

City of Belleville

Report No: DF-2025-07

Meeting Date: May 12, 2025



To: Mayor and Members of Council

Department: Finance

Staff Contact: Brandon Ferguson, Director of Finance/Treasurer

Subject: **City of Belleville 2026 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-2025-07, and approve the 2026 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.

The 2026 Capital and Operating budget process will utilize the City's established Budget & Financial Controls Policy, as well as follow 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 2026 Capital and Operating Budget timeline has been prepared for adoption.

The Capital Budgeting process will be consistent with the prior year's budget process, and will continue to enhance the capital and financial plan based on updated asset data and alignment with legislative Asset Management plan updates. 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 2026 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-2025-07 and approve the 2026 Capital and Operating Budget timeline and Community Engagement strategy.

Attachments:

[2026 Budget timeline](#)

[2026 Budget CP Public](#)

Reviewed by:

Doug Irwin, City Clerk

Matt MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer

Status:

Approved - 02 May 2025

Approved - 05 May 2025

Month	Week of	Capital / Operating	Description
Apr-25	April 28th	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-25	May 12th	Capital & Operating	Council approval of Budget Timeline and Public Engagement / Communications Plan Survey #1 - distributed to the Public for 2026 Capital and Operating Budget input (<i>survey to close June 6th</i>)
Jun-25	June 12th	Capital & Operating	Present survey results to Finance Committee Committee to recommend guidelines for budget preparation, ensuring Capital budget alignment with AMP 10 Year Capital plan guidelines and feedback
	June 30th	Capital	Preliminary Draft 10 Year Capital Plan and 2025 Capital budget documents provided to departments for completion
Jul-25	July 14th	Capital	Council approval of Capital Budget and 10 Year Capital Plan guidelines
	July 28th	Capital	Capital Budget documents and 10 Year Capital plan prepared and updated by departments and submitted to Finance
Aug-25	August 4th	Operating	Finance Committee - Operating budget guidelines, approval and recommendation to Council
	August 11th	Operating	Preliminary Draft Operating budget and Departmental plan documents provided to departments for completion
	August 4th - 22nd	Capital	Departmental meetings; review of Capital budget and 10 year Capital plan

	August 25th	Operating	Council Approval of Budget guidelines
Sep-25	September 2nd	Capital	Distribution of Capital Budget and 10 Year Capital Plan to EMT - meeting #1
	September 8th	Capital	EMT working group meeting #1 to review Draft Capital budget submissions (EMT)
	September 15th	Capital	Distribution of Capital Budget and 10 Year Capital Plan to EMT and Finance Committee - meeting #2
	September 23rd	Capital	EMT workgroup meeting #2 (EMT & Finance Committee)
	September 29th	Operating	Operating budget and Departmental plan documents Completed and submitted to Finance
Oct-25	October 6th	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 3, 2025)
	October 7th - 24th	Operating	Conduct departmental budget meetings
Nov-25	November 3rd	Operating	Distribution of Operating Budget and Departmental Plan to EMT - meeting #1
	November 10th	Operating	EMT working group meeting #1 to review draft submissions (EMT & Mayor)
	November 19th	Capital	Capital Budget Meeting
	November 24th	Operating	Distribution of Operating Budget and Departmental Plan to EMT and Finance Committee - meeting #2
Dec-25	December 8th	Operating	EMT working group meeting #2 (EMT & Finance Committee)
Jan-26	January 29th	Operating	Strong Mayors' operating budget posted publicly and provided to Council Survey #2 distributed to public to obtain feedback on draft budget (closure February 18)
	February 25 -26		Presentation of survey results to Council

Feb-26	<i>(Special Council Meeting)</i>	Operating	Operating budget meeting deliberations <i>Expiry of Council budget amendment period (Feb 27th)</i> <i>(amendment to be made by resolution)</i>
Mar-26	March 9th	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)
	March 24th <i>(Tentative Special Council Meeting)</i>	Operating	Expiry of Council's override period of Mayor's veto of Council's budget amendments (if applicable) (requires a 2/3rd vote of Council)



City of Belleville Communications Plan

Project: 2026 Budget
Department/Committee: Finance
Staff Lead: Brandon Ferguson/Brianne MacNevin

