

MUNICIPAL MATTERS

Spring/Summer 2023



TAX RATES REMAIN UNCHANGED IN 2023 - 2024 FISCAL YEAR

At the Regular Council Meeting held on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, Council of Region of Queens Municipality approved the 2023 – 2024 Operating, Water Utility, Hillview Acres and Capital Budgets for a total budget of \$44,193,722. The Budget has no increase on the Residential, Commercial and Resource tax rates. Residents subject to a Hydrant Charge for the Water Utility have a one cent decrease in their tax rate, and residents in District 5 & 6 (Brooklyn) have a half cent decrease in the area rate.

2023 – 2024 Fiscal Year

Operating Budget: \$27,266,907

Capital Budget: \$14,417,946

Water Utility Budget: \$797,901

Hillview Acres Budget: \$1,710,968

Tax Rates (Per \$100 Assessment)

	<u>Districts 1 – 12</u>	<u>District 13</u>
Residential and Resource	\$1.07	\$1.92
Commercial	\$2.17	\$3.02

Area Rate for Residents of **District 5 & 6 only** (across all categories), add \$0.055

June 1, 2023 was the due date for all property taxes, with no interest charged for any taxes being paid on or before June 30, 2023.

The full 2023-2024 Budget, along with information about how to pay taxes, can be found on-line at: <https://www.regionofqueens.com/municipal-services/finance/property-taxes>

When people are paying their taxes, Municipal staff often hear from residents that the Municipality raised taxes this year. The Municipal tax rates remained the same; there was no increase in tax rate. However, many tax payers received a higher tax bill; this is because Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) increased the cap on assessments by 7.7% this year. Also, PVSC staff were thorough and visited most properties in Queens last summer and fall, reassessing properties to bring them to 2022 values. Municipal tax bills are based on the tax rate that a Municipality sets, and that rate is applied to the assessed value of the property. Region of Queens Municipality's Council was aware that property owners would have a higher cap or a raised assessment, and intentionally did not raise the tax rate, opting to balance the budget with funds from the surplus.

QUESTIONS, CONCERNS OR SUGGESTIONS ABOUT COUNCIL ACTIONS AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Whenever you have questions, concerns or suggestions about the work of Council, or Municipal programs, services, infrastructure or something else the Municipality is doing, please reach out to your elected officials. Council members can direct you to appropriate Municipal staff to provide an answer or may be able to provide you with the information you are looking for. **Please note, contact numbers for Council members have recently been updated; these are their cell phone numbers:**

Councillor Kevin Muise, District 1 902-350-0982

Deputy Mayor Jack Fancy, District 5 902-350-4169

Councillor Ralph Gidney, District 2 902-350-6851

Councillor David Brown, District 6 902-350-4338

Councillor Maddie Charlton, District 3 902-350-2598

Councillor Carl Hawkes, District 7 902-354-8037

Councillor Vicki Amirault, District 4 902-350-6157

Mayor Darlene Norman, 902-354-3453 (office)
902-350-3274 (cell)



A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR NORMAN

On May 29, I was pleased to accept the Mel Hebb Hourglass Community Action Award on behalf of Region of Queens at an awards ceremony which marked the start of National AccessAbility Week. Our municipality is seen as a leader across the province in terms of improving access and disability inclusion in our communities. Through the work of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and Diversity and Inclusion Action Team (DIAT) both of which are committees of council with citizen representation, actions have been taken to ensure Municipal facilities and operations are accessible. The dedicated focus of our Accessibility and Inclusion Coordinator has resulted in improvements to Beach Meadows Beach, the Astor Theatre, and Queens Place Emera Centre in terms of accessibility. The splashpad section of Etti Milita'mk Universally Designed Playpark opened in early July, and anticipation is high for the fall opening of the playground equipment. In addition to the Municipal facilities and operations accessibility improvements, many community organizations have received support and funding to improve and increase accessibility and inclusion for their projects and programs. Receiving the Mel Hebb Hourglass Award was acknowledgement of the work that has taken place, and there is more to be done. The Municipality's Accessibility Plan, developed in 2021, still has a number of items to be addressed. If you have questions about a accessibility in regard to a project you are undertaking, please contact RQM's Accessibility and Inclusion Coordinator Elise Johnston for assistance, phone: 902-354-3455, or email: ejohnston@regionofqueens.com.

