

■ OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (CAO)

As adopted December 7, 2025

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

	2025 Budget		2026 Budget	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
Budget (\$000's)				
CAO Administration	626.4	626.4	643.4	643.4
Corporate Communications	1,228.4	1,131.8	1,281.2	1,108.1
Net Budget	1,854.9	1,758.2	1,924.7	1,751.6
Budget Change			69.8	(6.7)
2025 Outlook			1,752.6	1,752.3
Change to Outlook			172.1	(0.7)
Permanent Full-Time Staffing (FTE):				
Opening Staffing			9.0	
New			-	
Total Staffing			9.0	
2025 Outlook			9.0	
Change to Outlook			-	

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

The Office of the CAO supports the Town's Strategic Plan and all other business plans by guiding all departments on implementing objectives. The CAO also chairs the Town's Executive Leadership Team, bringing department heads together to align on priorities. Corporate Communications furthers these plans by informing residents about Town programs, services, cultural events and celebrations through various channels and by providing meaningful opportunities for public feedback through in-person events and the Engage Aurora platform.

2025 accomplishments

- The Town was the first municipality in Canada to achieve OES Platinum certification from Excellence Canada, the national authority on quality and healthy workplaces.
- Completed the Website Host Platform and Content Migration Project, a capital initiative to transition Aurora.ca, Aurora Town Square and Museum and Archives websites to the new Govstack content management system.
- Won the dotCOMM gold award for the new website.
- Received four international MarCom Awards for the Aurora Town Square Grand Opening, held September 21 to October 13, 2024, including three Golds and one Honourable Mention.
- Launched the Town's new corporate intranet, a key initiative in strengthening internal communications and a major objective in our Multi-Year Strategic Communications Plan.
- Successfully communicated the new ownership of both Aurora Town Square Café Indie Coffee and Slabtown Armoury.
- Addition of 44 “360 views” of rooms to support rentals and bookings which received over 290,000 impressions.
- Focused on generating video content for our social media channels and saw an increase of 25 per cent in video views from 2024.
- Hosted an in-person Social Media Symposium for 33 staff members across the organization to help organization strengthen their digital engagement skills. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants noting the organization, engaging content, and practical takeaways.
- Reached 39,600 followers on our main corporate social media channels. Aurora ranks highest among the Northern Six municipalities for social media followers relative to population.
- Supported 165 events, programs and initiatives with communications activities and tactics including campaigns where clear communication was critical such as Blue Box transition program and Windrow Pilot program.
- Supported the grand opening of John Abel Community Gardens, and Thelma Fielding Parks and new turf fields at Sheppards Bush and G.W. Williams
- Created hundreds of communications materials – including press releases, social posts, advertisements, FAQs and new web pages on Town programs, events and initiatives.

A Fresh Face for Aurora.ca

This year, the Communications team completed the transition to our website to serve users better. The capital project included transitioning all content from Aurora.ca, Aurora Town Square and Museum and Archives websites to the new Govstack content management system.

This transition wasn't just about migrating content, it was about improving and building something better. The new site is more mobile friendly – critical with over 60 per cent of visitors coming from a mobile device or a tablet.

The results are a modern, resident-centered website with cleaner navigation, improved search functionality, consistent mobile experience and dynamic event promotion. With over 2 million page views a year, Aurora.ca remains the Town's primary source for news, updates and access to essential programs and services – and this redesign is all about making that experience better for everyone in our community.

Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)

The Office of the CAO is working to establish OKRs for the department. These will evolve over time as the department refines their OKRs to ensure that the right things are being measured to track the goals in the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Objective: Provide a great citizen experience

Provide responsive and timely communication back to all inquiries.	Status: On track
This metric measures response times and quality of interactions with residents and members of the media through social media, and website inquiries to ensure citizens feel heard and supported.	

Strategic Objective: Support a growing economy

Work to strengthen the municipal brand.	Status: On track
This metric measures awareness and perception of the municipality as an attractive place to live, work and invest through media coverage, website traffic and social media engagement.	

Strategic Objective: Practice good governance

Provide quarterly reporting to CAO and Council on communications reach, engagement and outcomes.	Status: On track
This metric ensures we are supporting the priorities of Council and administration through our communications efforts.	

Strategic Objective: Create a connected community

Increase followers and subscribers to our various communication channels. Status: On track

This metric tracks followers to our social media channels and subscribers to our e-newsletters to ensure residents are receiving timely, accurate and direct information.

