

SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 150

CITY NEWSLETTER

DEC. 2014

No property tax hikes for 7 years

THAT WILL BE THE RECORD AT THE END OF THE CITY'S NEW 2015/2016 BUDGET

By law, cities in Washington state are allowed to increase their property tax revenue by one percent each year.

For example, if a city's property tax revenue was \$2,000,000 in 2014, it would be allowed to increase its property tax revenue, on existing properties, to \$2,020,000 in 2015. And the city could add another one percent each year.

So here's the good news for Sammamish taxpayers, assuming no major adjustments are made: At the end of the new, two-year budget (2015/2016) approved by the City Council on Nov. 17, Sammamish will have gone seven years without taking that one percent annual increase.

Here is some additional context:

- In addition to the property tax on existing properties, the city is allowed to impose tax on new construction. In 2015, the property tax on new construction will be approximately \$578,000. So the total property tax revenue in 2015

See NO HIKES, pg. 3



Wally Pereyra stands on the new fish culvert next to his house.

Resident opens the way for Kokanee

THANKS TO HIS \$300,000 INVESTMENT, SALMON HAVE SURGED INTO THE UPPER REACHES OF EBRIGHT CREEK

Armed with a Ph.D in fisheries science and decades of government and private sector work in the fish business, Wally Pereyra is probably the best neighbor the Kokanee salmon in Ebright Creek could have hoped for. And boy, did he come through for them.

The creek passed through a narrow pipe next to his house, and after years of watching fish struggle

with the obstacle, Wally decided to do some remodeling. Very expensive remodeling.

He rerouted the stream, took out the pipe, dropped in a spacious 20-ton culvert, refurbished the stream bed, turned the water back on, and then watched as thousands of Kokanee made a huge run up the creek to their newly accessible spawning grounds.

See RESIDENT, pg. 5

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

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COMMUNITY CENTER

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COMMISSION OPENINGS

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2014: A year of challenges and achievement

This year Sammamish celebrated its fifteenth year! It can be an awkward age, to be sure. In spite of anxieties and challenges, in part brought on by our continuing struggle with growth, this year brought important accomplishments – and more than a few good times. Let's look back for a moment.

One notable early event was the release of a new Sammamish Community Profile. It described a city we have come to know: one third of our residents are under the age of 18; we remain a largely affluent, educated, community of families.



*Tom Vance
Mayor*

We're also increasingly diverse. Sammamish now has the third highest proportion of foreign-born residents on the eastside. And, despite our reputation for youth, more of our seniors and empty-nesters are staying in the family home. It's nice to know we're retaining all that wisdom even as we make way for new generations!

In January, after nearly two years of negotiations, Sammamish agreed to a seven-year inter-local agreement for fire and emergency service, starting in 2015. Along with Issaquah, North Bend and two Fire Districts, our fire department will remain Eastside Fire and Rescue. We will still get the excellent service EF&R provides, but with a more equitable funding plan.

In April, Sammamish and Issaquah approved an inter-local agreement to transfer the Klahanie Potential Annexation Area rights to Sammamish. This began an intergovernmental pro-

cess that will likely lead to an election in Klahanie as early as next April. If successful, the annexation will provide benefits for both Klahanie and Sammamish residents. Klahanie taxpayers will see lower taxes along with much improved services. And, among other benefits, improvements along Issaquah-Fall City Road and Issaquah-Pine Lake Road will provide better commutes for all of our residents, current and future.

In May, Sammamish announced that Porter Brothers Construction had been selected to build our new Community and Aquatic Center. As approved by the Council, the new center will have two pools, two gyms, workout areas and much more. In June, a ceremonial groundbreaking signaled the start of construction. The expected opening is early 2016. As I write this, the project is beginning to take shape. You'll have to look over a chain-link fence, but please drop by City Hall plaza for a look. It's going up fast!

Summertime is a great time to live in Sammamish. The Farmer's Market enjoyed a great season, and our Parks Department scheduled a wonderful new season of concerts and Shakespeare in the Park. As a patron of several of the concerts and both Shakespeare plays, I can report that a great time was had by all!

