Date:

Dear Councillor _____,

**Subject: Request for Explanation and Accountability on 2026 Budget Growth**

I am writing as a resident of Prince Edward County regarding the 2026 municipal budget and its continued impact on household affordability. Like many residents, I support the provision of essential public services. My concern is not ideological. It is about proportionality, transparency, and long-term financial stewardship.

Based on publicly available data:

- Prince Edward County's population has grown by approximately 6–8% since 2016.
- Median household incomes have increased in nominal terms, but once inflation is accounted for, real income growth for many households has been minimal.
- Over the same period, the County's tax-supported operating budget has grown by more than 40%.

This widening gap directly affects residents' ability to absorb higher property taxes and fees. For many households, these increases come at the expense of savings, children's activities, local spending, and financial resilience in a high-inflation environment.

I am therefore asking for clear answers to the following questions:

1. What specific factors are driving operating budget growth at a rate far exceeding population growth and residents' real income growth?
2. Which portions of the 2026 budget represent unavoidable cost pressures, and which are discretionary or policy choices?
3. What alternatives were considered to limit operating cost growth before approving the 2026 budget?
4. How is Council ensuring that administrative and overhead costs remain proportionate and benchmarked against comparable Ontario municipalities?
5. What guardrails exist to prevent structural operating costs from continuing to grow faster than residents' ability to pay?

I would also appreciate clarity on how Council evaluates long-term affordability when approving budgets, and how residents can meaningfully assess whether spending increases are delivering measurable service improvements.

Transparency and accountability are essential to maintaining public trust. I am requesting this information in good faith and with the hope of better understanding how Council is balancing service delivery with residents' financial realities. Thank you for your time and for your service to the community. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,