

# 2023

# BUDGET REPORT



  
Whitecourt  
[WWW.WHITECOURT.CA](http://WWW.WHITECOURT.CA)

# Highlights



**9,927**  
people



**4231**  
private dwellings



Average assessment value  
of a single family home  
**\$327,700**



2022 development  
permits valued at over  
**\$15.3 million**



Region offers  
**420km** of groomed  
snowmobile trails



**50km**  
of trails in town for  
walking, biking, etc.



Offer over **800** fitness/  
recreation/wellness  
programs to residents



Town of Whitecourt  
2023 Operating and  
Capital Budget totals  
**\$52,112,674**



Annual average daily  
traffic on Highway 43  
through Whitecourt:  
**21,907** vehicles



Whitecourt services  
a primary trading  
area of over  
**50,000** people

The Town of Whitecourt recognizes the ongoing support of the Government of Canada and Province of Alberta through the following grant programs: Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Mountain Pine Beetle Program, Alberta Children's Services, Alberta Community Partnership Program, Alberta FCSS Grant Program, Alberta Municipal Water Wastewater Partnership, Alberta RESTOR Program, Build Canada Small Communities Fund, Canada Community Building Fund, Canada Summer Jobs Program, Celebrate Canada, FRIAA FireSmart Programs, Infrastructure Canada Investment Program, Municipal Sustainability Initiative, and Policing Support Grant.

Alberta

Canada



# Council & Administration



From left to right:

Mayor Tom Pickard, Councillor Tara Baker, Councillor Bill McAree, Councillor Braden Lancot, Councillor Paul Chauvet, Councillor Derek Schlosser and Councillor Serena Lapointe.

## Mayor's Message:

Each budget brings with it unique challenges and expectations, and 2023 has been no exception. With the current economy and cost of living top of mind, preparing the 2023 budget required balancing the community's expectation to maintain service levels with rising operating costs and a need to plan for our future.

Similar to households across Whitecourt, municipal operations have been greatly impacted by inflationary pressures. On top of a carbon tax increase of \$67,000, the cost for materials, supplies and utilities for the municipality has increased a staggering \$877,000.

Since the interim budget was approved in December 2022, Whitecourt Town Council challenged our Council Committees and Administration to find further reductions. Through additional cuts the overall tax increase was lowered from 6.49% to 4.64%. Based on the average single family home, this results in a \$8 per month increase to property taxes.

The Town of Whitecourt has a secure financial position, and has prioritized strategic planning and financial management to ensure our continued viability, sustainability and prosperity. It is this prudent planning that has helped our community

make large facilities investments, such as the Allan & Jean Millar Centre, and also weather economic upsets, such as the pandemic. While many municipalities are currently working to finance retroactive policing costs, Whitecourt identified this as an item that could significantly affect our budget several years ago, and reserves were created to lessen the impact.

The following report and information will help increase your understanding of community projects, and your knowledge of where your tax dollars are spent. We have detailed how much of property taxes is allocated to Whitecourt, and how much is requisitioned for school and seniors/affordable housing. There is also a breakdown on how much of each municipal tax dollar is allocated to each department.

Thank you to the members of our Council Committees and Administration for rising to Council's challenge to find cost efficiencies. I know it was not an easy task, and we appreciate all of the work that has been put into the 2023 budget.

**Tom Pickard, Mayor**

**Vision:** To create a vibrant community with endless opportunities where all aspects of life are enjoyed.

  
**Whitecourt**

[www.whitecourt.ca](http://www.whitecourt.ca)



# Taxation & Assessment

The 2023 Budget, which totals \$52,112,674 includes many exciting projects and services that will enhance the community's quality of life.

With current economics in our province and throughout the country, Town Council created a budget that requires a 4.64% overall tax change.