In addition to all the organized fun, our most active parks – Beaver Lake Park, Pine Lake Park, and Sammamish Landing – were popular and busy destinations for our residents this past year.

And for those looking for a quieter, more natural experience, the trails at Beaver Lake Preserve, Big Rock Park and Evans Creek Preserve – now with

a trailhead on Sahalee Way – provided a way to enjoy open space and wildlife.

Six years and one recession after the Town Center Plan was adopted, August brought the first Town Center construction proposals for review by city staff.

Although they all have commercial as well as residential components, one proposal – from TRF Pacific – has gotten the most attention. Anchored by Metropolitan Market, the project will include restaurants and a variety of retail and service businesses, as well as major medical office space. This is moving fast, with a potential groundbreaking in 2015 and a possible opening in late 2016.

I'll close with the recent Council approval of the 2015-2016 budget. Without raising taxes, Sammamish will provide services to our residents, finish construction of a new Community and Aquatic Center, complete several important roads projects, and finish 2016 with an ending fund balance of more than \$34 million.

In addition, economic forecasts project long-term financial health beyond the next six years. It will take continued hard work and lots of tough choices, but that's a trajectory we should all be proud of.

It's been a complex and eventful year for our city, and I have no doubt 2015 will follow suit, but as a very young city, we have accomplished a lot.

Have a happy and healthy holiday season! And please join us all in looking forward to a great new year!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tom Vance'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

CITY OF SAMMAMISH

NO HIKES, cont. from pg. 1

will be equal to the same amount as 2014 plus the additional revenues from new construction .

- To avoid taking in more revenue when the assessed valuation of Sammamish properties go up, the city lowers its levy rate. If you look at the Levy Rate History chart (below, left), you'll see that the city will collect \$2.05 per thousand of assessed valuation in 2015. That's down from \$2.41 per thousand in 2014.
- Keep in mind that the city's levy rate accounts for only about 20 percent of your total property tax bill. Most of the money you contribute through property taxes goes to your school district, the State School Fund, and King County.
- Despite the city's reduction of the levy rate, it's possible the amount you pay to the city could go up. That's because the city's levy rate reduction compensates for a rise in the city's overall assessed valua-

tion. But if your specific property's assessed valuation rose to a greater degree than the city's overall assessed valuation, the taxes you contribute to the city will rise.

- If the other entities receiving a share of your taxes require larger payments, that can also result in a higher tax bill.
- In the "Revenue History" chart (below, right), the slow rise in city property tax revenue is clear. But since 2010, that rise is accounted for almost entirely by "new construction," or to put it another way, by new homes and properties that come onto the tax rolls. There have been no city "tax hikes" on existing property owners since 2009.

