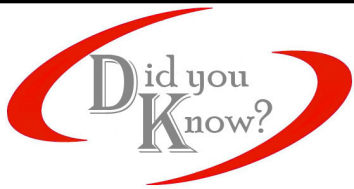




2021/22 Budget Highlights

Town of Stratford 2021/22 Budget Report



The 2021/22 Town of Stratford budget does not include an increase for Stratford Utility customers. The Town has only recently begun pumping the Town's sewage to the Charlottetown Pollution Control Plant however we remain hopeful that our flow estimates will be close. What can you do to help? As residents, every drop of liquid going into our system now counts and is paid for through our billing agreement with the City of Charlottetown. Please be mindful of how much is leaving your home and entering our sewer system, and make changes where you can - every drop saved counts! Consider using that leftover water in your cup to water a plant, shorten your shower time by a minute or two, and check that your sump pump isn't illegally connected to the Town's sewer system. Be sure to have a water audit completed as well if you haven't already and learn even more ways to save. Your cooperation is appreciated!

It is my pleasure to highlight the 2021/22 Town of Stratford Budget. This budget is balanced by implementing the second phase of last year's previously announced tax increases. This two-year plan was necessary to allow us to balance our budget and was shared among all in Stratford, rather than just by some tax payers. The increases in most cases maintain a lower or equal rate to those of our closest neighbours in Charlottetown and Cornwall. To the average residential property owner, this will mean a less than \$15 tax increase for the upcoming year. I am pleased to announce there will be no increase in our Stratford Utility charges for the upcoming year.

The Town of Stratford continues to face significant pressure from growth. With growth, comes the need to provide additional infrastructure, programming, and services, all of which require additional revenue to be able to deliver. While being positioned for growth is exciting for our Town, it requires us to be forward thinking in our planning and forecasting. Growth in the Town is very positive, however it doesn't directly relate to increased revenue for the Town as services including water and sewer infrastructure, trails and sidewalks, increased recreation and culture programming, and fire protection, among others, are required in order for the growth to occur and come at an expense that is not equal to the growth revenue. We expect that this year will see further growth from both commercial and residential developments, and for this trend to continue for many years to come.

As we look to the next 12 months, there are many exciting projects underway in our community. Some of these will be highlighted in more detail on the following pages but residents will be looking forward to seeing the waterfront space begin to develop; the Community Campus design and initial servicing begin; the launch of Switch Stratford - a residential energy retrofit program; a trail expansion at Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park; and much more!

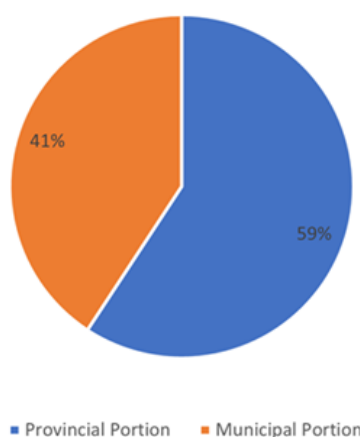
Our community is a great one with many positive things happening around us, and of course our biggest asset is our wonderful residents. We are positioned well for the future and together we are truly building the best community possible!



Revenue and expenses

In the 2021/22 Town budget, we are forecasting revenue of \$7,943,000 which includes government transfers of \$1,334,000 and expenses of \$7,942,200, resulting in a surplus of \$800. The Town of Stratford, through your Town Council and staff, continue to deliver exceptional value for your investment as a resident with the amount of revenue available to us. Municipalities are limited in number of sources of revenue available to them and, like others, rely primarily on property taxes, utility charges and fees to pay for services and infrastructure.

