



 OFFICE OF THE CHIEF
**ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER (CAO)**

As approved on January 31st, 2023

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

	2022		2023	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
Budget (\$000's)				
CAO Administration	583.0	583.0	545.1	545.1
Corporate Communications	871.3	871.0	1,016.0	1,015.7
Net Budget	1,454.3	1,454.0	1,561.1	1,560.8
Budget Change			106.8	106.8
Permanent Full-Time Staffing (FTE):				
Opening Staffing				8.0
New				-
Conversion				1.0
Approved Staffing				9.0

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

The Office of the CAO supports every objective in the Town’s Strategic Plan and all other business plans by providing support and guidance to all departments on how best to implement various objectives. Moreover, the CAO chairs the Town’s Executive Leadership Team, which is comprised of all department heads and serves as space for Town leadership to identify and align on key priorities. Corporate Communications also plays a critical role in supporting the Strategic Plan and other business plans by using various communications channels to inform Aurora residents about the programs and services offered by the Town, as well as Town-led cultural events and celebrations. Importantly, Corporate Communications provides residents with meaningful engagement opportunities to share their feedback on programs, services and policies through in-person engagement events as well as the Engage Aurora online platform.

2022 Accomplishments

In 2022, the Office of the CAO’s accomplishments included:

- Continuing to lead the organization through the COVID-19 pandemic, including facilitating numerous service delivery adaptations and modernizations to support continued service delivery to the community, including new technologies to facilitate operations, governance leadership, and information-sharing with Council, staff and the community
- Based on immediate operational needs and the outcomes of the Service Delivery Review, the Office of the CAO oversaw a significant organizational realignment, with IT moving from Corporate Services to Finance, and Customer Service (Access Aurora) moving from Corporate Services to Community Services
- Continued to facilitate the management of the Aurora Town Square project, including monthly updates to Council on project progress, as well as the development of an Aurora Town Square website, which serves as a touchpoint for residents to familiarize themselves with the project and the amenities that will be offered at Aurora Town Square
- Corporate Communications issued hundreds of communications to the community and internal stakeholders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring information was shared in a timely and effective way to relevant target audiences
- Oversaw the successful implementation of the new ward system for the 2022 Municipal Election, and effectively communicated this significant change to residents

Communications

SNAPSHOT



2,176,053 impressions*
108,888 engagements*
726 new followers*



559,011 impressions*
14,052 engagements*
599 new followers*



1,025,161 impressions*
20,150 engagements*
546 new followers*



83,842 impressions*
7,671 engagements*
798 new connections*

403,720

Website users*



1,266,745

Unique page views*



1,506,296

Website page views:
with 800,606 unique
views*



Top 4

Web Searches



Summer
camps 2022



Swimming



Swimming
schedules



Swimming
lessons

11+

Online community
engagement consultations
and surveys in 2022



23

Events that Communications
helped promote and execute

Top 4

Page Views



e-PLAY, COVID-19,
Aquatics, Community Service
Program Guide

*FROM NOVEMBER 2021 TO OCTOBER 2022

Operating Budget

Overview

The operating budget for the Office of the CAO is approved to increase by \$106,800 in 2023. The main drivers of the increase relates to salary and benefit adjustments for existing positions and the conversion of an existing temporary Communication Coordinator position to permanent.

Operating financial summary

\$000's	Net Actual Results		2022	2022	2023
	2020	2021	Net Fcst*	Budget	Budget
Expenditures	1,216.0	1,416.2	1,390.1	1,454.3	1,561.1
Non-Tax Revenues	(12.1)	-	(0.7)	(0.3)	(0.3)
Net Tax Levy	1,203.9	1,416.2	1,389.4	1,454.0	1,560.8
% Tax Funded	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Budget Change	\$	212.3	(26.8)	64.6	106.8
	%	17.6%	(1.9%)	4.6%	7.3%

*Net forecast as of October 31, 2022

Operating Budget priorities for 2023

The 2023 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.

Community engagement

With an increasingly diverse and growing community, the Town of Aurora is committed to ensuring that all residents are able to fully participate in their government. In 2023, Corporate Communications will introduce additional community engagement opportunities – both online and in person – in an effort to garner more feedback from residents on programs, services and policies that impact the Town’s diverse population.

Communications Strategic Plan

The Office of the CAO, through Corporate Communications, will develop and implement a new Communications Strategic Plan. This includes enhancing the Town’s profile in local and regional media, continuing to build the strategic communications capacity of the Corporate Communications team as well as the organization, and providing communications leadership and support for significant 2023 projects.

The Budget for the Office of the CAO will support the modernization of service delivery to our community. In particular, Corporate Communications intends to continue its focus on the Town’s main website and online services by expanding the types of services available online.