Norman

COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE Region of Queens Municipality's Council meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. and the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in Council Chamber at the Municipal Administration Building, 249 White Point Rd., Liverpool, NS. In summer, there are only meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of July and August. Meetings are open to the public, and are recorded, with links to the audio and the video promptly posted on our website. Those present at meetings may speak for up to 5 minutes during the public comments section of the agenda. If you are unable to attend, contact your Councillor or Mayor Norman to bring your question forward. Meeting agendas are posted online by noon on the Friday prior to a meeting:

<https://www.regionofqueens.com/council-governance/council-agendas-minutes-audio>.

COUNCIL IN YOUR COMMUNITY

As part of Council's ongoing efforts to connect with residents and enable easier access to information, four times a year, an evening Council meeting is held off-site in a community hall in North, East, West, and South Queens. Attend a meeting, and learn about how your Council functions.

2023 Dates & Locations, Community Council Meetings:

Jan. 24 - Brooklyn Community Hall, Brooklyn

April 25 - West Queens Community Centre, Port Mouton

June 27 - Greenfield Fire Hall, Greenfield

Oct.24 - Seaside Community Centre, Beach Meadows

CONNECTING WITH COUNCIL

When you have a question about the Municipality, we encourage you to reach out to Mayor Norman or your Councillor and ask them. They are passionate about their communities, and genuinely want to hear from residents.

Maps of Districts:

<https://www.regionofqueens.com/council-governance/electoral-districts-for-cg>

Contact information is on our website:

<https://www.regionofqueens.com/council-governance/council-mayor-for-cg>

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED A CAREER WORKING FOR THE MUNICIPALITY?

Currently, there are positions available in several areas of Municipal operations. There may be a perfect job for you and your skills! The Employment section of the Municipal website is updated frequently, and has full time, part time, casual and seasonal positions posted. For the full listing follow this link or scan the QR code:

<https://www.regionofqueens.com/municipal-services/employment>



YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO SAVE ON MUNICIPAL TAXES

You may qualify for savings on your Municipal taxes! A new tiered system based on a range of total income levels has been put in place, with higher rebates available to eligible applicants.

<u>Rebate Amount</u>	<u>Total household Income</u>
Up to \$300.00	\$25,001 to \$30,000
Up to \$350.00	\$20,001 to \$25,000
Up to \$400.00	\$0 to \$20,000

Provide a copy of your 2022 Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency with your application. Applications are accepted year round, with an **application deadline of February 29, 2024**.

For more information and to download the application form, go to:

<https://www.regionofqueens.com/municipal-services/finance/property-taxes>.

For further assistance, please call Finance Department at (902) 354-3453.



This is not the view anyone wants this summer! Grey Boxes are for residents of areas without curbside collection and are for regular household waste, and not for oversized items.

Did you know residents of Queens can take solid waste to the Municipal Solid Waste Management Facility up to four times a month at no charge?

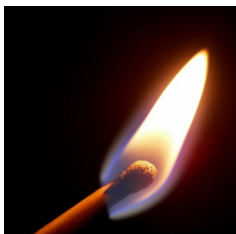
Our Solid Waste Management Facility accepts household hazardous waste, blue bag recyclables, garbage, leaf and yard waste, construction and demolition materials, and oversized items. Located at 3750 Hwy. 8, Milton, the Municipal Solid Waste Management Facility is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. For more information call 902-354- 3455, visit our website:

<https://www.regionofqueens.com/municipal-services/works/waste-management> or scan the QR code:



