure Fair Stormwater Financing by review the Stormwater Financing Plan annually to ensure all eligible rebates and incentives are delivered to residents and businesses as intended.
- **No New Taxes.** Fund the Asset Management Plan (AMP) through existing capital funding in the 10-year budget and beyond, supplemented by grants and funding from senior levels of government. Windsor taxpayers have already faced a new 1.1% Asset Management Tax in 2020, followed by a further 0.25% increase in 2023, adding approximately \$41 million to the ongoing base budget. It is time to prioritize existing resources rather than impose additional taxes.
- Keep property taxes under control by limiting spending growth to the actual rate of inflation, rather than a blended inflation rate that can mask overspending. Property taxes have increased 20% since 2014 and 9% since 2022.
- Adopt a pay-As-You-Go strategy to minimize unnecessary borrowing and high interest costs, easing pressure on property taxes and preserving funding for capital projects.
- Reduce the city’s debt from a projected \$130 million in 2026, up from \$104 million in 2014 – an increase of \$26 million.
- Strengthen the city’s financial reserves to improve financial flexibility, support local and Canadian purchasing, and fund Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) that help local businesses grow and neighbourhoods thrive.
- End costly, over-budget legacy capital projects like the Trolley Beacon Project (approximately \$10 million) and the City Hall ice rink (approximately \$15 million).

- Put residents at the centre of the budget process by implementing People-Based Budgeting and ending the Strong Mayor Powers budgeting process. Restore City Councillors' role in developing the budget alongside the Mayor and City Administration.

2. Housing

Housing has been a central issue in this campaign and is one of the key reasons I am running for Mayor. We have opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing in Windsor, and we need a practical, coordinated approach to make it happen.

That starts with modernizing City Hall through professional, accessible online services; making better use of existing city-owned land through clear, competitive processes; working with provincial and federal governments to advance housing initiatives; and establishing clear timelines for permit approvals. By making municipal services more efficient and predictable, we can create a more attractive environment for housing development in Windsor.

A key part of the Francis Administration's approach would be accelerating housing development in the downtown core through a targeted package of incentives. This would include an office-to-residential conversion program, property improvement incentives, and a development-charge-free zone. Downtown Windsor has underutilized buildings and existing infrastructure that can be leveraged to bring more housing to market in a cost-effective way.

We would also extend this approach to Sandwich Town and Ford City, supporting revitalization, encouraging investment, and creating more opportunities for people to find affordable housing in established neighbourhoods.

Our goal is clear: remove unnecessary barriers, make better use of the resources we already have, and create the conditions for more housing options across Windsor.

- Expand Housing First Initiatives with emphasis on increasing supply of affordable housing.
- Package city owned properties and issue competitive calls for mixed-use proposals with public-benefit conditions that can be ranked by neighbouring residents.
- Provide tax incentive programs that support growth, housing development and affordable housing developments in the city.
- Waive permit fees for affordable housing developments in Windsor.
- Reduce development charges through partnerships with senior government funding programs so that property taxes are not negatively affected.
- Establish clear permit timelines for housing and development applications.
- Deliver full online building and planning services so residents and businesses can apply for permits and access services without unnecessary red tape at City Hall.
- Accelerate downtown development by pre-zoning the downtown core for as-of-right density, eliminating parking minimums and establishing a dedicated Downtown Development Concierge with set municipal permit timeframes.
- Build a Community Improvement Plan that delivers results, with incentives tied to redevelopment, business growth and revitalization of vacant and underused properties.
- Launch an Office-to-Residential Conversion Program to encourage transformation of underused office space into housing.
- Offer tax-increment grants and property improvement incentives to attract private investment and redevelopments to the downtown core, Ford City and historic Sandwich Town.

- Maintain the Downtown as a development-charge-free zone and include Ford City and historic Sandwich Town to encourage new investment.
- Tackle vacancy and derelict properties through stronger mandatory property standards enforcement for absentee owners of neglected buildings and storefronts.
- Encourage developers investing in Windsor to hire local workers and businesses wherever possible, supporting local employment and economic growth.
- Require post-development at occupancy and two-years after completion to ensure all objectives are completed and any outstanding requirements are addressed.

3. Public Safety/ Safety, Security & Crime Reduction in all Windsor Neighbourhoods

Public safety is a city-wide concern, not just a downtown issue. A Francis Administration will conduct a comprehensive review of police patrol coverage, staffing levels, and response times across all neighbourhoods to ensure resources are allocated on an equitable basis.

We will establish a **Downtown Safety and Outreach Command Unit**, led by a Director who reports directly to the Mayor on a weekly basis. This unit will coordinate a **Clean and Safe Streets Ambassador Program**, improve 311 service response times, and strengthen connections to mental health and addiction services, including programs modelled on the HART Hubs approach.

Public safety also requires strong leadership and accountability. I am the only candidate who has publicly taken the position that the Mayor must sit on the Windsor Police Service Board, reinforcing the importance of direct leadership, transparency, and accountability in addressing the safety concerns of residents and businesses across Windsor.

