

City of Belleville

Report No: DF-2024-10

Meeting Date: May 13, 2024



To: Mayor and Members of Council

Department: Finance

Staff Contact: Brandon Ferguson, Director of Finance, Treasurer

Subject: **City of Belleville 2025 Capital & Operating Budget Timeline and Community Engagement Strategy**

Recommendation:

"THAT Council approve the recommendations of the Finance Committee as outlined in the Director of Finance/ Treasurer's Report No. DF-2024-10, and approve the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget timeline and community engagement strategy."

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The City of Belleville's Strategic Plan identifies nine strategic themes. This report aligns with each of the City's nine strategic themes and the City's mission statement by providing innovative and efficient services in support of our community's vision.

Background:

As part of the Terms and Reference of the Finance Committee and their regular responsibilities, the committee reviews and determines the annual schedule for the Capital and Operating Budget preparation and presentation and forward recommendations to Council for approval.

Further the City's Budget & Financial Controls Policy sets the roles and responsibilities for the Finance Committee and Council associated with the recommendation and approval of;

- Annual Departmental Operating Plans;
- Establishing and approving priorities and guidelines in advance of detailed budget preparation;
- Approving proposed level of public communication and engagement; and
- Review and debate budget submissions.

As with the prior year, the 2025 Capital and Operating budget process will utilize the City's established Budget & Financial Controls Policy, as well as the requirements under the Strong Mayor powers. Under this timeline the Mayor is required to provide the proposed Operating budget to Council, on or prior to February 1st each year. Failing that, Council is responsible for preparing and adopting a budget with Council retaining the powers to pass the budget.

Strong Mayor's requirements in the Operating budget timeline include;

- Council budget amendments to be provided within the 30 day deadline
- The Mayor will have the ability to veto amendments (in writing) within 10 days after the expiry of the 30 day period above
- Council will have the ability to override the Mayor's veto (if utilized) with a 2/3 vote within 15 days of the expiry of the veto

After the expiry of the time period for council to override the Mayor's veto, the proposed budget is deemed to be adopted by the municipality and does not require a vote of Council.

Financial/Analysis:

In accordance with the legislative requirements and the City's existing policy, the attached draft 2025 Capital and Operating Budget timeline has been prepared for adoption.

The Capital Budgeting process will be enhanced and further integrated with legislative requirements for Asset Management planning and development of a ten (10) year capital plan. Continued engagement and the further development of the City's Departmental Operating plans will be completed as part of the Operating budget process.

As part of both budgetary processes, continued engagement and enhanced educational materials will be provided. A draft Communication Plan to engage the public on the 2025 Operating budget is attached to this report. The plan includes three (3) surveys to be distributed to the public as follows:

- Survey #1 - will obtain feedback regarding Capital and Operating spending priorities and overall approach to budget development. These results will be presented to the Finance Committee and Council to assist with the establishment of budgetary guidelines.
- Survey #2 - Capital Budget and 10 Year Capital Plan Feedback - to obtain direct feedback on the preliminary draft Capital Budget and 10 Year Capital Plan. The survey results will be included at the Capital Budget meetings for Council's consideration.
- Survey #3 - Operating Budget Feedback - to obtain direct feedback on the preliminary draft Operating budget. The survey results will be included at the Operating Budget meetings for Council's consideration.

Conclusion:

THAT Council approve the recommendations of the Finance Committee as outlined in the Director of Finance/ Treasurer's Report No. DF-2024-10 and approve the 2025 Operating Budget timeline and community engagement strategy.

Attachments:

[2025 Budget timeline](#)

[2025 Budget CP Public - Final](#)

Approved by:

Matt MacDonald, Director Corporate Services

Rod Bovay, Chief Administrative Officer

Status:

