

#### 2024/25 MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROVED

Halifax Regional Council has approved the 2024/25 municipal budget of \$1.04 billion in total municipal expenditures and capital plan of \$306.5 million. The average residential tax bill is increasing by 6.3 per cent. That equates to an extra penny on the local residential tax rates. This means the average single-family home tax bill will increase by \$214 in 2024/25. Below are select highlights from the 2024/25 municipal budget, grouped in Regional Council approved priorities from the Strategic Priorities Plan 2021-25 ([www.halifax.ca/city-hall/budget-finances/budget/strategic-priorities-plan](http://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/budget-finances/budget/strategic-priorities-plan)):

#### Communities:

- \$2 million for a 24/7 fire station conversion in Hammonds Plains
- Funding for 22 new Halifax Regional Police positions and six new Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers
- \$2.3 million in continued Community Safety programs and new positions
- Funding for 10 new crossing guard positions

#### Prosperous Economy:

- \$7.5 million in budgeted tax relief for non-profit and charitable organizations

#### Environment:

- \$18.6 million for capital projects as part of HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together

#### Integrated Mobility:

- \$271 million for the Mill Cove Ferry Terminal project
- \$2.4 million for funding of the Integrated Mobility Plan

The Province of Nova Scotia has given notice that, effective the 2024/25 fiscal year, the municipality will no longer be required to collect and remit taxes for Social Housing and Correctional Services. Previously, these charges were included in the "provincial rate" section of your tax bill, however; they increased the contribution required for Mandatory Education.

A new commercial taxation policy came into effect in April 2023, changing the way that commercial property taxes are calculated. Geographical tax boundaries for commercial properties will change from the previous urban, suburban and rural areas to one of five new tax areas. As well, for each tax area, rates will vary by assessed value of the property, within three tiers of assessment. The rates for each tier and tax area are listed on [www.halifax.ca/taxrates](http://www.halifax.ca/taxrates).

Municipal tax-supported debt will remain stable in 2024/25, the total property tax-supported principal and interest payments on outstanding debt will be \$49.3 million. This represents 4.7 per cent of total municipality expenditures, which is well below provincial guidelines of 15 per cent for debt management.

The annual HRM budget funds all costs associated with servicing a growing municipality. This includes day-to-day municipal operations (for example, transit, police, fire, garbage collection, and staffing costs), as well as capital projects and investments to purchase, construct, rehabilitate and replace municipal assets. Learn more at [www.halifax.ca/budget](http://www.halifax.ca/budget).

#### HRM 2024 CITIZENSHIP AWARDS

Every year HRM presents a Citizenship Award to outstanding Grade 9 students throughout the municipality. The recipients are chosen based on qualities of leadership in their school and community, and commendable performance in the courses in which they are enrolled. This year the following students from our district were bestowed with this honour:

- Marine Drive Academy – Grayson Rehberg
- Oyster Pond Academy – Rory Jennex
- Bicentennial Jr, High – Sophia Langille

Great efforts by these outstanding students!

#### COMMUNITY MUSEUM GRANTS

The HRM Community Museums Grants Program was established in 2018 in response to a request for funding assistance from several local museums, some of whom do not receive operating assistance under the provincial Museums Assistance Program and instead rely heavily upon volunteers and self-generated revenue. The term "community museum" is defined to distinguish these museums from provincial, federal, or institutional museums, stand-alone archives, interpretation centres, and art galleries. Here is a list of this year's grants and tax relief provided to our local community-based museums:

#### Project Grants:

- Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society: \$4,000 towards the purchase of security cameras.
- Lake Charlotte Area Heritage Society: \$5,000 towards professional services for research pertaining to people of African descent and their role in the settlement of the Eastern Shore region.

#### Capital Grants:

- Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Farm Society: \$15,000 to re-shingle the Giles House.
- Lake Charlotte Area Heritage Society: \$25,000 towards the construction of a new archival storage facility.

