



## 2014 YEAR IN REVIEW and 2015 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

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Beaver County is a rural municipality southeast of Edmonton. It is ideally located along the Province's High-Load Corridor and has a diversified tax base, ranging from acreage development in the west, to mixed farming in the centre and east, and gravel/oil/gas extraction in the east.

Beaver County taxpayers expect County Council to use property tax dollars prudently for the efficient and economical delivery of municipal services, while meeting the changing needs of its citizens. Council takes this responsibility very seriously and thoroughly reviews the municipal budget each year to ensure that essential services are properly funded, levels of service meet the needs of County residents, and the County continues to build towards social, economic, and environmental success.

The budget reflects the costs to provide various services to a level established by Council as well as specific priorities that Council identifies on an annual basis. Together with a team of dedicated employees, Beaver County works hard to develop the County as “a place to call home”.

This document will explain the varied services offered by the County, highlight Council's accomplishments in 2014, and provide information regarding special projects in 2015.

### **Legislative and Governance**

Beaver County Council's function is to provide good government, provide services that are necessary or desirable, and maintain a safe and viable community.

The 5-member Council does this by determining the level of services provided, setting strategic priorities, passing policies and bylaws, and levying taxes to fund the services it provides.

#### **2014 Key Accomplishments:**

Completed the following strategic priorities:

- √ Equity Industrial Park Development Strategy (Committee work)
- √ Regional vision and work program (Beaver Regional Partnership)

#### **What's New in 2015?**

New strategic priorities, as follows:

- √ Equity Industrial Park Development Strategy
- √ Emergency mock exercise
- √ Regional waterline strategy
- √ Environmental stewardship program

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- √ Oiling/paving of subdivision roads (options paper)
  - √ West End Fire Smart Strategy
  - √ Bathgate waterline feasibility
  - √ BMS dividend request
  - √ Compensation review

The strategic priorities are updated each quarter as projects are completed. Click [here](#) for the most recent strategic priorities chart.

### **General Administration**

Administrative staff support Council, other departments, and the public, by providing legislative and corporate services, financial and accounting services, insurance and risk management, health and safety programs, property tax and assessment, communications, and strategic planning. An organizational chart for the County may be viewed by clicking [here](#).

#### *2014 Key Accomplishments:*

- √ Regional vision and work program (Beaver Regional Partnership)
- √ Passed external Health and Safety Audit (92%)
- √ Negotiated funding agreement with Clean Harbors

#### *What's New in 2015?*

- √ BMS dividend request
- √ Compensation review
- √ Updated aerial photos
- √ County vision/long-term strategic plan

### **Bylaw/Traffic Enforcement**

Two Community Peace Officers enforce bylaws regarding animal control, excessive noise, traffic enforcement, unsightly premises, and road bans, and provide other public safety services.

#### *2014 Key Accomplishments:*

- √ Concentrated enforcement efforts:
  - 47 animal-related complaint files opened
  - 278 traffic violation tickets issued
  - 37 road use agreements authorized and monitored

#### *What's New in 2015?*

- √ Assistance to BESC re: emergency management, including mock exercise
- √ Contract kennel service

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## **Protective Services**

Beaver County contributes funding to Beaver Emergency Services Commission to provide fire protection and emergency management services ([www.besc.ca](http://www.besc.ca)). Three County Councillors sit on the Board.

The County is one of five members of Beaver Emergency Medical Services ([www.beaver-ems.com](http://www.beaver-ems.com)) which is contracted by Alberta Health Services to provide ground ambulance services via 9-1-1 dispatch (no taxes required).

### **2014 Key Accomplishments:**

√ Assistance to BESC re: CAO services

### **What's New in 2015?**

√ Assistance to BESC re: strategic planning

√ West end Fire Smart strategy

## **Public Works**

A fleet of 10 full-time grader operators maintain and upgrade over 2,600 km (1,615 miles) of open roads (grading, snowplowing). Roads are graveled on a 3-year rotation (approximately 900 km (560 miles) per year). The County also maintains bridges and culverts.

The County has developed a cost-sharing program for residents to alleviate dust as there are few oiled or paved roads.

### **2014 Key Accomplishments:**

√ Upgrade shoulders on 35 km (22 miles) of road

√ Base stabilization and chip seal surfacing on 8 km (5 miles) of road

√ Construction of new grader shed in Viking

### **What's New in 2015:**

√ Upgrade shoulders on 48 km (30 miles) of road

√ Base stabilization and chip seal surfacing on 13 km (8 miles) of road

√ Apply oil (new application) on 3 km (2 miles) of road

√ 5 year road construction plan

√ Oiling/paving of subdivision roads (options paper)

## **Utilities (Water Supply, Sewage Treatment, and Waste Management)**

The County provides potable water to rural residents via the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission ([www.hwy14water.ca](http://www.hwy14water.ca)). The County is represented on this Commission by one Councillor.

