

AGENDA

SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL
Tuesday, October 7, 2025 at 4:00pm
Forest Interpretive Centre Council Chambers

Present: Mayor Pickard; Deputy Mayor Schlosser; Councillors Baker, Chauvet, Lanctot, Lapointe, and McAree; CAO Smyl; Recording Secretary Spivak.

1. Call to Order:
2. 2026 Budget Public Input Session:
3. 2026 Budget:
 - a) 2026 Preliminary Budget – Part 1:
 - b) 2026 Budget – Power Franchise Fee:
 - c) 2026 Budget – Gas Franchise Fee:
4. 2026 Preliminary Budget – Part 2 (Closed Meeting):
(Sections 19, 20, 26, and 30 of the Access to Information Act)
5. Adjournment:



REQUEST FOR DECISION

Date: September 30, 2025
Meeting: October 7, 2025 Special Meeting of Council
Originated by: Judy Barney, Director of Corporate Services
Title: 2026 BUDGET PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND:

In preparation for the 2026 Budget, a Budget Public Input Session was scheduled to provide community members the opportunity to share their comments and opinions on the 2026 Budget.

Community members were encouraged to share written comments or attend the September 22 Regular Meeting of Council. This opportunity was advertised via Town social media platforms, featured on the Whitcourt website, and advertised in the local newspapers.

REFERENCES:

N/A

BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES AND OPTIONS:

The Budget Public Input Session provides an opportunity for ratepayers to offer feedback, ideas and suggestions on what they believe should be included and prioritized in next year's budget.

Written submissions received are summarized below.

Public Input #1:

- Suggested a full-time Fire Department be created.
- Suggested a new hospital be constructed.
- Suggested the demolition of abandoned structures, including the building on the corner of Highway 43 and Mill Road.

Public Input #2:

- Suggested cuts be made to transit operations and the Vitalization Grant Program to account for increased expenditures at the new Culture & Events Centre.
- Suggested the Town consider a change to the waste and recycling collection system to encourage less waste and lower operating costs. Suggested less frequent collection to encourage residents to reduce waste.
- Suggested that funding should be allocated to linking trail systems to enhance connection between Centennial Park, Festival Park, Dahl Drive and Highway 43.

Public Input #3:

- Suggested building a campground with power and water hook ups behind the ball diamonds/golf course area.
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COST AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

COMMENTS:

N/A


RECOMMENDATION:

That Council accept the 2026 Budget Public Input Session as information.

APPROVAL:

Department Director:

CAO:





Whitecourt

REQUEST FOR DECISION

Date: October 1, 2025
Meeting: October 7, 2025 Special Meeting of Council
Originated by: Judy Barney, Director of Corporate Services
Title: 2026 PRELIMINARY BUDGET – PART 1

PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND:

Annually, Administration meets with Council to do a preliminary review of 2026 department outlooks, project carry forwards, and to discuss new projects. It's also an opportunity to hear Councillors' expectations, ideas, what you've heard from your Committees, Conventions and peers for best practices and trends and to review public comments for the 2026 Budget. Attached is a memo that provides department function details.

The budget will be finalized in the spring once the impact for the 2026 assessment roll has been established, the status of grant applications is available, and 2025 year-end is completed. Also in March, the provincial budget is usually announced which is needed before the Province will release the school tax rates to municipalities and the final provincial grant amounts.

REFERENCES:

- 2026 Preliminary Budget Memo – attached
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BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES AND OPTIONS:

The preliminary budget meeting provides timely direction to Administration for research of projects/initiatives that need further Council direction in the development of the 2026 Budget.

Guidelines enhance the budget process by setting threshold, priorities and goals for Administration to consider in budget preparation.

COST AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

COMMENTS:

Based on discussion and feedback received from Council at the Special Meeting, Administration will prepare a schedule for review of projects/initiatives that will be brought back to a future meeting for direction.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council accept the 2026 Preliminary Budget Memo as information.

APPROVAL:

Department Director:

CAO:



Memo

To: Peter Smyl, CAO

From: Judy Barney, Director of Corporate Services
 Chelsea Grande, Director of Community Services
 Lee Hardman, Director of Community Safety
 Jennine Loberg, Director of Planning & Development
 Drew Hadfield, Director of Infrastructure Services

Date: October 3, 2025

Re: **2026 Preliminary Budget**

0 General

The Budget 2026 preliminary meeting will provide Council an opportunity to share their input to determine the levels of service provided to the community and establish investments in infrastructure to guide the preparation of the budget. Administration will also provide the annual review of all department's proposed initiatives, project carry forwards, and forecast for budget impacts. Whitecourt continues to have challenges with minimal growth, and reduced grant funding. To minimize the impact on taxes, Administration will continue to search for opportunities for efficiencies and cost reduction options to achieve operational sustainability.