#### Operating Grants:

- Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society: \$17,574 HRM + \$50,012 Community Museum Assistance Program (CMAP)
- Lake Charlotte Area Heritage Society: \$23,066 HRM + \$21,000 CMAP
- Musquodoboit Harbour Heritage Society: \$8,787 HRM + \$14,748 CMAP
- L'Acadie de Chezzetcook Association: \$5,492 HRM
- Sheet Harbour Area Heritage Society: \$3,295 HRM

#### Property Tax Relief:

- Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society: \$6,808 but pay \$75 for fire hydrants.
- L'Acadie de Chezzetcook Association: \$3,864
- Lake Charlotte Area Heritage Society: \$11,877
- Musquodoboit Harbour Heritage Society: \$1,310 but pay \$135 (HRM Tenancy: District 2 Councillor's Office)
- Sheet Harbour Area Historical Society: \$864 but pay \$1,882 for lease.

#### Less than Market Value Lease:

- Sheet Harbour Area Historical Society: \$5,110 Rent Waiver + \$5,150 Operating Assistance = \$10,260

#### NEW A.I. CAMERAS TO DETECT WILDFIRES

In partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia, the HRM has launched a pilot program using artificial intelligence (A.I.) software called FireScout to detect wildfires in three areas across the municipality. Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency (HRFE) will be the first municipal fire department in Canada and on the eastern seaboard of North America to use the FireScout technology.

This pilot program is part of the HRFE Wildland Urban Interface Strategy and is expected to significantly improve HRFE's ability to identify the location of a fire, reduce the time for notification and arrival so crews can take action much sooner. These specialized cameras have been placed on provincial communications towers in Hammonds Plains, Musquodoboit Harbour and Middle Sackville. A.I. software monitors the imagery for signs of smoke. By adding local imagery, the software continuously improves how it identifies and detects smoke from wildfires. It compares camera imagery to millions of database images to identify a potential wildfire versus fog or other smoke like appearances. The cameras and software can detect wildfires up to 29 kilometers away during daylight hours, and up to 21 kilometers away during the night. When smoke is detected, an alert is sent to HRFE for assessment and action. The cameras run 24/7 and offer a 360-degree view of their area, enhancing wildfire safety through early detection and accuracy.

Residents are encouraged to prepare for the wildfire season by:

- Staying informed about weather conditions and fire restrictions ([www.novascotia.ca/burnsafe](http://www.novascotia.ca/burnsafe))
- Planning an evacuation route
- Having an emergency kit
- Learning about the FireSmart program, which helps protect residents, their homes, neighbourhoods, critical infrastructure and vital natural resources from wildfire at [www.firesmartcanada.ca](http://www.firesmartcanada.ca).

#### ENVIRONMENT WEEK IS JUNE 3-9

During #CanadianEnvironmentWeek (CEW) there are many dedicated days to heighten our awareness of various environmental causes such as World Environment Day (June 5), Clean Air Day (June 7) and World Oceans Day (June 8).

For more information, visit [www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/canadian-environment-week.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/canadian-environment-week.html). During CEW and throughout the year, we are urged to reflect on the many ways we can take action to protect and preserve our natural surroundings.

#### GRADUATION CONGRATULATIONS

I want to congratulate the Class of 2024 Graduates in high school, community college and university. May each of you find your own path in life that leads to many successes and the best of luck with your future endeavours.



Councillor David Hendsbee  
Councillor—Counciller municipal—Comhairlaiche—Wunaqapeme'j  
District 2: Preston—Chezzetcook—Eastern Shore

Railway Museum – #7895 Highway #7  
P.O. Box 2, Musquodoboit Harbour, NS, B0J 2L0

1841 Argyle Street, Councillor's Support, 4th Floor  
P.O. Box 1749, Halifax, NS, B3J 3A5

Office Phone: 902.889.2448  
Cell Phone: 902.483.0705  
City Hall: 902.490.4050  
Fax: 902.829.3620

[david.hendsbee@halifax.ca](mailto:david.hendsbee@halifax.ca)  
[David.hendsbee.ns.ca@gmail.com](mailto:David.hendsbee.ns.ca@gmail.com)  
[www.hendsbee.ns.ca](http://www.hendsbee.ns.ca)  
[@david\\_hendsbee](https://www.facebook.com/david.hendsbee)  
[facebook.com/david.hendsbee](https://www.facebook.com/david.hendsbee)

**311**  
902.490.4000  
TTY: 902.490.6645  
TTY Toll Free:  
1.866.236.0020  
Toll-Free: 1.800.835.6428