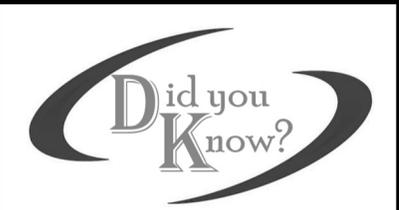




# 2026/27 Budget Report



The Town of Stratford is committed to realizing one of the largest projects in our community's history with the development of the Community Campus. With outdoor amenities planned to open this summer, the Province of PEI well underway with the construction of the high school and a planned junior high school on the site in the future, as well as the opportunity provided for an expansion of the business park, and the anticipated wellness centre, your tax dollars are being maximized to ensure this becomes a reality.

The planned third year of the tax increase in 2026/27 will allow us to maximize this investment in the community, generating \$5.9M in funding for these projects over the next 25 years.

The Town of Stratford's 2026/27 budget is the final budget of the current council's mandate. It continues to reflect Council's direction to maintain service levels for residents while making strategic investments in areas that improve resident life, support the growth and infrastructure needs of the community and allow us to continue to build the best community possible.

As with any budget discussion, there are difficult decisions that are required to be made. The Town continues to show fiscal responsibility through responsible stewardship of tax payer dollars. Like all Island municipalities we are not able to project a deficit, which means we must be that much more diligent with the dollars available. We also believe in not leaving a burden for residents by over-committing and under-planning. While continuing with the final year of the planned two-cent increase in municipal taxes remains, there is no increase to water or sewer rates in the 2026/27 budget. The increase for a property assessed at \$400,000 will amount to less than \$7/month or approximately \$80 per year.



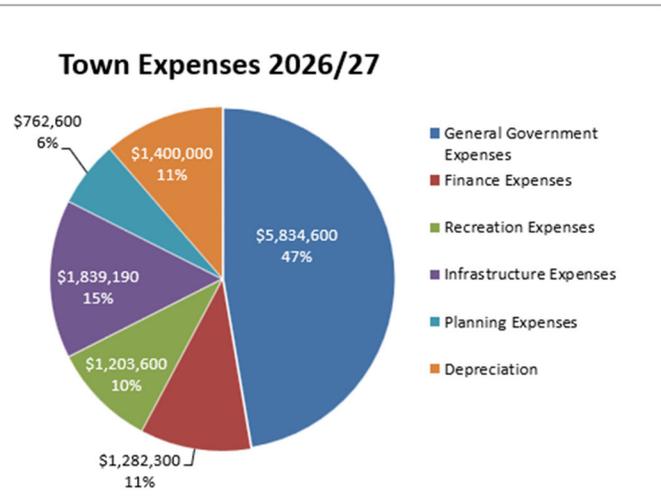
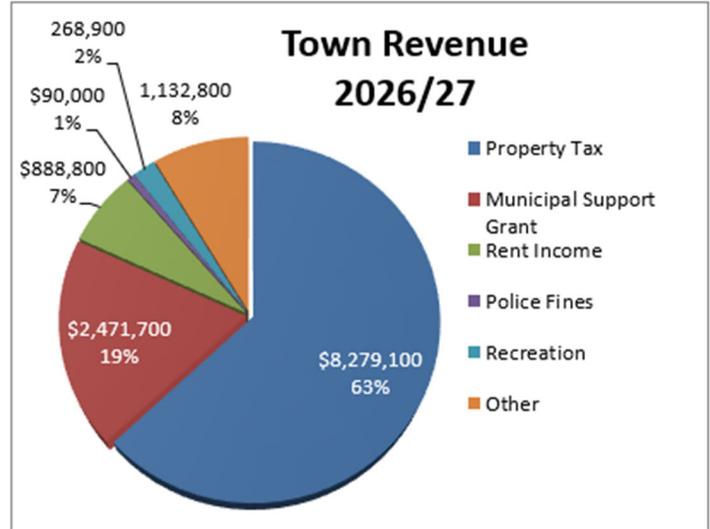
The Town remains responsive to the community's needs and important investments have been made in safety, including supporting the Cross Roads Fire Department with their recent addition of a new ladder truck to their fleet. Excluding the ladder truck, fire dues have seen a 46% increase and policing a 55% increase over this term of council alone. In many cases, such as these two examples, we at the municipal level have very limited discretion over spending except to perhaps set the levels of service residents receive.

With these investments our community remains a desirable place to live for residents of all ages. Together we will continue to make the best decisions we can and to celebrate our community - one that is diverse, welcoming and ready for the future.



