

## 2025 Year in Review

District staff delivered a wide range of services and projects in 2025 to support Council priorities and the community. Highlights include:

- 55 Council/committee meetings, with 290 resolutions and 87 staff reports prepared
- 16 bylaws and 3 policies adopted to support governance and service delivery
- 55 intermunicipal business licences issued and 79 Community Hall rentals facilitated
- 138 bylaw complaints processed and ongoing enforcement activities supported
- 25 building permits issued
- 159 fire department dispatches, including 80 medical calls
- Over 1,500 fire-related permits issued and 80 fire and life safety inspections completed

## Stay Tuned in 2026

Upcoming items include

- **Business Licence Bylaw** to better support local businesses and protect the environment
- **A Traffic Calming Report** to help identify road safety improvements
- Development of a replacement **Tree Protection Bylaw** to help preserve and manage our valued natural environment
- **2026 Municipal Election** October 17, 2026

## 2026 Property Taxes

For 2026, the municipal portion of property taxes in the District of Highlands will increase over 2025 by approximately **\$232 for the average household** (just under **\$20 per month**). This represents an approximate **9.5% overall increase**, including:

- **7.5%** for general and fire services; and
- **2%** for the asset management levy

It's important to note that **only about 48% of your total property tax bill stays with the District** to fund local services. The remainder is collected on behalf of other agencies, including the Capital Regional District (CRD), CRD Hospital District, BC Transit, BC Assessment (BCA), Municipal Finance Authority (MFA), and the Province for school and police services.

The 2026 Financial Plan continues to support essential services and Council priorities, with key investments in **roads, roadside ditches, culverts, and planned paving projects**.

The **asset management levy**, introduced in 2019, appears as a separate line on your tax notice. This dedicated funding supports the long-term renewal of roads, facilities, and other critical infrastructure—helping ensure these assets continue to serve the Highlands community for years to come.



# PROPERTY TAX INFORMATION

**TAXES DUE: Thursday, July 2, 2026**

**PENALTIES:** Unpaid property taxes (including unclaimed Home Owner Grants) are subject to penalties as follows: 5% if paid after July 2, 2026, and an additional 5% if paid after September 1, 2026.

**PLAN AHEAD:** Delays caused by postal service disruption will **NOT** exempt late payments from penalties.

### PROPERTY TAX PAYMENT OPTIONS

#### IN PERSON

District of Highlands Office  
1980 Millstream Road

Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

(excluding statutory holidays)

Accepted: cash, cheque, or debit (*no credit cards*)

💡 You can also pay at your financial institution using your tax notice.

#### ONLINE BANKING

Payee: *Highlands, Dist (BC) Taxes*

Account: Use your 11-digit folio (roll) number from your tax notice (e.g. 36215999000 with no spaces or punctuation.)

🕒 Be sure to submit your payment before your bank's processing cut-off.

#### NEW: ONLINE CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

Starting June 1, 2026, pay online by credit card through OptionPay (*third-party fees apply*)

Visit: [www.highlands.ca/payments](http://www.highlands.ca/payments)

#### BY MAIL OR 24-HOUR DROP BOX

District of Highlands

1980 Millstream Rd, Victoria, BC V9B 6H1

⚠️ Do not send or drop off cash

📅 Payments must be received by the due date (postmarks are not accepted)

📍 Drop box located to the left of the front entrance

✉️ Include your payment stub or folio number; make cheques payable to *District of Highlands*

### PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

#### HOME OWNER GRANT

Home Owner Grants are administered by the Province and cannot be processed at the District Office. To avoid penalties, claim your grant each year by the property tax due date.

More information and to claim your grant:

[www.gov.bc.ca/homeownergrant](http://www.gov.bc.ca/homeownergrant)

📞 1-888-355-2700

#### PROPERTY TAX DEFERMENT PROGRAM

This provincial loan program allows eligible homeowners to defer current year property taxes.

⚠️ **New:** The program has recently changed. For details and to apply:

[www.gov.bc.ca/propertytaxdeferment](http://www.gov.bc.ca/propertytaxdeferment)

📞 1-888-355-2700

#### SPECULATION AND VACANCY TAX

An annual provincial tax based on how residential properties are used in designated areas.

📅 Declaration letters are mailed in January, and **all owners must declare by March 31** each year.

