



2015 YEAR IN REVIEW and 2016 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

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, County Council 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 2015, and provide information regarding special projects in 2016.

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.

2015 Key Accomplishments:

Completed the following strategic priorities:

- √ Oiling/paving of subdivision roads (options paper)
- √ Bathgate waterline preliminary design and stakeholder consultation
- √ BMS dividend request
- √ Compensation review

What's New in 2016?

New strategic priorities, as follows:

- √ Municipal sustainability plan
- √ Long-range financial plan

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- √ Service capacity review adjustment
 - √ New Animal Control Bylaw
 - √ Road plan review
 - √ Gravel haul options
 - √ Update country residential development regulations
 - √ Equity Industrial Park Area Structure Plan
 - √ Agricultural strategy
 - √ Black Nugget Lake Campground terms of reference
 - √ Recreation Master Plan implementation

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](#).

2015 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Compensation review
- √ Updated aerial photos

What's New in 2016?

- √ Municipal sustainability plan
- √ Long-range financial plan
- √ Well-site property assessments
- √ Farmland assessment update

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.

2015 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Concentrated enforcement efforts:
 - 64 animal-related complaint files opened
 - 485 traffic violation tickets issued
 - 30 road use agreements authorized and monitored, of which 11 were agricultural-related
 - Animal Control Bylaw public consultation

What's New in 2016?

- √ Assistance to BESC re: emergency management
- √ Practicum student
- √ New Animal Control Bylaw

Protective Services

Beaver County contributes funding to Beaver Emergency Services Commission to provide fire protection and emergency management services (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) which is contracted by Alberta Health Services to provide ground ambulance services via 9-1-1 dispatch (no taxes required).

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.

2015 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Oiling/paving of subdivision roads (options paper)
- √ Upgrade shoulders on 40 km (25 miles) of road
- √ Base stabilization and chip seal surfacing on 13 km (8 miles) of road
- √ Road oiling for 3.2 km (2 miles)

What's New in 2016:

- √ Road plan review
- √ Gravel haul options
- √ Upgrade shoulders on 40 km (25 miles) of road
- √ Base stabilization and chip seal surfacing on 4 km (2.5 miles) of road
- √ Apply oil (new application) on 16 km (10 miles) of road
- √ New road stabilization alternatives

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.hwyl4water.ca). The County is represented on this Commission by one Councillor.

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). The County is represented on the Board by one Councillor.

2015 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Extension of regional waterline and construction of water truck fill station in west end
- √ Bathgate waterline preliminary design and stakeholder consultation

What's New in 2016?

- √ Kinsella sewage lagoon clean-out

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.

2015 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Youth engagement initiative (youth and public consultation)

What's New in 2016?

- √ Youth engagement initiative (data collection and analysis)

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 (223 hectares (550 acres) near Ryley and Viking) to retain business, support tourism, expand the economic base, and improve the quality of life of residents.

2015 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Over 80 new housing/business start-ups
- √ Equity Industrial Park (EIP) Development Strategy (Committee work)
- √ Sold 2 lots in EIP
- √ Purchased additional land for EIP expansion

What's New in 2016?

- √ Bury power line on SH 854 to assist with high load moves out of EIP
- √ Equity Industrial Park Area Structure Plan (public input & final strategy)
- √ Install utilities in EIP expansion area
- √ Update country residential development regulations

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.

2015 Key Accomplishments:

- √ All County road allowances were mown to control vegetation along road shoulders
- √ 105 miles of road allowances were mulched
- √ 304 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
- √ 40 kilometers (25 miles) of roadsides were seeded following shoulder pulls
- √ 178 clubroot surveys were completed
- √ Financial support totaling over \$10,000 was provided to various County organizations that promote agriculture within the community
- √ Partnered with University of Alberta (Augustana campus) to complete a research project focusing on mitigating human wildlife interactions through adaptive management

What's New in 2016?

- √ Blanket weed spraying will occur in Divisions 1, 2, and 3 for control of weeds and brush regrowth
- √ Spot weed spraying will take place in Division 5
- √ Mulching will occur in Divisions 1, 2, and 3 to improve traffic safety and road maintenance operations
- √ Roadside mowing will begin in Divisions 1 and 2 and progress east
- √ New contract for land flood control
- √ One-year agreement with the Seed Cleaning Plant, in the amount of \$30,000, for operational purposes
- √ Expanded focus of the University of Alberta partnership to focus on ecological sustainability in rural landscapes including potential carbon metrics on the prairie landscape
- √ Agricultural strategy

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. In 2015, the County provided over \$67,000 in financial assistance.

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 Paragon Theatre (formerly Beaver Regional Arts Society building) in Holden.

Shared services funding totaled approximately \$440,000 in 2015.

2015 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Cooperated with the Town of Tofield in a Community Hall study

What's New in 2016?