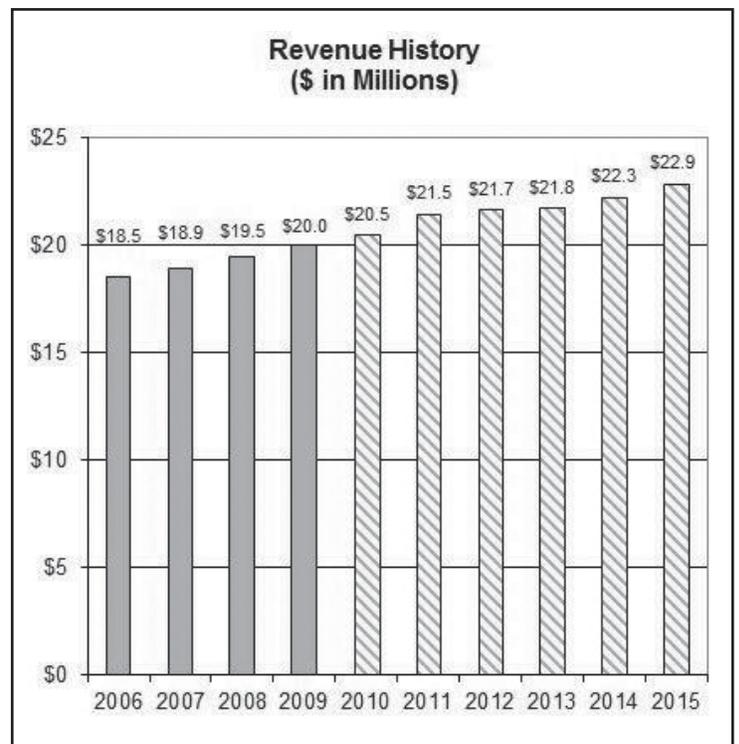
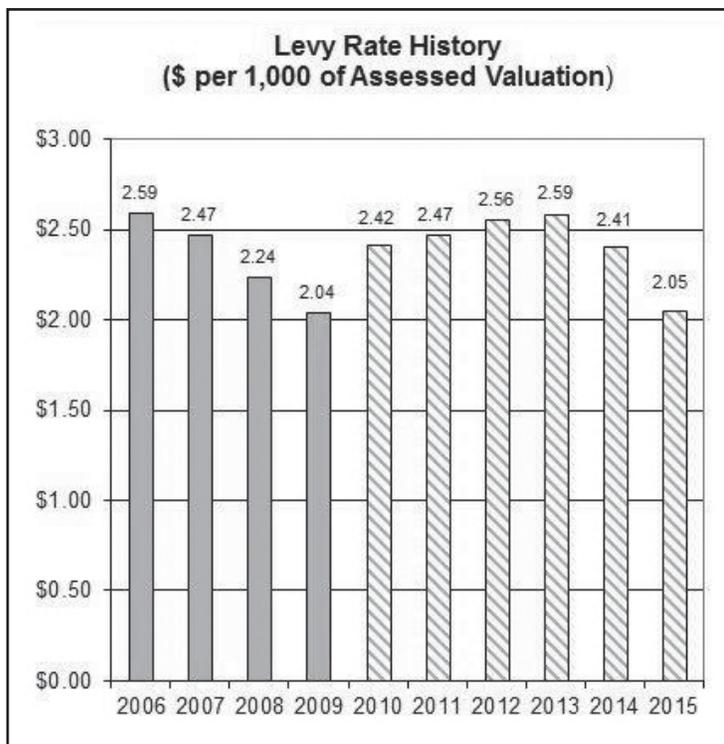
"We're always pleased when we can lower our levy rate," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "And it's a tribute to our City Council that by the end of 2016 we will have gone seven years without taking the one percent increase in revenue allowed by law. Our finances are in great shape and the Council plans to

keep them that way."

Highlights of the city's financial posture include the following:

- Expenditures on capital projects and operations are budgeted for \$158 million over 2015 and 2016.
- The ending fund balance at the end of 2016 is projected to be \$34 million.
- Those reserves will be there even though the city is constructing its Community and Aquatic center and making other major capital investments.
- The city has no bonded indebtedness.
- As a limited service city that contracts for police, fire and other services, Sammamish will continue to expend far less per capita than surrounding cities. In 2013, for example, Sammamish spent only \$566 per person. That same year, Redmond spent \$1,402 per person and Issaquah spent \$1,028.

For full details on the city's new, 2-year budget, please go to www.sammamish.us, click through *Departments, Financial Services*, and select "2015-2016 Budget, Second Reading."



Update: Community and Aquatic Center

Compared to the methodical and lengthy public input process that produced a concept for the Community and Aquatic Center, the actual construction feels like the blink of an eye.

Walls are going up, concrete slabs are going down, and plumbing elements are popping out all over the place. The weather has an effect at times, but steady progress is being made.

“Things slow down during bad weather, of course, but so far, there’s no reason to think we’re going to get way off schedule,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “We’re looking forward to opening up this great public facility in early 2016.”

Crews have almost completed the storm water vault at the west end of the

main building. When everything is complete, the roof of the vault will support a surface parking area.