For every dollar of taxation:

- **\$0.74** is allocated to municipal operations/projects
- **\$0.24** is allocated to schools
- **\$0.02** is allocated to the Lac Ste. Anne Foundation for seniors and affordable housing

## There are three parts to the Property Tax:

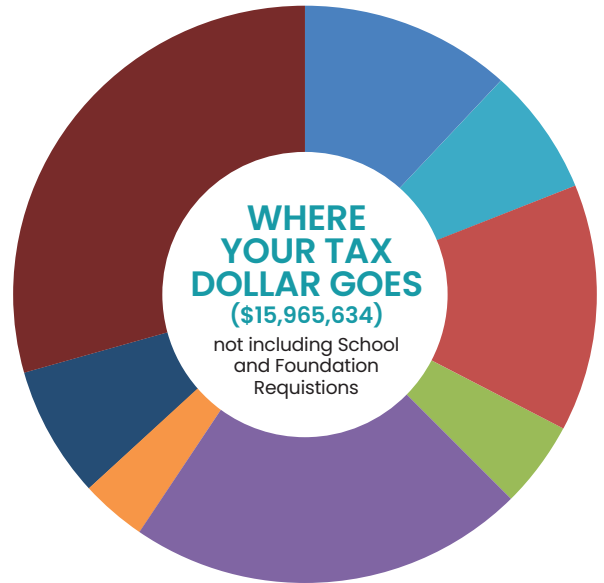
- **General Municipal Mill Rate** – This rate is set by the Town of Whitecourt and this portion of your property taxes is used to fund municipal services and programs.
- **Education Requisition** – This rate is set by the Alberta School Foundation on behalf of the Alberta Government and this portion of your property taxes is directed to the Province to provide educational services.
- **Seniors/Affordable Housing Requisition** – This rate is set by the Lac Ste. Anne Foundation and this portion of your property taxes is directed to operate local seniors and affordable housing facilities.

## Tax Rates are calculated using the following formula:

Assessed Property Value x Total Mill Rate/1000 = Total Property Tax

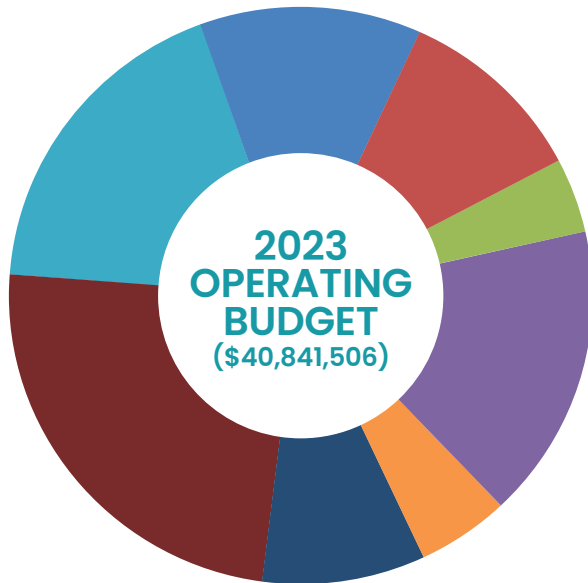
You can expect to receive your Town of Whitecourt Tax Notices in mid-May. If you have questions on your tax notice, feel free to contact the Tax Clerk at 780-778-2273.