- 0.1 The residential and non-residential assessment base for 2025 is estimated to be \$2.0049 billion. The forecast is based on the following assumptions:
- a. Residential assessment base is anticipated to see inflation of 2.0%;
 - b. Non-residential assessment base, not including Designated Industrial Properties (DIP), is anticipated to see inflation of 2.0%;
 - c. Minimal growth is anticipated;
 - d. Impact for market and/or growth for DIP (Linear and Machinery and Equipment) is not known at this time.

It is anticipated that the taxation revenue for 2025 will be similar to 2024 due to minimal growth. Changes to assessment for market (inflation/deflation) are considered in the tax rate calculation and generally do not affect the tax levy revenue amount.

- 0.2 The forecast for the Cost of Living Adjustment is anticipated to be 2.0% to 2.2% for 2026.
- 0.3 Power franchise fee revenue is expected to increase by approximately 5.0% as per the 5-year plan (2026 – 2030) adopted at the June 23, 2025 Regular Meeting of Council. The new plan provides for an increase to Power franchise fee rate/revenue and to maintain the gas franchise rates/revenue at current levels to better align the franchise fee rates for both power and gas. The 2025 Gas franchise fee is near the maximum allowed threshold.
- 0.4 Based on the Alberta Government three-year commitment outlined in the 2024 provincial budget, the Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF) Capital grant for 2026 is anticipated to be approximately 5% (\$84,431) lower than 2025 allocation at \$1,594,667. Future LGFF Capital allocations will be determined based on the Alberta government's actual revenue from three years' prior and is anticipated to increase for 2027. The LGFF Operating grant amount is not known at this time as the provincial government is developing the allocation

formula for next year.

- 0.5 The Federal government, Canada Community – Building Fund (CCBF) provides long term, stable funding for municipalities to help build and revitalize public infrastructure. It is not known what the allocation is for 2026; however, in the past, the amount each year is similar. The 2025 grant amount was \$652,132. Other grant and funding opportunities are included in various departments.
- 0.6 Interest revenues are anticipated to be lower for 2026 based on the Big Five banks forecast for the Bank of Canada Rates. The forecast is for an annual average interest rate of 2.3% in 2026 which impacts the bank account balance interest revenue only, and has been considered in our cash flow forecasting. The Town has mitigated the drop by investing in GICs for rates ranging from 5.54% to 6.04% to maximize the investment returns that have been allocated to the construction of the CEC.
- 0.7 Power and natural gas transmission and distribution charges are anticipated to be 2.59% higher for power and it is not known what the increase will be for natural gas. The consumption rates will be similar for natural gas at the four year blended rate of \$2.42/GJ (2025 \$2.42/GJ) and for power at \$69.5/MWh (2025 \$69.5MWh). There will be no carbon tax for 2026 based on the Federal government announcement effective April 1, 2025; savings for 2026 is anticipated to be approximately \$235,000.
- 0.8 Employee compensation and benefits are anticipated to be impacted by the following:
 - a. Alberta Municipalities (AM) is presently working with SunLife on the benefit renewal for 2026 to determine the overall plan experience of the AM pool, also taking into consideration the Town's utilization of the benefits. Administration and AM representatives will be meeting in early October to discuss the forecasted rates for next year. Based upon the preliminary review we anticipate that rates will increase for trend factor (industry rate increase, similar to other municipalities) and the Town's utilization. It also anticipated that there will be minimal to no additional rate increase to balance the plan as the Town is close to achieving the required paid-loss-ratio minimum for premiums paid versus benefits received.
 - b. The rates for Local Authority Pension Plan for 2026 have not been announced yet.
 - c. Workers Compensation Board (WCB) rates are also not known at this time; however, it is anticipated that rates will be significantly higher for 2026 based on claims for the three-year period of 2022-2024.
 - d. As per the Employee Policy Manual, the estimated cost of living adjustment is 2.0 - 2.2%.
- 0.9 The Town is wrapping up the second phase of its Asset Management Implementation Plan (AMIP), which focused on building reliable water and sewer asset inventories. In 2026, we will move into the third phase of the AMIP. This phase will focus on developing templates for field collection of asset condition assessments and training operational staff to collect and input condition data for their respective asset groups. Future phases of the AMIP will use the collected condition data to produce a level of service (LOS) report for the assets and perform lifecycle modeling to help guide recommendations for the optimization of the Town's capital renewal budget program. The information gathered through the AMIP will help the Town plan maintenance and replacements more effectively, ensuring our infrastructure is managed responsibly and cost-efficiently over time.
- 0.10 In 2020, the Province implemented a program that reduced the recovery of Grants-In-Place-Of-Taxes (GIPOT) levied to 50% for 2020-2024, and then 75% in 2025. Beginning in 2026, the recovery is anticipated to be 100% for an additional revenue of approximately \$35,700 per year.
- 0.11 Education Requisition – In 2025, the Alberta government increased the municipalities' share of education operating expenses to 31.6% (2024 -29.5%), resulting in a 10% increase to the Town's annual requisition and education tax levies from our ratepayers. It was also planned in 2025 to increase the municipalities share of education expenses to 33.0% for 2026 that is anticipated to increase the requisition by another 5-10%.