More information: [www.gov.bc.ca/spectax](http://www.gov.bc.ca/spectax)

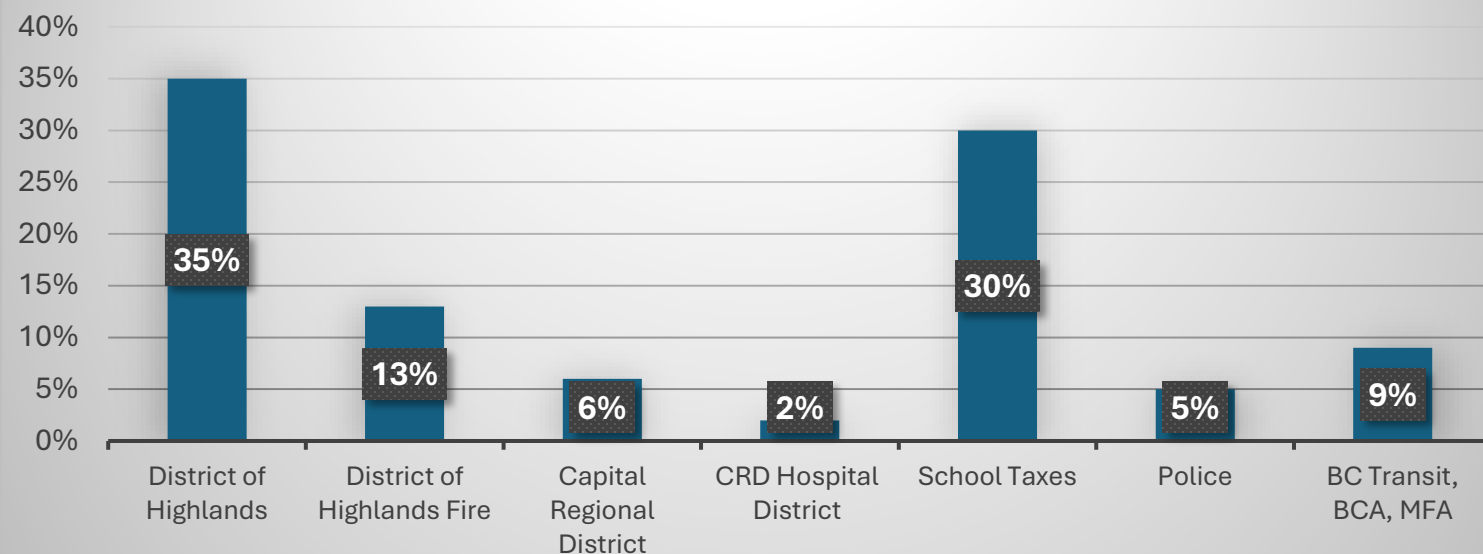
📞 1-800-663-7867

### MONTHLY PRE-AUTHORIZED PAYMENT PLAN

Property owners can enroll in the Pre-Authorized Payment Plan to pre-pay next year's property taxes through convenient monthly payments. 📅 Apply by **August 1, 2026**.

More information: <https://www.highlands.ca/local-government/finance/property-taxes/payment-options>

## Where Your 2026 Tax Dollars Go



## Have Questions ?

📞 250-474-1773 | 📧 [info@highlands.ca](mailto:info@highlands.ca)

🌐 Learn more: [www.highlands.ca](http://www.highlands.ca)


## Stay Connected with the District


**Coming in June...**Subscribe to District news, service alerts, event information, and community updates directly to your inbox.


## Grant Funding at Work in the Highlands


Grant funding allows the District of Highlands to invest in important projects **without relying on local property taxes**. The District has successfully secured grant funding to advance key community priorities. You may have already noticed some of these upgrades around the community, with more projects planned for **2026 and 2027**.


