

Town of Whitby

Staff Report

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Report Title: 2026 Workforce Plan Review

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: June 2, 2025

Report Number: CAO 15-25

Department(s) Responsible:

Organizational Effectiveness
Human Resource Services

Submitted by:

Jacqueline Long, Head, Organizational Effectiveness

**Acknowledged by M. Gaskell,
Chief Administrative Officer**

For additional information, contact:

Jacqueline Long, longj@whitby.ca

Theresa Bickle, Manager, Organizational Effectiveness, bicklet@whitby.ca

1. Recommendation:

1. That Council receive report CAO 15-25 regarding the 2026 Workforce Plan Review for information.

2. Highlights:

- Typically, the output of the workforce plan review is a recommended list of positions for consideration in the following year's budget. However, **considering other budget pressures faced by the Town for 2026, Staff's recommendation is to not put forth any tax-funded positions for consideration in the 2026 budget.**
- In 2022, staff worked with a third-party consultant to undertake a strategic workforce planning study including benchmarking staff count to comparator municipalities based upon number of staff per 1,000 households. In 2025, staff updated the benchmark data based upon 2023 Financial Information Returns (FIR) for the same group of comparator municipalities.
- The updated benchmark average staff complement was determined to be 12.75 full-time staff per 1,000 households.

- To maintain staffing at the updated benchmark levels, the 2025 review has determined that approximately 18.8 FTE, on average, would need to be added to the Town's staff complement annually between 2026 and 2031.
- For 2025, based upon the benchmark analysis compared to the Town's staff per thousand households, the full-time complement deficit for 2025 has been offset due to the approved increased staffing levels for firefighters and the Whitby Sports Complex.
- The Workforce Plan also develops a preliminary list of position needs on a three-year cycle. For 2026, staff have identified the need to add 23.85 FTE at an estimated value of \$3.3 million, and for 2027, 28.81 FTE at an estimated value of \$3.8 million, and for 2028, 7.5 FTE at an estimated value of \$1.0 million.
- Further to Staff's recommendation to not put forward any tax-funded positions in the 2026 budget, the 23.85 FTE identified for 2026 will be carried forward to the 2027 workforce planning review.

3. Background:

In 2022, staff worked with a third-party consultant to undertake a strategic workforce planning study. The 2022 Workforce Planning Project used sixteen (16) municipalities as the Town's comparator group. The 2022 benchmark average staff complement was determined to be 12.2 full-time staff per 1,000 households compared to the Town's 11.83 full-time staff per 1,000 households.

In 2025, staff updated the benchmark data and forecast staffing needs. The 2025 Review of Workforce Staffing Trends used fifteen (15) municipalities instead of the original sixteen (16), due to one municipality not filing their Financial Information Return (FIR) with the Province of Ontario at the time of analysis. The updated 2025 benchmark average is determined to be 12.75 full-time staff per 1,000 households, up slightly from the 12.2 full-time staff per 1,000 households identified in 2022. With the estimated total households in Whitby in 2031 remaining unchanged at 58,670 and applying the updated benchmark of 12.75, the Town requires an average of 18.8 FTE per year from 2026 to 2031 to respond to growth.

The 2025 refresh of the benchmark data indicates that the Town's staff count per 1,000 households has increased to 12.9 and has offset the previously identified staffing deficit. This is largely due to the approval of resources for the Whitby Sports Complex and increase to firefighter complement. This significant influx of full-time resources may distort existing deficits and give the impression previously identified deficits are no longer a concern. Staff continue to undertake an annual review, led by Organizational Effectiveness, that engages all departments in preliminary planning for staffing and technology needs. In 2025, the list of positions in the budget process were limited to those roles that were aligned to the staffing needs for the Whitby Sports Complex and addition of twenty (20) firefighters, excluding the identified gaps in other departments. The 2025 recommendation included twenty-one (21) positions representing 52.8 FTE for the Whitby Sports Complex and twenty (20) full-time firefighters. Any positions that were not considered are carried forward to future years or deleted.

4. Discussion:

The fourth iteration of the annual Workforce Planning Review began in March 2025 and concluded in May 2025. This review enables management to consider any new inputs that may impact the need for positions, and new or unforeseen considerations. This process includes consultations with all departments to review the 2026 workforce plan submission, identify the changes and carry over positions since the prior year's review, and finalize the identified needs for 2026.

The output of the workforce plan review in 2025 is a recommended list of positions for consideration in the 2026 budget process. For the review, the use of the same objective ranking system used in the past has been applied. This prioritizes the position requests based upon primary drivers and impact if not achieved. The result for 2026 is 28 positions with a total FTE count of 23.85, at an estimated cost of \$3.3M. However recognizing the fiscal pressures on the Town, it was decided to apply greater rigour and include only those positions that are in response to legislative or regulatory changes, are needed to mitigate risk, or are council mandated. This reduced the list to 12 positions with a total FTE count of 10.99 and an estimated cost of \$1.3M.

Despite the rigour applied in ranking the position requests, upon final review by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and in consideration of other budget pressures facing the Town, the recommendation by SLT is to not include any tax-funded positions in the 2026 budget. The Workforce Planning Review also forecasts projected staffing needs for 2027 and 2028. When the review is completed for the upcoming years, the modified objective ranking system will continue to be applied. In addition, with the Community Strategic Plan concluding in 2026, it will be necessary to determine the alignment and appropriate weighting be applied if deemed applicable.

5. Financial Considerations:

There are no immediate financial considerations related to this report as staff are recommending that 0.0 FTE tax-funded positions will be included in the preliminary 2026 budget for consideration.

Normally the full list of ranked positions that have gone through the Work Force Plan process of detailed review, analysis, objective scoring, and SLT discussion would be provided to Council in quarter 2 and then a subset of the positions would be included in budget discussions in quarter 4 of each year. However, staff are recommending that none of the tax-funded positions will be considered in for the fiscal 2026 budget due to other budget pressures, including:

- Economic uncertainty due to the trade/tariff war: this is one of the causes for lower development activity and is projected to increase prices of goods and services that the Town purchases (e.g. salt for winter maintenance and service contracts linked to the consumer price index);
- Annualization and phase-in of 2025 staffing: The 20 firefighters and Whitby Sports Complex positions were included in the 2025 budget part way through the year in terms of funding the positions. Accordingly, there is a 2026 annualization or funding phase-in impact of over \$1.5 million; and,

- Lower assessment growth revenues projected due to a slow-down in development activity: economic uncertainty and higher interest rates (compared to the pre-COVID-19 pandemic period) have impacted both consumers and developers resulting in lower development activity (see also item 10.2 of the [Regular Council Meeting Agenda for May 26, 2025](#), memorandum titled *Status of Development Charges Reserve Funds and Impact on 2026 and Future Budgets*). Further, a current lag in electricity infrastructure keeping pace with proposed development has delayed major residential development at the Town.

6. Communication and Public Engagement:

Not applicable.

7. Input from Departments/Sources:

The annual Workforce Planning Review, facilitated by Organizational Effectiveness, includes consultation with all departments to fully understand current and future staff needs.

Strategic Priorities:

The Workforce Plan aligns with the following pillars of the Community Strategic Plan:

- 4.2 Be the organization that people want to join and build their future.
- 4.3 Deliver exceptional customer service and community engagement.
- 4.4 Ensure fiscal responsibility and plan for responsible growth.

8. Attachments:

Appendix A – Workforce Plan Position List for 2026