Provincial/Municipal Property Tax Bill Comparison

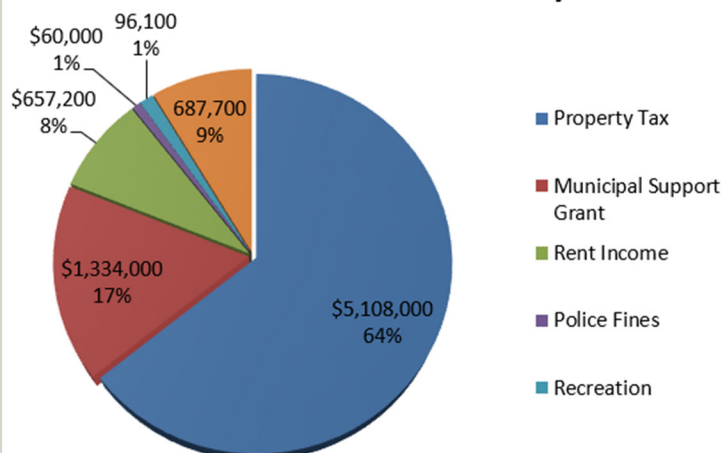


The upcoming budget year includes investments in developing interpretational signage demonstrating the value of natural areas in the community, the continuation of the popular residential tree planting program, further park development in the Town, as well as additional public art installations.

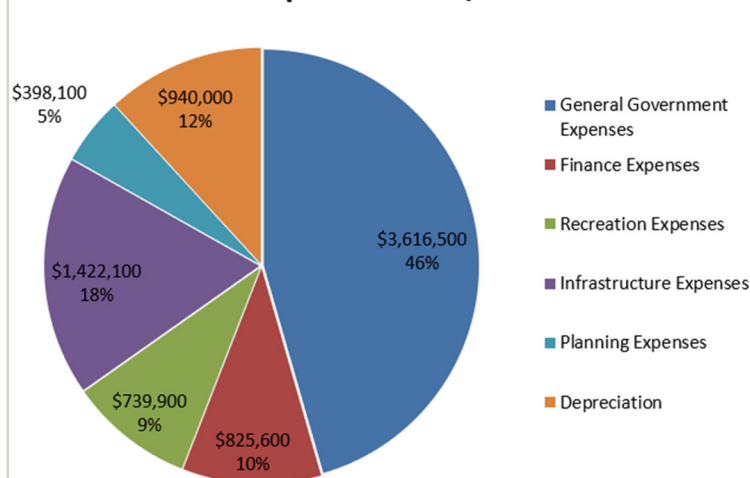
The past year has seen use of our outdoor spaces, including trails, parks and sidewalks, greatly increase with numbers remaining high throughout the winter months as well. Many residents have discovered places like Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park for the first time this past year and are now including it as a regular part of their activities. The Town continues to expand our network of trails and connections, including looking at additional partnerships with private landowners who remain responsive to our requests to extend our active transportation networks across their properties. A new active transportation path, subject to pricing, is planned for the waterside of Keppoch Road from Kinlock Road extending east to Town boundary.



Town Revenue 2021/22



Town Expenses 2021/22



Capital Budget

The budget for the Town of Stratford's 2021/22 capital items is \$7,875,100, which after infrastructure funding and other funding partners in the amount of \$4,372,200, will be a net cost \$3,420,900 to taxpayers. Included in this number is funding for Town capital including \$2,570,000 in New Deal Gas Tax Funding, \$670,200 in Investing in Canada funding and \$1,132,000 in other funding. The Town will use the surplus from 2020/21 to reduce our capital financing.

The Utility Capital Budget is \$3,259,100 of which the Town will receive infrastructure funding of \$900,000 from the Clean Water Wastewater Fund, \$206,200 from Municipal Strategic Component Funding and \$1,041,000 from the Investing in Canada Fund for a net capital of \$1,111,900.



Community Campus

The 2021/22 Town of Stratford capital budget includes funding to complete the purchase of the Community Campus lands as well as the annexation of the portion located outside of the boundary of the Town and the required rezoning of the campus lands to Public Service and Institutional (PSI), and the rezoning of the two remainder parcels to Residential R-1. This process is underway and expected to be complete by summer.