Overview			
Start Date	May 12, 2025	End Date	Feb. 26, 2026
Background	<p>The communications and engagement plan for the 2026 budget will focus on providing clear, accessible content and meaningful engagement. The timeline for communications for the 2026 budget is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capital & Operating Preliminary Survey Distribution – May 12 - Capital & Operating Preliminary Survey Closes – June 6 - Results Presented to Council – June 12 - Draft Capital Budget and Survey Posted – Oct. 6 - Draft Capital Budget Feedback Closes – Nov. 3 - Capital Budget Meeting/Approval – Nov. 19 - Draft Operating Budget and Survey Posted – Jan. 29 - Draft Operating Budget Feedback Closes – Feb. 18 - Operating Budget Meeting/Approval – Feb. 26 		
Comms. Objective	Education, engagement and feedback		
Target Audience	City residential and non-residential taxpayers		
Key Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Important dates - Surveys - Belleville Budget newsletter - Draft budgets - Meeting dates 		
Internal Communications			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes
Council & Staff	Preliminary survey release. Draft capital budget feedback survey release.	May 12 Oct. 6	<i>Jenna</i>

	Draft operating budget feedback survey release. Budget approval release.	Jan. 29 Feb. 26 (TBD)	
Website			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes
Media Release	Preliminary survey link. Draft capital budget and feedback survey link. Draft operating budget and feedback survey link. Budget approval.	May 12 Oct. 6 Jan. 29 Feb. 26 (TBD)	<i>Sent to Council, staff and media. Posted to website. Shared on social media.</i>
Alert	Preliminary survey Draft capital feedback survey Draft operating feedback survey	May 12-June 6 Oct. 6-Nov. 3 Jan. 29-Feb. 18	<i>Pop-up on website homepage.</i>
Belleville Updates Newsletter	Preliminary survey link. Draft capital budget and feedback survey link. Draft operating budget and feedback survey link.	May 30 Oct. 31 Jan. 30	<i>Mailed to list of subscribers and posted to website/social media.</i>
Belleville Budget Newsletter	Educational material, important dates, survey links.	Ongoing	<i>Mailed to list of subscribers and posted to budget webpage/social media.</i>
New Page/Update	Belleville.ca updated with important dates, links to surveys, draft documents, meeting agendas, Belleville Budget newsletter links.	Ongoing	<i>Posting new page/updating existing webpage.</i>
Social Media			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes
Facebook	Preliminary survey Draft capital budget and feedback survey Draft operating budget and feedback survey Belleville Budget newsletter content	May 12-June 6 Oct. 6-Nov. 3 Jan. 29-Feb. 18 Ongoing	<i>Organic posts.</i>
Twitter	Preliminary survey Draft capital budget and feedback survey Draft operating budget and feedback survey Belleville Budget newsletter content	May 12-June 6 Oct. 6-Nov. 3 Jan. 29-Feb. 18 Ongoing	<i>Organic posts.</i>
Paid Campaign (\$)	Preliminary survey Draft capital budget feedback survey Draft operating budget feedback survey	May 12-June 6 Oct. 6-Nov. 3 Jan. 29-Feb. 18	<i>Advertising on FB and IG.</i>
Print			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes

Community Press Ad Spot	Preliminary survey Draft capital budget and feedback survey Draft operating budget and feedback survey Belleville Budget newsletter promo	May 15, June 5 Oct. 9, 30 Feb. 5, 12 Ongoing	<i>Included in weekly ad spot.</i>
Buck Slip	Information on budget and important dates.	End of May	<i>To be mailed out with 2025 final tax notice and extra copies made available for distribution at public events and meetings.</i>
Roadside Signs	Preliminary survey	May 13-June 1	<i>To be displayed at five different locations around town.</i>
Other Methods			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes
Marquee Signs	Preliminary survey Draft capital budget and feedback survey Draft operating budget and feedback survey	May 12-June 6 Oct. 6-Nov. 3 Jan. 29-Feb. 18	<i>Located at Quinte Sports & Wellness Centre and Zwick's Park.</i>
Televisions	Preliminary survey Draft capital budget and feedback survey Draft operating budget and feedback survey	May 12-June 6 Oct. 6-Nov. 3 Jan. 29-Feb. 18	<i>Located throughout Quinte Sports & Wellness Centre.</i>
Digital Ads (Quinte News & InQuinte)	Preliminary survey Draft capital budget and feedback survey Draft operating budget and feedback survey Belleville Budget newsletter promo	May 15-22 Oct. 9-16 Feb. 5-12 Ongoing	<i>InQuinte rotating ad and Quinte News sidebar ad. Run weekly.</i>
Digital Billboard	Preliminary Survey Draft capital budget and feedback survey Draft operating budget and feedback survey	May 22-June 5 Oct. 9-23 Jan. 29-Feb. 12	<i>Located at Bell Boulevard and North Front Street.</i>
Results			
Platform	Messaging	Date(s)	Notes
Engagement Report	Results of surveys/engagement	June 12, Nov. 10, Feb. 25	<i>Full summary of engagement with metrics.</i>