**PROPERTY TAXES ARE DUE FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2023.**

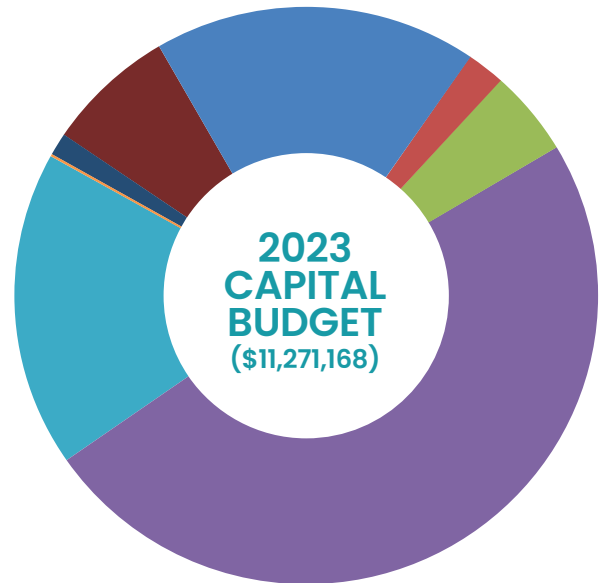


Administration	12.1%
Legislative & Other General Government	7.0%
Police, Bylaw & Safety	13.5%
Fire Protection	4.6%
Roads, Cemetery, Storm & Fleet Services	22.4%
Community Support & Transit	3.7%
Land, Planning & Development	7.4%
Recreation, Parks & Culture	29.4%





Administration	12.5%
Police, Bylaw & Safety	10.5%
Fire Protection	4.1%
Roads, Cemetery, Storm & Fleet Services	16.3%
Community Support & Transit	5.0%
Land, Planning & Development	9.1%
Recreation, Parks & Culture	24.1%
Utilities (Water, Wastewater & Waste)	18.3%



Administration	18.0%
Police, Bylaw & Safety	2.0%
Fire Protection	4.9%
Roads, Cemetery, Storm & Fleet Services	48.8%
Utilities (Water, Wastewater & Waste)	17.7%
Community Support & Transit	0.1%
Land, Planning & Development	1.3%
Recreation, Parks & Culture	7.3%

## 2023 TAX RATES:

	Residential	Non-Residential
Municipal Tax Rate	6.5179	11.1748
Education Tax Rate	2.6011	3.8519
Seniors Tax Rate	0.216	0.216
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.3350</b>	<b>15.2427</b>
Designated Industrial Property	0.0000	0.0746

If your house is assessed at

**\$327,700**

you can expect to pay:

\$2,135.92	General Municipal Taxes
\$852.38	Education Requisition
\$70.78	Seniors Requisition
<b>\$3,059.08</b>	<b>2023 Property Tax Total</b>



# Infrastructure

REVENUES  
\$18,062,540

EXPENDITURES  
\$21,638,714

BALANCE FROM  
TAXATION  
\$3,576,174

## \$0.22 OF EACH TAX DOLLAR IS ALLOCATED TO THIS FUNCTION

Maintaining and growing municipal infrastructure is one of the biggest challenges faced by communities across Canada. Whitecourt is in an enviable position as our community has proactively planned and managed infrastructure needs; we are fortunate that we do not carry the same infrastructure deficits (i.e. aging roads and outdated water treatment facilities) that other municipalities are struggling to finance.

## 2023 Priorities and Projects:

### Capital

- A phased plan will be initiated this year to improve and widen pathways in Centennial Park. Phase 1 will begin in 2023 and involves approximately 1,300 metres of pathway surface and drainage upgrades, along with the installation of root barriers along the edge of the pathway to mitigate future damage: \$842,870
- Street Improvement Program: Street overlays; lighting, sidewalk and trail repairs (funded through the Federal Gas Tax Fund, Municipal Sustainability Initiative – Capital and municipal reserves): \$1,059,540
- Replacement of the flush vacuum truck (\$668,214) and Tandem Truck (\$320,000) as per the vehicle replacement plan.

### Operating

- Continue educational and promotional activities to encourage recycling with the goal of diverting waste from the Landfill.
- Continue to promote the incentive and education program for businesses to reduce the percentage of inorganic materials (ex. grit, grease, oil) from entering the wastewater collection system.
- Continuation of the Free Clean Up Week and Take It or Leave It Campaign.
- Review of the “Blades on the Street” Pilot Program launched in 2022 for residential snow clearing.

- Infrastructure Services maintains 149 lane kilometres of road, 50 kilometres of paved trail, and an additional 50 kilometres of pathways and unpaved trails.
- The Water Treatment Plant's capacity is 18 million litres per day

DID  
YOU  
KNOW?

## MORE ITEMS NOW ACCEPTED FOR BLUE BAG RECYCLING PROGRAM

.....

