



Working together with our community

Budget Committee Meeting – October 16, 2025

Subject: Proposed 2026 New Budget Initiatives
Report Number: CS-25-136
Division: Corporate Services
Department: Finance
Ward: All Wards
Purpose: For Decision

Recommendation(s):

That report CS-25-136 Proposed 2026 New Budget Initiatives be received as information; and

Further that the proposed New Budget Initiatives for \$741,900 be referred to the Budget Committee for consideration with the Draft 2026 Levy Supported Operating Budget.

Explanation: New Budget Initiatives recommended to be included in the Draft 2026 Levy Operating Budgets focus on addressing legislative requirements and service delivery in key service areas.

Executive Summary:

Purpose of the Report: The purpose of this report is to outline the New Budget Initiatives (NBIs) that have been recommended, by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), to be included in the Draft 2026 Levy Operating Budget. There are no recommended NBIs directly related to the Rate Budget and seven for the Levy Budget outlined in further detail within this report. Draft business cases have been included in Attachment 1.

Background and Context: Each year staff across the organization are encouraged to review operations and consider where improvements can be made. Sometimes these improvements lead to a change in Norfolk's operating budget, which is referred to as a New Budget Initiative (NBI). Most often, an NBI is a service level change proposed within the operating budget. These are ongoing or one-time changes to the status quo offerings or activities provided by a Division or Department; these changes include:

1. Proposals for improved efficiency of existing services or programs
2. The provision of additional or removal of services or programs
3. Irregular consulting services or contracted services
4. Changes to the way business is carried out

The NBI process begins in June with SLT's review of the prior year NBIs that were not approved. Any that remain a priority are kept on the list and updated, if necessary, while others are removed. The next step is for staff across the organization to identify strategic priorities and any new NBIs that should be added to the list. The complete list of NBIs brought forward was analyzed and reviewed by SLT. As part of a thorough process to identify resource needs within County, the initial list is then prioritized and shortened based on most critical needs. The shortened list is then ranked by each member of SLT individually based on the NBI Ranking Guideline (Attachment 2). The rankings are averaged, and the highest ranking NBIs are reviewed, to arrive at the recommended NBIs that have business cases included with this report.

Key Findings and Analysis: This year the process has seven NBIs recommended for inclusion in the Draft 2026 Levy Operating Budget. All seven NBIs are summarized within the report and full draft business cases are attached for consideration.

Additionally, within the report and the attachments are 3 discretionary NBIs put forth by the Norfolk County Public Library. These initiatives were not reviewed or considered by the Senior Leadership Team. They have not been prioritized or ranked against other initiatives and County pressures, and as a result SLT is not providing a recommendation to include them in the budget.

Options: Council may ask for more information and/or can provide feedback to the Mayor regarding inclusion of any or all of the NBIs in the Draft 2026 Levy Operating Budget to be presented in January 2026.

Conclusion: The recommended NBIs will be included within the Draft 2026 Levy Operating Budgets for Council's consideration at budget deliberations in January.

Financial Implications: The 7 NBIs recommended to be included in the Draft 2026 Levy Operating Budget represent a total net levy increase of \$741,900. This equates to a 0.54% increase over the 2025 net levy requirement.

Discussions:

Each year staff across the organization are encouraged to review operations and consider where improvements can be made. Sometimes these improvements lead to a change in Norfolk's operating budget, which is referred to as a New Budget Initiative (NBI). Most often, an NBI is a service level change proposed within the operating budget. These are ongoing or one-time changes to the status quo offerings or activities provided by a Department or Division; these changes include:

1. Proposals for improved efficiency of existing services or programs
2. The provision of additional or removal of services or programs
3. Irregular consulting services or contracted services
4. Changes to the way business is carried out

Review and Ranking Process

The NBI process begins in July with SLT's review of the prior year NBIs that were not approved. Any that remain a priority are kept on the list and updated if necessary, while others are removed. The next step is for staff across the organization to identify strategic priorities and any new NBIs that should be added to the list. The complete list of NBIs brought forward was analyzed and reviewed by SLT. As part of a thorough process to identify resource needs within County, the initial list is then prioritized and shortened based on most critical needs.

The shortened list is then ranked by each member of SLT individually based on the NBI Ranking Guideline (Attachment 2). The rankings were averaged, and the highest ranking NBIs were reviewed, to arrive at the seven (7) recommended NBIs that have business cases included with this report. Prior to ranking the shortened list, SLT reviewed the NBI Ranking Guideline (Attachment 2) and deemed the guideline remained appropriate, no changes were made for the 2026 ranking process.