Large Project Support

The Office of the CAO will continue to provide leadership on all large projects across the organization. This includes the successful completion of the Aurora Town Square project as well as the expansion to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex. Moreover, the Office of the CAO will continue to monitor and react to any COVID-19 developments, including the implementation of the Town’s new Alternative Work Arrangement Policy.

Incremental Budget changes

	2023	
	FTE	\$000's
Starting Budget	8	1,454.0
Base		
Salaries & Benefits including COLA, step increases, gapping and other approved staffing actions and recoveries	-	51.3
Communications advertising, events and promotions	-	9.4
Other minor increases	-	0.3
	-	61.0
Maintaining Service Levels for Growth		
Communications Coordinator to support sustained growth in demand for online communications which developed during the pandemic	1	91.6
Less: Salary gapping for first six months of new position	-	(45.8)
	1	45.8
Budget Change	1	106.8
Approved Budget	9	1,560.8

The business cases for the new position follows on the next page.

Business Case

Communications Coordinator – Maintaining Current Complement

Communications

Budget Change Type: Growth

Recommendation:	Financial Impact	
That the Communications Coordinator position, seconded to Corporate Communications during the COVID-19 pandemic, be converted to a full time, permanent position.	# FTE	1.0
	Wages & Benefits	\$89,100
	Staffing costs	2,500
	Recoveries	-
	Net Tax Impact	\$91,600
Rationale/Benefits:		
<p>COVID-19 struck many organizations by surprise; what was originally thought to be a temporary two-week interruption to business, turned out to be a multi-year (and counting) pivot in how we operate.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic put an increased pressure on municipal communications teams to increase and expedite information to the public and staff. As we look to recovery post COVID-19, the expectations from the community regarding increased and expedited information remain and have carried over to all areas of communications, not just COVID-19 communications.</p> <p>The effects of COVID-19 on Communications continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As we look to hybrid work, internal communications becomes a focus to maintain strong employee engagement and company culture. • COVID-19 drove many residents to connect with the Town online vs. in person and this trend continues as we have seen an increase in inquiries come to communications via email, online inquiries and social media. • Some programs, services and capital projects were put on hold / deferred during the pandemic, including Corporate Communications’ own projects such as a Resident Satisfaction Survey and Communications Master Plan – now all coming back and requiring communications support. <p>In addition to pressures brought on by the pandemic, the Town has introduced several large-scale changes to operations that impact the level of service communications is expected to provide. This includes, but are not limited to, a new focus on diversity and equity/Black history month and Indigenous relations, Excellence Canada certification, formalized CMT role, and the Town moving to a ward-based system.</p> <p>Maintaining this position, which has been in place since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, will allow the team to maintain current and expected service levels, and deliver on Mayor, Council, and Department needs as well as resident expectations. This position directly supports the Corporate Services and Operational Services Divisions with all campaigns, initiatives and messaging as well as social media, internal staff messaging, website, newsletters and community engagement.</p>		

Impact of Not Proceeding or Delay:

Without maintaining this resource, the service levels Corporate Communications provides the organization would be impacted. Some communications work would need to be outsourced at a higher cost to the organization. All campaigns, initiatives and messaging for the Operational Services and Corporate Services departments would be impacted or put on hold as resources are already stretched thin within the Communications division.

Currently, this position continues to support COVID-19 related matters such as return to work plans, hybrid work policies and procedures, promotion of vaccination clinics and maintains regular meetings with York Region colleagues on public health matters such as Monkey Pox and potential new waves of COVID-19.

In addition, this position supports elections, internal communications including our internal newsletter and other emergency communications that require collaboration with York Region, such as heat, cold and snow alerts.

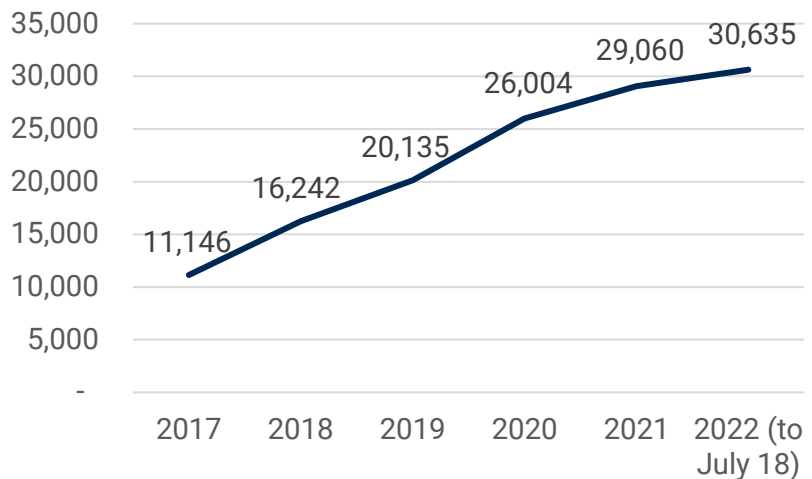
Without this position, the Corporate Communications team could not be able to maintain their service levels for both internal and external clients.

