

3.5% tax increase approved by Council

Aurora homeowners can expect to see an average tax increase of \$87.52 next year on the municipal portion of their tax bill, following Council's approval of the 2025 Budget.

Council formally adopted its Operational and Capital budgets for the year ahead last week, as did the Region of York.

The \$87.52 forecast on the municipal portion of the bill is calculated by the Town is an average based on a home assessed at \$800,000.

In a statement, the Town of Aurora said the budget reflects "a commitment to maintaining high-quality services while investing in key infrastructure projects to support Aurora's growth and sustainability."

The 3.5 per cent includes a one per cent rise in the Town's contributions to capital reserves.

"I believe this budget strikes a strong balance that highly respects residents' tax dollars," said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement, noting that the inflationary portion of the tax-levy increase for 2025 is below the Consumer Price Index. "This Budget gives us the ability to effectively manage our operating costs, which have gone up significantly over the last few years, while also allowing us to confidently move forward on important community-building projects that will help ensure Aurora continues to be one of the best places to live, work, and raise a family."

The Budget maintains all existing service levels, such as snow clearing, recreation programs and parks maintenance, as well as furthers support into 2025 for Central York Fire Services, the Aurora Public Library, and the Aurora Cultural Centre.

The Town's updated 10-Year Capital Plan includes the "modernization" of Town facilities, the redevelopment of and upgrades to playgrounds and tennis and pickleball courts; enhancements to the Benjamin Pearson Park boardwalk; traffic calming studies; plans to streamline zoning and the development approval process; investments in roads, stormwater ponds, sewers, and pumping stations; and the implementation of online tax and water-billing systems.

"Operating spending in 2025 amounts to a total of \$125.9 million, which is supported by both property taxes and user rates (water, wastewater, and stormwater). The Town's 10-Year Capital Plan (2025 to 2034) amounts to a total of \$371.2 million, with \$65.3 (million) set aside in 2025."

The Region's budget was unanimously approved November 28, representing \$4.8 billion they say "balances fiscal responsibility with efficient service delivery while being responsive to the priorities of the community, including community safety."

"The 2025 budget includes a \$3.5 billion operating budget to cover day-to-day expenses and provides funding for rehabilitation and replacement of existing infrastructure. It also includes \$1.26 billion in capital spending, part of a record-level \$12.2 billion 10-year capital plan, supporting growth-related infrastructure and renewal of existing assets," said the Region. "A tax levy increase of 3.55% plus a separate 1% Rapid Transit Infrastructure Tax Levy will increase the average household property tax by \$133. The tax levy increase includes 1.85% to support community safety initiatives by providing additional funding to York Regional Police."

Goals funded by the Regional Budget include bringing on 304 sworn officers and civilian staff to York Regional Police over two years; hiring 74 paramedics and support staff over two years, and building six stations by 2034; adding community housing units and new emergency and transitional housing beds; investing in housing-enabling water and wastewater infrastructure to support an additional 70,000 housing units over the next 10 years; maintaining 4,406 lane kilometres of roads and improving and expanding roads and intersections; Operating and expanding Regional transit system with 23.4 million transit trips expected in 2025; investing in the Yonge North Subway Extension; and expanding the Region's fibre network.

By Brock Weir