

2014-15 HRM BUDGETS APPROVED

HRM Council has approved its 2014-15 operating and project budgets. The \$845-million gross operating and \$144-million gross project budgets include a residential tax rate decrease of one cent while the urban commercial tax rate drops by 11.5 cents. The regional transportation and transit tax rates remain unchanged.

The general tax rates on residential property (per \$100 of Assessed Value) will be set at:
 \$0.658 for the urban area (Last year: \$0.668)
 \$0.625 for the suburban area (Last year: \$0.635)
 \$0.619 for the rural area (Last year: \$0.629)

The general tax rates on commercial property (per \$100 of Assessed Value) will be set at:
 \$2.939 for the urban area (Last year: \$3.054)
 \$2.939 for the suburban area (Last year: \$3.054)
 \$2.590 for the rural area (Last year: \$2.691)

Regional Transportation & Transit Tax rates (per \$100 of Assessed Value) are equal to last year:
 \$0.051 for the Regional Transportation tax rate
 \$0.105 for the Local Transit tax rate.

The approval of this budget will ensure 88% of homes and 57% of commercial properties will have a tax bill this year that will be the same or lower than last year. The new budget reflects an ongoing commitment to achieve Regional Council priorities – with investment in initiatives ranging from planning for the future transit network and enhancing Metro Transit's current technology (\$8.8-million), to maintaining and improving its municipal road network throughout the region (\$24.5-million). This year we will see the completion of the new Central Library, significant progress on a Parking Strategy, and analysis of the potential redevelopment of the downtown Cogswell Interchange. Regional Council also takes quite seriously the safety and security of its citizens. This year Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency Services (HRF&ES) will present details from major reviews it has undertaken that will lead to operational plans as HRF&ES mobilizes and restructures to meet the changing demands of the region, while Halifax Regional Police will be implementing its strategic plan that will guide its operations, leadership, and management to 2024. For more details on the 2014-15 budget visit: www.halifax.ca/budget

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Emergency Preparedness (EP) Week is May 4th - 10th. Everyone should be prepared and able to take care of themselves for a 72 hour period from any potential harm caused by a significant weather event or incident. Our district is very fortunate to have two Joint Emergency Management (JEM) Teams: Eastern Shore JEM (Cole Harbour to Ship Harbour) and Sheet Harbour JEM (East Ship Harbour to Ecum Secum). For more details about them please go to: www.halifax.ca/EMO/jems.html. On Saturday May 10th, 10 AM - 1 PM, the eighth annual 'JEM Jamboree' will be at the Porters Lake Atlantic Superstore parking lot. Their plan is to continue promoting efforts in emergency preparedness, training & community readiness. Our JEM Teams are looking for volunteers. Here are more web-sites about EP information:

- www.GetPrepared.gc.ca
- www.publicsafety.gc.ca
- <http://novascotia.ca/just/emo>
- www.halifax.ca/emo
- www.redcross.ca

WEST CHEZZETCOOK SCHOOL UPDATE

HRM completed a building assessment of the old school beside St. Anselm's Church in West Chezzetcook and has determined it ought to be demolished. The facility has been closed for a couple of years now but been subject to deferred maintenance for many years before its closure. The building is beyond any feasible restoration. The structure will be levelled and the site made safe by being transformed into a parking lot. HRM will retain ownership of the property and the playground equipment will remain in place for use by the local community.

CALL 2-1-1 FOR INFO ON SERVICES

211 is helping Nova Scotians find the right community and social services. Navigating the expansive network of community and social services provided by government and the not-for-profit sector can be challenging. With the launch of 211 Nova Scotia in February 2013, over 4000 community and social services available across the province are now just a phone call or a click away. 211 is a free, confidential information and referral service for thousands of community and social services available across the province. When you dial 2-1-1 trained information and referral specialists will help you understand and find services like applicable rebates services for seniors, home care and respite, volunteer opportunities, tax services, credit counselling, mental health/addiction services, disability services, recreational programs, tuition assistance, food banks, housing assistance, emergency shelters and much more. This phone service is available daily from 7AM-7PM in English and French and for the hearing impaired. There are also interpretation services available in over 100 languages. For more information, dial 2-1-1 or search their on-line database at www.ns.211.ca

EXEMPTION & RELIEF FOR GROUPS

Back on March 18th, HRM Council approved the Grants Committee's annual recommendations for tax exemption and tax relief for local organizations and charities that own or lease their properties and provide community service to the area. Here is the list of groups and organizations that serve our district area:

Full Tax Exemption :