NBI Ranking Guideline

The guideline provides an objective way to prioritize NBIs, on set criteria, including:

1. Federal, Provincial or other jurisdiction regulatory or legal requirements
2. External Funding
3. Health & Safety / Risk Mitigation
4. Alignment with Strategic Goals and/or, Corporate Priorities
5. Savings and/or Efficiencies
6. Growth Requirements
7. Benefit Outweighs the Cost

To start, each NBI was reviewed for any Federal, Provincial or other jurisdiction regulatory or legal requirements. Any NBIs that were included due to this requirement were moved forward without continuing through the remainder of the criteria. Those NBIs that did not have a regulatory or legal requirement, were further ranked for all the remaining criteria.

The full listing of initiatives proposed by staff, categorized by overall ranking is included in Attachment 3. This attachment is broken down into three sections

- Proposed 2026 NBIs
 - These NBIs were the highest ranked and were moved forward to the business case development stage.
- Prioritized Shortlist
 - These NBIs were ranked by SLT but did not move on to business case development.
- NBIs Submitted by Staff for Consideration
 - This section notes all other NBIs that were brought forward to SLT.

As demonstrated in Attachment 3, there were many priorities identified across the corporation through the 2026 NBI process. While limited resources meant that these

needs required prioritization, this will help form the basis for planned NBIs in future years and inform future levy projections.

As noted, the prioritized shortlist of NBIs were ranked but did not move forward to business case development, however, it should be considered that deferring these initiatives builds a level of risk within ongoing operations and the budget. SLT has prioritized through the ranking process, what was decided to be the most critical service enhancements and will continue to monitor organizational needs and further refine and develop business cases for presentation to Council in future budgets.

New Budget Initiatives Recommended – Levy Operating Budget

Risk & Claims Specialist – Ranking 25.00

This initiative is being proposed to reduce insurance costs, minimize reliance on external adjusters, and generate new revenue through a structured cost recovery program for damage to County property. This service enhancement will result in measurable cost savings, increased revenue, and improved control over claims management. It is expected that the full cost of this NBI will be offset by lower insurance premiums and deductibles, and user fees. The total estimated Levy impact for 2026 is \$nil for 1.0 FTE.

Fleet Training and Compliance Officer – Ranking 22.86

The Fleet Training and Compliance Officer will focus on creating and implementing targeted in-house learning opportunities to ensure employees are equipped with the necessary skills, certifications, licensing upgrades, and training to safely operate Norfolk County vehicles and equipment. This strategic role is essential to preventing incidents and damage to County vehicles and fleet equipment while ensuring the safety of their operators and the public. The total estimated Levy impact for 2026 is \$133,900 for 1.0 FTE.

Stormwater CCTV Inspections & Condition Assessment – Ranking 21.86

This initiative is being proposed as a result of recent regulatory changes and in keeping with industry standards. The NBI proposes to engage a consultant to complete CCTV inspections, which will provide condition assessments of the stormwater infrastructure. This work strengthens long-term capital planning and helps ensure that growth is directed to areas with sufficient infrastructure capacity. The initiative proposes a ten-year phased cycle. The program will be fully contracted, with internal coordination and oversight. The total estimated Levy impact for 2026 is \$300,000.

Development Compliance Technologist – Ranking 19.86

The addition of a permanent full-time Development Compliance Technologist will allow the Engineering Department to improve the services that support the growth and development in Norfolk – specifically the construction and assumption phases of the land development process. The role serves to ensure that infrastructure is properly built and that through this process, the public and environment are protected from undue harm and negative impact. Performing the tasks demanded of this role will serve to

improve the municipal and public confidence in the development process and ensure that the newly built infrastructure will properly, safely and reliably support the community that is dependent upon it. It is expected that 75% of the cost of this initiative will be offset by the Inspection Fees collected by developers. The total estimated Levy impact for 2026 is \$26,100 for 1.0 FTE.

Customer Service Representatives, Gilbertson Administration Building – Ranking 19.00

This initiative is being proposed to create a corporate customer service desk at GAB that includes two permanent, full-time Customer Service Representatives (CSRs). The initiative would ensure that there are two Customer Services Representatives at the customer service counter during regular business hours to greet customers, answer general inquiries and connect customers with staff working at GAB to answer more technical questions. There is currently a 0.5 FTE specific to social services that would form part of this initiative to service all the departments operating within GAB. The total estimated Levy impact for 2026 is \$117,500 for 1.5 FTEs.