Comparative Analysis / Performance Metrics:

More and more residents are choosing to interact with the Town through social media, meaning increased pressure on the Communications team to provide timely, accurate content and be responsive.

Our four social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) have steadily grown over the last five years. This trend continued during COVID-19, as the Town saw a 30 per cent increase in followers across all channels between the start of 2020 and July 2022.

Followers - All Social Media Platforms

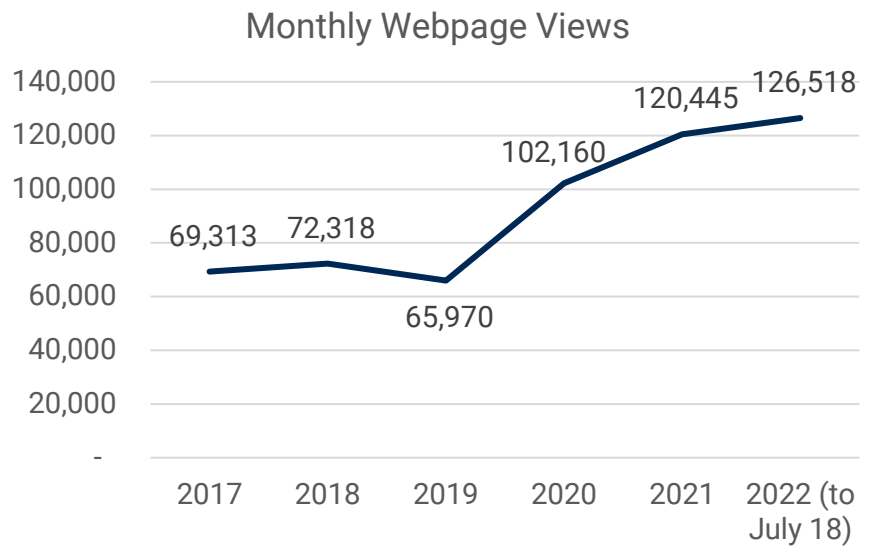


Our engagements across all channels have doubled since the onset of the pandemic. In January of 2020, we had 11,200 engagements versus 21,848 engagements in June, 2022.

This position was directly responsible for ensuring thousands and thousands of social media followers were kept up to date with critical information regarding provincial COVID restrictions, vaccinations and vaccine mandates. Moreover, during the pandemic there was a significant increase in the number of questions being posed by residents directly on social media. Replying in a timely and accurate manner to these questions added another new responsibility for the Communications department to take on.

Residents are also relying more on the Town’s website than ever before. At the same time, Communications is supporting new, online projects that benefit the entire organization.

In the years prior to the pandemic, the Town saw only modest increases – sometimes even small decreases – in monthly average page views on aurora.ca. During the first two years of the pandemic, however, there was a dramatic increase in the number of average monthly pageviews, in fact nearly doubling between 2019 and 2021. Moreover, our yearly total unique website views increased 83 per cent from 2019 to 2021.



In addition to seeing a significant increase in traffic to our main site during the pandemic, the Communications team also launched the Engage Aurora community engagement platform to allow the Town to more effectively engage with residents on programs, services and policies. Since the site launched in early 2020, it has garnered more than 1,100 survey responses on a variety of programs and services, as well as generated hundreds of comments and question submissions.

Engage Aurora benefits many different departments across the Town, with residents able to provide direct feedback on initiatives such as the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Official Plan Amendment, and the Active Transportation Master Plan, to name just a few. This undoubtedly helps both Council and staff in the decision-making process. This has, however, meant an increased workload for the Communications team, with Communications staff responsible for all updates to the Engage Aurora platform, as well as the development of all social media posts and media releases promoting the surveys. This position plays a critical role in supporting the Engage Aurora Platform.

Capital Budget

Overview

The Office of the CAO is approved to spend \$44,400 in 2023 on capital projects of the total \$155,000 in Capital Budget Authority. All projects relate to studies and other.