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The County also provides sanitary sewage collection and disposal services in the Hamlets of Bruce and Kinsella.

Sanitary waste collection and disposal services are provided throughout the County via Beaver Municipal Solutions ([www.beavermunicipal.com](http://www.beavermunicipal.com)). The County is represented on the Board by one Councillor.

2014 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Extension of regional waterline and construction of water truck fill station in west end (commissioning in 2015)

What's New in 2015?

- √ Sale of Kinsella water distribution system to Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission
- √ Regional waterline strategy
- √ Bathgate waterline feasibility
- √ Review BMS strategic plan (regional initiative)

### **Community Services**

The County supports “people” services by providing grants to external organizations in support of adult learning, preventive family and community support services, and doctor recruitment efforts.

2014 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Youth engagement initiative (grant funding secured)

What's New in 2015?

- √ Youth engagement initiative (strategy)

### **Planning & Economic Development**

The County’s planning department provides planning and land use policy development and administration services to the public.

The County is proud to market and promote the community and its two industrial parks (174 hectares (430 acres) near Ryley and Viking) to retain business, support tourism, expand the economic base, and improve the quality of life of residents.

2014 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Equity Industrial Park Development Strategy (Committee work)

What's New in 2015?

- √ Equity Industrial Park Development Strategy (public input & final strategy)
- √ Bury power line on SH 854 to assist with high load moves out of Equity Industrial Park

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## Agriculture

A joint Councillor/public-at-large Agricultural Service Board determines the level of service provided to residents.

Permanent and seasonal staff provide services to the agricultural community, including weed and pest control, weed and pest inspection, beaver, coyote, and other pest control, vegetation management, education, and conservation planning.

The County supports the Beaver County Seed Cleaning Plant and provides grants to various organizations to promote sustainable agricultural practices.

### 2014 Key Accomplishments:

- √ All County road allowances were mown once to control vegetation along road shoulders
- √ 43 miles of road allowances were mulched
- √ 287 yardsites were brushed and/or sprayed to improve visibility and safety
- √ 2/3 of County road allowances were sprayed for the control of weeds and brush
- √ 30 kilometres (18.5 miles) of roadsides were seeded following shoulder pulls
- √ 195 clubroot surveys were completed
- √ Financial support totaling over \$10,000 was provided to various County organizations that promote agriculture within the community, including a one-time debt retirement grant to the Seed Cleaning Plant
- √ Policy development
- √ Partnership with University of Alberta (Augustana campus) to complete a research project focusing on mitigating human-beaver conflicts

### What's New in 2015?

- √ Blanket weed spraying will occur in Division 5 for control of weeds and brush regrowth
- √ Spot weed spraying will take place in Divisions 1-4
- √ Mulching will occur in Division 4 to improve traffic safety and road maintenance operations
- √ Roadside mowing will begin in Division 1 and 2 and progress east
- √ Expanded focus of the University of Alberta partnership to address human-wildlife interactions through adaptive management
- √ Environmental stewardship program

## Parks & Recreation, Libraries, and Culture

The County owns Black Nugget Lake and Camp Lake campgrounds and contracts their operation to private companies.

The County is pleased to financially support many hamlet and rural community organizations. For a list of groups that received financial assistance from the County in 2014, click [here](#).

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The County recognizes the benefit of regional cooperation and shares operating costs of recreation and library facilities in towns and villages that are used by rural residents. It also financially supports cultural events in the County-owned Beaver Regional Arts Society building in Holden.

Shared services funding totaled approximately \$400,000 in 2014.

2014 Key Accomplishments:

√ Shared services agreement for on-going support of Viking Carena

What's New in 2015?

√ Cooperate with the Town of Tofield in a Community Hall study

**Requisitions**

In addition to municipal taxes, the County is required to levy taxes to pay requisitions to the Alberta School Foundation Fund (education) and the Beaver Foundation (seniors housing). Your property tax bill is a combination of all three taxes.

**2015 Property Taxes**

In summary, the 2015 municipal budget expenditures total \$20,741,917, offset by funding sources of \$7,674,717 (user fees, reserves, and grants), leaving a tax levy requirement of \$13,067,200. Compared to 2014, this represents less than a 1% increase in spending, however with a decrease in funding sources, a municipal mill rate increase of 3.43% was required.

