



## **Common Questions & Answers Regarding COVID-19 and Your Property Taxes for 2020.**

### **1. When are property taxes due?**

The 2020 property tax deadline has been deferred (extended) by ninety (90) days. Property taxes are now due September 30, 2020. However, we still encourage property owners who are not in financial difficulty to pay by June 30, if possible.

### **2. What property types are included in this property tax deferral?**

All residential and non-residential properties are eligible to defer payment of their taxes in 2020, to September 30.

### **3. Do I have to defer payment of my taxes?**

No. The City encourages property owners to pay their taxes by the regular June 30 deadline if possible. Deferring payment of your taxes is completely optional and is based on your personal financial circumstances.

### **4. Do I need to apply, or fill out a form, to defer my taxes?**

No. You do not need to apply or contact the City of St. Albert to arrange for this deferral.

### **5. Who do I contact if I am having trouble paying my taxes, or can't pay my taxes?**

Contact the City of St. Albert Taxation department to obtain information on what tax relief measures are currently in place. Please phone 780-459-1516 or email [taxation@stalbert.ca](mailto:taxation@stalbert.ca).

**6. Will there be any penalties for late payment or non-payment of property taxes in 2020?**

Yes. A 6 per cent penalty will be applied on October 1, 2020 on any outstanding taxes not paid by the extended deadline of September 30. Please ensure you give yourself adequate time in advance of the September 30 deadline to pay your taxes. If paying your taxes via online banking, please ensure you make payment at least three (3) business days in advance of the deadline to allow your financial institution time to process your transaction. (We often have folks who pay online on the deadline date, and the funds transfer to us late, and they thus incur a penalty).

**7. Can I pay my taxes before the September 30 deadline?**

Yes. All property owners who are able to pay their property taxes in advance are encouraged to do so. Timely payment will assist City finances during the COVID-19 crisis.

**8. What do I do if I already am paying my taxes via the City's pre-authorized monthly payment plan (PAT)?**

You have two options:

- a) You can continue with no change required on your part. We will continue processing your monthly withdrawal as planned. You do not have to contact us. (Approximately 60 per cent of all property owners currently pay their taxes in monthly installments using the City's pre-authorized monthly payment plan option.)
- b) If you are experiencing financial hardship, you can contact our Taxation department at [taxation@stalbert.ca](mailto:taxation@stalbert.ca) to make arrangements to temporarily suspend your monthly payments. You can suspend payments up until September 30. However, if you wish to resume the pre-authorized payment plan as of October 1, you must then have your remaining payments in 2020 adjusted to ensure your tax account balance is \$0 by December 31, 2020.

Example:

The Smiths pay \$4,800 a year in property taxes. Their monthly pre-authorized tax withdrawal is \$400. On July 1 they decide to suspend their payments due to financial hardship. Their current outstanding tax balance at the time is \$2,400. They make no payments in July, August or September. On September 30, their outstanding balance is thus still \$2,400. They wish to re-commence their pre-

authorized payments on October 1. The \$2,400 owing has to be paid over the remaining three (3) months of the year, which equates to now \$800 per month for October, November and December. By December 31, their balance is \$0.

**9. I am a non-residential taxpayer; how do I go about deferring my education taxes, as announced by the Provincial Government?**

You do not need to take any action to defer the education tax portion of your total tax bill. The City of St. Albert has employed a combined deferral approach, whereby both the education and municipal tax components automatically have a deferred payment deadline of September 30.

**10. What happens if I am unable to pay my property taxes in full by September 30?**

A penalty of 6 per cent will be applied to the outstanding balance on October 1. The City typically has three penalty dates in a given year (July 1, August 1, and October 1). The July 1 and August 1 penalty dates have been cancelled for 2020 in order to provide tax relief to property owners.

**11. Do any of the tax deferrals or penalty cancellations extend into 2021?**

At this time, there are no planned tax deferrals or penalty cancellations scheduled for the 2021 tax year. The duration and severity of financial effects stemming from COVID-19 will determine if further property tax relief measures are considered in 2021.

**12. If I defer my taxes, does that mean I still have to pay them?**

Yes. Deferring payment of your taxes does not mean your taxes are reduced or cancelled. Your taxes must still be paid in full, but you have a longer time frame in 2020 in which to do so. Payment must be made in full by September 30, to avoid a penalty being incurred on October 1. For those property owners who are enrolled in the pre-authorized payment plan (PAT), your tax account must have a zero balance by December 31.

**13. When will I receive my combined 2020 Assessment & Tax Notice?**

All 2020 Assessment & Tax notices will be mailed to property owners on May 29, 2020. You should then receive this mail within seven (7) days via Canada Post. If you don't receive your notice on a timely basis, please contact our Taxation department at 780-459-1516 or [taxation@stalbert.ca](mailto:taxation@stalbert.ca).

**14. If I can't pay my taxes, should I be appealing my property assessment as a way to seek relief?**

No. The property assessment appeal process is not intended for complaints regarding tax amounts, or ability to pay taxes. The property assessment appeal process is intended for disputes over the market value assessment for your property, as shown on your 2020 Assessment & Tax Notice.

**15. Does the COVID-19 pandemic effect my property value and taxes for 2020?**

No. Your market value assessment, for the purposes of the 2020 tax year, is based on a legislated valuation date of July 1, 2019. As of this valuation date, the COVID-19 pandemic had not yet occurred. Any effects that the pandemic might have on the market value of property will be analyzed and incorporated into the 2020 Assessment Roll, which will be based on a valuation date of July 1, 2020. (2021 Tax Year)