Strengthen community awareness and engagement with municipal programs and services by providing online engagement opportunities. Status: On track

This metric tracks the engagement rate on our social channels as well as engagement opportunities on the Town's Engage Aurora platform.

Strategic Objective: Invest in our people

Launch an internal intranet platform, accessible from both inside and outside the Town's network and work to set baseline measurements for future. Status: On track

This metric tracks both the launch of the new intranet but also will develop a baseline for the team to set new OKR's for 2026.

Communications SNAPSHOT



39,600

Followers on our social media channels.
Highest among the Northern Six municipalities for social media followers relative to population.



80,359

Social media engagements on our more than 2,000 posts

3.7%

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

205,753

Video views
An increase of 25% from 2024



252,996

Number of website users more than 4x Aurora's population

1,050,887

Unique website page views
(+ 32,463 from 2024)

70%

Open rate on our Aurora Matters Newsletter, double the industry average of 35%



10+

Engage Aurora community consultations launched in 2025
7,500 consultation visits in 2025, an increase of 400% from 2024



59



Media releases issued to local, regional and national media about Town events, programs and initiatives

98



Media inquiries responded to about Town events, programs and initiatives



The Big Picture



165

Number of events, programs and initiatives that we will support in 2025 across all Town departments

- More residents reached than ever before
- Stronger community participation online and in person
- Faster, clearer and broader sharing of Town news

STATS FROM JANUARY 1, 2025 TO JULY 25, 2025

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 a decrease of \$6,700 on the tax levy in 2026. The main driver of the decrease is the safe restart funding for the cost associated with the communications project management services supporting inter/intranet which are partially offset by the costs associated with salaries and benefits including COLA, step increases, gapping and other approved staffing actions for existing staff.

Operating financial summary

\$000's	Net Actual Results		2025	2025	2026
	2023	2024	Net Fcst*	Budget	Budget
Expenditures	1,501.3	1,758.1	1,843.1	1,854.9	1,924.7
Non-Tax Revenues	(68.5)	(104.0)	(96.4)	(96.6)	(173.1)
Net Tax Levy	1,432.8	1,654.1	1,746.7	1,758.2	1,751.6
% Tax Funded	95%	94%	95%	95%	91%
Net Budget Change	\$	221.3	92.6	11.5	(6.7)
	%	15.4%	5.6%	0.7%	(0.4%)

Budget change summary

		2026
		FTE
Starting Budget		9
Base		1,758.2
Salaries & Benefits including COLA, step increases, gapping and other approved staffing actions	-	66.4
Safe restart funding for communications project management support through 2026	-	(76.5)
Communications advertising, events and promotions	-	3.0
Cost recovery adjustment for Aurora Town Square support	-	(1.0)
Cell phone contract update	-	1.1
Other minor adjustments	-	0.2
	-	(6.7)
Budget Change	-	(6.7)
Total Budget	9	1,751.6

Changes to the multi-year budget

The multi-year budget decreased by \$700 in 2026 over the budget approved last year. The decrease relates to savings from updating the salaries and benefits to the latest staff complement which are offset by reduced cost recovery from Aurora Town Square and mobile phone contract update.

Budget change to outlook

	FTE	2026 \$000's
2025 Budget Outlook	9	1,752.3
Budget Changes to Outlook		
Salaries and benefits adjustments		(4.4)
Cost recovery from Aurora Town Square adjustment		2.6
Mobile phone contract update		1.1
Budget Change to Outlook	-	(0.7)
Total Budget	9	1,751.6

Multi-year operating budget priorities

The 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.

The Office of the CAO priorities 2026 include:

Implementation of Multi-Year Strategic Plan

In 2026, 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. Most initiatives are underway or nearing completion, but some will be developed 2026 including finalizing many communications policies and embedding OKRs into our communications work.

Developing People Leaders

The Office of the CAO will continue to work to strengthen internal capacity with the next level of people leaders in the organization to identify talent, build leadership skills and ensure the organization is well-positioned to meet future needs.

Capital Budget

Overview

Office of the CAO plans to spend \$108,100 in 2026 on capital projects of the total \$170,000 in Capital Budget Authority for studies and other projects.

2026 Capital Budget Authority

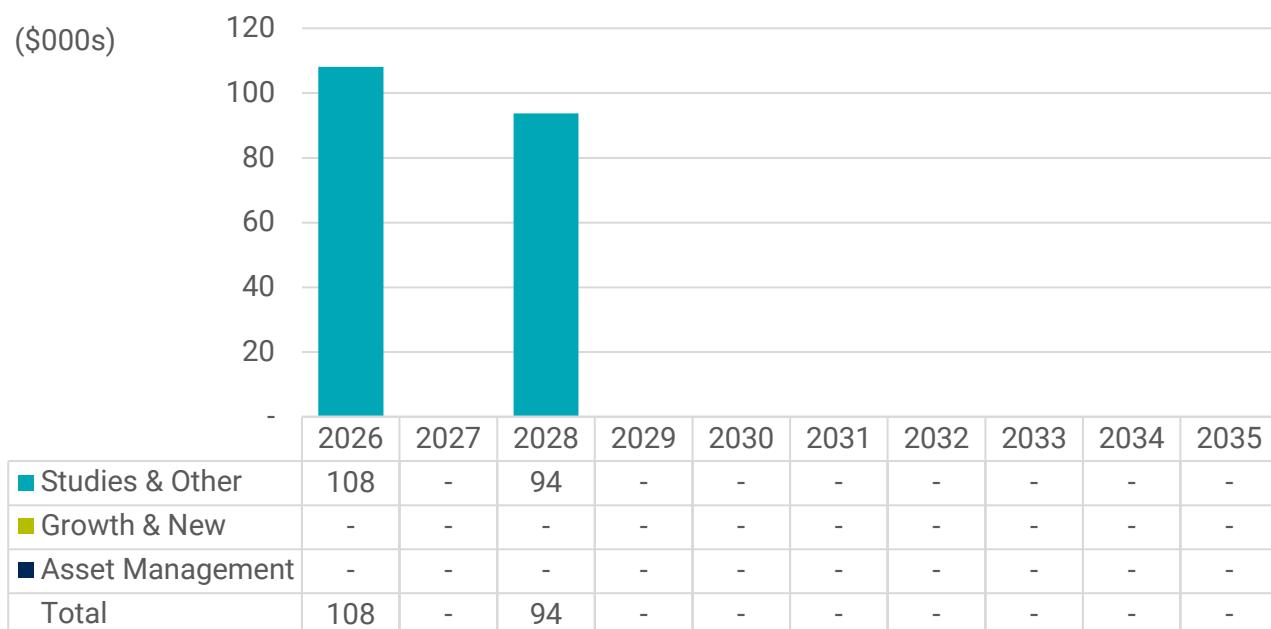
(\$000s)	Previously Approved Budget	2026 Budget		Capital Budget Authority Cash Flow			
		Capital Budget Authority*	Budget Change	Actuals to Dec/24	2025 Forecast	2026	2027+
Asset Management	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Growth & New	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Studies & Other	125.0	170.0	45.0	61.9	-	108.1	-
Adopted Budget	125.0	170.0	45.0	61.9	-	108.1	-

* Includes all active project budgets, adjustments to project budgets and new budget commitments

10-year capital plan

The 10-year capital plan includes \$202,000 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. A detailed list of projects seeking approval and their timing can be found later in the chapter.

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.

Capital Projects

Adopted new capital or increases to Capital Budget Authority

Detailed project sheets follow for projects with new or an increase to Capital Budget Authority

Studies and Other Projects

(in 000's)

Detailed Project Sheet Page #	Project	Adopted Capital Budget Authority	Previously Adopted Budget	Adopted Budget Change	Reason for budget change
7-12	S00087: Resident Survey - 2026	45.0	-	45.0	New capital project
	Total Studies and Other	45.0	-	45.0	

Previously adopted capital projects with no change or reduction to budget

This list includes existing capital projects where no increase to the capital budget authority is being requested.

