



 OFFICE OF THE CHIEF  
**ADMINISTRATIVE  
OFFICER (CAO)**

As published October 29, 2024

# Office of the CAO

The Office of the CAO is dedicated to providing leadership that supports the policies and programs of Council and drives the organization forward. With values rooted in fiscal responsibility, sound management principles and community engagement, our focus continues to be on ensuring the Town has efficient and effective systems in place to support the responsible growth of Aurora.

The Office of the CAO includes Corporate Communications which is headed by a manager reporting to the CAO.

## Net budget by division

	2024 Budget		2025 Budget		2026 Budget	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
<b>Budget (\$000's)</b>						
CAO Administration	607.7	607.7	626.4	626.4	641.0	641.0
Corporate Communications	1,118.6	1,014.4	1,228.4	1,131.8	1,111.6	1,111.3
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>1,726.3</b>	<b>1,622.0</b>	<b>1,854.9</b>	<b>1,758.2</b>	<b>1,752.6</b>	<b>1,752.3</b>
<b>Budget Change</b>			<b>128.6</b>	<b>136.2</b>	<b>(102.3)</b>	<b>(5.9)</b>
<b>2024 Outlook</b>			<b>1,671.5</b>	<b>1,671.2</b>	<b>1,718.3</b>	<b>1,718.0</b>
<b>Change to Outlook</b>			<b>183.3</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>34.3</b>
<b>Permanent Full-Time Staffing (FTE):</b>						
Opening Staffing				9.0		9.0
New				-		-
<b>Total Staffing</b>				<b>9.0</b>		<b>9.0</b>
<b>2024 Outlook</b>				<b>9.0</b>		<b>9.0</b>
<b>Change to Outlook</b>				-		-

## The Office of the CAO supports the implementation of the Strategic Plan and all other key plans

The Office of the CAO supports every objective in the Town’s Strategic Plan and all other business plans by providing support and guidance to all departments on how best to implement various objectives. Moreover, the CAO chairs the Town’s Executive Leadership Team, which is comprised of all department heads and serves as space for Town leadership to identify and align on key priorities. Corporate Communications also plays a critical role in supporting the Strategic Plan and other business plans by using various communications channels to inform Aurora residents about the programs and services offered by the Town, as well as Town-led cultural events and celebrations. Importantly, Corporate Communications provides residents with meaningful engagement opportunities to share their feedback on programs, services and policies through in-person engagement events as well as the Engage Aurora online platform.

## 2024 accomplishments

- Finalized the Town's updated Brand Standards Policy and Brand Standard Guide.
- Continued work to strengthen internal communications by completing a survey of staff and leading the Intranet Refresh Project, which will see the Town move the current intranet to the updated SharePoint Online platform to provide easier navigation for both back-end and front-end users and is mobile friendly and accessible off the Town's network.
- Numerous improvements were made to our website, Aurora.ca including strengthening search-bar functionality to offer more targeted and relevant searches and improving accessibility by implementing a tool called Userway which is a web accessibility feature that provides instant accommodations for common disability profiles from vision impairments to dyslexia and beyond.
- As a result of the Multi-year Communications Strategic Plan, the team focused on producing video content and in just the first quarter of 2024, tallied more than 43,000 video views across Town channels, a 253 percent increase when compared to the same period last year, helping ensure more community members are staying informed and engaged.
- Launched the AuroraTownSquare.ca website and integration with the Box Office software – the site received upwards of 20,000 unique page views in the first few months and selling out three events within the first two weeks of launch.
- Provided leadership and strategic support on the Aurora Town Square project, including marketing and communications support leading up to the Grand Opening in September.
- Eleven projects have been published for public input and engagement on the Engage Aurora platform so far in 2024.
- In collaboration with Human Resources, completed the 2024 Employee Engagement Survey which received better results than in 2020 and in many cases, exceeded the municipal benchmark.
- Created hundreds of communications materials – including press releases, social posts, advertisements, FAQs and new web pages on Town programs, events and initiatives

# Communications

## SNAPSHOT



**41,670**

Social media followers across all Town channels, including 2,971 new followers in 2024