Mechanic – Ranking 17.86

The addition of a full-time Mechanic would allow for more vehicle repairs to be completed in-house reducing the amount of mechanic contracted services utilized by Norfolk County. The additional resources would also improve internal customer service by increasing the ability to provide Fleet staff to provide quicker reactive service to required repairs as well as reduce the requirement of departments spending time bringing vehicles to outside contractors. Further, by completing more work in-house there is greater quality control and increased internal knowledge retention which is imperative for future specialty equipment repairs. It is expected that this initiative will be fully offset by the reduction in mechanic contracted services. The total estimated Levy impact for 2026 is \$nil for 1.0 FTE.

By-Law Enforcement Officer – Ranking 17.00

An addition of a By-law Enforcement officer would provide additional enforcement services throughout the year. Responsible for the investigation of bylaw offences in an assigned zone. Responsible for the participation, oversight and administration of all parking enforcement activities including but not limited to the seasonal paid parking program, seasonal parking enforcement officers, parking bylaw maintenance and parking enforcement. The total estimated Levy impact for 2026 is \$164,400 for 1.0 FTE.

Further refinement of business cases is ongoing, and final proposed NBIs will be reflected in the respective budget documents for Council's consideration.

Prioritized Shortlist

The Prioritized Shortlist highlighted in Attachment 3 includes initiatives that were prioritized and ranked by SLT, however, ultimately were not recommended to move forward at this time. The following table includes the identified corporate priorities and would be selected for inclusion by SLT prior to other initiatives on the remainder of the overall listing.

New Budget Initiative	FTEs	Ranking
Policy Review, Development and Maintenance Coordinator	1.0	16.71
Membership - Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (exiting SCOR)	-	15.29
Business Retention and Expansion Ambassador (Temp) - Conditional on Funding	-	15.00
Website and Digital Content Coordinator	1.0	15.00
Parks and Facilities Maintenance Staff	1.0	13.71
Customer Service Experience Coordinator (CRM Coordinator)	1.0	13.29
Recreation Software Administrator	1.0	13.00

Norfolk Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes July 9, 2023

At the Norfolk County Council meeting on September 23, Cllr. Columbus pulled Resolution No. 24 and made a motion to refer to 2026 budget discussions and receive it as information.

Resolution No. 24

Moved By: M. Bollert

Seconded By: C. Hewitson

That the Norfolk Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the budget request to join SOMA; and

Further that the Norfolk Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the proposed idea to hire an additional Economic Development Staff member to create a concierge system.

Both of these requests were submitted during the NBI process for the 2026 budget discussions. SLT reviewed both of these requests. They are included in Attachment 3, in their respective sections, based on the SLT review and ranking.

In regard to the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) membership, the request was shortlisted by SLT and is shown in the chart above. As the ranking was lower than the NBIs recommended for inclusion in the 2026 Budget, a fulsome business case was not drafted. The request, as provided to SLT was for \$50,000, \$33,000 for membership in SOMA and \$17,000 for associated travel expenses. It was stated that the cost of membership would be mostly offset by ending the County's membership in SCOR, in doing so the impact on the levy would only be \$20,000.

The addition of an Economic Development staff to create a concierge system was initially requested for inclusion in the 2025 budget; the request was not prioritized by SLT during the 2025 NBI process (as shown in Attachment 3 to report CS-24-133 Proposed 2025 New Budget Initiatives). The request was reviewed during the 2026 NBI process and it was not prioritized by SLT for the 2026 Budget. As the request was not prioritized, it was not ranked, and a fulsome job description and business case were not

created. As such, Human Resources (HR) did not complete review and ranking of the position. Based on the limited information in the initial request, HR has provided a high-level estimate that the position’s salary and benefits could range between \$101,500 and \$118,400, pending a fulsome job description and business case, plus costs for equipment and training applicable for the position.

Discretionary New Budget Initiatives

The Norfolk County Public Library has advised of three (3) proposed service level enhancements. The draft business cases for these initiatives have been included within Attachment 4. These initiatives were not reviewed or considered by the Senior Leadership Team. They have not been prioritized or ranked against other initiatives and County pressures, and as a result SLT is not providing a recommendation to include them in the budget. The business cases will be presented as discretionary items, in addition to the 2026 levy operating budget for Council consideration at the time of budget deliberations. The total estimated Levy impact for 2026 for the proposed discretionary Library NBIs is \$403,800 for 3.84 FTEs.

This means that they will not be embedded within the levy supported operating budget and would be considered over-and-above the net levy increase proposed by staff.