11 Legislative

- 11.1 Budget to include funding for a strategic planning session for Council.
- 11.2 A comprehensive Council Compensation review was completed in late 2024 to provide for changes to be in place for the 2025 election. No compensation review is planned for 2026 as per policy, unless requested.
- 11.3 Continue membership on the Community Rail Advocacy Alliance Committee and Mid-Sized Towns Mayor Caucus that is estimated to be \$2,500 for both.

12 General Administration

- 12.1 Information Technology initiatives being proposed for the 2026 budget include the following:
- a. As recommended in the IT Modernization Plan, the current email system is being replaced with Microsoft 365 a cloud based outlook email system that also includes add on options for the licensing of office products and meeting software. A comprehensive review of existing users is currently underway to determine licensing requirements and annual licensing budget for 2026.
 - b. Also, recommended in the IT Modernization Plan was the upgrade to an internet protocol telephone system. Administration has reviewed options and selected Microsoft 365 Teams telephone system that will integrate with the email licensing platform and require annual licensing cost for the 2026 budget. Implementation of the new telephone system at the Allan & Jean Millar Centre and Public Works Shop will commence in 2025, and other Town facilities will be phased in future years. The 2026 annual licencing cost will be offset by the reduction in monthly telephone charges and purchases of telephone handsets.
 - c. The upgrade to the latest version for the accounting application was deferred in 2025. Administration will research if an upgrade is required for 2026 as per 20 Year Capital and Major Maintenance Plan.
 - d. Administration is proposing to defer the Records Management and the Cemetery System software purchases to 2027 to allow focus to be on moving physical records to the new administration building.
- 12.2 Replacement of the Forest Interpretive Centre printer is planned as per the Office Equipment Replacement plan. Planned office and record retention equipment replacement for the Town Office will be considered with the set up of the Culture & Events Centre.
- 12.3 A surveillance consultant has been reviewing the current systems in place and is in the process of providing a plan for upgrades. It is anticipated that replacement at priority sites (Allan & Jean Millar Centre, JDA Place, and the Town Shop) will commence prior to year-end with other sites being completed throughout 2026.
- 12.4 Carry forward funding for assessment contracting services to include a review of industrial assessment to ensure accuracy of provincial numbers reported.
- 12.5 Construction continues on the Culture & Events Centre and is still on track for a completion date of the fall of 2026. The Festival Park Roadway project will be completed in the spring of 2026, along with other paving and landscaping at the Culture & Events Centre.
- 12.6 The operational plan for the Culture & Events Centre and associated staff positions will be brought to a future meeting.
- 12.7 Debenture borrowing is planned for next year as per the funding plan for the construction of the Culture & Events Centre. Budget will include the first semi-annual payment that is anticipated to be paid in the fall of 2026, with the amount to be determined based on rates at the time of borrowing.

19 Other General Government Services

- 19.1 Communication initiatives to enhance internal communication are being planned that include employee recognition awards (Champ Awards Program), staff facility tours, and promotional items.
- 19.2 Included in contracting fees is funding for Council Planning Strategic Plan session and workshops, and miscellaneous consulting fees. The Bi-annual Team Building event is held every two years (2026) for approximately \$14,000. (\$7,000 was budgeted in 2025 to carry forward to 2026.)
- 19.3 Carry forward funding to host a Communications Workshop for the Communication Committee and staff to learn new ways and trends to enhance effective communications. (\$7,500)
- 19.4 The tri-annual compensation review was planned for 2025, but deferred for a year as the preliminary compensation review didn't justify it being done for 2025. To meet the requirements of the Employee Policy Manual, the review is scheduled to be undertaken in 2026, with results and recommendations of the review brought forward for Council consideration for the 2027 budget. The review ensures that the Town remains competitive and current in today's ever changing municipal marketplace, and provides for attraction and retention of qualified and professional staff, while minimizing the risk for large adjustments. The cost for the review is anticipated to be \$27,000 with funding from the GST Partnership Reserve.