### Highlights Include:


 **Accessibility upgrades** at the District Office, including improved front entry access and parking areas (*SPARC BC*)


 **FireSmart initiatives**, such as public education, wildfire risk assessments, staff training, and development of a new Community Wildfire Resilience Plan (*UBCM*)


 **Fire Department readiness and safety**, including decontamination upgrades at both fire halls, a digital fire training simulator, and a backup generator at the East Fire Hall (*UBCM*)

 **Infrastructure investments**, including culvert replacements, road paving, traffic calming studies, and restoration work at Twinflower Park (*Growing Communities Fund*)

 **Road safety improvements**, such as upgraded signage and cat's-eye reflectors (*ICBC*)

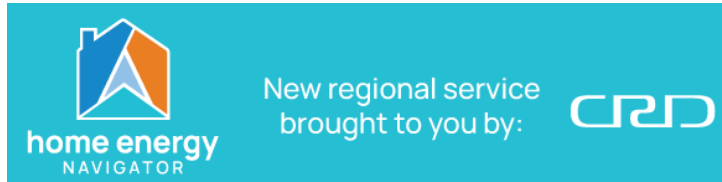
 **Modernized municipal services**, including live-streamed and recorded Council meetings, a new meeting portal, records digitization, improved records management, and a redesigned District website (*COVID Restart Grant*)

 **Climate action projects**, including a Bike Lane Feasibility Study and new groundwater monitoring equipment (*Local Government Climate Action Program*)

 **Resiliency projects funded from reserves**, including Ross Durrance Road embankment stabilization, Lorimer Road paving, Eagles Lake Park restoration, and the purchase of a wildland mini-pumper

Together, these projects strengthen **safety, accessibility, resilience, and service delivery**, helping ensure the Highlands community continues to thrive now and into the future.

## New Free Service for Highlands Residents



The Home Energy Navigator program offers expert guidance to help homeowners plan energy upgrades, compare quotes, access rebates, and navigate the retrofit process with confidence—visit <https://homeenergynav.ca> to learn more or call 1-866-381-9995.

**FireSmart™: Home Assessments**

Looking to FireSmart your property? The District of Highlands is offering **FREE** home assessments with no obligations. Grab a gift of your choice while supplies last.

Email [firesmart@highlands.ca](mailto:firesmart@highlands.ca) or call (778) 700-0243




## Before You Occupy an Accessory Dwelling Unit — Know This


Before an **accessory dwelling unit** (secondary suite, carriage house, garden suite, etc.) can be occupied, an **Occupancy Permit is required by bylaw**. **Why does this matter?** Because it helps make sure all dwelling units are **safe, healthy, and properly serviced**—for owners and tenants alike.

An Occupancy Permit helps ensure that dwelling units:

- ✔ Meet **BC Building Code** health and safety standards and are built to **provincial standards**
- ✔ Have **proper potable water and sewage systems** especially where wells or septic systems are shared
- ✔ Are safe and suitable for **long-term living**
- ✔ Provide clarity for **insurance, resale, and financing**
- ✔ Support **responsible housing growth** in our community

 **Important:** All applicable provincial regulations continue to apply, including the:


- *BC Building Code*
- *BC Drinking Water Protection Regulation*
- *BC Sewerage System Regulation*

 **Shared well or septic?** If more than one dwelling unit uses the same system, **Island Health approval is mandatory**.

### Island Health Resources:

Sewerage: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/environment/sewerage-subdivision>

Wells: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/drinking-water/drinking-water-legislation-approval>

**Do you need an Occupancy Permit?** If you're planning to use or rent your accessory dwelling unit, the next step is simple:  **Fill out a Building Permit Application** (<https://www.highlands.ca/building-development-planning/building/building-permits-inspections>) and submit the required documents.

## Keeping Culverts Clear Protects Our Community

Did you know that property owners are responsible for maintaining the driveway culverts located in the road right of way in front of their homes?

Culverts are essential to drainage, allowing water to flow through ditches and under driveways to prevent flooding, road damage, and erosion. While road right of ways are typically municipal, the culvert serving a driveway is a private improvement and must be maintained by the homeowner.

### What does maintenance involve?

Regular maintenance is simple but important:

- Keep both ends of the culvert clear of leaves, sediment, and debris
- Remove blockages of branches, snow, or ice
- Ensure water can flow freely through the culvert

## Shipping Containers on Your Property: Permit Required

Shipping containers may require a permit before placement.

### What's required and why it matters:

- **Zoning and setbacks** ensure containers are properly located or do not block access
- A **permit application** (site plan, size, use, duration) confirms safe and compliant placement
- **Approvals for long-term or modified use** ensure containers meet building and safety standards
- **Time limits** prevent unregulated permanent use
- **Enhances firefighter safety** by helping ensure access routes remain clear, visibility is maintained, and potential hazards are minimized during emergencies.

**Before delivery**, contact the District to confirm requirements and obtain any necessary permits to avoid fines or removal.