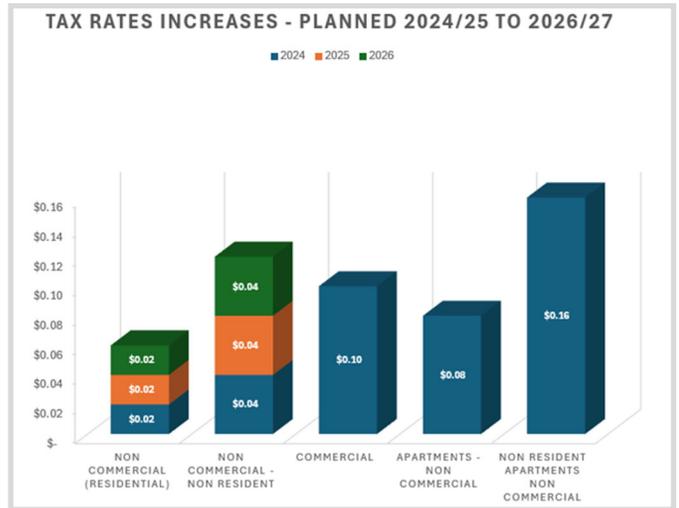
## Revenue and Expenses

The 2026/27 Town of Stratford budget forecasts an operating surplus of \$12,210 for the upcoming year after accounting for allocation to reserves. The Town again commits to residents that should any surplus exist at the end of the year, that it will be placed in a reserve to support future investments in the community, including the Community Campus. The Town of Stratford is limited in the sources of revenue available to us. The Town relies primarily on property taxes, utility charges and fees to pay for our services, programs and infrastructure, with additional funding sources and programs also regularly explored. To make the investments residents are requesting, a two-cent increase is necessary and will complete the final year of the three-year planned increase.



In looking at where our largest expenditures are, police and fire protection make up the largest portion of the General Government expenditures at over 51% of the departmental budget. The largest expense in all other departments is salaries and benefits. Within the Finance and Technology department, the interest payments on capital investments follows salaries closely as the second largest expense. As has been the history of previous councils, the current council remains committed to the responsible use of our tax dollars.

Our 2026/27 budget includes continued investment in our community through priorities which we know are important to you. These include areas such as active transportation, transit, police and fire protection, technology, parks and recreation, tree planting and forest management planning, climate change mitigation, housing, and more. Your council will continue to look ahead and make investments for the future of our community.



## Capital Budgets

The Town's capital budget for 2026/27 is \$17,771,250 which after infrastructure funding and other funding partners in the amount of \$8,922,690, will have a net cost of \$8,848,560. Funding for Town capital includes \$1.5M in New Deal Funding, \$1.6 in Investing in Canada funding, \$1.3M in Active Transportation Funding, with the remainder from a variety of other funding sources.

The Utility Capital Budget is \$12,165,000 of which the Town has applied for infrastructure funding of \$5M from Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund and \$2.6M in other funding, for a net capital expenditure of \$4,501,900.



## Community Campus and Stratford Business Park

The Community Campus continues to get closer to the full buildout, most recently with the announcement of initial funding support from the Federal government in January 2026. This



funding has allowed us to move into the design stage for the Wellness Centre which will be a focal point on the property once completed. This facility is planned to include amenities like a new youth centre space,

ice surfaces, indoor turf field, cultural and community space, and library. This facility will be a gathering place for residents of all ages and complement the outdoor sports fields that will open in Summer 2026 including soccer, ball and cricket fields. Expressions of Interest continue to be received for the development of the new business park lots which are located on the south end of John Joe Sark Drive. It is the Town's hope to have sales for some of these in the upcoming budget year followed by potential development soon after. Design work for road and services will begin this year and lead to future lot sales on the current Myrtle Street outdoor soccer fields once the new fields are fully operational on the Community Campus. The construction of the new high school by the Province of PEI also continues on the Community Campus property and space is being held currently to allow for the future junior high school as well.

The 2026/27 budget year will continue to be an important one for this project and we anticipate further funding announcements of both private and public dollars to come.

## Michael Thomas Waterfront Park

The upcoming year will continue to see improvements made at Michael Thomas Waterfront Park to enhance the parks use and offerings. The design and construction of a pavilion will begin in spring 2026 and offer amenities including washroom facilities, a shaded open air deck and indoor event space that will include a commercial kitchen fit-up.

## Transit Expansion

The Town of Stratford has allocated funding again this year to continue to look for areas for expanded transit service. The 2025/26 budget allowed for the development of a now operational daytime intra-community route which allows residents to move more easily within the Town of Stratford to run errands, attend appointments or visit socially with others. With the current uncertain-



ty and increasing fuel prices, we hope that residents will look to transit as a cost effective way to move about for work or personal use.

## E-watch Cameras

Along with a line item to invest in a some E-watch camera systems in the 2026/27 budget, the Town launched a program in late 2025 to encourage our commercial enterprises in our community to support these important investments in public safety. Further cameras will be installed as funds permit and at locations which have been determined in consultation between the Town, RCMP and Provincial officials.



## Official Plan Review and Housing Accelerator Funding

The Town of Stratford will continue the work initiated in 2024, and which began even prior to that time period, on a review and adoption of the updated Official Plan and Zoning & Development Bylaw. Following a strong engagement period this past fall, the Town, through the project consultants, have taken the necessary time to listen, review and adjust the original draft plan and will have a new draft available later this spring. Residents and stakeholders should watch for upcoming engagement opportunities and take the time to review and un-



derstand the documents when they are released. These continue to be important conversations with our community and will set us up for future success once approved.

The Town of Stratford has launched numerous projects through the Housing Accelerator Fund to date, with further initiatives still in development. These initiatives are one means of allowing us to support projects which will lead to more housing units in the Town of Stratford, which includes \$164,500 returned to residents and developers over the 2025/26 budget period through available rebates. The Town recently launched our catalogue of 'missing-middle' housing types which provide for permit-ready approvals when used.

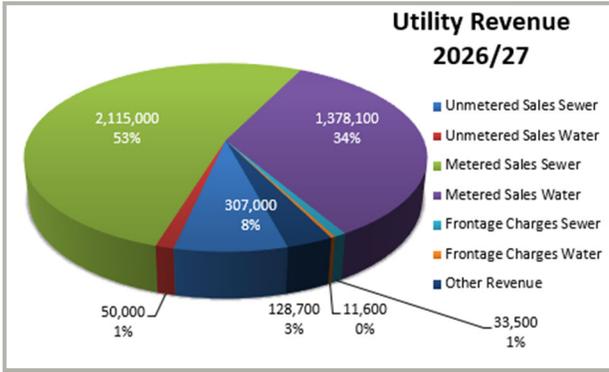
## Other Highlights

- Enhancements at four community parks as well as in some neighbourhood parks
- Further installation of mural art at select locations
- Ongoing investment in the waterfront
- Municipal election administration (Fall 2026 contracted to Elections PEI)
- Expansion of active transportation network (subject to funding)

# Stratford Utility Update

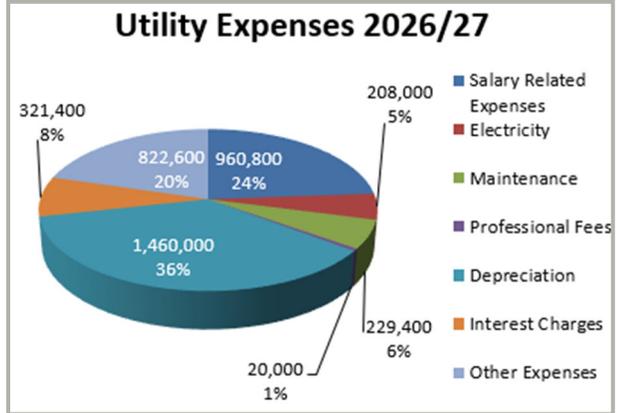
The Town of Stratford is pleased to be able to operate in the upcoming budget year with no increase to water or sewer rates. The Stratford Utility operates on a cash recovery basis and as such, the Town continually analyzes expenses to ensure that the

rates for customers are equitable among our customers, while being sufficient to meet our long term needs. Stratford Utility customers continue to demonstrate their support by limiting their personal use of water where possible, and supporting conservation methods and programs provided by the Town.



The upcoming year will see projects by the Stratford Utility including:

- Continuing with renewal of concrete sanitary sewer main using trenchless technologies and addition of fire hydrants in the core area
- Decommissioning of Harbourview Sewage Lift Station and redirecting flow to nearby Waterfront station
- Upgrades to Cable Heights water station and the Zakems Sewage Lift Station (subject to funding)
- Replacement of the water distribution system in Reeves Estates (subject to funding)



## Stratford Utility Programs Available



Eligible residents may receive a rebate of up to \$2000 to have a sump pump redirected from the municipal sewer system, and a battery backup system installed, on their property. Visit our website

to learn more!

Other water saving initiatives in place currently are a low-flow showerhead exchange program and low-flow toilet rebate program.



Good news - At the end of 2025, our average water usage was 170 cubic meters per household, a reduction from an average of 175 cubic meters at the end of 2024, and closer to our lowest annual usage of 166 cubic meters seen in 2023. We appreciate the continued commitment to reduce water use by both residential and commercial users. Together we can continue to support our water conservation efforts for everyone's benefit.

## Summary

The Town of Stratford is a great place to live and work. We are proud of the community we have built, and of the opportunities that exist for our future. As residents, stakeholders, business leaders, and others invested in Stratford, we assure you there is a committed council and staff who are working hard on your behalf every day - with passion, dedication and unwavering excitement about what our community has to offer. We are listening to you and to each other. Our democracy works best when differing opinions and ideas are able to be shared, discussed, evaluated and then the best or most appropriate decision made based on the information available at the time. This is how we will continue to work and represent our community. We thank you for your support and trust to be able to do so.

It is unfortunate that we remain in a world where global instability and uncertainty remains around complex issues and strained relations. We recognize these pressures and assure



residents that we continue to monitor these and make adjustments as we move through this time in our history, just like you are. We live in the best community, in the greatest country, and together we will all get through this period.

Our residents continue to be our greatest asset.

We appreciate the time you provide to volunteer, to support causes that are important to you, and that you are involved and engaged with Town events and activities. Your engagement allows us to hear from you through activities like our Annual Resident Survey, draft budget consultations or public engagement sessions - please keep coming out and lending your voice to these discussions and opportunities.

The Fall of 2026 will see municipal elections held in PEI, including here in Stratford. We hope that all eligible residents will take the opportunity to participate in this important democratic activity. Together we are all helping to build the best community possible!