- 19.5 Early renewal negotiations indicate that insurance is anticipated to increase on average 7-10% due to the increased inflationary value of the Town's property and claims experience.
- 19.6 Administration is proposing that the Town does not undertake a municipal census in 2026. The next federal census will be conducted in 2026, and should municipalities conduct a census in 2026 it would be for information purposes only as the Province will only accept the federal census data for that census year. (Data on the 2026 federal census will likely be released in 2027.)

21 Police Protection

- 21.1 The Province has lifted the freeze on the Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) Program in Alberta, and released the new ATE guidelines that restrict the locations for Photo Radar and the use of Intersection Safety Devices. Currently, there are 25 active sites in school and playground zones. All other locations previously approved along Highway 43 and throughout the community have been removed. Administration has submitted a business case for the use of an Intersection Safety Device on Highway 43 and 51 Street, and is exploring further locations in the community that may warrant the use of ATE.
- 21.2 Conduent Business Solutions/Modaxo was awarded the ATE contract for the Town; however, due to start-up delays, there was limited ATE use for half the year in 2025. While there have been significant changes to the ATE program, victim of crime percentages and constraints in the court system have continued to reduce the amount of fine revenue the program has generated over the last several years. Along with the restrictions by the Province on the placement of ATE, Administration is projecting similar budgeted fine revenue from 2025 for 2026. Administration will provide an update of the impact on the Safe Community Initiatives Program in the operating budget.
- 21.3 The RCMP contract has increased significantly, including in 2026. Utilizing the RCMP Multi-Year Financial Plan for 2026-2031, the estimated regular member pay raise based on a non-contractual estimate is 3.5%. Negotiations are underway, and salary increases, whether imposed through arbitration or negotiated, could result in increases below or above the estimated rate. The modernization of intervention equipment, which includes ballistic shields, breaching equipment, hard body armour, long gun rifles, extended-range impact weapons, body-worn cameras, pistol modernization, and Taser upgrades, is a factor in the costs per member. Division administrative costs have also increased.
- 21.4 Administration has rejoined the Alberta Citizens on Patrol Association after the program dissolved in 2021. The Citizens on Patrol (COP) Program has an RCMP liaison and the Crime Prevention Liaison assigned to the program. This program is slated to start up in the fall of 2025, with the rollout in the community beginning in 2026, accompanied by the addition of volunteers to support the initiative.
- 21.5 Crime Prevention workshops and initiatives will expand in 2026 with the hiring of the Crime Prevention Liaison in 2025.
- 21.6 Host the RCMP Regimental Ball, which is hosted every two years.
- 21.7 As per the facility lifecycle plan the following items are due for replacement in 2026 and it is being recommended that:
 - a. Replacement of Detachment toilets occur in 2026 (\$1,500);
 - b. Exterior front door (\$7,000) be deferred to 2031;
 - c. Administrative windows (\$60,000) be deferred to 2030.

23 Fire Protection

- 23.1 A Regional FireSmart Coordinator has been contracted in October 2025 with funding from a Firesmart grant. The Coordinator is responsible for leading, facilitating, and delivering FireSmart initiatives across program partner communities within the Whitecourt Forest Area, including the Town of Whitecourt, Woodlands County, and the Town of Swan Hills. The Coordinator will build on the extensive work already completed on FireSmart for the region into 2026 and 2027.

- 23.2 Administration will host a Community Emergency Preparedness Day. A community event focusing on emergency preparedness, FireSmart, and our local emergency service responders will be hosted at Festival Park in the summer of 2026.
- 23.3 An application has been submitted to continue the 2026 FireSmart Summer Crew and Mulching Program with grant support from the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA).
- 23.4 Administration will continue the rollout of the electronic-based permitting system, which allows for online submission of fire permits, inspection requests, occupancy loads, etc. This process streamlines the Fire Department's permitting process, making it more efficient for residents to access services. Administration will be adding online payment options in 2026.
- 23.5 Administration will be reviewing the False Alarm Bylaw.
- 23.6 Administration intends to continue with long-term planning to right-size the firefighting fleet to achieve the most efficient use of vehicles and funding. This includes a long-term plan for replacing engines and the County tender, as well as determining the best timeline and replacement plan.
- 23.7 Replacement of the 2004 Freightliner Pumper (engine 1). This apparatus has exceeded its lifespan and requires replacement. Was slated to be replaced in 2027; however, due to processing and order times exceeding 2-3 years, Administration recommends ordering in 2026. The estimated cost is \$1,500,000.
- 23.8 As per the Equipment Life Cycle Plan, major purchases include bunker gear replacement, hoses, vent saws, forestry pump, gas monitors, training props and miscellaneous rescue equipment (\$88,800).
- 23.9 As per the facility lifecycle plan the following item is due for replacement in 2026 and it is being recommended that:
 - a) Exterior painting (\$5,000) be moved to 2030.
- 23.10 There is \$10,000 slated in the facility lifecycle plan for miscellaneous maintenance in 2026. It is recommended that it be allocated to:
 - a) Purchase of a new pressure washer, it was under budgeted in 2025 (\$6,500 Carry Forward and New \$6,500);
 - b) Roof membrane repairs (\$3,500).
- 23.11 To meet new code, a Fire Suppression System Fire Connection and Check Valve will be installed (\$2,400).