**101,473**

Social media engagements on our more than 2,000 posts

**493%**

Increase in video views on Town social media channels, year-over-year

**3.6%**

Engagement rate on Town social media posts, roughly double the industry average for government

**300,630**

(+3,465 from 2023)

Number of website users



**1,018,424**

(+148,663 from 2023)

Unique website page views

**165**

Number of events, programs and initiatives that the Communications Division will support in 2024 across all Town departments



**70%**

Open rate on our Aurora Matters Newsletter, double the industry average

**AURORA  
MATTERS**

**62**



Media releases issued by the Communications Division to local, regional and national media on Town events, programs and initiatives

**92**

Media inquiries the Communications Division responded to on Town events, programs and initiatives

\*STATS FROM JANUARY 1, 2024 TO AUGUST 16, 2024

# Operating Budget

## Overview

The majority of the operating budget for the Office of CAO is made up of staffing costs. Other significant portions include advertising (which includes public notices and event advertisements), subscriptions to communications platforms and tool such as Engage Aurora and website operations and maintenance.

The operating budget for the Office of the CAO department includes an increase of \$136,200 on the tax levy in 2025 and a decrease of \$5,900 in 2026. The main driver of the increase in 2025 is the elimination of safe restart funding for the cost associated with the communications project management services supporting inter/intranet and other online channels.

In 2026, the main driver of the increase relates to salaries and benefits including COLA, step increases, gapping and other approved staffing actions for existing staff.

## Operating financial summary

\$000's	Net Actual Results		2024	2024	2025	2026
	2022	2023	Net Fcst*	Budget	Budget	Budget
Expenditures	1,519.8	1,501.3	1,696.9	1,726.3	1,854.9	1,752.6
Non-Tax Revenues	(97.0)	(68.5)	(104.1)	(104.3)	(96.6)	(0.3)
<b>Net Tax Levy</b>	<b>1,422.8</b>	<b>1,432.8</b>	<b>1,592.8</b>	<b>1,622.0</b>	<b>1,758.2</b>	<b>1,752.3</b>
% Tax Funded	94%	95%	94%	94%	95%	100%
Net Budget Change	\$	10.0	160.0	29.2	136.2	(5.9)
	%	0.7%	11.2%	1.8%	8.4%	(0.3%)

\*Net forecast as of August 31, 2024

## Changes to the multi-year budget

The multi-year budget is proposed to increase by \$87,000 in 2025 and by \$34,300 in 2026 over the budget approved last year in 2024. The increase relates to a pressure from updating the salaries and benefits to the latest staff complement, the extension of the communications project support temporary position to the end of 2025, net of Safe Recovery Grant funding for the contract extension and a share of corporatewide savings in photocopier contract related to the CAO's Office.

## Budget change summary

	2025		2026	
	FTE	\$000's	FTE	\$000's
<b>Starting Budget</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,622.0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,758.2</b>
<b>Base</b>				
Salaries & Benefits including COLA, step increases, gapping and other approved staffing actions	-	136.3	-	(102.0)
Safe restart funding for communications project management supporting inter/intranet and other online channels	-	7.6	-	96.3
Cost recovery adjustment for Aurora Town Square funded position starting midway through 2023	-	(7.9)	-	(3.6)
Advertising services including savings on print advertising in 2024	-	(2.5)	-	2.6
Photocopier contract savings	-	(3.4)	-	(0.1)
Other minor adjustments	-	6.1	-	0.8
	-	<b>136.2</b>	-	<b>(5.9)</b>
<b>Budget Change</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>136.2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(5.9)</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,758.2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,752.3</b>

## Budget change to outlook

	2025		2026	
	FTE	\$000's	FTE	\$000's
<b>2024 Budget Outlook</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,671.2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,718.0</b>
Prior Year Restatements				87.0
<b>Budget Changes to Outlook</b>				
Salaries and benefits adjustments		(10.7)		48.9
Continuation of communications project management		101.1		(101.1)
Website management		0.3		-
Photocopier contract savings		(3.7)		(0.4)
<b>Budget Change to Outlook</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>34.3</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,758.2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,752.3</b>

## Multi-year operating budget priorities

The 2025 through 2026 operating budget for the Office of the CAO continues to include initiatives that will support the growing community – most notably, strengthening the way in which the Town informs residents about programs and services, as well as enhancing public-engagement opportunities.