- Ostrea Lake Wharf Preservation Society - \$297
- Sheet Harbour Rockets Association - \$807
- Assoc. of Special Recreation Needs, Musq.Hbr - \$858
- Porters Lake Wilderness Assoc. The Old Hall- \$1,117
- Musquodoboit Harbour Heritage Society - \$1,441
- Moser River Community Association - \$2,019
- L'Acadie Museum, West Chezzetcook - \$2,172
- Ship Harbour Community Hall Auxiliary - \$2,284
- Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue - \$3,662
- Harbour Lites New Horizon Club, Musq. Hbr - \$3,779
- Lawrencetown Community Centre - \$4,028
- Eastern Shore Wildlife Assoc., Sheet Hbr - \$4,159
- Seaforth Community Hall Society - \$4,572
- Chezzetcook & District Lions Club - \$5,898
- Sheet Harbour Snowmobile Club - \$6,643
- Lake Charlotte Area Heritage Society - \$12,459
- Titans Gym & Trampoline Club, Westphal - \$38,170
- NS Black Cultural Centre, Cherry Brook - \$56,338

Tax Relief by Conversion from Commercial Rate:

- Native Council of NS, Sheet Harbour – (reduction: \$430) \$44 net.
- North Preston Medical Society – (reduction: \$3,586) \$338 net.
- Ashlar Masonic Building, Smith Settlement – (reduction: \$1,401) \$667 net.
- East Preston Day Care Centre – (reduction: \$6,494) \$676 net.
- Eureka Masonic Lodge, Sheet Harbour – (reduction: \$1,542) \$729 net.
- Old School Gathering Place, Musquodoboit Harbour - (reduction: \$2,229) \$1,427 net
- The Deanery Project, Ship Harbour – (reduction \$2,800) \$ 1,472 net.
- Petpeswick Yacht Club, Musquodoboit Harbour – (reduction: \$3,842) \$1,830 net
- Musquodoboit Harbour District Lions Club – (reduction: \$3,859) \$1,838 net.
- Lake Echo Lions Club – (reduction \$3,816) \$2,006 net.
- MacDonald House Association, Lawrencetown Beach (reduction: \$7,431) \$7,431 net.

CURBSIDE GIVEAWAY: JUNE 7th & 8th

Residents are encouraged to participate in HRM's Curbside Give Away Weekend - June 7th & 8th. Help discover the "Hidden Treasures" in your neighbourhood and our communities. Please follow HRM Solid Waste/Resources on [Facebook.com/HalifaxRecycles](https://www.facebook.com/HalifaxRecycles). Follow the latest posts on Curbside Give Away! It is the most up-to-date place to get answers to your 'What Goes Where' questions and what's new in the world of recycling. Or send your questions via e-mail to: WasteLess@Halifax.ca

GARBAGE & RECYCLING PROPOSALS

Back on January 14th, HRM Council approved an initiation process to change the Solid Waste/Resource By-law. The proposed changes could significantly improve the amount of waste diverted away from landfill and improve program costs. To be clear, NO CHANGES have been made yet. Once Council approves revisions to the by-law, which could take several months, there will be full public notification and education programs before residents have to make changes at roadside. Proposed changes include:

- Clear bags for residential garbage (including HRM serviced condominiums). Clear bag programs work to change behaviour, increasing proper sorting of recyclables and organics. Residents will have the option to use one 'black bag' for privacy purposes.
- Reduce garbage bag collection limit from 6 to 4 bags for single unit dwellings (5 to 3 per unit for multi-unit properties of 6 units or less). The vast majority of residents already put out 4 or less coloured bags of garbage for collection. However, almost 50% of the materials placed in coloured garbage bags sent to the landfill should have been recycled or composted. In fact, there are still some residents who are not recycling or composting. This bag limit change, combined with use of clear bags, will encourage HRM residents to do their part at home.
- Boxboard out of the green cart. Residents may still use boxboard (i.e. cereal and cracker boxes) for food scraps, but extra boxboard will now be recycled with paper and cardboard.
- Separate leaf & yard waste collection in kraft paper bags only. All yard waste would be placed out in kraft paper bags or bundles as it is now. Green carts would only be used for household organics and food scraps. This change reduces program costs, improves the organics program in terms of compost processing outcomes and results in a higher quality compost product which will be returned for distribution to residents.
- Banning grass clippings from collection. Managing grass clippings on your lawn is a best practice for lawn care and is the right ecological thing to do. It reduces organics program costs, eases facility capacity strain, and puts nutrients right back into your lawn. Education on mulching and its benefits will be provided.

For more information on these recommendations please visit: www.Halifax.ca/Recycle or call 311.

HRM BIKE WEEK 2014 : JUNE 6th - 15th

Bike Week aims to celebrate, educate and increase participation in all types of cycling throughout the region. It's an exciting, community-driven event and encourages people of all ages and abilities to get outside and be more active. There will be plenty of events organized by local individuals and groups to encourage bicycling for sport, recreation, and active transportation. For more information on event programs about HRM Bike Week, please go to: www.halifax.ca/bikeweek/ and for more details about safe cycling throughout our municipality: www.halifax.ca/cycling/index.html. Legislation now requires motorists to yield to cyclists. The NS Motor Vehicle Act was amended to include rules respecting bike lanes and now requires motorists to leave one metre of space between a vehicle and a bicycle in order to pass safely.





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