

Budget 2009/10 Highlights



- The budget for 2009/10 will provide incremental service increases in selected areas, based on Council Focus Areas, while holding the tax rate flat.
- \$570 million net municipal Operating Budget (3.6% increase over 2008/2009) and a gross Capital Budget of \$159 million.
- Mandatory Provincial Contributions are estimated to increase to \$4.2 million, 3.9% over 08/09. Due to growth in the assessment base however, the area rate will actually decline.
- This year's budget theme was Planning for Change, Seizing Opportunities, Safeguarding our Future.

Planning for Change:

Proactively preparing for the expected fiscal pressures
Recognizing the importance of hiring and retaining talented people
A calm and steady approach

Seizing Opportunities:

Exploring revenue prospects and expenditure reduction opportunities
Leveraging upcoming federal and provincial stimulus initiatives
Re-examining debt policy and capital budget

Safeguarding our Future:

Continuing to overcome the infrastructure deficit
Recapitalization efforts are ongoing
Modest increases in HRM low income rebate program
Ensure decisions today position us well for future years

- Earlier this year, Halifax Regional Council identified the areas on which to focus additional attention. The capital budget includes initiatives that support this direction:

Transportation - Ragged Lake Transit Operations Centre, Transit terminal upgrades and expansion, Bus stop accessibility, additional Woodside Ferry, and the Larry Uteck Interchange.

Community Planning - Prospect Recreation Centre, Canada Games Recreation Centre, four-pad arena, Detailed design for Central Library, and a 22% or \$1.8 million increase in Parks and Playgrounds

Infrastructure - Maintaining the 5 year plan, and using the evaluation matrix and capital priorities recently approved by Council to shape future plans

Public Safety - \$1 million increase for Fire apparatus, and 911/Non Emergency Recording System, hiring in police and fire

Governance & Communications - Corporate Document Records Management, Corporate Customer Database, continued Council Chamber Upgrades, implementation of corporate communications plan

- Reduction in the Fire Protection Area Rate to eliminate a \$4.7 million surplus.
- Council confirmed earlier this year that the commercial rates be adjusted so that the residential assessment cap does not impact commercial taxpayers.