The surge tank, an enclosure that absorbs any overflow from the swimming pools, is now complete, and the elevator shaft between the top and bottom floor is also close to being finished. When weather allows, the contractor is continuing

to excavate the east wing of the structured parking garage.

The 69,000-square-foot facility will feature two gyms, a pair of swimming pools, locker rooms, fitness areas, meeting spaces, child care, and much more on two levels.

For a more complete look, go to www.sammamish.us, click through *departments, parks and rec*, and then select the tab for *Community and Aquatic Center*.



Pouring the concrete slab that will support the building’s gymnasiums. City Hall can be seen in background on the left, the library on the right.

Klahanie annexation process

With an April 28 annexation election in its sights, the city is continuing to nudge the multi-jurisdictional annexation process forward. On Nov. 17, the City Council took several actions.

It passed an ordinance that officially places Klahanie and some adjoining neighborhoods within Sammamish’s Potential Annexation Area (PAA). This follows Issaquah’s release of the area from its PAA.

The Council adopted contingent land use designations and zoning for Klahanie. Since these are very similar to existing rules, there will be very little impact to Klahanie residents if the annexation goes through.

At that same Nov. 17 meeting, the Council also passed a resolution expressing the city’s intention to proceed with the annexation. At press time the city was scheduled to send a “notice of intent” to the regional Boundary Review Board (BRB) in early December. If the BRB process clears the way, the city will then pass a resolution setting an election date.

Time to prepare for heavy rains

Although city crews pay close attention to the weather forecast and are always ready to do what’s necessary to handle heavy rain and the flooding that sometimes accompanies bad weather, they can’t do it alone.

It’s in your best interests as a property owner and resident to make preparations of your own. Here are some suggestions:

- If you’ve experienced flooding before, keep sand bags on hand and place your valuables in elevated locations.
- Make sure your gutters and downspouts are clear.
- Put your leaves in a yard waste bin.
- Keep yard debris and leaves away from drainage ditches and streams. That will reduce the chances of the debris blocking a culvert.





This was the pipe salmon used to encounter on Ebright Creek.



This is the 20-ton box culvert Wally Pereyra installed to replace the pipe.

RESIDENT, cont. from pg. 1

Including engineering, environmental and permit costs, Wally's gift to the Kokanee lightened his wallet by about \$300,000.

But David St. John, with the county's department of natural resources and parks, says it's not just the money.

"Wally is an amazing guy," he said. "The value he provides as an example of a private citizen so dedicated to making a difference is just as important to us."

St. John said the new culvert was an instant success, noting that upon its completion in 2012, thousands of spawning Kokanee moved into almost pristine upstream areas that only a handful of Kokanee had seen over the