Approved - 06 May 2024

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Month	Week of	Capital / Operating	Description
Apr-24	30-Apr	Capital & Operating	Finance Committee approval and recommendation to Council of Budget Timeline and Public Engagement / Communications Plan Plan to incorporate prior engagement feedback into monthly educational budget postings throughout the year
May-24	13-May	Capital & Operating	Council approval of Budget Timeline and Public Engagement / Communications Plan Survey #1 - distributed to the Public for 2025 Capital and Operating Budget input (<i>survey to close June 5th</i>)
Jun-24	12-Jun	Capital & Operating	Present survey results to Finance Committee Committee to recommend guidelines for budget preparation, ensuring Capital budget alignment with AMP and 10 Year Capital plan guidelines and feedback
Jul-24	8-Jul	Capital	Council approval of Capital Budget and 10 Year Capital Plan guidelines
Aug-24	12-Aug	Operating	Finance Committee - Operating budget guidelines, approval and recommendation to Council
	Aug 5- 23	Capital	Departmental meetings; review of Capital budget and 10 year Capital plan
	26-Aug	Operating	Council Approval of Operating Budget guidelines
Sep-24	9-Sep	Capital	EMT working group meeting #1 to review Draft Capital budget submissions (EMT)
	23-Sep	Capital	EMT workgroup meeting #2 (EMT & Finance Committee)
Oct-24	7-Oct	Capital	Draft Capital Budget and 10 Year Capital Plan posted and mailed to Council Survey #2 - distributed to public to obtain feedback on draft Capital budget (closure on November 4, 2024)

	Oct 7- 21	Operating	Conduct departmental budget meetings
Nov-24	11-Nov	Operating	EMT working group meeting #1 to review draft submissions (EMT & Mayor)
	18-Nov	Capital	Capital Budget Meeting
Dec-24	9-Dec	Operating	EMT working group meeting #2 (EMT & Finance Committee)
Jan-25	27-Jan	Operating	Strong Mayors' operating budget posted publicly and provided to Council Survey #2 distributed to public to obtain feedback on draft budget (closure February 17)
Feb-25	February 24 -25 <i>(Special Council Meeting)</i>	Operating	Presentation of survey results to Council Operating budget meeting deliberations <i>Expiry of Council budget amendment period (Feb 25th)</i> <i>(amendment to be made by resolution)</i>
Mar-25	7-Mar	Operating	Expiry of Mayor's veto of Council's budget amendments (if applicable) (Veto of amendments must be provided in writing to each member of Council and the Clerk)
	22-Mar <i>(Tentative Special Council Meeting)</i>	Operating	Expiry of Council's override period of Mayor's veto of Council's budget amendments [<i>Tentative March 21st Meeting if required</i>] (requires a 2/3rd vote of Council)



City of Belleville Communications Plan

Project: 2025 Budget
Department/Committee: Finance
Staff Lead: Brandon Ferguson/Brianne MacNevin

Overview			
Start Date	May 13, 2024	End Date	March 22, 2025
Background	<p>Last year’s budget survey and engagement had great success with over 500 responses for the capital budget surveys and over 1,200 for the operating budget surveys. Staff were able to use the responses and input received to develop guidelines for departments to help shape their budgets, and then to determine key priorities towards the finalization of the budget.</p> <p>The survey also included questions around how people would like to be engaged about the budget. With these responses in mind, Finance will be making some additional improvements to the process to hopefully reach and engage even more residents with the 2025 budget process, including: additional public education, consolidation of the preliminary surveys to simplify processes and ongoing direct engagement with interested parties. The timeline for communications for the 2025 budget is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capital & Operating Preliminary Survey Distribution – May 13 - Capital & Operating Preliminary Survey Closes – June 5 - Results Presented to Council – June 12 - Draft Capital Budget & Capital Final Survey Posted – Oct. 7 - Capital Final Survey Closes – Nov. 4 - Capital Budget Meeting/Approval of Budget and 10-Year Capital Plan – Nov. 18 - Draft Operating Budget & Operating Final Survey Posted – Jan. 27 - Operating Final Survey Closes – Feb. 17 - Operating Budget Meeting/Approval – Feb. 24-25 <p>Between each of these dates, there will also be information sent to residents about key budget topics and important dates in the form of a periodic emailed ‘news blast’ to subscribers. Topics may include: outlining healthcare/external agency responsibilities, casino funding information, debt management, how different projects are funded, departmental operating plans, etc. Subscribers will also receive information on the surveys, upcoming meeting dates and more.</p>		
Comms. Objective	Education, engagement and feedback		