- √ Suspend Bounty in the County event
- √ Allocate 50% of Beaver Municipal Solutions' surplus revenue to grants for local and regional projects
- √ Contract new cultural arts tenant in Paragon Theatre
- √ Pilot project for campground host at Camp Lake
- √ Replace boat launch at Camp Lake
- √ Black Nugget Lake Campground terms of reference
- √ Assist Town of Tofield to rebuild spray park
- √ Recreation Master Plan implementation

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.

2016 Property Taxes

The 2016 municipal budget expenditures total \$22,104,025, offset by funding sources of \$9,056,037 (user fees, reserves, and grants), leaving a tax levy requirement of \$13,047,988. While spending increased from 2015, the tax levy remains the same. Unfortunately, due to a significant decrease in the non-residential property assessment base (\$33 million in assessment value), a municipal mill rate increase of 3.77% was required to balance the budget.

The school mill rate increased 1.1% for residential property and 12.5% for non-residential property (again, due to the decrease in property assessment value). The Beaver Foundation mill rate increased 3.4% for all properties.

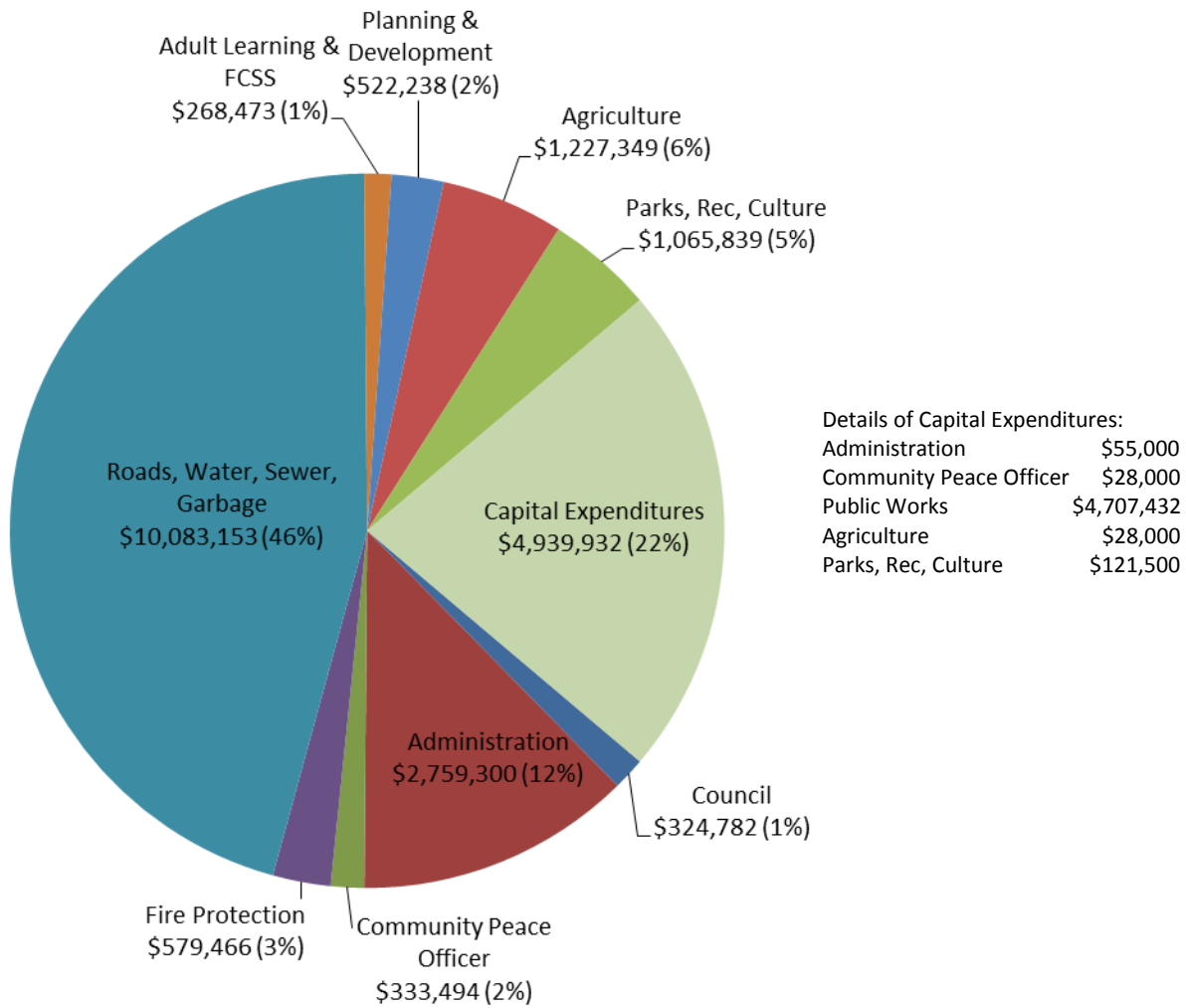
The change in your property taxes from 2015 to 2016 will depend on the change in your property assessment (if any). For detailed information regarding the County's assessment base, click [here](#). If you have questions regarding your individual property assessment once you receive your property assessment 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 <http://www.seniors-housing.alberta.ca/seniors/property-tax-deferral.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](#).