The Curbside Blue Bag Recycling Program helps reduce our waste, and increase the life of the Whitecourt Regional Landfill. The best part? There is no need for sorting and there is no limit to how many bags you can place out each week.

Currently, **450 tonnes** of waste is diverted from the Whitecourt Regional Landfill each year through our Curbside Blue Bag Recycling Program.

The average Whitecourt home generates **1320 kilograms** of waste per year – but only recycles **178 kilograms**.

**Through a new waste and recycling contract, the materials accepted in the residential blue bag recycling program have expanded to include plastics #1-7.**

### Accepted items:

- Mixed paper/paperboard: magazines, flyers, newspapers, catalogues, office paper, envelopes, craft paper, books with the front and back cover removed. Please bundle shred paper individually in a separate bag for ease of sorting.
- Cardboard (must be flattened and placed under your blue bag for collection)
- Wrapping paper and greeting cards (no foil, decorations removed)
- Aluminum and tin cans, pie plates and containers
- Hard plastic containers, tubs and bottles symbol 1 through 7 (no lids or caps) – detergent, condiment, shampoo bottles; margarine, and yogurt containers, ice cream pails, clamshells
- Deposit items: mix containers, pop & beer cans and bottles, tetra paks

All items must be clean and free of foods, liquids and dirt. All items must be left curbside by 7am in a blue or clear bag for collection.



# Economic Development & Planning



**REVENUES**  
\$2,696,632

**EXPENDITURES**  
\$3,873,874

**BALANCE FROM  
TAXATION**  
\$1,177,242

## **\$0.07 OF EACH TAX DOLLAR IS ALLOCATED TO THIS FUNCTION**

Whitecourt's economic development and planning team guides development in our community, supports local start-ups and entrepreneurs, attracts new businesses and visitors, and raises the profile of our community on a national and international level. Whitecourt's economic health is fundamental to the success of all other initiatives in our community and, as reflected in the 2023 budget, Council continues to prioritize these efforts.

- The value of development permits issued in 2022 was over **\$15 million**.
- Sagitawah Brewing Co., Frontier Auto & Imports, Whitecourt Grow Company, Royal Lepage, Precious Sprouts Childcare Centre, White Cabs, and several other businesses opened their doors in 2022.

**DID  
YOU  
KNOW?**

## **2023 Priorities and Projects:**

### **Operating**

- Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw Review, along with the completion of the North Flats Area Structure Plan.
- Completion of the Joint Use and Planning Agreements with school boards that will outline the long term planning and use of school sites in Whitecourt, as well as the reciprocal use and maintenance of school and municipal facilities (i.e. play fields).
- Initiation of the Off-Site Levy Bylaw review (conducted every 5 years).
- Continuation of the Tourism Enhancement, Sports Hosting Partnership and Vitalization Grant Programs.
- Continue to collaborate on the EVenture Northwest Alberta initiative to implement an electric vehicle charging network in the region to enhance economic development opportunities.
- Implementation of an "Experience" Task Force to enhance tourism enhancement and development opportunities in our community.
- Continue to promote Whitecourt as a Designated Community under the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program's Rural Renewal Program and Entrepreneur Stream.





# Community Safety

REVENUES  
\$3,871,120

EXPENDITURES  
\$6,758,957

BALANCE FROM  
TAXATION  
\$2,887,837

## \$0.18 OF EACH TAX DOLLAR IS ALLOCATED TO THIS FUNCTION

As Whitecourt grows and develops, Whitecourt Town Council is committed to ensuring the continued safety and wellbeing of our community. All functions related to safeguarding the community are grouped together to provide an integrated approach to serving Whitecourt.