Target Audience	City residential and non-residential taxpayers		
Key Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Important dates - Email subscription promotion - Surveys - Education pieces (linking to Budget 101 for more) - Draft budgets - Meeting dates 		
Internal Communications			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes
Council & Staff	Preliminary Survey release sent. Capital Final and 10-Year Capital Plan release sent. Operating Final release sent.	May 13 Oct. 7 Jan. 27	<i>Jenna</i>
Website			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes
Media Release	Preliminary Survey/Email Subscription Promo Capital Final Survey/Budget/Meeting Date Operating Final Survey/Budget/Meeting Date	May 13 Oct. 7 Jan. 27	<i>Sent to Council, staff and media. Posted to website. Shared on social media.</i>
Alert	Preliminary Survey Capital Final Survey Operating Final Survey	May 13-June 5 Oct. 7-Nov. 4 Jan. 27-Feb. 17	<i>Pop-up on website homepage.</i>
Newsletter	Promotion of email subscription. Surveys. Meeting Dates.	Monthly May 31, Oct. 31, Jan. 31 Oct. 31 and Jan. 31	<i>Mailed to list of subscribers and posted to website/social media.</i>
New Page/Update	Belleville.ca updated with: Important dates and email subscription. Links to survey (upon opening) News blast information.	May 13 May 13, Oct. 7, Jan. 27 Periodic	<i>Posting new page/updating existing webpage.</i>
Social Media			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes

Facebook	Surveys/Draft Budgets/Meeting Dates News blast information/education posts	May 13-June 5, Oct. 7-Nov. 4, Jan. 27-Feb. 17 Periodic	<i>Organic posts.</i>
Twitter	Surveys/Draft Budgets/Meeting Dates News blast information/education posts	May 13-June 5, Oct. 7-Nov. 4, Jan. 27-Feb. 17 Periodic	<i>Organic posts.</i>
Paid Campaign (\$)	Preliminary Survey Capital Final Survey Operating Final Survey	May 13-June 5 Oct. 7-Nov. 4 Jan. 27-Feb. 17	<i>Advertising on FB and IG.</i>
Print			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes
Community Press Ad Spot	Preliminary Survey Email Subscription Promo Capital Final Survey Operating Final Survey	May 16, 23, 30 June 13, July 11, Aug. 15, Sept. 12 Oct. 10, 17, 24, 31 Jan. 30, Feb. 6, 13	<i>Included in weekly ad spot. Department covers cost for additional ad space.</i>
Buck Slip/Rack Card	Information on budget, important dates and links/QR code.	End of May Ongoing	<i>To be mailed out with 2024 final tax notice and extra copies made available for distribution at public events and meetings.</i>
Other Methods			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes
Marquee Signs	Preliminary Survey Email Subscription Promo Capital Final Survey Operating Final Survey	May 13-June 5 June 13-27, July 11- 25, Aug. 15-29, Sept. 12-26 Oct. 7-Nov. 4 Jan. 27-Feb. 17	<i>Located at Quinte Sports & Wellness Centre and Zwick's Park. 1 ad/every 10 minutes, 6 ads every hour, 114 ads/per day</i>
Televisions	Preliminary Survey Email Subscription Promo Capital Final Survey Operating Final Survey	May 13-June 5 June 13-27, July 11- 25, Aug. 15-29, Sept. 12-26 Oct. 7-Nov. 4 Jan. 27-Feb. 17	<i>Located throughout Quinte Sports & Wellness Centre.</i>

Digital Ads (Quinte News & InQuinte)	Preliminary Survey Email Subscription Promo Capital Final Survey Operating Final Survey	May 16-23 June 13-20, July 11-18, Aug. 15-22, Sept. 12-19 Oct. 10-17 Jan. 30-Feb. 6	<i>InQuinte rotating ad and Quinte News sidebar ad. Run weekly.</i>
Digital Billboard	Preliminary Survey Capital Final Survey Operating Final Survey	May 23-June 6 Oct. 10-24 Jan. 30-Feb. 13	<i>Located at Bell Boulevard and North Front Street.</i>
Email Blasts	Updates on meeting dates, surveys, all budget content, links to Budget 101 documents.	Periodic	<i>Sent via email to list of subscribers/interested parties and posted on Budget webpage as accordion once sent out.</i>
Results			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes
Engagement Report	Results of survey/engagement	June 12, June 24, Nov. 18, Feb. 24	<i>Full summary of engagement with metrics.</i>