Update on NBIs Approved during the 2024 and 2025 Budget Processes

2024 Approved NBIs

NBI	Description	Status
Stormwater Management Program	Recent regulatory changes (and to keep with industry standards) require the County to implement a Stormwater Management Program. The program will ensure that the County’s stormwater infrastructure is maintained to deliver required levels of service in an effective and fiscally responsible manner as Norfolk County continues to grow. (3 FTEs and equipment)	The three positions were filled in May 2024, and the program subsequently began.
Senior Court Administrator	A Senior Court Administrator to act as a team lead and subject matter expert within the POA function. It would assist in relieving existing process pressures and to advance strategic priorities of the Revenue Services team overall	A report was brought to Council in June 2024 for a restructuring of the Revenue Services team and this position was repurposed to a Supervisor, Corporate Collections. The position was filled in August 2024

NBI	Description	Status
Building Student	This student position would assist with building permit application and administration process by providing a support role for staff as well as enhanced customer service during peak summer months.	This position was filled in summer of 2024. It was not filled in the summer of 2025.
Project Manager, Master Planning	A dedicated resource to develop and manage the various master plans that are required relative to municipal infrastructure.	This position has not been filled due to recruitment challenges.
Senior Case Manager and Scheduling Tool	Haldimand-Norfolk has been granted one time funding to support the purchase of a scheduling tool and the continuation of community outreach drop in clinics.	The tool was purchased and implemented in 2024. Temporary position was filled for the period.

2025 Approved NBIs

NBI	Description	Status
Stormwater Program	Addition of Operational budget to complete the work required and 1.0 FTE to help facilitate the program and completion of the work required.	Position was filled in May, 2025
Strengthening Paramedic Services	Addition of 4.0 FTEs Supervisors to provide 24/7 support to Front Line Staff and Commanders (50% Funded)	Positions filled in July on contract to end of 2025, will be hired permanent for 2026.
Transportation Engineering Specialist	Addition of 1.0 FTE to provide the County with resources to properly manage and maintain our transportation system.	Position renamed Project Manager, Transportation and was filled in late April 2025.
Project Lead, Facilities Capital Projects	Addition of 1.0 FTE to address deferred capital maintenance and improve focus on customer service	Position was filled in late March 2025
Realty Services Specialist	Addition of 1.0 FTE to assist with the increased and ever-growing demand and allow for the centralization of leases, easements and encroachments for the corporation.	Position was filled in late March 2025

NBI	Description	Status
Network/System Analyst	Addition of 1.0 FTE to enhancing the reliability and security of the county's IT infrastructure. This role will focus on monitoring, maintaining, and optimizing network systems to ensure seamless connectivity and data integrity across departments.	Position filled in March 2025

Finance Comments:

The 7 NBIs recommended to be included in the Draft 2026 Levy Operating Budget represent a total net levy increase of \$741,900. This equates to a 0.54% increase over the 2025 net levy requirement.

For the average assessed residential property, this impact is estimated at an annual increase of \$18.55 per year, or \$1.55 per month. This estimate is for context only. It is based on the current average assessed residential property and does not reflect potential changes in assessment values or education tax rates for 2026. Actual impacts will vary depending on individual property assessments and tax classes.

It should be noted that the preliminary 2026 operating budgets have not yet been reviewed by SLT. Those reviews may result in further refinement and prioritization of initiatives based on the overall status of each budget during their review. The attached business cases are intended to act as a draft preview of what is expected to be proposed, along with an opportunity for Council to ask questions and/or provide direction.

Interdepartmental Implications:

N/A

Consultation(s):

Senior Leadership Team; Workforce Planning; Human Resources; Norfolk County Public Library - CEO

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2022-2026 Council Strategic Priority Serving Norfolk - Ensuring a fiscally responsible organization with engaged employees who value excellent service.

Explanation:

New Budget Initiatives recommended to be included in the Draft 2026 Levy Operating Budgets focus on addressing legislative requirements and service delivery in key service areas.

Attachment(s):

- Attachment 1 – Proposed Draft Levy Operating NBIs
- Attachment 2 – NBI Ranking Guideline
- Attachment 3 – 2026 NBI Listing
- Attachment 4 – Discretionary New Budget Initiatives - NCPL

Approval:

Approved By:

Heidy VanDyk, General Manager, Corporate Services

Reviewed By:

Amy Fanning, CPA, Treasurer/Director, Finance

Chris Everets, CPA, Manager, Financial Planning & Reporting

Prepared By:

Amy Vesprini, Supervisor, Financial Planning & Reporting