The budget also includes funding to complete the development of a Master Plan for the campus property, which will include a site plan with elements and amenities laid out in accordance with their relationship to one another, and showing where the roads, water and sewer services, electrical and communication services, stormwater infrastructure, and active transportation infrastructure will be located, following the natural topography to the extent possible. The plan will also include a phasing scheme to enable the campus to be developed in an orderly fashion, as funding and community needs dictate.

Further decisions on the site development will be made by Council as funding is available, community needs arise and priorities are determined. The property is an investment in our community that will be developed over a period of time to serve the future needs of our residents.

T3 Transit Fleet

The Town of Stratford, along with partners the City of Charlottetown and Town of Cornwall, is upgrading the aging T3 Transit fleet with new busses to ensure we continue to provide a safe, reliable, and consistent service to the residents. In 2021/22 two 40' and four 35' transit buses and two mini-busses will be received. The addition of these buses will allow us to look at expanding service in the future and providing continued consistent service. The mini-buses will be a great



asset to the system and can be used in pilot program areas, where new routes are being contemplated, or the possible implementation of an on-demand transit area. In addition to the above, the Ready Pass system and upgrades to the Wi-Fi system will be implemented in the upcoming year.

Waterfront Park

With the Stratford Utility project to pipe the Town's sewer to Charlottetown complete, the Town will soon add the lagoon property at the entrance to our community and is in the process of planning for the future of this area. The Town of Stratford is completing phase 2 of consultations, closing on March 29, 2021, to receive feedback from residents on the future of the waterfront area. The current budget includes \$925,000 for initial work at the site to coincide with the de-commissioning of the lagoons.

Pedestrian Safety & Active Transportation Investments

Along with the previously announced planned active transportation path along Keppoch Road, the existing Trans Canada Trail network from the Hillsborough Bridge to the underpass connection on Glen Stewart Drive will be paved in the upcoming year, and upgrades to the sidewalks at the Trans Canada Highway, Stratford Road and Bunbury Road intersection will be made to assist with the movement of increased active transportation users once the new active transportation corridor across the bridge is complete by the Province of PEI.

The Town will make further pedestrian and traffic safety investments including purchasing additional portable speed humps and speed radar signs, and exploring the option of adding additional permanent speed humps in certain areas.

The Town thanks the Province of PEI for working with us to have rapid flashing crosswalk beacons installed at busy crossings near our schools.



Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park



Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park was created in 2013 with the purchase of 140 acres consisting of a mix of forest, field, stream and marshland, to protect the water supply at the Fullerton's Creek Well Field Site. Since then the property has continued to be developed and will see an further trail expansion in the upcoming year. This past fall an edible orchard was planted with support from Tree Canada and the Stratford Area Watershed Improvement Group, a red winged blackbird public art installation complete, and a public washroom constructed. The natural playground will open later in 2021.

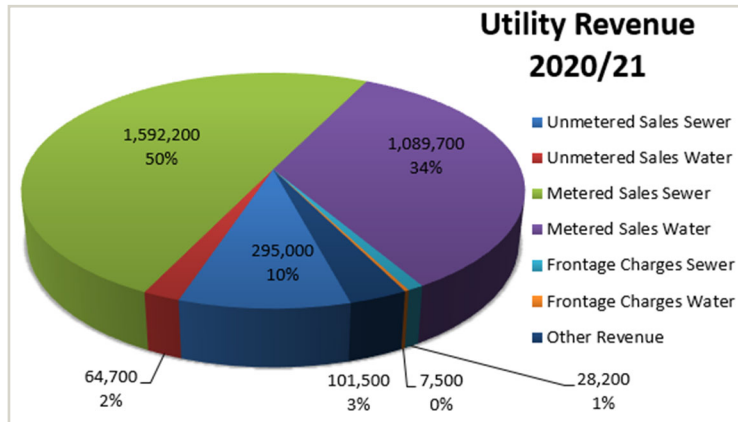
Other Highlights

- Solar panel installation at Stratford Emergency Services Centre (subject to funding)
- Energy retrofits at Cotton Centre (subject to funding)
- Establishment of an annual business survey
- Pondside Park parking lot paving
- Funding for 2023 Canada Games Stratford athletes and Canada Winter Games
- Funding to enable on-line voting for the 2022 municipal election (Note: Council has not yet made final decision on this initiative)
- Additional electric vehicle charging stations