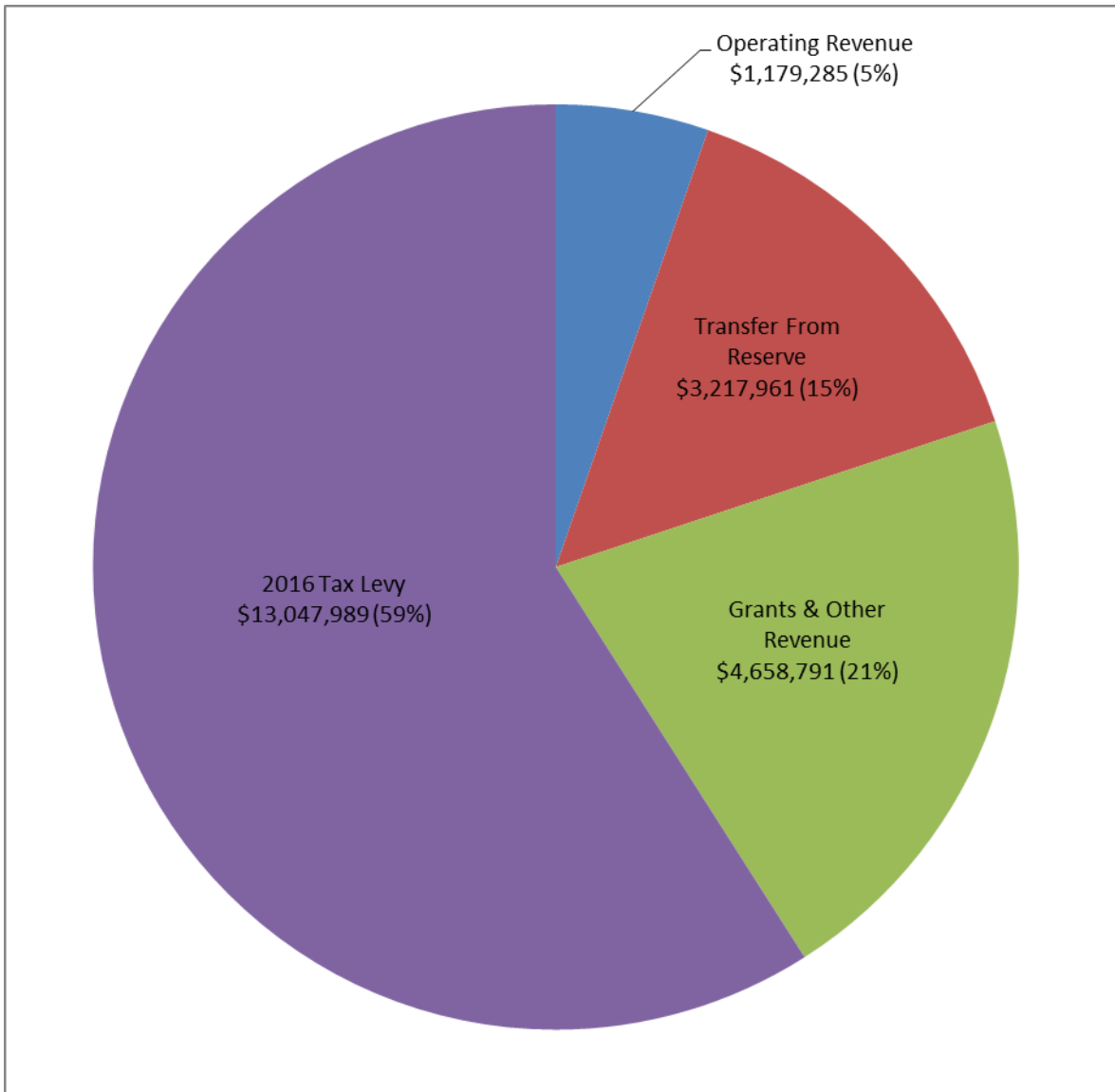
Where Does My Tax Dollar Go?

Budget 2016 \$22,104,026



How Is the 2016 Budget Funded?

Budget 2016 \$22,104,026



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 2015 "financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Beaver County as at December 31, 2015, 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 97% (2015).
- ❖ 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 2015 financial statements may be viewed by clicking [here](#).