



# Press Release

## **CHALLENGING 2009-2013 FINANCIAL PLAN STILL DELIVERS COMMUNITY PRIORITIES**

**May 12, 2009...Port Coquitlam, BC...** After some difficult decisions related to the global financial crisis, Port Coquitlam City Council unanimously adopted a 2009-2013 Financial Plan Monday night that meets the City's commitments with the lowest possible impact on taxpayers.

The 2009-2013 Financial Plan, a critical planning document for the City, outlines City spending and revenues for five years.

"The economic downturn added an extra challenge to this year's financial planning process," commented Mayor Greg Moore. "We had to make some tough decisions to get the tax increase down. At the same time, though, we kept in mind two of our citizens' top priorities – safety and transportation."

The Financial Plan includes Port Coquitlam's share of nine new Coquitlam RCMP officers, part of the City's long-term commitment to reducing the officer-to-citizen ratio. Moore noted that the investment has paid off with an overall decline in crime rates from 1998 to 2007, including a 23% drop from 2005 to 2007 alone.

Costs related to the \$135-million Coast Meridian Overpass project are also reflected in the Financial Plan. Approximately \$50.6 million in CMO costs will account for 2.2% of the tax increase in 2009 and in 2010. While this financial commitment brought additional pressure to the budget process, the new overpass will bring significant transportation, economic and other benefits to the community and region once it opens in early 2010.

Due to the economic downturn, the City experienced a number of revenue losses and cost increases that affected the tax rate, including:

- reduced development revenues
- reduced investment income, and
- increases in the cost of recycling due to the global recyclable market.

Measures taken to reduce the impact on taxpayers included:

- using \$142,000 of the 2008 surplus,
- not filling a vacant manager position in Development Services, and
- \$378,000 in other revenue enhancements and spending cuts or deferrals, including reduced overtime costs and deferred infrastructure projects.

In addition, new growth resulted in \$831,000 in tax revenue, up from \$720,000 in 2008.

"Despite the challenges we faced this year, we also saw several successes. In particular, I'm proud of how all members of Council worked together as a team to make the difficult decisions that had to be made. It's a good sign for things to come," Mayor Moore said.

"As well, we explored new ways to engage the public in our financial planning process, with an online survey that collected input from more than 200 people. In the months to come we'll build

on those successes by continuing to look for new ways to include our citizens in important City decisions, including our upcoming new Corporate and Environmental Strategic Plans.”

Moore also noted that while the City’s residential levies are still less than the average across Metro Vancouver, the City plans to launch a core service review of all City departments and functions, to make sure citizens are receiving the best possible value for their tax dollars.

The 2009 budget includes a 6.9% property tax increase, which amounts to \$110.30 for the average single family home, assessed at \$493,000.

The 2009 budget also includes a total 8.5% increase in sewer, water and garbage/composting utility charges, including a 1% increase to help pay for future utility infrastructure. The 7.3% increase in the garbage rate is substantially lower than neighbouring municipalities.

The total 2009 impact of the combined municipal tax and levy increase is below:

<b>2009 tax and levies for average single family home (assessed at \$335,000)</b>				
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>\$ Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Property Taxes</b>	<b>\$1,598.55</b>	<b>\$1,708.85</b>	<b>\$110.30</b>	<b>6.9%</b>
<b>Utilities</b>				
Water Levy	\$274.03	\$306.50	\$32.47	11.8%
Sewer Levy	\$255.91	\$272.10	\$16.19	6.3%
Garbage Levy	\$164.30	\$176.30	\$12.00	7.3%
<b>Total Utility Charges</b>	<b>\$694.24</b>	<b>\$754.90</b>	<b>\$60.66</b>	<b>8.5%</b>

Property tax bills will be mailed mid-May and will be due on July 2, 2009.

Further information regarding the City’s Financial Plan can be obtained through [www.portcoquitlam.ca](http://www.portcoquitlam.ca) or from the Finance Division at City Hall.

**For additional information, contact:**

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