Utility Update

The Stratford Utility operates on a cash recovery basis and as such, the Town continually analyzes expenses to ensure that the rates for customers are equitable while being sufficient to meet our long term goals. Recently the Stratford Utility Corporation, and ultimately all residents, reached a milestone as the Town's sewage began successful pumping to the Charlottetown Pollution Control Plant. In 2020 a comprehensive review of water and sewer expenses as well as a five year projected capital plan was



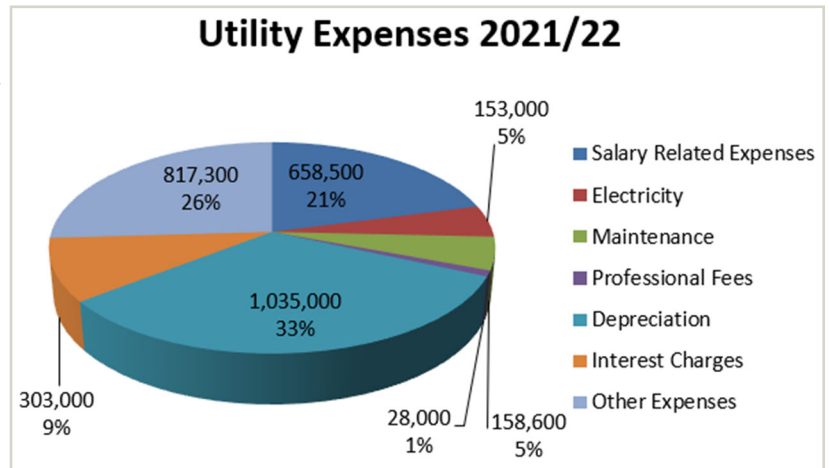
completed and these projections run through a utility rate model. For the upcoming budget year, the Town of Stratford's Utility customers will have no increase to their water or sewer rates.

As we have just begun pumping to Charlottetown and will be billed ongoing for all sewage pumped to their plant, it is important for all Stratford Utility users to look for ways to reduce their consumption where possible.

The 2021/22 Utility budget includes \$3,178,800 in revenue, consisting primarily of metered and unmetered Utility customer rates. The expenses are budgeted to be \$3,153,400 resulting in a surplus of \$25,400.

Further budget investments from the Utility budget include upgrades to the Corish Sewage Lift Station and Pondside Water Station, along with further implementation of the Town's inflow and infiltration reduction program which saw repairs to over 50 manholes in the 2020/21 budget year. This work is even more important now that we are pumping our sewage to Charlottetown and will reduce the amount of surface and groundwater seeping into the sewer system.

An application to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program for twinning of the water tower, further upgrades to the Corish Sewage Lift Station, and to implement solar power at three water stations will be made. Continued upgrades to the Town's SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) communications by converting all remaining sewer pump stations to radio communications will be made this year.



Water Audit Program

The Town of Stratford and Stratford Area Watershed Improvement Group continue to provide Stratford Utility customers with a free in-home water audit. The program aims to teach residents how to read their water meter and check regularly for leaks in their home, to educate residents about how much water they are using and provide homeowners with recommendations on how to reduce their water consumption. While the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the ability to offer the program for part of 2020, we wish to assure residents that the Water Audit Program continues at this time in a safe and compliant manner, and encourage all Stratford Utility customers to consider having one completed.

Closing

In closing, on behalf of all members of Council, we thank residents for their resilience over the past year. While 2020, and 2021 have thrown many challenges at us thus far, we have adjusted, adapted and responded as needed, and with you and your safety in mind. For many residents, and businesses in our community, 2021 may remain a challenging year but as a community, as your Town, we commit to continuing to work hard on your behalf every day, and will pivot as or if needed once again. We truly hope that there will be an in-person community gathering before the year is through.



Respectfully submitted,
Gail MacDonald, Chair Finance & Technology