

Corporate Management



Corporate Management reflects the combined operations of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Director of Legislative and Legal Services.

The CAO is responsible for the strategic leadership of the County as well as fulfilling the role of key advisor to Council and the Senior Leadership Team. Meanwhile, the Director of Legislative and Legal Services is responsible for overseeing the Legal Services Division, the Office of the Clerk, the Community Services Division and the Communications and Organizational Development Division. For the purposes of the budget, Community Services is established as a separate service area and excluded from the Corporate Management budget estimates.

With the exception of Community Services, the Legislative and Legal Services Division is tasked with ensuring the County is compliant with its legal obligations, is open and transparent and that the County's message is being communicated to residents and stakeholders.

Level of Service Statement

Corporate Management provides support to all service areas of the Corporation. By providing strategic, legislative, legal and communication advice and supports, these service areas act as the administrative backbone for the Corporation. In the two-tier municipal system, County staff in Corporate Management also strive to be a regional resource to peers at the local level, strengthening intergovernmental relations and sharing ideas and best practices.

Opportunities and Challenges for 2025

The Legislative and Legal Services Department has evolved over the past 25 years in response to changing service level requirements and the need to implement various statutory requirements.

In early 2024, the long-serving Clerk and Director of Legislative and Community Services retired. This resulted in a complete and fulsome service delivery review of the organizational structure of this department.

The external review confirmed that it was appropriate to separate the role of Clerk from the Director role, and also confirming that, given the increasing legal complexities of the department, the Director should be a lawyer.

Since early 2024, the Clerk role performs the statutory duties assigned under the *Municipal Act, 2001*, and oversees Council Services, records management, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy matters, and accessibility programs.

Legal Services will continue to have a heavy workload in 2025, as the County road network continues to expand, resulting in further property acquisitions. In addition, ongoing matters being dealt with before the Ontario Land Tribunal, administration of claims, the review of procurement contracts and various other legal matters will require significant resources. In 2025, the vacant solicitor position created by the realignment of the Director role with the County Solicitor role will be filled, which will assist to address the rising demand on internal legal services.

As is prevalent within many service areas, recruitment and retention of staff are ongoing concerns. Ensuring our workforce is engaged and informed is a continuous challenge for our Communications and Organizational

Development team. Similarly, ensuring that the public is kept informed of Corporate initiatives and providing opportunities for public input is a priority.

Ensuring the day-to-day needs of the County are being met and ensuring that the goals outlined in the County's new Strategic Plan are being implemented will be key priorities for 2025 and beyond.

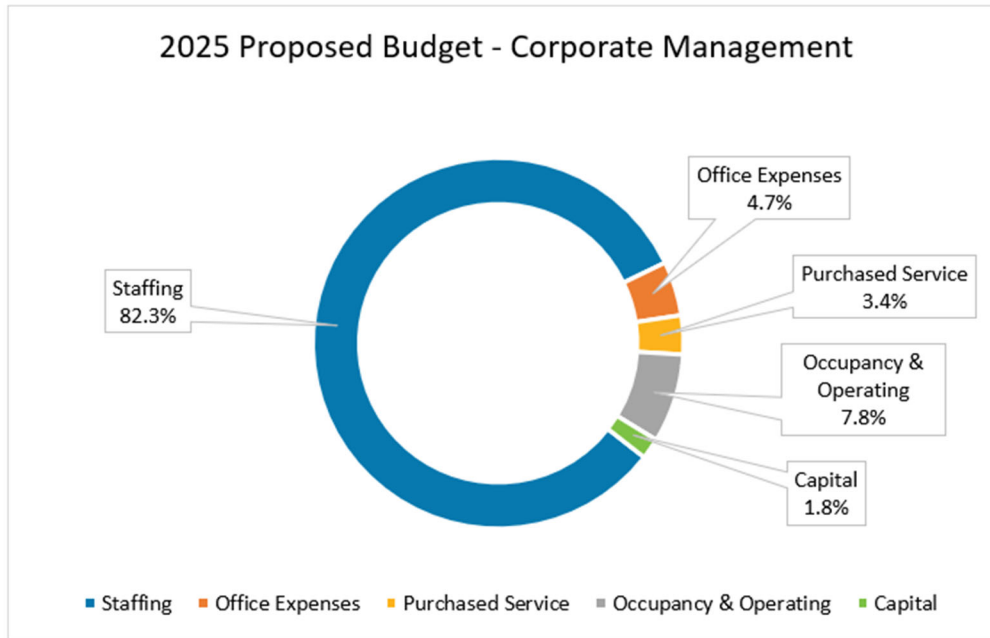
Proposed 2025 Budget Plan

In addition to increased wages and benefits resulting from the recent market survey, inflation has also affected the rates charged for training, conferences and resource material subscriptions.

In 2024, Records Management and Legal Services found summer student positions to be of great benefit. As such, the Department will continue to supplement their human resources through the continued use of summer students by securing two students for 2025, with these positions to be funded from reserve.

Additional internal corporate allocations for insurance and occupancy costs are also reflected in the proposed 2025 Budget.

The graph on the following page illustrates the key areas of proposed 2025 Budget spending in Corporate Management:



Overall, the proposed 2025 Budget for Corporate Management, net of recoveries, totals \$2,894,900 (an increase of \$418,760 (16.9%) over the 2024 Budget of \$2,476,140). The bulk of this increase is related to obligations related to wages and benefits.

Alignment with Strategic Plan Initiatives

The proposed 2025 Budget for Corporate Management aligns with the County's new Strategic Plan in a number of ways, but most notably with the following:

Focusing "Team Essex County" for Results/Being an Employer with Impact/Promoting Transparency and Awareness

The Corporate Management Group, especially through the Office of the CAO and the Office of the Clerk, continue to facilitate regional groups to address common needs and concerns at the CAO and Clerk level. Additionally, the Clerk continues to lead efforts locally to harmonize records management standards and ensure the County is continuing to work towards meetings accessibility requirements.