Department business plan update

Assessment and Tax

2021

STRATHCONA COUNTY

Department overview

The Assessment and Tax Department annually prepares a legislatively compliant assessment and tax roll that provides for the equitable distribution and collection of property taxes amongst residents, business and industry.

Our team prepares property assessments for one of the largest and most complex assessment bases in the province. As a specialized municipality, Strathcona County is unique in terms of the significant scope of urban and rural properties combined with a large petrochemical industry.

Department 2021 budget actuals are trending very close to budget.

We have a department staff complement of 16.5 FTE (15.0 FTE in 1993).

STRATHCONA COUNTY

Department overview

STRATHCONA COUNTY
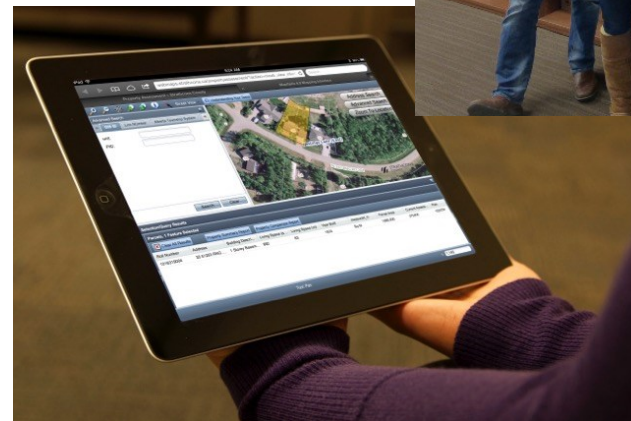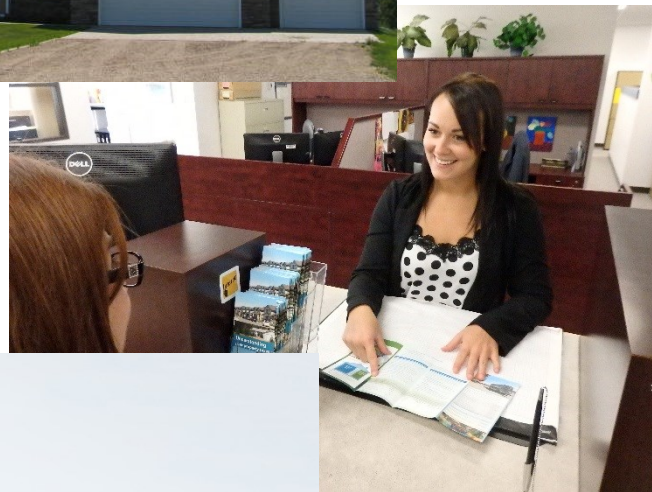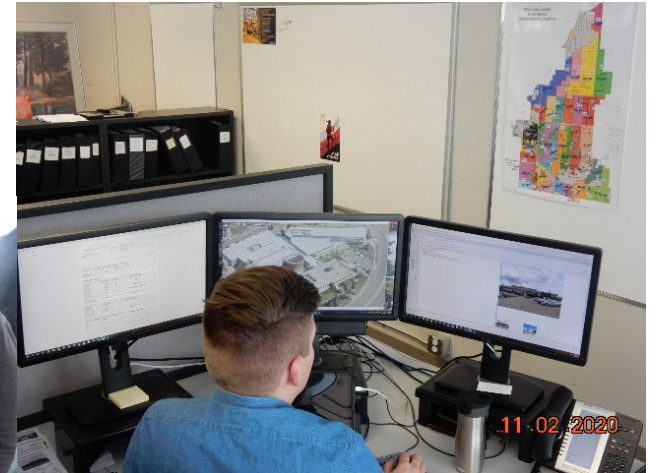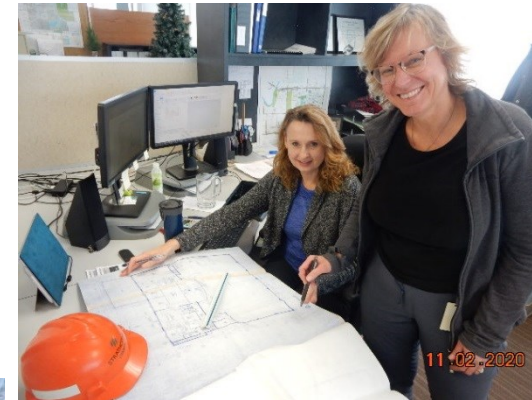
Core business functions