## Implementation of Multi-Year Strategic Plan

In 2025, Corporate Communications will continue to implement the Multi-Year Strategic Communications Plan, 2023-2026. This plan aims to improve how the Town communicates with residents and increase opportunities for two-way engagement. Key projects include a Website Improvement Plan, a Multi-Channel Content Strategy, and an enhanced Community Engagement Calendar. Most initiatives are underway, but some will be developed in 2025 and 2026. Communications plans to absorb new costs into its current operating budget but additional funds may be requested in future budget cycles if needed.

## Large Project Support

The Office of the CAO will continue to provide leadership on all large projects across the organization. This includes the successful completion of the Aurora Town Square project as well as the expansion to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex.



# Capital Budget

## Overview

Office of the CAO plans to spend \$25,000 in 2025 on capital projects of the total \$175,000 in Capital Budget Authority. This includes \$50,000 for asset management projects and \$125,000 for studies and other.

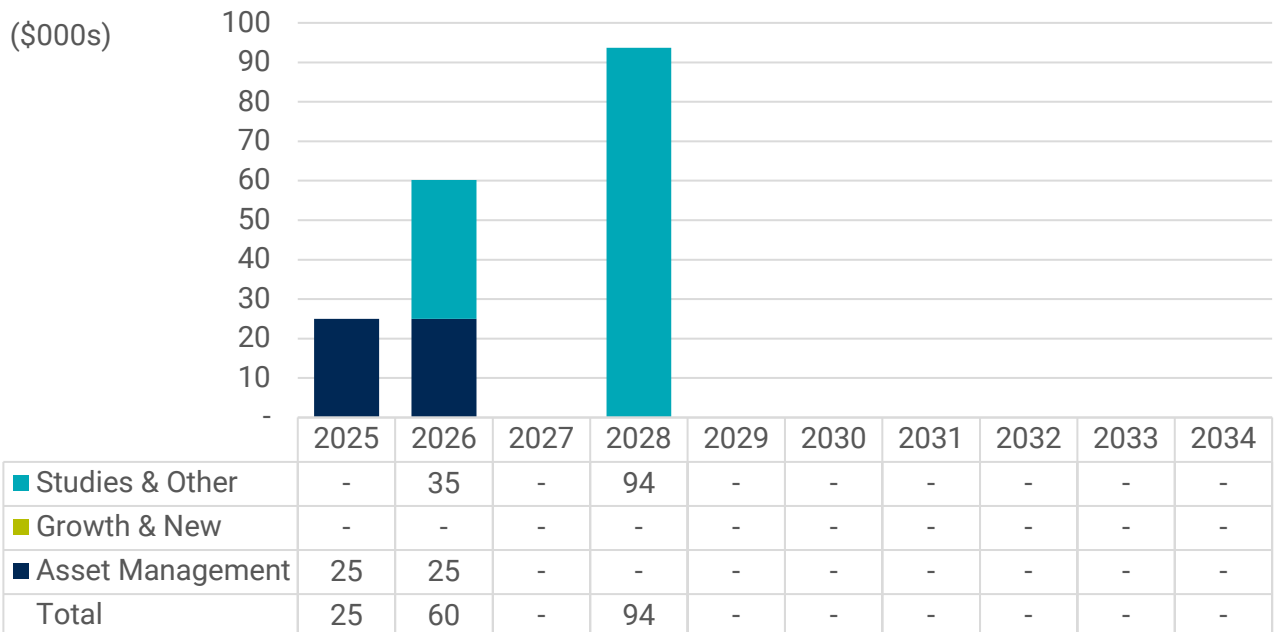
## 2025 Capital Budget Authority

(\$000s)	Previously Approved Budget	2025 Budget		Capital Budget Authority Cash Flow			
		Capital Budget Authority*	Budget Change	Actuals to Dec/23	2024 Forecast	2025	2026+
Asset Management	-	50.0	50.0	-	-	25.0	25.0
Growth & New	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Studies & Other	125.0	125.0	-	61.9	63.1	-	-
<b>Approved Budget</b>	<b>125.0</b>	<b>175.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>25.0</b>

## 10-year capital plan

The 10-year capital plan includes \$179,000 in capital projects. The Office of the CAO has two projects in the 10-year capital plan for Studies and Other which are to support organizational initiatives including a resident survey in 2026 and an update to the Strategic Plan in 2028. For asset management, website host platform update project is planned for 2025 and 2026.