24 Emergency Management and Community Safety

- 24.1 Carry forward of \$10,000 for the continued development of the Town's Health and Safety Program, including the development of safe work practices and site-specific emergency response plans, as well as facilitating an internal and external audit of the Town's Health and Safety Program.
- 24.2 Continue the rollout of the Town's Health and Safety Program. The Town will undergo a Certificate of Recognition (COR) Audit in 2026, with the anticipated achievement of acquiring the COR designation.
- 24.3 Continue the Emergency Management Team Training Plan. An additional ICS 300 course will be offered to Incident Management Team members in 2026. Administration has partnered with regional communities (Edson, Drayton Valley, Hinton, Municipal District of Greenview, and Jasper) to complete joint training. This partnership enables enhanced role-specific training opportunities in emergency management throughout the region. Courses will be offered in the area starting in 2026.
- 24.4 Host a regional tabletop emergency exercise with Woodlands County and the Town of Swan Hills.
- 24.5 Disaster Recovery Program application was approved in December 2023. Flood damage project repairs will continue into 2026.
- 24.6 Drought and Flood Protection Program grant approved to begin mitigation projects in 2025 to protect critical infrastructure from flood and to ensure public safety. Engineering is underway, with construction to begin 2026.

26/28 Municipal Enforcement / Animal Control

- 26.1 Municipal Enforcement will continue to perform the duties of animal control, along with other traffic functions, operating Monday to Saturday between the hours of 7am and 10pm for the summer months and 7am to 8pm during winter months.
- 26.2 Fine revenue is estimated for 2026 at \$129,600.
- 26.3 Exploring efficiencies and processes for coordinated response between Fire and Municipal Enforcement. With both Fire and Municipal Enforcement dispatched through Parkland County 911, there are opportunities to improve response coordination.
- 26.4 Continue to advertise and inform residents of the expanded bylaw complaint reporting, with options for online submission directly to Municipal Enforcement, along with a dedicated 24/7 reporting phone line for complaints.
- 26.5 In-Car and Body Worn Cameras are on a 5-year contract for \$5,000/year.
- 26.6 Purchase of driver's licence scanners for E-ticketing. \$4,000.

31 Common Services

- 31.1 Administration will continue to support the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) with one student to be hired. Continued support will be offered in advancing our Fleet Services staff journeyman and technician training in both automotive and heavy duty certifications.
- 31.2 A review of the Fleet Management Plan will be conducted and vehicles that are due for replacement in 2026 will be brought forward. The review of the plan will include fleet replacements that were deferred due to budget limitations. The fleet maintenance budget is anticipated to increase in 2026 to reflect the higher cost for parts, freight charges, and contracted repairs. The increase has been offset by anticipated lower cost for fuel and the replacement of aging units in the fleet. The allocation of equipment charges to other department (internal) will reflect the increased costs through the use of the fleet throughout the organization. Additional units being considered for 2026 are:
 - a. Purchase of additional equipment - field dresser (\$30,000);
 - b. Purchase of a wing blade for large loader (\$32,000);
 - c. Explore the purchase of a vehicle to support the additional trades position (\$70,000).
- 31.3 As per the facility lifecycle plan, the following items are due for replacement in 2026 and it is being recommended that:
 - a. New Shop Exterior paint (\$8,000) be deferred to 2030;
 - b. Overhead jib crane (\$25,000) be deferred to 2027;
 - c. Washroom fixtures Old Shop (\$5,000) be deferred to 2031 as they were upgraded in 2025;
 - d. Furnace replacement Old Shop (\$5,000) occur in 2026;
 - e. Shop Compressor (\$6,000) occur in 2026;
 - f. Overhead heater in wash bay in Old Shop (\$5,000) be replaced;
 - g. Replacement of Wash Bay Ceiling in Old Shop occur (Carry Forward \$18,000 and \$9,000 new).
- 31.4 One-time maintenance proposed for the buildings include:
 - a. Air conditioning/air cooler for upstairs for summer student (\$8,500);
 - b. Old shop wash bay overhead door new high cycle springs be install (\$1,000);
 - c. Snow stop on roof– Old Shop (\$10,000-\$19,000);
 - d. Pallet racking – additional storage shelves for bus bay (\$1,500);
 - e. Openers in the salt shed (\$2,000).

