



Council Budget Review and Approval Process

The annual budget review and approval process includes the following distinct components, each with their separate Council Review and Approval Process flow:

November/December each year (January to March following an election)

- Operating Budget
 - CAO controlled operations
 - Aurora Public Library Board funding request
 - Aurora Cultural Centre Board funding request
 - Aurora Historical Society funding request
 - Central York Fire Services Budget
 - Utilities Operations Budgets

- Annual Fiscal Strategy Budget

- Annual Special Phasing Budget

- Three Year Forecast Budgets

- Budget Directives for the next year's budget

October each year (January following an election)

- Capital Budget
 - Ten Year Asset Management and Investment Plan
 - Annual Capital Budget

March to September

- Annual Detailed Review – departmental detailed review (rotating)

Operating Budget

The annual operating budget will be reviewed by the General Committee – Budget (Budget Committee) in the fall period prior to each budget year, except budgets for the year following an election. All meetings of the Budget Committee are open to the public.

A multi-year budget approach is to be used by Aurora. The current year's budget, plus similarly detailed forecasted budgets of the subsequent three years are to be prepared and presented by staff, in accordance with directives from Council. The basic premise of the multi-year budget approach is that a current budget which meets the previously approved forecast and budget directives of Council will generally be approved by

Budget Committee and Council. Staff can more effectively plan multi-year programs, revenue streams and staffing based on the presumption of having complying budget forecasts receiving approval. Any variations from forecast would need to be fully explained in the presentation of such budget. It is important to note that Committee or Council can still make amendments to those future approved forecasts based on new initiatives, new regulations, or changing economic circumstances.

Using this presumed approval and multi-year approach to developing budgets will give several advantages:

- improved coordination of budgeting for strategic priorities,
- greater certainty for departments in managing expenditures and service levels
- improved fiscal discipline of the organization
- streamline annual budget reviews to focus on key changes in assumptions and outlooks, and the reasons driving such changes
- allow staff to develop budgets with fixed targets in place, allowing early response to circumstances and budget constraints of such targets.

In conducting its annual operating budget review and approval process, the Budget Committee will consider the following components and their related three year forecasts:

- CAO controlled operations including Building Services Budget
- Aurora Public Library Board funding request
- Aurora Historical Society funding request
- Central York Fire Services Budget (as recommended by Joint Council Committee)
- Utilities Operations Budgets
- Annual Fiscal Strategy Budget
- Annual Special Phasing Budget

Once these budget components have been reviewed by Budget Committee, Committee will recommend adoption to Council.

Operating Budget – Aurora Cultural Centre Board funding request

To fulfil the requirements of the Cultural Services Agreement with the Aurora Cultural Centre Board, their annual report and budget request for funding of operations will be presented to Budget Committee. Budget Committee will deliberate on the funding request and make any adjustments to the Operating Budget as appropriate.

Budget Communications Strategy and Key Messages

Following recommendation for adoption of the annual operating budget and forecasts, Budget Committee will discuss and provide direction to staff regarding key messages and budget highlights, including any specific statements or strategies to be included in media releases, website and other communications regarding the approval of the budget.

Budget Directives for Next Budget

Following resolutions regarding Communications Strategy Key Messages, the Budget Committee will turn its attention to reviewing the budget directives for the preparation of the subsequent budget. The directives presented by staff for consideration will be those of Council from the prior year, with any changes recommended being highlighted. Budget Committee will recommend a set of Budget Directives for adoption by Council.

Capital Budget

The annual review and approval of the Ten Year Asset Management and Investment Plan will be completed prior to the end of October prior to the budget year. This timing allows for pricing advantage of early tendering, as well as allowing integration of the capital plan into the operational plans, capacities and requirements of the affected business units within the Operating Budget as applicable. Budget Committee will recommend adoption to Council. Funding allocations approved in the annual capital budget will be effective January 1 of the budget year, unless otherwise specifically approved by Council.

Rotating Annual Departmental Detailed Budget Reviews

Separate from and completed subsequent to the annual final budget approval, a specific group of town budget areas will be examined in detail each year during the period of April to September or as otherwise determined by Committee. The Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) will review the operational budget details of each operating department on a rotating basis, so as to review all operating departments of the Town once each term. Recommended adjustments will be reflected by staff in the following year's operating budget submission.

This rotating approach balances the need to review the details of each departmental budget with the expectation of efficient and effective use of Committee time commitment for the annual budget process. Detailed review of every department every year is not practical. The rotational approach allows for ongoing assurance by Council, new members to Council, and the general public that all areas of the budget have been reviewed in extensive detail within the last few years by a committee of Council, and that such reviews continue on a regular basis on a fixed schedule. This approach ensures that the annual budget review of the overall corporate budget submission can remain at a higher level of consolidation, focusing on service levels, performance indicators and overall compliance with budget directives and prior forecasts, and the forecasts for the following years.

The rotation of detailed reviews will be as follows (calendar year of term):

Year 1	Parks, Recreation and Culture Services Infrastructure & Environmental Services Utilities Operation Budget
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Year 2 Building Services Division (fees funded budget)

Building & Bylaw Services
Planning & Development Services

Year 3 Council Administration
CAO/ Administration
Legal & Legislative Services
Corporate & Financial Services
Corporate Accounts

Year 4 None due to municipal election

The detailed review will include, but is not limited to:

- the current approved operating budget, with provided expanded details;
- all related fees and rates charged;
- activities, services and service levels provided by the department;
- open capital projects and status
- the area's related content details within the Ten Year Asset Management and Investment Plan
- adequacy of staffing and funding to meet mandatory activities, services, commitments, and approved non-mandatory services, activities and programs and general expectations of Council;