The school mill rate decreased 1.4% for residential property and 4.3% for non-residential property. The Beaver Foundation mill rate decreased 4.7% for all properties. These decreases in mill rates will help to offset the impact of the municipal mill rate increase.

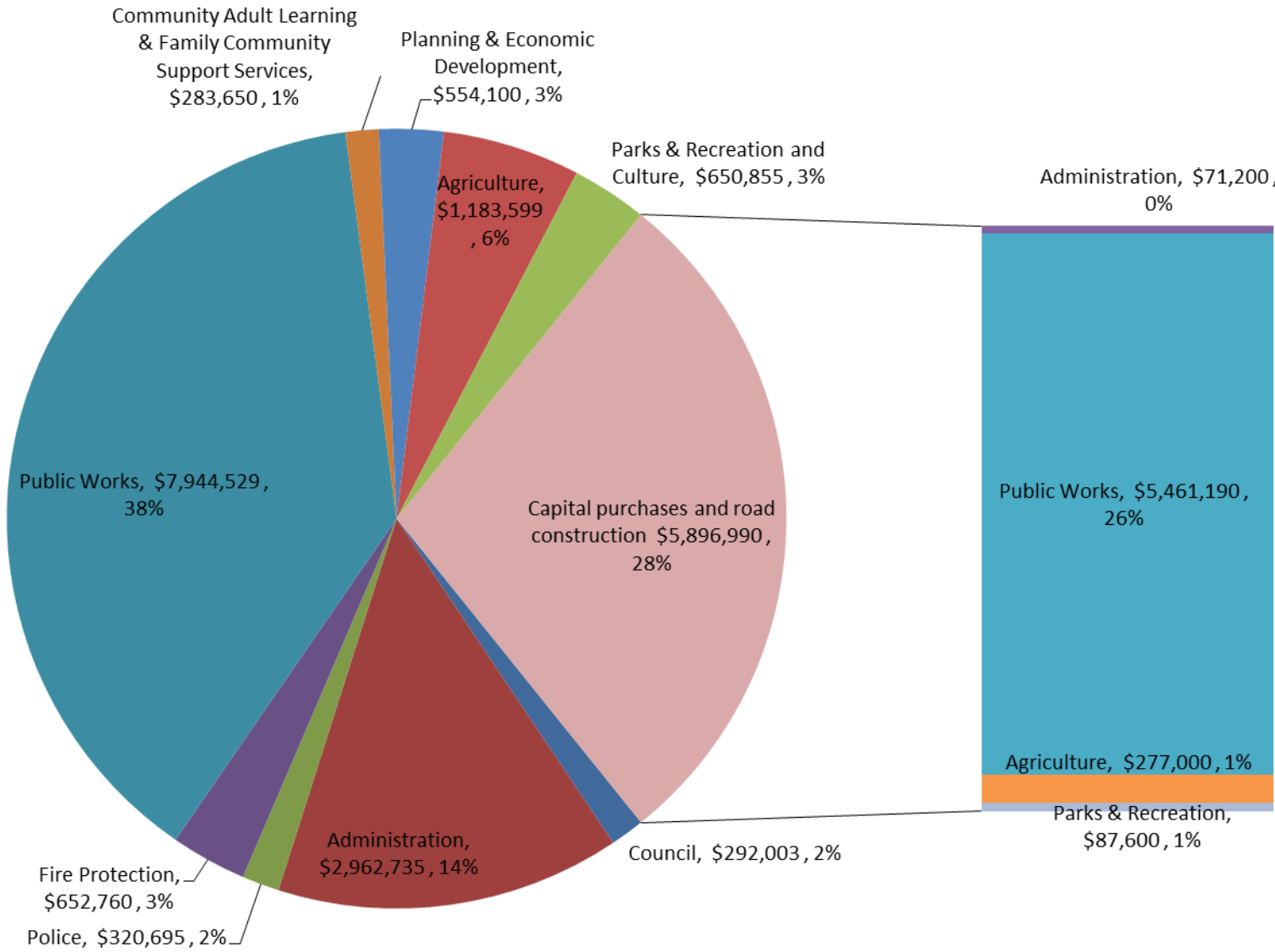
The change in your property taxes from 2014 to 2015 will depend on the change in your property assessment (if any). For detailed information regarding the County's assessment base, click [here](#). If you have questions regarding your individual property assessment once you receive your property assessment notice, contact one of the County's assessors at 780-663-3730.

Senior citizens who are having trouble paying their property taxes may benefit from the Seniors Property Tax Deferral program. This program allows eligible senior homeowners to defer all or part of their annual property tax through a low-interest home equity loan with the Government of Alberta. For more information, go to [www.health.alberta.ca/seniors.html](http://www.health.alberta.ca/seniors.html).

