

Should the current Council have proceeded with CIP planning and approval that the next Council will inherit? Who or why not?

Projects in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) do not automatically get built.

As someone who's watched both the Operating and Capital budget processes with much interest over the past 15 years, I was pleased that Council finally decided to align the budget processes.

Aligning the process allows the new Council to approve or not approve projects. Council approved a new, aligned process for deliberation and approval of the Operating and Capital budgets. Starting in 2022, the CIP will begin the process of becoming aligned with the Operating Budget, and existing 2026 capital projects (which are unapproved) in the 2022–2031 CIP will be brought forward for the new Council to consider. The new process will be fully in place by 2026, where Council will be able to debate the 4-year Operating Budget and the 4-year CIP in the same year. It also means that each Council will determine their own capital priorities and deal with the tax implications of those decisions.

Further, starting in 2023 Council will receive ongoing annual reviews of the Operating and Capital budgets for the next 4 years to determine if adjustments or amendments are required.

The new process gives Council more control over the budgets, more opportunities to adjust the Operating budget mid-cycle, and greater accountability and input from the public. Council will be much more involved with budgets – it's more work! – which will result in Councillors having a better understanding of City finances.