

Aurora looks at 3.5% tax increase in 2025 ahead of Budget deliberations

Aurora residents could see a 3.5 per cent tax increase on the municipal portion of the tax bill next year.

This is the preliminary figure forecasted by the Town ahead of the start of Budget deliberations next week.

In a report released this week ahead of the November 5 Committee of the Whole meeting, Jason Gaertner, Financial Manager for the Town of Aurora, said this year's deliberations will start with a 3.5 per cent increase for 2025, and a 2.9 per cent increase in 2026.

The Town of Aurora's 2025-2026 Operating Budget proposes tax increases of 3.5 per cent in 2025 and 2.9 per cent in 2026 after assessment growth forecasted at 1.6 and 1.2 per cent per year for 2025 and 2026, respectively, is considered, said Gaertner in his report. These annual increases include a one per cent annual increase to capital reserve contributions to support the 10-year capital plan. These proposed increases align with Council's recently approved Budget Principles policy.

Operating costs for the Town in the draft 2025 Budget come to \$125 million and, for 2026, \$130.1 million.

These planned expenditures are partially offset by non-tax revenues such as water, wastewater and stormwater rate revenue, investment income, user fees, grants, fines and penalties, said Gaertner. All rate-funded services are fully offset through rate revenues. The remainder is raised through property taxes.

The proposed tax increase, if approved as-is, will see the municipal portion of the average tax bill increase by \$10.94 for each \$100,000 of assessment, and \$9.38 per year in 2026 using the same measure.

For an average home in Aurora assessed at \$800,000, the Town's share of the tax bill in 2024 is \$2,500, said Gaertner. If the proposed tax increases are adopted, this tax bill will increase by \$87.52 to \$2,588 for 2025. The tax bill would increase by a further \$75.05 to \$2,663 in 2026.

The average quarterly residential water bill assumes the use of 54 cubic metres of water during the three-month period. The rates for water and wastewater are charged per cubic metre and then the stormwater charge is a monthly fee. So, each residential bill will include three months. The average residential bill in 2024 was \$343.41; if adopted, the rates in this budget for water, wastewater and stormwater will result in increases to the water, wastewater and stormwater average quarterly bill increasing by \$19.62 to \$363.03 in 2025 and \$19.26 to \$382.29 in 2026.

The Budget is expected to be formally presented to Council at November 5's Committee of the Whole meeting at 7 p.m., with formal deliberations set to begin Monday, November 11 at 6 p.m.

Both meetings will take place in Council Chambers.

By Brock Weir