Each municipality sets its mill rates based on its individual budget, circumstances, and levels of service. For a comparison of Beaver County's mill rates to that of its rural neighbours, click [here](#).

**Where Does My Tax Dollar Go?**

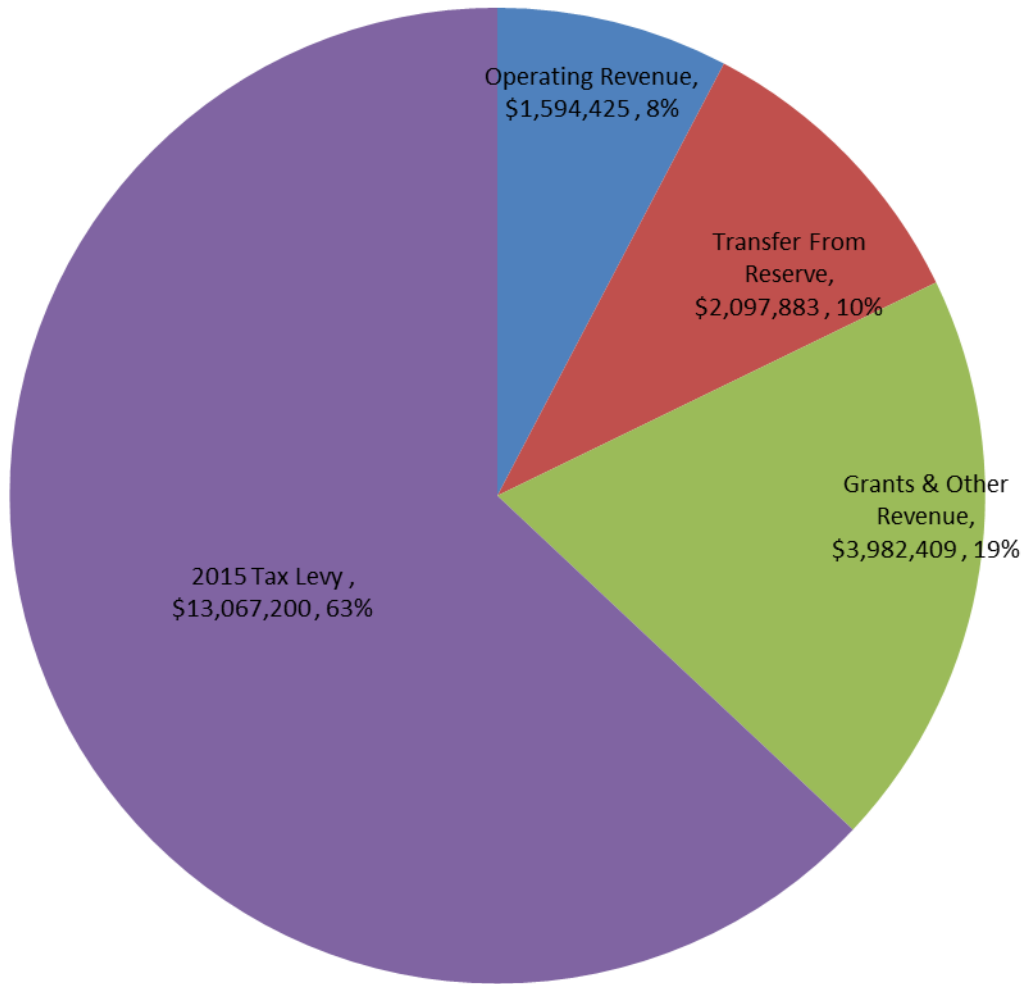
**Budget 2015 - Expenses \$20,741,917**



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**How Is the 2015 Budget Funded?**

**Budget 2015 - Revenue \$20,741,917**





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## **The County's Financial Position**

Annually, the County's financial systems are audited by an independent accounting firm. This firm, MNP LLP, has issued its opinion that the County's 2014 "financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Beaver County as at December 31, 2014, and the results of its operations, change in net financial assets, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards".

The County is in a good financial position, as evidenced by the following:

- ❖ The value of its financial assets exceeds the value of its liabilities.
- ❖ It spends "within its means".
- ❖ Property taxes are collected at a rate of 98% (2014).
- ❖ It has no long-term debt other than a debenture that it took to finance Beaver Foundation's debt on the Tofield and Viking seniors housing facilities. This debenture is recoverable by all the municipalities in the region via the annual requisition and will be fully paid in 2035.
- ❖ It has a modest reserve with which to fund strategic priorities or emergency expenses.

A complete copy of the 2014 financial statements may be viewed by clicking [here](#).