

# 2015 Property Tax Bylaw

## Question and Answers



CITY OF  
FORT SASKATCHEWAN

*gotta*  *it!*  
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## Why is the bylaw being approved now?

Although City Council approves the budget for City services in December, the final property assessment values and requisitions for the provincial education tax and the Heartland Housing Foundation are not available until the end of March.

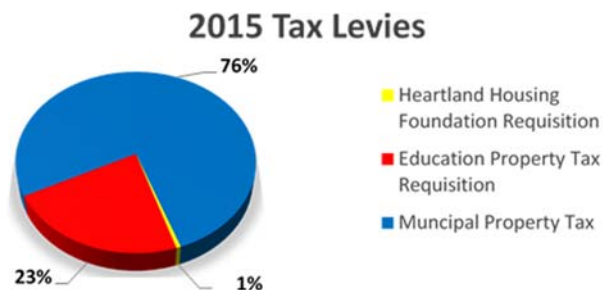
## How are taxes calculated?

Each year, City Council determines the municipal budget needed to provide services to our residents and businesses. This include such things as fire and police service; snow removal; community and social services; road construction and maintenance; bylaw enforcement; park maintenance; recreation; and library.

The primary source of revenue for the City is property taxes. However, we also receive revenue from other areas such as government grants and user fees.

The municipality is also required to collect 1) school taxes on behalf of the Province, and 2) funding for the Heartland Housing Foundation (primarily for seniors housing). For both school taxes and funding to the Heartland Housing Foundation, the City does not have authority to change or refuse the amount requested.

The following chart shows the portion of your taxes that go towards City services, the provincial education tax, and Heartland Housing Foundation.



## What is the Heartland Housing Foundation?

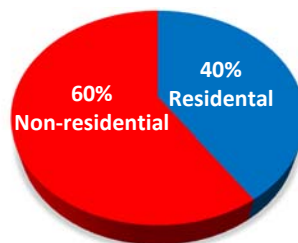
In collaboration with the communities of Fort Saskatchewan and Sherwood Park, Heartland Housing Foundation provides services to low and modest income seniors, individuals and families.

Heartland Housing Foundation operates three seniors lodge facilities within Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan, manages one seniors' apartment complex and one affordable family housing complex, and administers five rent-geared-to-income, self-contained seniors' apartment facilities within Strathcona County and Fort Saskatchewan on behalf of the Province of Alberta.

The Alberta Housing Act provides the Foundation with authority to requisition funds from municipalities. The City acts solely as the authority to collect the Heartland Housing Foundation requisition and does not have authority to change or refuse the amount requested.

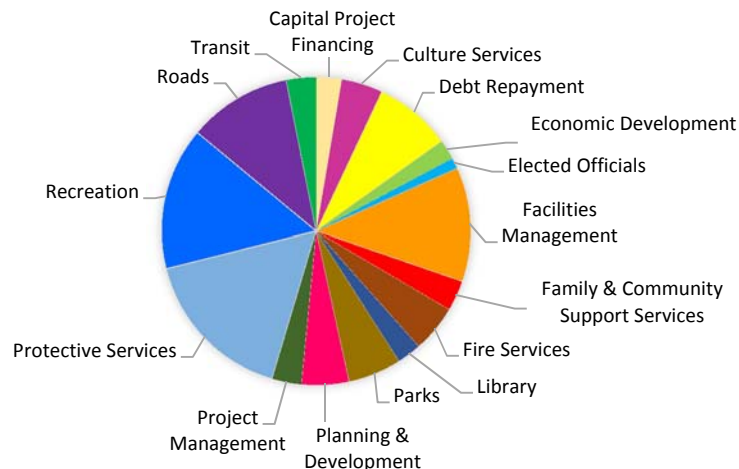
## Where do may municipal taxes come from?

For the municipal portion of property taxes, the City will be collection \$38.9 million. The City collects tax dollars from both residential (\$15.8 million) and non-residential (\$23.1 million) properties.



## Where do my municipal taxes go?

Funding provided by municipal property taxes supports a variety of programs and services, as indicated by the chart below.



## What is an assessment?

Your assessment is an estimate of the price your property may have sold for on the open market by a willing seller to a willing buyer, as of July 1 of the previous year. The City is required to reassess all properties annually, and assessments are used to equitably distribute the revenue required from property taxes to support City services.

