

City Council Update



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CITY COUNCILLOR WARD I

The proposed 2007 City budget was recently released and is a key topic of discussion for both Council and citizens. I wish to provide you some background information and get your feedback on the budget process.

Population and Tax Increases

Since 1990, taxes for the average Edmontonian have increased by \$1,628. Of this, 71 per cent (\$1,157) went to the Federal Government, 27 per cent (\$439) to the Provincial Government, and two per cent (\$32) to the City. Since 1978, taxes in Edmonton have increased on average 2.8 per cent per year, with the population growing by approximately 50 per cent over that same period. Estimates have 18,000 people, the equivalent of a city the size of Spruce Grove, moving to the Edmonton area this year alone.

Provincial Grants

A significant challenge for the City's ability to maintain existing services and respond to growth has been the decline in provincial grants. Since 1992, annual operating grants from the Province have been cut by \$6 million. Some relief was provided in 2005 when the Province initiated the Alberta Municipal Infrastructure Program, providing \$135.5 million a year for five years for capital projects only. This was in addition to an ongoing fuel rebate program that provides the City with five cents per litre for fuel purchased in Edmonton.

Proposed 2007 Budget

The total proposed budget represents \$2.3 billion, \$1.4 billion in operating and \$1 billion in capital expenditures (less .1 for transfers). Council will deliberate the budget on December 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 and 15, 2006. This will take place in Council Chambers and is open to the public.

The proposed budget increase of 7.8 per cent works out to about \$127 a year or \$10.58 a month. This is largely due to an increase in the municipal costs of doing business, estimated to be between five and six per cent this year with some capital costs rising upwards of 20 per cent. Due to these cost increases, 6.3 per cent of the proposed tax increase would go to cover existing operations.

Further Information

Further information or input on the 2007 budget may be obtained via the City website at www.edmonton.ca/budget

Give Me Your Thoughts!

Ward I Town Hall Meeting on the budget hosted by Councillors Leibovici and Sloan on December 5, 7:00 pm at the West End Seniors Centre (9629-176 Street).

Attend Council Deliberations on the budget December 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 and 15th in Council chambers.

Send a Note by email to linda.sloan@edmonton.ca or mail to 1 Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton, AB, T5J 2R7