



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: GPFC Recommendation: C-FS-15 Policy Amendment - Tax Relief
Presented by: Greg Dahlen, Senior Manager, Assessment & Taxation

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3/18/2019	1	City Council		

TAMRMS#: B06

GPFC Recommendation: C-FS-15 Policy Amendment - Tax Relief

Presented by: Greg Dahlen, Senior Manager, Assessment & Taxation

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That revised Council Policy C-FS-15 - Property Tax Relief, provided as an attachment to the March 18, 2019 Agenda Report entitled "C-FS-15 - Property Tax Relief", be approved.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present proposed revisions to C-FS-15 - Property Tax Relief.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Service Name: Tax Account Administration

Service Definition: Administration of the annual and supplementary tax levy, pre-authorized payment system, schools support declarations, property tax collection process, and land title office changes.

Service Component: Not applicable

Current Service Level: Not applicable

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

On February 11, 2019, the Governance, Priorities and Finance Committee made the following recommendation:

(AR-18-587)

That the Governance, Priorities and Finance Committee recommend to Council that revised Council

Policy C-FS-15, provided as an attachment to the February 11, 2019 Agenda Report titled "Council Policy C-FS-15 Amendment - Tax Relief", be approved.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The City of St. Albert, at present, does not have a policy to govern how it deals with requests from property owners for property tax relief. Provision of such a policy would be beneficial, as it would provide a framework for both Council and property owners, as to what types of requests for property tax relief would be deemed reasonable and acceptable. Revisions to an older existing policy, C-FS-15, have been made, in an effort to provide policy in this area.

Section 347(1) of the *Municipal Government Act* permits Council the discretion to cancel or reduce tax arrears, cancel or refund all or part of a tax, or defer the collection of a tax, for a particular taxable property, or class of taxable property, if it considers it equitable to do so.

Council must exercise this discretion in an equitable and transparent manner, as any cancellation, reduction, or deferral has a financial consequence to the City. Council Policy C-FS-15 - Property Tax Relief attempts to provide clarity and guidance as to how requests for property tax relief may be deliberated at the Council level.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

Any request for property tax relief, has a potential financial implication to property tax revenues.

Legal / Risk:

Decisions by Council to allow tax refunds, cancellations, reductions, or deferrals, are typically rare. However, any decision in this area may imply an unintended precedent; which could be construed as a risk. Conversely, the policy attempts to provide a framework of limitations on what is an acceptable tax relief request, which serves to mitigate financial risk.

Program or Service:

It is anticipated that Council Policy C-FS-15 - Property Tax Relief will bring greater clarity, transparency, and fairness & equity in the administration of property tax accounts. By providing a more formalized mechanism for property owners to request tax relief, customer service is enhanced.

Organizational:

Approval of Council Policy C-FS-15 - Property Tax Relief will result in slight workload adjustments for Taxation Department staff and Legislative Services staff. Taxation staff will administer the request form process. Legislative Services staff will advise property owners of Council's decision on a tax relief request, by mail.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

1. Council could choose to further amend Council Policy C-FS-15 - Property Tax Relief and ask Administration to incorporate those textual changes.
2. Council could choose to not approve implementation of the amended Council Policy C-FS-15 - Property Tax Relief and continue to deal with future requests for tax relief on a complete ad

hoc basis.

Report Date: March 18, 2019

Author(s): Greg Dahlen

Committee/Department: Finance & Assessment Department

Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble