



Regional district tax hike could be on the way for Kelowna

While Kelowna owners will pay slightly more, small decreases will be seen elsewhere

KELOWNA NEWS STAFF / Mar. 6, 2018 6:00 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS



The first draft of the Regional District of Central Okanagan's 2018 operating budget has come in at approximately \$65.75-million.

And, according to the RDCO, almost 41 per cent of that is Municipal Finance Authority financing on behalf of the municipalities that make up the regional district.

That means a small increase is expected in the regional taxes property owners in Kelowna will pay.

Based on the draft budget, the average home in Kelowna would see an increase of \$2.74 in the regional district line on the property tax bill, while the average home in Peachland will see an increase of \$0.19. There are decreases expected in Lake Country (down \$2.53), West Kelowna (down \$0.06), Central Okanagan East (down \$1.53) and Central Okanagan West (down \$31.86).

Growth and assessment increases in the Kelowna area in particular, have caused a shift of some existing taxation between areas, resulting in a slight increase in taxes to Kelowna rather than a decrease, says the regional district in a statement.

Each municipal area participates in 18 to 20 general RDCO services, including regional rescue (emergency management), 9-1-1, regional parks, the Okanagan Basin Water Board, economic development and dog control.

According to the RDCO, the total cost per average home for that basket of services ranges from \$181 in Kelowna to \$206 in Peachland. It's \$200 for Lake Country and \$196 for West Kelowna.

The electoral areas participate in 28 general services each. The draft budget suggests total taxes per house in Central Okanagan East are \$475 and \$493 for Central Okanagan West. Taxes can vary further depending whether a property receives additional local services from the regional district such as fire or participation in a community hall.

The public will get two more opportunities to share their comments about the RDCO 2018-2022 Financial Plan.

The next opportunity will be during a public meeting March 8 starting at 8:30 am. The final opportunity will be at the public regional board meeting March 26 at 7 pm prior to final consideration and adoption of the financial plan bylaw.

The meetings will be held in the Woodhaven boardroom at the regional district office at 1450 KLO Road in Kelowna.

You can view all the Financial Plan documentation and presentations at regionaldistrict.com/budgets.

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