## What is the relationship between my assessment and my property taxes?

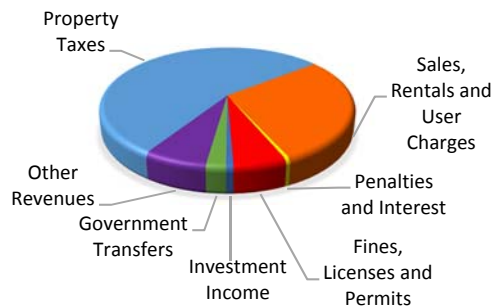
Your property assessment is used to determine your share of the total property taxes the City needs to provide the services and infrastructure established in the annual budget.

The change in your property assessment compared to the overall change for all property in your assessment class determines whether you will pay more, less, or the same as the average property tax increase. If your tax bill is either higher or lower than last year, it may be due in

part to a change in your property's assessed market value being higher or lower than the average change in property values City wide.

## What other sources of revenue does the City have besides taxes?

The City receives funding from a variety of sources, as shown in the chart below.



## What change can I expect to see in my taxes?

The following chart illustrates the estimated change in taxes payable for an average home in Fort Saskatchewan between 2014 and 2015 if your assessment did not change.

	<b>2015</b> Assessment \$400,000	<b>2014</b> Assessment \$400,000	<b>Dollar Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Municipal Taxes	\$ 1,961.02	\$ 1,925.49	\$ 35.53	1.85%
Education Taxes	\$ 917.80	\$ 954.32	-\$ 36.52	-3.83%
Heartland Housing Foundation Taxes	\$ 19.86	\$ 19.59	\$ 0.27	1.35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,898.68</b>	<b>\$ 2,899.40</b>	<b>-\$ 0.72</b>	<b>-0.02%</b>

The change in your property assessment compared to the overall change for all property in your assessment class determines whether you will pay more, less, or the same as the average property tax increase.

Also, the percentage increase approved by Council only relates to municipal taxes. Your tax notice also includes requests related to the Provincial Education tax and Heartland Housing Foundation, which may also have increased over the previous year.

## When are taxes due?

Property taxes are due on or before June 30.

## How can I pay my taxes?

The City of Fort Saskatchewan offers a number of convenient options for you to pay your Property taxes:

- Sign up for the **monthly Fort Electronic Payment Plan (FEPP)**. The plan divides your annual property taxes into 12 equal monthly payments which are automatically withdrawn from your chequing account on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Applications are accepted until May 1 of the year that taxes are due and payable. Your tax account must be paid up to date (e.g. if joining in May, taxes for January to April of the current year must be paid plus any arrears owing), and a specimen cheque marked “VOID” must be attached to the application.
- **Telephone or internet banking** through your financial institution (your seven digit roll number is your account number).
- At most **chartered banks, credit unions** and other financial institutions (Allow 7 days to process payment).
- **Mail your cheque** (payable to City of Fort Saskatchewan) and enclose the remittance portion of the tax notice.
- **In person** at City Hall (10005 - 102 St) between 8 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday by cash, cheque or debit card (please check with your financial institution to ensure your single transaction limit is sufficient for debit card).
- **After hours payment** can be deposited in the “mail deposit” located at the main entrance to City Hall (please enclose the remittance portion of the tax notice).
- **In person** at other City Facilities (please bring the remittance portion of your tax notice) including the:
  - **Dow Centennial Centre** 8700 - 84 St
  - **Harbour Pool** 10001 - 94 Ave
  - **James E Graham Building** 11121 - 88 Ave

**Please note, credit cards or credit card cheques are not accepted for tax payments.**

## Does Alberta have a tax deferral program for seniors?

The Government of Alberta's **Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program** allows qualifying seniors to defer their property tax payment through a low-interest home equity loan with Alberta Seniors. Under this program, the Alberta government will pay your residential property taxes directly to the City on your behalf. You re-pay the loan, with interest, when you sell the home, or sooner if you wish.

To be eligible, a senior homeowner must:

- be 65 years of age or older;
- be an Alberta resident;
- own a residential property in Alberta; and
- have a minimum of 25% home equity.

For more information on this program, visit <http://www.seniors.alberta.ca/seniors/property-tax-deferral.html> or call the Alberta Supports Contact line at 1-877-644-9992 (780-644-9992 in Edmonton).