- Establish a Downtown Safety and Outreach Command Unit, led by a Director who reports weekly to the Mayor. This Unit will coordinate with Mobile Crisis Response Teams consisting of local police, mental health services workers, and Essex-Windsor EMS.
- Designate the downtown core and riverfront as a priority enforcement zone within the city.
- Launch a Clean and Safe Streets Ambassadors Program in the downtown core.
- Establish a 311-To-Response guarantee so residents receive timely responses to reports of people in crisis, discarded needles, unsafe conditions and other urgent concerns, with clear service standards and response times.
- Increased mental health and addiction treatment capacity through additional funding for HART Hubs model in Windsor, treatment beds, with wraparound and treatment supports so people can access help when and where they need it

As Mayor, I will sit on the Windsor Police Service Board to ensure that community safety is established as a top priority.

- Review police patrol coverage, staffing levels and response times across every Windsor neighbourhood to identify gaps and improve service delivery.
- Restore visible, responsive police patrols in every Windsor neighbourhood to enhance public safety and community confidence.
- Reinstate visible and consistent traffic enforcement throughout Windsor to address speeding, dangerous driving and other road safety concerns.

- Refocus Windsor Police resources on core policing priorities, including neighbourhood patrols and criminal investigations.
- Invest in safer road and street infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, while making Windsor's Vision Zero road safety plan a priority.
- Expand traffic-calming measures across Windsor, including speed bumps, pedestrian crossings, roundabouts and other roadway improvements designed to reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety.

4. Infrastructure

The City of Windsor faces a significant infrastructure deficit, particularly in roads and sewers, along with an ongoing need for expanded transit services. We would continue to prioritize road and sewer projects through the existing Road Classification System to ensure investments are directed where they are most needed. Transit expansion would focus on reinstating additional bus service to high schools, recognizing its importance in mitigating traffic congestion while remaining revenue neutral. With the elimination of unplanned legacy projects, we would adopt a more strategic and transparent approach to capital planning, ensuring projects are prioritized based on need, impact, and available resources.

5. Accountability and Transparency

Accountability and transparency are essential to the future of the City of Windsor. On day one, a Francis Administration will delegate Strong Mayor Powers back to Council, aligning Windsor with Tecumseh, Essex, Amherstburg, and other municipalities that have rejected a policy that weakens accountability, diminishes transparency, and undermines the authority of duly elected City Councillors. These powers also limit the ability of voters to hold both the Mayor and Council accountable for their decisions.

We will modernize the City's reporting systems, information channels, and public access processes to make voting records, Council debates, and delegation submissions easier to find and access. We will also restore City Council meetings to a 4:00 p.m. start time to encourage greater public participation and accessibility.

Furthermore, a Francis Administration will reduce the use of in-camera meetings and introduce independent, third-party audits of closed-session practices and voting procedures, subject to applicable legal requirements. We will strengthen transparency around media availability and ensure appropriate disclosure of post-litigation settlements, salary continuances, employee contracts, and employment-related severance payments, consistent with legal obligations and privacy requirements.

Windsor deserves an open, accountable, and accessible municipal government—one that respects the democratic mandate of elected representatives and the right of residents to know how decisions are made and public resources are spent.

- Eliminate Strong Mayor Powers.
- Establish a Blue-Ribbon Committee of residents, community organizations, businesses and labour representatives to review the city's committee and board structures.
- Move regular City Council meetings to a 4:00 pm start time, with in-camera meetings held beforehand.
- Publish detailed descriptions of in-camera meeting agendas.

- Conduct an annual audit of in-camera meeting agendas to ensure all items comply with Section 239 of the Ontario Municipal Act.
- Report all in-camera decisions publicly at the next regular City Council meeting.
- Release in-camera agendas earlier to allow for meaningful public review.
- Include City Councillors in agenda-setting process.
- Hold monthly meetings with each City Councillor, followed by media availability.
- Hold monthly news conferences at City Hall, with an open question period.
- Publish all City Council voting results online in a clear and easily accessible format.
- Review and overhaul the city's website to make it more user-friendly and accessible to residents and businesses seeking information, including third party reviews to incorporate best practices.
- Change City Council Procedural By-law to ensure delegates listed to speak on public session items can do so, regardless of any motion to refer or defer the item.
- Provide City Councillors with greater communication resources to better respond to residents' questions and concerns.
- Hold an annual State of the City Address with Mayor and City Council each January, free of charge and open to the public.
- Hold an annual public meeting with City Council, Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament each November.
- Keep City Hall open and accessible to members of the public, media and staff.
- Establish an Emerging Leaders Youth Council chaired by the Mayor. Hold an annual strategic session with City Council and administration to ensure priorities are set, progress is measured and follow-up occurs.
- Publicly disclose the total amount of taxpayer money used for pre and post legal settlements, salary continuances, employee contracts, and employment-related severance payments.