

District keeps tax rates down

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Comox Strathcona Regional District had fixed spending plans for 2007 that are actually lower than last year.

And for most residents, the tax rate it will levy is also being reduced - mainly to help compensate for the increase in averaged assessed house values.

Directors have adopted a \$64.8 million budget, of which \$15.35 million is for 'capital' expenditure - buildings and equipment rather than day-to-day supplies and running costs.

Although total budgeted costs are about \$600,000 lower than last year, some new initiatives are being funded in 2007.

These include the Comox Valley active communities program, Comox Valley marine search and rescue, and and the healthy communities partnership with Vancouver Island Health Authority.

There are also increased costs for the expanded Comox Valley transit service, including the bus service north to Oyster River and additional evening and weekend in-town services.

Additional parks staff are being taken on to plan, develop and maintain the 88 community parks which are the responsibility of the regional district.

And there is also provision for negotiated staff wage and salary increases and payments to board members.

The capital works include projects such as constructing a new water supply and distribution control building for the Black Creek/Oyster River system, an extra reservoir for the Comox Valley water supply area, and washroom facilities for people using the running track by Vanier School in Courtenay.

It is possible to fund more services while cutting overall spending because of lower debt charges, some new or increased fees bringing in extra income, and the identification of some economies in existing services.

All property owners of the Comox Valley pay something towards the cost of the regional

Regional District tax rate changes

The number of specific regional district services provided to residents varies from area to area, which is the main reason why tax rates between them are different. For example, 33 services are provided in Area B but only 13 in Cumberland.

After the identification of each area, the first figure quoted in this table is the 2006 tax cost for every \$100,000 of residential property value, the second is the new 2007 cost per \$100,000, and the third is the reduction in dollars for every \$100,000 value.

Area A (Baynes Sound)	\$145	\$136	-\$9
Area B (Lazo North)	\$150	\$137	-\$13
Area C (Puntledge/Black Creek)	\$137	\$129	-\$8
Area K (Denman/Hornby Islands)	\$79	\$71	-\$8
Cumberland Village	\$80	\$70	-\$10
Courtenay City*	\$86	\$77	-\$9
Comox Town*	\$84	\$75	-\$9

* In addition, City of Courtenay and Town of Comox property owners will pay additional taxes for sewer and water services not included in the above table.

district, even if they are within one of the three municipalities.

That's because the regional district supplies certain services to the whole

area - examples include transit and the operation of the big sports and aquatic centres.

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