## 2023 Priorities and Projects:

### Capital

- Complete trail work and interpretive signage as part of the Athabasca River Bank Erosion Project: \$16,000
- Replace bunker gear and other miscellaneous equipment as identified in the Fire Equipment Replacement Plan: \$35,215
- Replace a Fire Command vehicle as per the Fire Fleet Replacement Plan: \$85,000

### Operating

- Work with the Whitecourt FireSmart Working Group to provide FireSmart education and promote best practices in the community.
- Continue fire prevention and education initiatives.
- Collaborate with the community on police service priorities and enhancements.
- Initiate a review and update of the Municipal Health & Safety Plan.
- Initiate a review and update of the Emergency Management Plan.



**DID  
YOU  
KNOW?**

- Whitecourt's Fire Department responded to 343 calls in our region in 2022.
- The Whitecourt RCMP Detachment generated 3,910 files in 2021 – a 5.9% increase compared to 2020.



## SCHEDULE A FIRESMART HOME ASSESSMENT AND QUALIFY FOR UP TO \$1,000 TOWARDS PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS

Book your **FREE** FireSmart Home Assessment with the Whitecourt Fire Department and get information on how you can take advantage of our FireSmart Homeowners Incentive Program!

Created in 2022 with support from Intact Public Entities (IPE) and Intact Financial Corporation, the FireSmart Homeowner Incentive Program encourages homeowners to adopt FireSmart practices to lower the risk of wildfire on their property. Property owners that complete recommended improvements may be eligible to receive up to \$1,000.

### How to qualify

1. Schedule a FireSmart Home Assessment with the Whitecourt Fire Department by emailing [firedepartment@whitecourt.ca](mailto:firedepartment@whitecourt.ca). A representative will complete the assessment and provide you with a list of recommendations specifically for your property.
2. Carry out one or more of the recommendations, and take before and after photos to show your progress.
3. Fill out a FireSmart Homeowner Incentive Program Application Form and submit it before the August 31, 2023 grant deadline.

→  
**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION  
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QR CODE**





# Community Support Services



REVENUES  
\$1,463,728

EXPENDITURES  
\$2,049,247

BALANCE FROM  
TAXATION  
\$585,519

## \$0.04 OF EACH TAX DOLLAR IS ALLOCATED TO THIS FUNCTION

Being healthy includes not just your physical state – but also your social and mental well-being. Services and programs offered in our community contribute to and support the overall health of all members of your family. Whether it's providing transportation to and from appointments, hosting wellness information sessions, or offering events that allow you to reconnect with friends – we are committed to building a healthy community.

## 2023 Priorities and Projects:

### Operating

- Continuation of the agreement with the Province to provide diversion services for school aged children and families from Valleyview to Oneway through the Family Support Program.
- Continuation of Whitecourt Transit service with half-hour pickups during morning and afternoon peak times.
- Continuation of Dial-A-Bus service on weekdays for individuals that meet program criteria, and administration of the Transportation Grant Program available to seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- Continuation of seniors programming and support
- Continuation of the Doors Open program, a youth afterschool program for grades 6-12. Due to the success of the program it has been expanded in 2023 to offer the program one day per month for grades 4 & 5.
- Support to the Youth Advisory Committee, which acts as a liaison between Town Council and Whitecourt youth, to ensure needs of this demographic are met. There are 10 youth members on this Committee.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- The Whitecourt Food Bank served **1,694** people in 2022. An additional 3,390 perishable food boxes were distributed.
- Whitecourt Transit provided transportation to over **3,861** passengers in 2022.



# Recreation, Parks and Culture

REVENUES  
\$5,978,991

EXPENDITURES  
\$10,674,478

BALANCE FROM  
TAXATION  
\$4,695,487

## \$0.29 OF EACH TAX DOLLAR IS ALLOCATED TO THIS FUNCTION

High quality recreation facilities are essential to making communities great places to live – and invest in. Not only do the leisure and cultural facilities and programs offered in Whitecourt provide opportunities for community members to stay active, they also attract businesses and industries to locate in the region, and motivate workers and families to stay or relocate here. The Town of Whitecourt will continue to invest in and provide leadership for recreational and cultural development within our community.