Studies and Other Projects

(in 000's)

Project	Adopted Capital Budget Authority	Previously Adopted Budget	Adopted Budget Change	Reason for budget decrease (if applicable)
S00002: Organization Structural Review	125.0	125.0	-	
Total Studies and Other	125.0	125.0	-	

Studies and Other detailed capital project sheets

Project: S00087: RESIDENT SURVEY - 2026

Estimated start date: 2026-Q1 End date: 2027-Q1

(in \$000s)	Capital Budget			Capital Budget Authority (CBA) Cash Flow				
	Approved Restated	Adopted CBA	Budget Change	Actuals to Dec 2024	2025 Forecast	Budget 2026	Budget 2027	Budget 2028+
Project Expenditures:								
Contracts	-	45.0	45.0	-	-	45.0	-	-
Total	-	45.0	45.0	-	-	45.0	-	-
Project Funding:								
Studies & Other	-	45.0	45.0	-	-	45.0	-	-
Total	-	45.0	45.0	-	-	45.0	-	-

Overview of the project including key goals, objectives, and performance measures

The Corporate Communications Division will work with a reputable, nationally recognized polling firm to conduct a Resident Satisfaction Survey following the 2026 Municipal Election. The survey will measure residents' satisfaction with quality of life in Aurora, as well as with Town services and programs.

As a key component of the Town's broader community engagement strategy, the survey supports goals such as enhancing public trust and transparency, and fostering a culture of listening, feedback, and inclusion. It will provide residents with another meaningful way to help shape their community.

More specifically, the objectives of the Resident Satisfaction Survey include assessing satisfaction with core services, perceptions of value for tax dollars, and preferred methods for receiving and seeking out Town information. A key objective will also be to understand how satisfaction levels vary across different demographic groups, and to compare Aurora's results both to other municipalities and to the Town's 2022/2023 Resident Satisfaction Survey.

To ensure statistically valid results, the survey will use computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), an industry-standard method also used in the 2022/2023 survey. This approach involves random digit dialing to select a representative sample of residents. In addition to the telephone survey, the Town will also offer an open-link online survey to allow all residents the opportunity to share their feedback.

Key performance indicators for the project include achieving a statistically valid sample size of at least 800 completed resident surveys, consistent with the 2022/2023 survey. Additional KPIs include the number of online survey completions and overall response rate across demographic groups to help ensure broad community representation.

Reasons the project should be approved and the impact it will have on service levels

One of the strongest reasons to approve this project is that staff were explicitly directed by Council to undertake another Resident Satisfaction Survey following the 2026 Municipal Election. Conducting the survey on a four-year cycle is also standard industry practice, allowing residents to provide feedback based on a full term of Council.

The Resident Satisfaction Survey provides statistically valid insights into the areas where residents want to see the most improvement – most notably through the gap analysis conducted using the data. Individual departments and divisions, as well as Council and the Executive Leadership Team, can use these insights to determine whether there are actionable steps to improve specific programs or service levels.

On a broader level, the survey also helps build trust and transparency with the community. While not a direct service, it strengthens the Town's reputation and reinforces to residents that they have a voice in shaping their community.

Benefits of the project including impact on the community and Town operations (finances, internal performance, learning and development, etc.)

The Resident Satisfaction Survey provides statistically valid data that can help guide decision-making and ensure Town resources are aligned with community priorities. Through the important gap analysis, departments and leadership can identify areas for improvement and assess whether service adjustments are needed, supporting more efficient use of tax dollars and better overall performance.

The results also support internal learning by encouraging a culture of listening and accountability. They can inform departmental planning, staff development, and service reviews.

For the community, the survey builds trust and transparency, reinforcing that residents have a meaningful voice in shaping their town – and helping strengthen the Town's reputation for responsiveness and engagement.

Impact of not approving or delaying the project

Delaying or not approving the project would mean missing a critical opportunity to capture resident feedback at the start of the new Council term – a key moment for setting strategic priorities and aligning services with community expectations. It would also undermine Council direction and the Town's commitment to transparency, engagement, and continuous improvement. Without updated data, departments would lack a current, community-informed benchmark to guide performance evaluation and service planning, which could lead to misaligned resources and reduced public trust.

Impact this project has on climate change

While the survey itself has a minimal direct impact on climate change, it can support the Town's climate change goals by helping identify how important climate-related issues are to residents. Through targeted questions, the survey can gauge community support for sustainability initiatives such as active transportation, waste reduction, tree planting, or green infrastructure.

This feedback can help Council and staff better align environmental programs with community priorities, strengthen public engagement in climate action, and inform planning decisions that contribute to long-term resilience and sustainability.

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.

Completed objectives

Website Host Platform and Content Migration Project

The Town completed transition to a more advanced content management system called Govstack to enhance the user experience on aurora.ca and other microsites.

Objectives in progress

Multi-Year Strategic Communications Plan, 2023-2026

In 2026, 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. Most initiatives are underway or nearing completion, but some will be developed 2026 including finalizing many communications policies and embedding OKRs into our communications work.

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