## 10-year capital plan





## **Key capital initiatives**

The capital plan for the Office of the CAO includes studies which support the CAO in leading the organization.

### **Organizational Structural Review**

As the Town matures and grows, management continues to require new leadership skills to work as part of a "larger town" leadership group. With the assistance of an organizational development expert, managers will learn new skills and consider new perspectives. The goal of this effort is to strengthen the entire management team and promote more cross-departmental collaboration, ultimately improving the delivery of programs.

### **Resident Satisfaction Survey**

With support from Council, Corporate Communications will conduct a Resident Satisfaction Survey in late 2026 (after the municipal election) to garner residents' opinions on municipal programs and services. Importantly, the results of this survey will be compared with the results from the 2022/2023 survey.

### **Website Host Platform and Content Migration Project**

The Town is transitioning to a more advanced content management system called Govstack to enhance the user experience on aurora.ca and other microsites. This move will empower staff to make website updates in-house, provide greater flexibility and reduce reliance on external support.

## **Progress on departmental objectives**

These objectives were established through the annual budget process. The following provides a status update on the progress of completing the objectives and identifies new initiatives.

### **New objectives**

#### **Resident Satisfaction Survey**

With support from Council, Corporate Communications will conduct a Resident Satisfaction Survey in late 2026 (after the municipal election) to garner residents' opinions on municipal programs and services. Importantly, the results of this survey will be compared with the results from the 2022/2023 survey.

#### **Employee Engagement Survey Action Plans**

Working closely with HR, the office of the CAO will lead action plans in response to the 2024 Employee Engagement Survey to address issues, recognize successes and enhance organizational culture and performance.

## Website Host Platform and Content Migration Project

The Town is transitioning to a more advanced content management system called Govstack to enhance the user experience on aurora.ca and other microsites. This move will empower staff to make website updates in-house, provide greater flexibility and reduce reliance on external support.

### Completed objectives

None.

### Objectives in progress

#### Multi-Year Strategic Communications Plan, 2023-2026

In 2025, Corporate Communications will continue to implement the Multi-Year Strategic Communications Plan, 2023-2026. This plan aims to improve how the Town communicates with residents and increase opportunities for two-way engagement. Key projects include a Website Improvement Plan, a Multi-Channel Content Strategy, and an enhanced Community Engagement Calendar. Most initiatives are underway, but some will be developed in 2025 and 2026. Communications plans to absorb new costs into its current operating budget but additional funds may be requested in future budget cycles if needed.

#### Identify organizational needs associated with new ward system and provide necessary supports

With the Town having moved to a ward system in the 2022 Municipal Election, the Office of the CAO continues to monitor any new institutional needs and possible realignments that may arise from this, most notably increased communications support for individual ward councillors.

#### Utilize communications channels to support plans to revitalize downtown core

Corporate Communications continues to work closely with Economic Development to market the Town of Aurora and support increased investment and development in the downtown core.

#### Continue leadership development with Executive Leadership Team and Management

There has been ongoing investment in the growth and development of the Corporate Management Team and the Executive Leadership Team to enhance business acumen, strategic planning, proactive collaboration, and to support data-driven decision making and recommendations to Council. A leadership development framework, and key performance indicator framework development, are well underway.

Accelerate the rollout of the IT Strategic Plan and key technological systems that will support enhanced employee collaboration and performance

Underway across various channels and being led by IT, with regular reporting through the Executive Leadership Team and to Council. An IT Governance Committee has been established to support strategic and data-driven technological investment aligned with the IT Strategic Plan.

Grow community engagement opportunities and ensure more regular activities and touchpoints are accessible to our diverse populations

In alignment with the Multi-Year Strategic Communications Plan, improvements are being made to the Town's two-way engagement platform, engageaurora.ca. Corporate Communications is also working to develop new in-person engagement opportunities to better reach our diverse and growing community

### **Abandoned objectives**

None

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