

Council approves budgets to maintain momentum

\$6.5B in expenditures supports growing city with new & maintained infrastructure and enhanced services

Edmonton City Council approved operating and capital budgets that support Canada's fastest-growing city, through the provision of quality services, facilities and infrastructure that meet the needs of a diverse and expanding population.

"These budgets are balanced and represent prudent choices for a fast-growing city," said Mayor Don Iveson. "They keep us on course to building an even more livable, attractive and well-run city, allow us to deliver on our commitments and maintain the services, programs and infrastructure that more than 878,000 Edmontonians expect to support our quality of life."

The 2015 Operating Budget, 2015 Utilities Budget and 2015-2018 Capital Budget provide residents and organizations in Edmonton more than 90 programs for \$6 a day in taxes for a typical household.

For a typical Edmonton household (valued at \$374,500), the approved budgets mean an average municipal tax increase of about \$119 per year, or an increase of \$9.92 per month for people on the monthly payment plan. The Utilities Budget includes an increase in fees of \$1 per month for Drainage Services and \$3.35 per month for Waste Management Services.

The **2015 Operating Budget** maintains all existing programs and provides enhancements across the range of civic services, such as improvements to the snow clearing program, 89 positions for the Edmonton Police Service which includes sworn police members and civilian employees, support of the Green Shack program and extra transit service late at night and during peak times.

The **2015-18 Capital Budget** will see investment of \$4.3 billion on infrastructure, ranging from widening of Whitemud Drive to adding bicycle lanes in the core of the city. Building on the intensive investment in the past 10 years to halt the infrastructure deficit of past decades, projects in the current Capital Budget include new and upgraded libraries, fire stations, a police campus and a transit garage; renewal and upgrade of recreation facilities; construction of transportation assets like the Valley LRT line, roads and bridges; and reconstruction of roads in about 5 neighbourhoods each year.

The average 5.7% tax increase allows for:

- 1.5% to continue the Neighbourhood Renewal Program for repair and reconstruction of roads, sidewalks and streetlights in mature neighbourhoods
- 2.4% related to capital and contributed assets to staff and operate and debt service recently built facilities and infrastructure required for city growth, such as the Metro LRT line, two new Community Recreation Centres, libraries and a fire hall and
- 0.5% for debt servicing associated with newly approved infrastructure enhancements required for the growing city
- 0.8% for program enhancements, including enhanced transit services, growth in police positions, support for the ITU series.
- 0.5% from inflationary impact such as labour, building and road repair materials

City staff work to continuously improve operations to make sure that each dollar goes as far as it can. Improvement efforts leading up to the 2015 operating budget release resulted in \$15.6 million in funds available for reallocation to other priorities and allowed for \$12 million in cost avoidance, which reduced the tax increase from what it would have otherwise been.

"This Budget demonstrates how the City of Edmonton works at improving our operations and finding more efficient ways to deliver on our commitments to Edmontonians," said Mayor Iveson. "City managers have been committed to positive changes that create better value, ensuring maximum payoff for every taxpayer dollar."

City Council also chose to be accountable for their decisions for funding some capital projects through the use of debt by implementing the tax increases that will arise to pay for that debt during their term. This means that they would not defer all their funding decisions onto future Councils. This also allowed for the increases to be phased in over the four-year capital program time frame, thereby limiting spikes in tax increases related to debt servicing. In doing so, City Council generated much-needed funding to pay for additional growth capital projects.

"The Capital Budget strikes a balance between investments in a growing city and the requirement to keep existing City assets in good repair," said Mayor Iveson. "We're building a great city for the people who live, work and play in Edmonton."

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[Background information on the 2015 Operating Budget, 2015-18 Capital Budget](#)

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