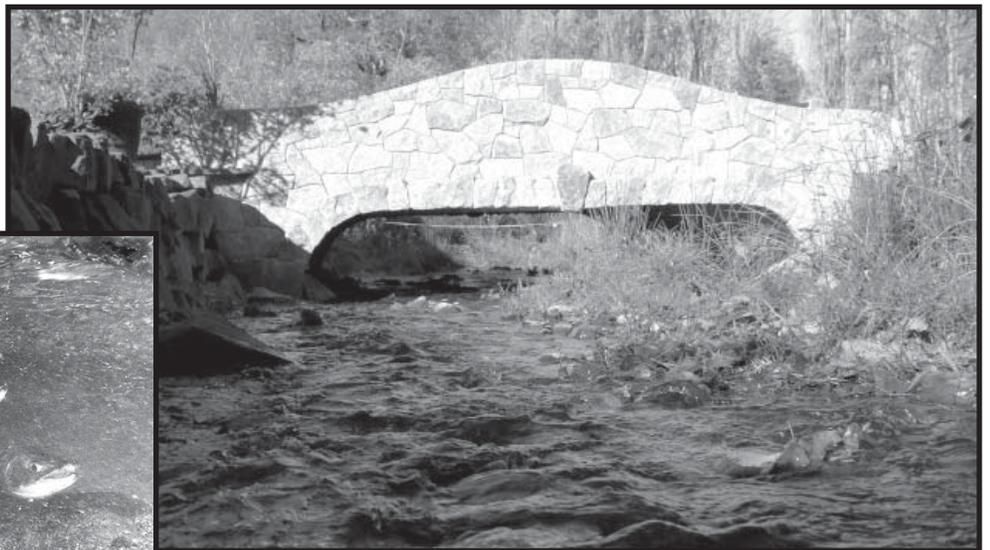
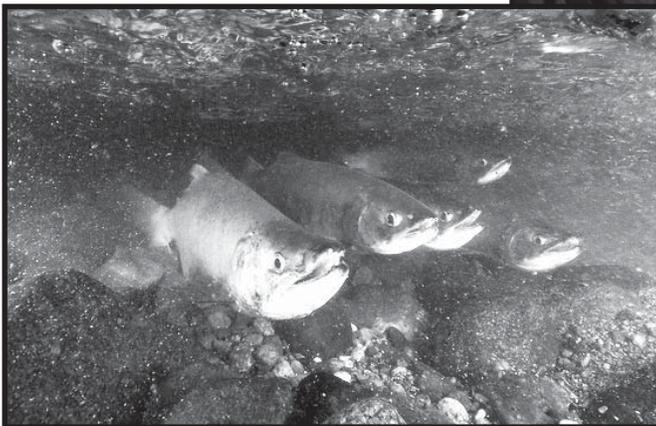
past seventy years or so.

For this special contribution, and others, Wally has received broad recognition. Among other things, he's received the "Conservationist of the Year" award from the northwest chapter of Trout Unlimited, the "Landowner of the Year" award from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and a SAMMI award for "Environmental Stewardship."

The success of the culvert fits in nicely with a broader effort being made by the Kokanee Work Group, a col-

laborative enterprise featuring Sammamish, the other cities around Lake Sammamish, the Friends of Issaquah Salmon Hatchery, Trout Unlimited, Friends of Pine Lake, and numerous other stakeholders, including Wally. The goal – to return the Kokanee population in Lake Sammamish to robust health and establish a fishery for Kokanee on the lake. It's a goal that fits Wally perfectly.

"I've always been interested in stream ecology," he says. "It's something I've always had a passion for."



These Kokanee salmon (left) were photographed in Ebright Creek. Thanks to the finished culvert (above), they have now been seen in much greater numbers swimming up Ebright Creek to their traditional spawning grounds.

Openings on city's boards and commissions

RESIDENTS INTERESTED IN SERVING SHOULD APPLY NO LATER THAN DEC. 31

Would you like to be on the Planning Commission? Or the Parks and Recreation Commission?

With the Dec. 31 application deadline quickly approaching, now is the time to contact the city.

Would you like to serve on the Arts Commission or the Beaver Lake Management District Board? Ditto.

Just send a letter of interest to City Clerk Melonie Anderson at manderson@sammamish.us, along with a resume and a completed questionnaire.

The questionnaires are available online at www.sammamish.us under the Commissions and Boards tab.



Planning Commissioners deliberate at their Nov. 20 meeting, from left: Mabbubul Islam, Mike Luxenberg, Frank Blau, Ryan Kohlmann, Cynthia Krass, Philip Cherian, Mike Collins.

Scholarship opportunity

The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Center for Quality Communities is offering six scholarships (\$1,250 each) to deserving students who plan to attend college or a trade school in the fall of 2015.

The city is eligible to nominate one 12th grade student from Sammamish. For more information, and to be included in the city's selection process, please go to <http://cfqc.org> or contact Lynne Handlos at lhandlos@sammamish.us. Applications are due at the end of January.

Plant native trees, shrubs at Ebright Creek Park

Ebright Creek is a salmon-bearing creek that runs into Lake Sammamish. Volunteers with the Washington Native Plant Society are working to restore this important creek by removing invasive weeds and planting native trees and shrubs. Please volunteer to help out, and learn about native plants and salmon habitat along the way!