## 2023 Priorities and Projects:

### Capital

- Completion of the Festival Park Roadway/Parking and Parcel Upgrade Project: \$2,978,476
- Installation of a giant bouncy pillow in Festival Park (\$35,000 sponsored by Pembina Gas Infrastructure) and site preparation (\$25,000)
- Resurfacing and improvements to the basketball courts located near the Whitecourt Twin Arenas: \$40,000
- Parks & Playgrounds: Replacement of Graham Acres and Riverboat Park playgrounds: \$83,000
- Installation of dehumidifier for the Whitecourt Twin Arenas: \$160,000
- Purchase of strength equipment for the Pembina Fitness Centre at the Allan & Jean Millar Centre: \$75,000
- Repairs to lap, leisure, and tot pool liners at the Pembina Gas Infrastructure Aquatic Centre in the Allan & Jean Millar Centre: \$349,000

### Operating

- Continued support for the Whitecourt Woodlands Performing Arts Society, and continued partnership with the Society to host cultural events, concerts, and festivals such as Party In The Park.
- Continued support for the Communities in Bloom Committee.
- Operating grant to the Whitecourt & District Public Library.
- Support the Whitecourt Community Foundation in increasing community contributions to the Whitecourt Community Fund. The fund was established to build and strengthen Whitecourt and the area community. The fund provides grants today and into the future to local charities aimed at improving the quality of life of residents. It will support a wide selection of charitable efforts as the fund grows.



DID  
YOU  
KNOW?

- Over 800 fitness/recreation/wellness programs are offered to residents each year.
- There were 169,118 member visits to the Allan & Jean Millar Centre in 2022.
- The Allan & Jean Millar Centre set a record in 2022 for the highest annual daily admission revenue since the facility opened at \$292,997.





## FESTIVAL PARK ENHANCEMENTS FOCUSED ON SAFETY – AND FUN!



Road construction will be completed in the fall of 2023 on the extension of 50 Street/Legion Street into Festival Park (formerly Rotary Park). With grant funding support, the road will provide a second access into Festival Park increasing safety and access, and assisting with traffic control and congestion. Development of the new parking lot will also be completed.

The road extension project has been on Whitecourt's 20 Year Capital and Major Maintenance Plan for several years. It was included in the 2011 Festival Park Concept Plan, which was then replaced in 2017 with the Sportfield Master Plan. The Sportfield Master Plan identifies projects to meet community outdoor recreational needs for the next 15 years and include enhancement for Festival Park, Graham Acres and the Community Learning Campus area (near the Ecole St. Joseph School site).

In addition to the road construction, a new parking lot will also be developed that will link to Festival Way and the 50 Street/Legion Street extension. Not only will this enhance access to the Park, but it will help promote the downtown core.

### Giant Bouncy Pillow

In addition to road enhancements, a new feature will be added to the Park this year courtesy of Pembina Gas Infrastructure. The pillow, which is filled with air and acts like a trampoline, is a seasonal feature that will provide fun and entertainment for people of all ages.

### Festival Way

Festival Way provides the base for cultural and family entertainment options in the community. The paved corridor for pedestrian traffic through the south side of Festival Park is available for rent for markets and festivals, and features specialized power and pads for vendors and food trucks. To book email [bookings@whitecourt.ca](mailto:bookings@whitecourt.ca).



WWW.WHITECOURT.CA



## KEEPING YOU CONNECTED

### CONTACT US

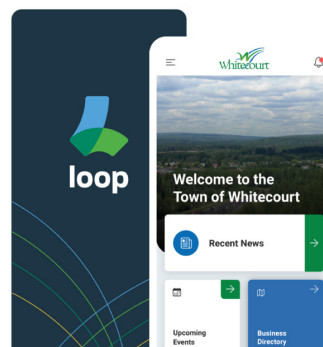
#### TOWN OF WHITECOURT

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Email: [administration@whitecourt.ca](mailto:administration@whitecourt.ca)



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- [youthofwhitecourt](#)
- [tourismwhitecourt](#)
- [allanjeanmillarcentre](#)

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