- 31.5 To meet new code, a Fire Suppression System Fire Connection and Check Valve is required at the Town Shop (\$3,100).
- 31.6 Purchase of an additional hoist for the Town Shop. This would be a larger hoist than ones used for light duty vehicles to accommodate Transit (\$35,000-\$75,000).

32 Road Transport

- 32.1 Continue with the use of mastic products. This is the most effective product for repairing potholes and pitting at rail crossings. The product will enhance the preventative maintenance program and could reduce and delay future major maintenance. A mastics machine will be rented to increase efficiency of the program, by adding the product in bulk; reducing the amount of time to place and allowing for a hot-in-place mastic application that generally lasts a few years. (\$10,000)
- 32.2 The Winter Maintenance budget reflects the 5-year rolling average and prior year actuals. Staff continue to review the service levels, equipment, and staffing required to meet the current policies. Costs will continue to be allocated to other functions, such as transit and municipal buildings, so that these services are properly reflected in other areas of the budget.
- 32.3 The Blades on the Street (BOS) project has been successful the last couple of years and will continue for the 2025/2026 season.
- 32.4 The budget for Christmas lighting includes ongoing phased replacement of new decorations adjacent to major roadways. The current level of funding replaces approximately ten decorations per year. 2026 will continue with our decoration replacement for the ninth year and focus on the Christmas lighting for the exterior of the Culture & Events Centre (\$20,000).
- 32.5 The current funding level allocated to sidewalk replacement will be maintained (\$30,000).
- 32.6 Infrastructure projects being carried forward from 2025 include:
 - a) Drainage Main Ditch East of Wastewater Treatment Plant (Carry Forward \$12,000);
 - b) Centennial Park Catchment Area Study - Project is 80% complete (Carry Forward \$4,418);
 - c) Centennial Park Drainage improvements as outlined in the 20 Year Capital & Major Maintenance Plan. Review and design has started. Improvements may not commence until 2027 (Carry Forward remaining funds).
 - d) Blue Ridge Road Culvert Replacement deferred to 2026 (Carry Forward \$796,528).
 - e) 53 Avenue and Legion Street intersection repair (Carry Forward \$60,000).
 - f) Seven projects in the Flood Mitigation Program are to be completed in 2026 (Carry Forward remaining funds).
 - g) Completion of the remaining Disaster Recovery Program (DRP) Projects in 2026.
- 32.7 2026 Street Improvement programs
 - a) Reviewing options for completing Phase 3 & 4 of the 55 Avenue Concrete Rehabilitation Plan.
 - b) Annual asphalt overlay, catch basin and sidewalk repairs.
 - c) Additional thermoplastic road markings for intersections as part of the intersection improvements from the Rural Transit Grant (Rural Transit Solutions Fund -RTSF) (Carry Forward \$170,000).
 - d) Improvements to existing bus stops – accessibility, benches and shelters (RTSF) (Carry Forward \$180,000).
- 32.8 An application for funding was submitted to the Green Municipal Fund's "Growing Canada's Community Canopies" (GCCC) Program for the first phase of the Town's Highway 43 Vitalization plantings. This phase includes plantings along both sides of Highway 43, between 53 Avenue and Riverboat Park Road, which is identified in the Town's 20 Year Capital and Major Maintenance Plan to occur in 2025. The Town's application has passed the first steps of the GCCC process, which included a Readiness Check, Eligibility Consultation with a GMF Representative, and a Pre-Application Submission. It underwent an External and Internal Peer Review, and was recommended for funding. Our application is now in the

funding recommendation stage with a final decision anticipated by the spring of 2026. This project will be a carry forward to 2026, pending the GCCC grant being approved.