Sign up on the city's events calendar: <https://www.sammamish.us/events/>.

Dec. 13 - 9 a.m. to noon

Ebright Creek Park

Water, snacks, gloves and tools will be provided.

The Sammamish Arts Commission
presents its first holiday theater production:

"It's a wonderful life!"

Join us at 7:30 p.m., on Dec. 20 and 21,
at the Eastlake Performing Arts Center.

To reserve your free tickets,
go to www.BrownPaperTicket.com.

CITY CALENDAR

DECEMBER

Tuesday, Dec. 2

- City Council Office Hour, 5-6 p.m.
- City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 3

- Parks and Rec Comm Mtg, 6:30 p.m.
- Beaver Lake Mgt District Mtg, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 4

- Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 5

- Very Merry Sammamish, 5:30-8 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 6

- Restoration at Lower Commons,
9 a.m.- noon

Tuesday, Dec. 9

- City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 11

- Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 13

- Volunteer at Ebright Creek Park,
9 a.m.- noon

Wednesday, Dec. 17

- Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.
- EX3 Boys and Girls Club

Saturday, Dec. 20 and Sunday, Dec. 21

- “It’s a Wonderful Life”,
7:30-9:30 p.m.
- Eastlake High School

Thursday, Dec. 25

- Christmas Day,
City offices closed

JANUARY

Tuesday, Jan. 6

- City Council Office Hour, 5-6 p.m.
- City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 8

- Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 13

- City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 15

- Planning Commission Mtg,
6:30 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 19

- Art Exhibit - Anne Anderson
Silk paintings, 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 20

- City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 22

- City Council Retreat, 6-8 p.m.
- Location TBA
- Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 23

- City Council Retreat, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.
- Location TBA

Saturday, Jan. 24

- City Council Retreat, 9 a.m.- noon
- Location TBA
- “Build It Sammamish” - LEGO Event,
10 a.m.-3 p.m.

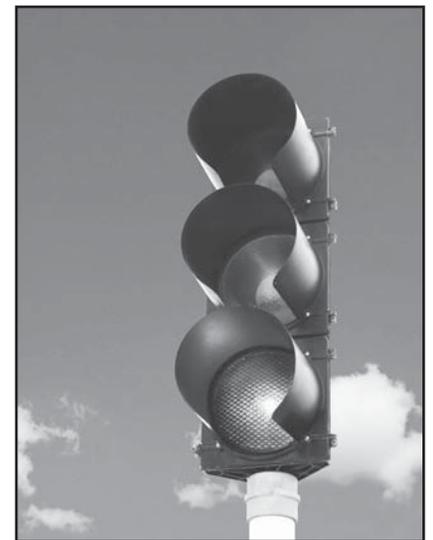
PLEASE NOTE:

All meetings and events at City Hall, unless otherwise noted. Times, dates and locations are subject to change. Please consult the city website for the most current information.



Reminder:

If traffic lights are knocked out by bad weather, as they were recently, remember that the intersection should be treated as a 4-way stop.
Drive carefully!





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*Kathy Huckabay
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*Don Gerend
Councilmember*



*Bob Keller
Councilmember*



*Tom Odell
Councilmember*



*Ramiro Valderrama
Councilmember*



*Nancy Whitten
Councilmember*

Toys for Tots!



The end of business on Wednesday, Dec. 10, is the deadline for dropping off new, unwrapped gifts for needy children. Just come into City Hall and drop them into this bin outside the Police Department!

CITY OF SAMMAMISH OFFICES

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Jessi Bon	Parks & Rec Director
Beth Goldberg	Admin Services Director
Joe Guinasso	Finance Director
Jeff Thomas	Community Dev Director
Melonie Anderson	City Clerk
Nathan Elledge	Police Chief
Bud Backer	Fire Chief
Michael Kenyon	City Attorney

Newsletter suggestions or concerns?
Contact Communications Mgr Tim Larson
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