Business Façade Program Accepting Applications for 2023-2024

Calling all Queens County businesses! Applications are being accepted for Region of Queens Municipality's 2023-2024 Business Façade Program! This grant is a great opportunity for business owners looking to improve their curb-appeal, and be funded by the Municipality for up to 50% of approved application costs, net of HST, to a maximum of \$5,000 per project. Applications are being accepted on a first come basis until the grants are fully used. Projects must be completed, and a final report submitted by February 28, 2024. Upgrades that improve the visual appearance of a property are eligible, including signage, planters, windows, siding and more! Program guidelines and application are available online: <https://www.regionofqueens.com/document-library/business/2610-business-facade-program-2023-2024/>. If you require further clarification or have questions, please contact Richard Lane, Director of Economic Development, 902-354-3453, or by email: rlane@regionofqueens.com.



In Nova Scotia, wildfire risk season is from March 15 - October 15. As seen earlier this year, wildfires can be devastating. Before lighting an outdoor fire of any type, check the Province's Burn Safe website to see if burning is allowed. Did you know that regardless of the conditions, outdoor burning is not permitted between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.? Go to the Burn Safe website <https://novascotia.ca/burnsafe/> daily after 2 p.m. or call toll free for the daily burning restrictions: 1-855-564-2876(BURN).

CITIZEN REPORTER TOOL, PLUS SUBMIT CURB CUT APPLICATION AND TRAFFIC DISRUPTION PERMIT APPLICATIONS ONLINE, AND SEE CURRENT TRAFFIC DISRUPTIONS

Non-emergency requests related to parks & trails, transportation services, winter maintenance, water utility, sanitary and storm sewer through use of the Citizen Reporter. The tool allows users to submit details of a particular request directly to the Engineering & Public Works Department. Once received the requests are reviewed and triaged based on priority. Users can check back on the Citizen Reporter to review the status of their request as well as other requests throughout Region of Queens Municipality. Click the icons online on our website:

<https://www.regionofqueens.com/municipal-services/works>



CITIZEN REPORTER



CURB CUT APPLICATION



CURRENT TRAFFIC DISRUPTIONS



TRAFFIC DISRUPTION PERMIT APPLICATION
(within former Town of Liverpool)

SWIMMING LESSONS AND AQUATIC ACTIVITIES PLANNED AT MUNICIPAL OUTDOOR POOLS

Summer is here! North Queens Aquatic Centre and Milton Centennial Pool are open for programming and swimming lessons. Learning to swim is an essential skill, and knowing how to swim and how to save others could save a life. Details about registration and session dates for swimming lessons, and Public swim schedules for each of the outdoor pools has been posted on the Municipality's website <https://www.regionofqueens.com> and social media pages. This season is the second year offering the Life-saving Society's Swim for Life® swimming lesson program; the change was required as Canadian Red Cross discontinued its swimming lesson program in 2022. Swim for Life® is a complete learn-to-swim program from Parent & Tot through to Leadership, and a major, national program that teaches hundreds of thousands of Canadians how to swim annually.



Last summer, swimming lessons transitioned to the Swim for Life program. Swimmers with previous Red Cross lesson levels will be placed in the equivalent Swim for Life level.

NEW ART INSTALLATION AT VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

Welcoming, inclusive and a safe place for all are themes associated with the Pride rainbow, and the Diversity and Inclusion Action Team (DIAT) for Region of Queens Municipality is happy to unveil a new art installation showcasing those themes through a multi-piece series of rainbow coloured stained glass panels installed at the Visitor Information Centre in Liverpool, NS. Scot Slessor of SAS Glass submitted the design idea in response to DIAT's request for proposals for public art to highlight the importance of and to celebrate equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility throughout Queens County. Slessor designed the overall design concept, and cut and assembled the panels. More than a dozen students and two teachers from Liverpool Regional High School designed and painted images and text that supported inclusive themes, with several students helping to assemble the sections. Theresa Farrell and Sophos Slessor also assisted Slessor with painting and assembly. More public art installations celebrating diversity in Queens County will be unveiled in the coming months.



Sophos Slessor, Scot Slessor, and Theresa Farrell installing stained glass panels in the windows of the Visitor Information Centre, Liverpool.