- 32.9 The Enhanced Driveway Crossing Replacement Program is proposed to remain at the current level (\$10,000).
- 32.10 Traffic calming review on 55 Avenue and the effects on Dahl Drive/Mink Creek Road intersection will be considered in upcoming Master Transportation Plan.
- 32.11 Purchase a traffic speed/volume counter to provide current traffic information for areas within the community. This will also provide the opportunity to spot check areas of concern (\$6,000).
- 32.12 Continue milling application program, in which millings are applied to gravel roadways to decrease dust and improve the road surface (\$30,000).
- 32.13 Participation in the Transportation Routing and Vehicle Information System (T.R.A.V.I.S), permit application fees are now being collected for overweight and over-dimension loads travelling on Whitecourt roads. In 2025, approximately \$25,000 in permit fees will be collected through the system, with similar levels expected in 2026.
- 32.14 Due to aged street light infrastructure along Highway 43, replacement options and agreements are being discussed with FORTIS and Alberta Transportation, and will be brought forward to a future meeting. (Carry Forward \$40,000)
- 32.15 Replacement of eight wayfinding signs around Town to change the name of Rotary Park to Festival Park, and additional Culture & Events Centre signage. (Carry Forward \$20,000)
- 32.16 Annual inspection of pathways may identify additional maintenance to be undertaken under the Street Improvement Program.
- 32.17 The replacement of the Dahl Drive sign with an electronic message board sign was carried forward to 2025 to review options for the installation of power or a transformer for the sign. (Carry Forward \$120,000)
Due to sign power requirements, Administration is exploring options/locations to reduce the replacement/installation cost.
- 32.18 Installation of new traffic signals at 47 Street and 52 Avenue, and at 51 Street and 49 Avenue. This will include updated traffic light and street light infrastructure, as well as roadway improvements. (RTSF – \$1,094,730)
- 32.19 Administration is investigating options for the purchase of hands-free headsets for tar crew, line painting crew, and snow blower operator for safety operations. (\$6,500)

34 Transit

- 34.1 2025 ridership (20,497) year to date is lower than 2024 (23,392). Fees will be budgeted at the same level as 2025 for 2026 (\$80,000).
- 34.2 The tender for the replacement Dial-A-Bus was awarded to Crestline. It is anticipated that the tender for three transit buses will also be awarded prior to year-end. The buses will be received in 2026. Funding for the buses was received through the Canada Public Transit's Fund Baseline Funding program, the Rural Transit Solutions Fund and the Fleet Replacement Plan.
- 34.3 In 2025, consultants reviewed the transit route and placement of stops to provide feedback and options that would enhance the transit program and make it more accessible and efficient. In 2026, adjustments will be made to the peak service route to shorten ride time for users. Funding was received through the Rural Transit Solutions Fund to modify existing stops and add additional stops where required to accommodate route changes as well as to make some existing stops more accessible. The modifications will take place in 2026, funding will be carried forward from 2025.

37 Storm Sewers

- 37.1 Deteriorating steel frame and cover of several catch basins located along arterial and collector road will be replaced annually with the Catch Basin Rehabilitation Program. (\$35,000)
- 37.2 West end drainage repair for Westview Road and West Street, from Westview Road to 50 Avenue. (\$15,000)
- 37.3 Completion of 33 Street, from 41 Avenue to 34 Avenue, culvert. Ditch bottoms need to be cleaned to re-establish proper drainage.
- 37.4 Clean/mulch drainage ditch at the end of the access road to the east of Dahl Drive. (\$10,000)

41 – Water

- 41.1 Water rates will continue to reflect 100% cost recovery for the function. The utility rates will be presented to Council at a future meeting, and any adjustments resulting from the meeting will be reflected in the interim budget prior to adoption.
- 41.2 The focus on asset assessment, preventive maintenance and initial replacement programs for important components of the water system started in 2025 and will continue in 2026. Funding available will be prioritized to reflect priorities of the water system.
- 41.3 General system improvements for the Water System planned for 2026 including 2025 carry forwards:
 - a) Continue with annual assessment and inspection of a number of systems and pumps as part of the ongoing preventative maintenance program.
 - b) Explore options for modifications or replacement of the Clean In Place and Alum tanks in the Water Treatment Plant. (Carry Forward \$22,000)
 - c) Complete the replacement of the fourth and final pump in the water intake pump house. (\$31,500)
 - d) Increase the water meter repair budget in 2026 to \$80,000 (\$35,000 in 2025) with funding from the Sustainability Reserve. Previous years saw reduced cost to repair meters as there was still a prorated (20 year) warranty on those meters that has now ended. Community wide water meter replacement program is planned to start in 2029; and repairs or replacements of meters done now, will be a cost saving in the future.
 - e) Replacement of the two compressors in the Water Treatment Plant will start in the first one in 2026 (\$20,000) and the second one in 2027. (\$20,000)
 - f) Replacement of the second backwash pump for the water filtration rack required for the operation of the membrane filter system. (\$30,000)
 - g) Undertake repairs for a vibration in a distribution pump in the main reservoir that was found during testing to prevent the pump from failing prematurely. (\$20,000)
- 41.4 Add \$5,500 to the 2026 budget for HVAC filters, belts, sensors, ignitors, preventative maintenance, roof inspection and misc. roof repairs.
- 41.5 A study is currently underway to determine the best and most efficient way to heat the Water Treatment Plant as the current boiler and systems are at end of life. It is anticipated that the study will be complete prior to interim budget.
- 41.6 A facility lifecycle plan will be completed in 2026 for the Water Treatment Plant, which will determine the large maintenance items required over the next 20 years.

