

Summer Village of Birchcliff

Spring 2026 Newsletter



Greetings from Council and Administration

We hope you had an enjoyable winter. As we head into the 2026 season, Council and Administration are pleased to provide updates on key initiatives, including this year's budget and community projects.

This newsletter provides updates on the following:

- 2026 Taxes
- FireSmart
- Annual Information Meeting
- West End Trail

Mill Rate Bylaw

In March, Council approved the 2026 municipal tax rate, **holding the municipal mill rate at 2.0677**, unchanged from last year. *(While the municipal mill rate remains unchanged, individual property taxes may vary depending on changes in assessed property values.)*

The province has increased the **education property tax rate to 2.848**, a 6.95% increase over 2025, which will result in an increase of approximately \$274 on the average property.

The **average home assessment in 2025 is approximately \$1,478,527** and the total property assessment for the Summer Village increased from **\$216,845,400 in 2024 to \$222,158,680 in 2025**. This growth will generate approximately **\$10,986 in additional municipal revenue**, which Council has directed to **financial reserves** to support future infrastructure and financial stability.

Provincial Charges (RCMP Policing)

In 2019, the province announced it would transfer a portion of **Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)** policing costs to municipalities.

These costs are collected through municipal property taxes and have increased significantly: 2021: \$11,963, 2026: \$39,213 Projected 2030–31: \$60,556

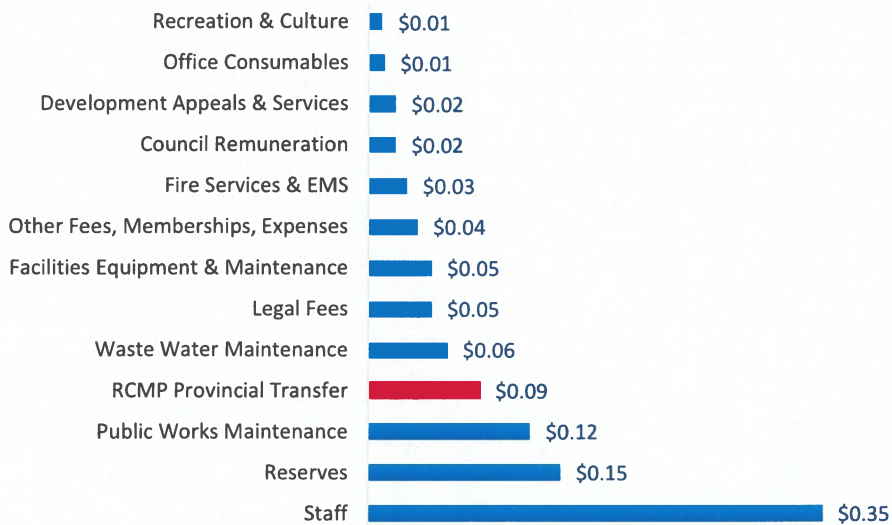
These provincially mandated charges now represent approximately **\$263 of the average municipal tax bill** and continue to place pressure on municipal finances.

Understanding Your Property Tax Bill

For the average family home in Birchcliff, assessed at approximately **\$1,478,527**, the total property tax bill is made up of two main parts:

- **Alberta School Fund – \$4,210 (58%)**
This amount is collected by the Summer Village and remitted to the Province.
- **Municipal Tax – \$3,057 (42%)**
This portion is set by Council and supports local services and operations.

Where Your Municipal Tax Dollar Goes



Annual Information Meeting

Council invites all residents to attend the Annual Information Meeting on **June 20**, from **10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**, at the Summer Village Office. Coffee and snacks will be provided.

The meeting will include a number of updates from Council, as well as a presentation and discussion with our Peace Officer. There will also be an opportunity for residents to ask questions provide opinion and engage in open discussion.



FireSmart is a wildfire prevention and risk reduction program designed to help communities reduce the threat of wildfire to people and property. In Alberta, it is coordinated by the Alberta Wildfire Management Branch within Alberta Forestry and Parks.

Key FireSmart Principles

1. Reduce the risk of wildfires
2. Promote responsible development
3. Educate residents on how to protect their homes and property through FireSmart Canada
4. Integrate wildfire risk reduction into emergency management planning

Protecting Your Home – Immediate Zone (0–1.5 metres)

The area closest to your home is the most critical:

- Remove dry grass, leaves, and other combustible materials
- Use fire-resistant siding and roofing
- Keep gutters clean and free of debris
- Store propane tanks and firewood at least 10 metres away from structures

Community Cleanup Efforts

Last year we targeted Open Space 19, with a primary disposal bin placed at the entrance to the oil lease near OS7. Thanks to the efforts of residents, approximately **12 tons of material** were collected.

For **May**, a yard waste bin will again be located at the entrance to the oil lease. Residents are encouraged to use this bin to dispose of deadfall and yard waste from their properties.

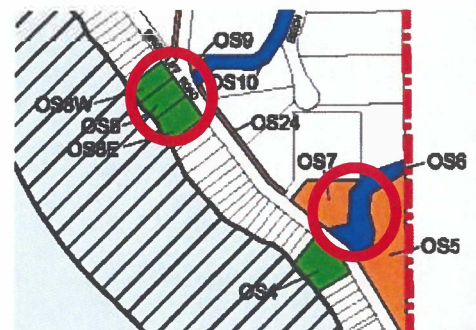
This year, FireSmart work will focus on **Open Space (OS8 & OS7)**. Contractors will be on site cutting deadfall into manageable sizes so it can be removed by hand.

We encourage residents who are able to volunteer some time to assist with cleanup efforts by removing cut material and deadfall from the reserve and depositing into the bins.

Important:

- Please leave all cutting to contractors (chainsaw use is in reserves is not permitted for residents) Removal of standing trees is prohibited.

This cleanup program will run from **May 1 - May 31** and is part of a multi-year initiative to reduce wildfire risk and maintain the natural beauty of our community.



Pathway Project Update

Council is pleased to provide an update on the pathway project approved last year. In 2025, Drew and Jen Zieglansberger, residents of the Summer Village of Birchcliff, proposed to construct a pedestrian pathway along their lands adjacent to Range Road 15 and Birchcliff Road.

Work began in the fall and has progressed steadily. The project is now on track for completion by the end of May, weather permitting and is expected to come in under the original estimated cost of \$125,000.

As part of the project, the property owners will have undertaken significant improvements, including upgraded fencing, pathway construction and drainage work. A formal Right-of-Way Agreement will be finalized to ensure long-term public access and clarity around maintenance and use.

Council would also like to recognize and thank Drew and Jen Zieglansberger, property owners of the lands in Lacombe County where the pathway is being constructed, for their generosity and in completing this project for the benefit of our community.

Emergency Contact Information

Regional emergency planning work has highlighted that our ability to communicate with residents is the largest key risk that we have at this point. Administration does not have a way to communicate with many of our residents should an emergency occur. You can reduce your risk and the risk to others by registering to receive email updates from the Summer Village at the bottom of the home page at <http://www.sylvansummervillages.ca/birchcliff.html>.

Council is committed to protecting our village values and improving community and quality of life while protecting the environment and your investment.

On behalf of Council and Administration enjoy the transition from spring to summer, keep safe and stay healthy.



Roger Dufresne

403 404 6684

roger.gi.dufresne@gmail.com