

## Council approves 2023 Municipal Budget and 3.5% tax increase

Council approved the 2023 municipal budget last Tuesday evening, with a 3.5 per cent increase on the tax levy, representing an increase of 2.5 per cent to account for inflationary pressures and another 1 per cent for the long-term renewal of Town infrastructure.

The increase translates to an additional \$81 for the average home in Aurora, valued at \$800,000.

"This budget recognizes the financial pressures facing residents and businesses, and along with members of Council, I am proud that we were able to keep this tax increase moderate, at nearly half the rate of inflation we saw last year. Importantly, this budget allows us to maintain all the services and programs that residents rely on, while investing in key projects that are vital to the health and safety of our residents," said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement.

"I want to thank all members of Council and Town staff for their hard work on the 2023 Budget. And of course, I am so grateful to the residents, businesses and organizations who took part in pre-budget consultations to outline their priorities and share their perspectives."

In addition to maintaining all existing service levels, the 2023 Budget makes strategic capital investments in numerous projects that will improve the quality of life for Aurora residents, including: the completion of the transformative Aurora Town Square; the expansion of the gymnasium at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex; work on the David Tomlinson Nature Reserve; a new artificial turf field at the Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School; and improvements to key Town assets and pieces of infrastructure, including, roads, sidewalks and facilities.

The 2023 Budget also includes financial support for various partner organizations that provide important programs and services to residents, including the Aurora Public Library, the Aurora Cultural Centre, and the Aurora Business Improvement Association.

Approved operating spending in the 2023 Budget amounts to a total of \$112.5 million, which is supported by both property taxes and user rates (water, wastewater, and stormwater). The Town's approved 10-Year Capital Plan amounts to \$347.1 million in capital projects over the coming decade, with \$73.9M set aside in 2023.

This year, \$1,000 from the Council contingency fund will be allocated toward each Councillor for \$6,000 in total, to spend within the ward for whatever the Councillor feels is necessary. This is in addition to the \$450 budget per Councillor for special functions that serve the ward such as renting meeting rooms or printing papers.

In the last Council meeting on January 31, Councillors discussed the importance of having the expenses approved by two people—the CEO and Treasurer—as per the existing Policy 57 that says that any expenses of members of Council must be approved.

The expenses will also be publicly recorded with an itemized list of how the \$1,000 is spent, to be published semi-annually on the Town website.

For more information, visit the Town's Budget Page: [aurora.ca/budget2023](http://aurora.ca/budget2023).

**By Elisa Nguyen**