1 Property Assessment Services

2 Property Tax Collection and Cashier Services

STRATHCONA COUNTY

Core function highlights

1 Property Assessment Services

- Legislatively governed process to maintain an annual Assessment Roll

- The Assessment Roll includes an accurate property and ownership inventory

- The Assessment Roll includes assessment amounts (market values and regulated values) on all properties, for the equitable distribution of property taxes

45,000 Number of Properties

3,500 Number of Ownership Changes

$34 Billion Total Assessment Base

300 Number of County Connect Cases

10,000 Number of Property Reviews/Inspections

65 Number of Assessment Review Board Cases

2019 / 2020 Data

STRATHCONA COUNTY

Core function highlights

2 **Property Tax Collection and Cashier Services**

- Legislatively governed process to maintain an annual Tax Roll and enable tax recovery

- The Tax Roll includes accurate taxable status and tax rates, to levy and collect property taxes

- Centralized cashier service is provided for tax and other payments, including utilities, animal licensing, Tax Certificates

$306 Million Total Tax Levy

18,000 Number of Tax Installment Payment (TIPP) Customers

43,000 Total Number of Tax Notices

175 Tax Recovery Files

97% Percentage Annual Tax Collection Rate

5,700 Fee for Service (Tax Certificates)

2019 / 2020 Data

STRATHCONA COUNTY

Successes and challenges

Successes:

- Property Data Collection (GIS imagery and automated Requests for Information = improved process efficiencies and customer interactions)
- Property Valuation Modelling (highly qualified staff and valuation analytics = accurate and equitable property assessments)
- Assessment Review Board Management (accurate assessments and owner consultations = mitigated levels of ARB complaints)
- Stakeholder Engagement and Reporting (ad-hoc/trend/growth and Audit reporting = informed decisions and legislative compliance)
- Customer Service (self serve technology and effective customer interactions = informed taxpayers and increased customer satisfaction)
- Department Location (recently moved back to County Hall office space = effective/safe cashier services and functional office configuration)

Challenges:

- SCBT (Design and Implementation of Tempest tax software = staff secondments/staff resource pressures)
- External Customers (GOA legislative change and third party ARB/MGB complaints = staff resource pressures)
- Internal Customers (corporate initiatives and decision making = staff resource pressures)
- Property Growth and Complexity (increased parcels/permits and Assessment complexity = staff resource pressures)

STRATHCONA COUNTY

COVID Impacts

Staff impacts:

- 25% work-from-office / 75% work-from-home
- Open to public – challenging balance between adequate office coverage and COVID protocols/pressures
- Reconfigured front counter conducive to COVID measures and staff safety

Service impacts:

- Fewer in-person payment customers (increasing online/other alternatives)
- Reduced on-site property inspections addressed with virtual/alternative measures

Financial impacts:

- Minimal impact

STRATHCONA
COUNTY

Employee engagement

Engagement survey theme	Engagement initiative	People Plan focus area
Leadership	Consistency and Fairness, Open lines of Communication, Business Plan linkages	Leadership, Clear Purpose, Accountability, Trust
Acknowledge Achievements	Celebrate success, Performance Planning Review (PPR) discussions	Positivity, Leadership, Team
Succession Planning	Mentorship opportunities, learning and development, career growth	Trust, Leadership

STRATHCONA COUNTY

Questions?