2023 Capital Budget authority

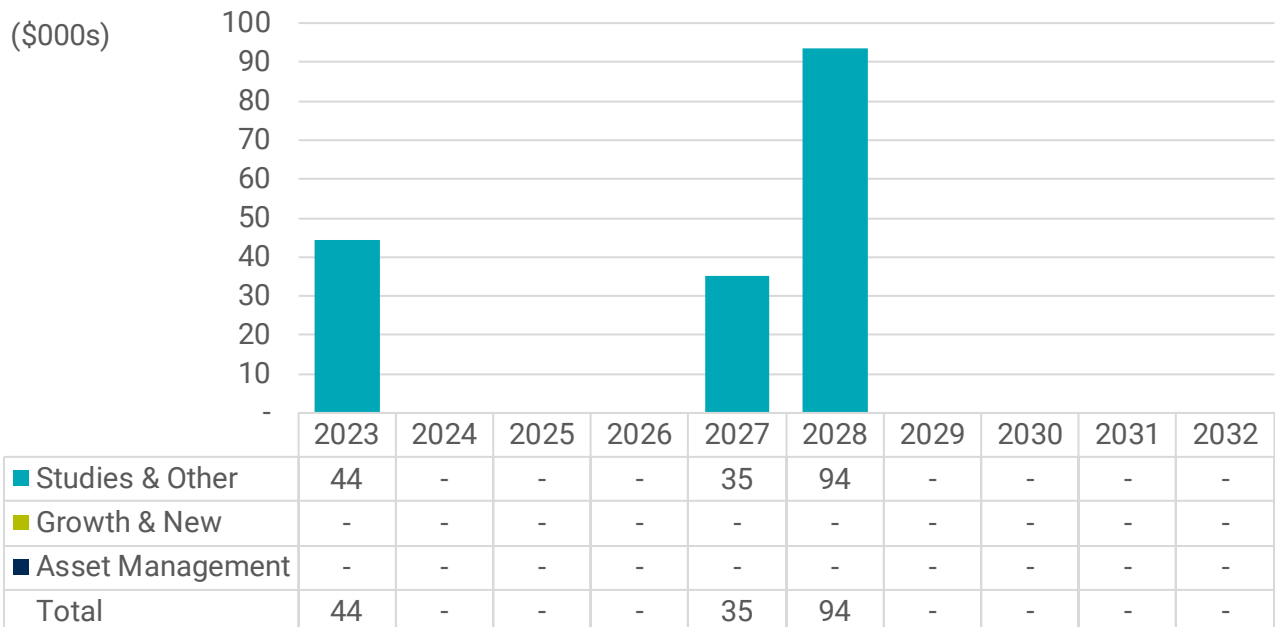
(\$000s)	Previously Approved Budget	2023 Budget		Capital Budget Authority Cash Flow			
		Capital Budget Authority*	Budget Change	Actuals to Dec/21	2022 Forecast	2023	2024+
Asset Management	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Growth & New	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Studies & Other	155.0	155.0	-	61.9	48.7	44.4	-
Approved Budget	155.0	155.0	-	61.9	48.7	44.4	-

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

10-Year Capital Plan

The 10-Year Capital Plan includes \$172,000 in studies and other capital projects. The planned spending in 2023 is to continue work of the organizational structure review.

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. The 2023 Budget includes \$44,000 to support the ongoing comprehensive Organizational Structural Review project.

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 and services to residents.

Progress on departmental objectives

These objectives were established during previously approved budgets. The following provides a status update on the progress of completing the objectives.

New objectives

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 will monitor any new institutional needs and possible realignments that may arise from this, including potential changes to committee structure and more individualized communications support for ward councillors.

Refinement of hybrid work model to attract and retain top talent

The Office of the CAO, in close collaboration with the Human Resources division, the Executive Leadership Team and Corporate Management Team, will continue to refine and strengthen an Alternative Work Arrangement (AWA) policy for Town staff. While the need for such a policy was accelerated by COVID-19, a solid AWA policy will help facilitate improved performance and create a flexible and productive work environment that is responsive to the professional and personal needs of today's workforce.

Completed objectives

Town Services Review

The Municipal Services Delivery Review is now complete, with the focus shifting to implementation and achievable outcomes, including increasing cross-departmental collaboration and possible organizational realignments. Early activities have included creating service level benchmarks for key service areas. Another initial step has been the move of Access Aurora to Community Services, with more changes to follow.

Objectives in progress

The delivery of a statistically relevant resident satisfaction survey

Led by Corporate Communications, the Town is currently undertaking a statistically relevant resident satisfaction survey, with results to be presented to Council in early 2023. The purpose of the survey is to give residents an opportunity to provide feedback on the issues that are most important to them and garner their opinions on municipal programs and services. The survey results will serve as a tool to inform future priorities for Council and all Town departments.

Lead action plans in response to the 2020 Employee Engagement Survey to address issues, recognize successes, and enhance organizational culture and performance

Departmental action task forces are in place and a reporting framework has been established to ensure ongoing updates to the Executive Leadership Team on actions taken in response to the survey. A pulse survey is planned for late 2022/early 2023.

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.

Develop Communications and Community Engagement Strategy, including Media Relations Plan, Website Improvement Plan, Crisis Communications Plan, Social Media Strategy, Internal Communications Plan and Marketing and Advertising Plan

Underway.

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

Underway. Ongoing improvements are being made to the Town's engagement platform and strategies, including changes to the marketing and promotion of engagement opportunities to different and diverse audiences, and engagement with various groups and committees to ensure representativity.

Intentional Blank