

Outgoing Council to consider compensation for incoming lawmakers

The thorny issue of Council compensation is set to come back into the spotlight this week as members of the outgoing Council consider potential pay increases for members of the 2026-2030 Council.

Sitting at the Committee level this week, Council is set to look at the current pay received by Mayor and Council in Aurora and how it compares to salaries received by lawmakers in similar municipalities across the Greater Toronto Area.

The staff report was intended to support fair and equitable compensation while maintaining fiscal responsibility and accountability to Aurora taxpayers.

The analysis considered principles of fiscal prudence, the need to attract a diverse and qualified pool of candidates, and the recognition of the demanding nature, complexity, and public accountability associated with the role of Mayor and Councillors, say staff. Factors of time commitment, decision-making responsibilities, and the breadth of issues addressed by elected officials were also considered.

The comparison report, which looked at salaries in King, Newmarket, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Bradford West Gwillimbury, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Caledon, Halton, and Uxbridge, found that the current mayoral salary in Aurora is 3.34 per cent below the 60th percentile, while compensation for Aurora Councillors falls to 31.96 per cent below that same percentile.

As part of the market review, staff assessed potential market positioning options to guide the Town's approach to Council compensation, say staff. A position at the 50th percentile is market. Anything above the 50th percentile is competitive. Based on the data reviewed, consideration may be given to a market position at approximately the 60th percentile, which balances fiscal responsibility with the objective of providing competitive and equitable compensation relative to comparable municipalities.

Based on the findings of the review, direction from Council is required with respect to the desired market positioning (percentile) within the identified comparator group, as well as the continuation or modification of car allowance entitlements for the Mayor and Members of Council. Reviews of benefits and severance entitlements for Members of Council confirm that no changes are required at this time. Council's direction on the identified matters will enable staff to proceed accordingly and ensure that compensation practices remain fair, competitive, and aligned with Council's objectives.

When it comes to vehicle allowances, the report found within the comparator group, transportation allowances for mayors range from \$3,000 to \$16,000, while the same allowances for Councillors range from \$1,500 to \$12,000.

Based on the average results of the comparator analysis, adjusting the Mayor's transportation allowance to \$12,000 to align with the market would represent a 17.14 per cent increase, while adjusting the Councillor's transportation allowance to \$3,250 would represent a 32 per cent increase, say staff. Adjustments should recognize increased vehicle operating costs, and the travel demands associated with the role and, while remaining below most comparator municipalities, demonstrate a fiscally responsible approach to market alignment.

Any increase to Council and Mayoral compensation would result in an increase to the Town's Operating Budget for the year it becomes active, note staff.

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