42 – Sanitary Sewers

- 42.1 Sewer rates will continue to reflect 100% cost recovery for the function. The utility rates will be presented to Council at a future meeting and any adjustments resulting from the meeting will be reflected in the interim budget prior to adoption.
- 42.2 The Wastewater Treatment Plant Study has been completed, and a review and financing strategy will happen in 2026. Preliminary design options will be explored in 2027; updates will be made to the 20-Year Capital Plan.
- 42.3 The focus on asset assessment, preventive maintenance and initial replacement programs for important components of the waste water system. Funding available will be prioritized to reflect priorities of the sanitary sewer system.
- 42.4 General system improvements for the Wastewater System are planned for 2026 including 2025 carry forwards:
- a) Manhole maintenance and rehabilitation that will include repairs in the hilltop industrial area. This would look to reseal a number of manholes in the Hilltop Industrial area that currently experience water seepage adding additional water into the wastewater system and adding volume of wastewater to treat at the plant. In addition, raising and repair to four manholes near the Hilltop Reservoir. (\$50,000)
 - b) Completion of transfer switches at Southland Phase 2 and Forest Interpretive Centre to allow for portable power source to be used during power failures. This will complete the project to install transfer switches on all of the Town's lift stations. (\$20,000)
 - c) Increase the annual sludge hauling allowance for 2026 to account for additional waste material in the lagoons due to the cleaning of Clarifier 2 in 2025. (increase \$40,000)
 - d) Clearing and mulching the outfall easement from the Wastewater Treatment Plant to the Athabasca River. (Carry Forward \$10,000)
 - e) Replacement of drywell piping and valve at Southland Phase 2 lift station. (\$65,000)
 - f) Replace Atta-faze with Variable Frequency Drives at the Park Circle lift station. The Atta-faze is no longer manufactured and has caused ongoing maintenance issues. Repair work was budgeted in 2025 but it has been determined that the control panel needs to be replaced. (Carry Forward \$10,000; additional \$70,000 in 2026)
 - g) Replacement of the pump in the lift station at the Forest Interpretive Centre. (\$15,000)
 - h) Wastewater Treatment Plant – Clarifier #2 repairs: New drive/gearbox, fix electrical boxes/cables, new rubber for the skimmer arms, decant valve maintenance, paint touch ups to the inside of the tank and aerators (\$200,000). Planned work for 2026 was for an extensive rebuild of a number of parts of this clarifier. The unit was emptied and cleaned in 2025 and was found to be in better condition than expected after 20 years of operation. The 20-year capital plan identified this project at \$550,000 for 2026.
 - i) Wastewater Treatment Plant – Clarifier #1 inspection & repair: Investigating the benefits of accelerating the maintenance program for the clarifier. This includes taking down clarifier and estimated repairs (\$200,000). This is the older of the two clarifiers and repairs for this unit are expected to be similar to Clarifier #2.
- 42.5 Additional projects being considered, subject to available funding include:
- a) Rebuilding of pumps for the Park Circle lift station (\$6,500);
 - b) Southlands Phase 2 lift station heater piping repairs (\$3,000);
 - c) Industrial (33rd Street) lift station spare pump (\$20,000);
 - d) Additional spare parts for pump repairs for Northhaven Lift Station (\$5,000);
 - e) Fence repairs at Flats Road lift station and Southland Lift station (\$10,000);
 - f) Site access improvements to the clarifier tanks at the Wastewater Treatment Plant;
 - g) Generators (stationary and portable) to run lift stations during power outages.
- 42.6 Add \$5,500 to the 2026 budget for HVAC filters, belts, sensors, ignitors, preventative maintenance, roof inspection and misc. roof repairs.
- 42.7 A facility lifecycle plan will be completed in 2026 for the Waste Water Treatment Plant, which will determine the large maintenance items required over the next 20 years.

43 Environmental Health (Garbage)

- 43.1 The Landfill Authority will present its 2026 preliminary budget at a future Policies and Priorities Committee meeting.
- 43.2 Partner with resident waste/recycling contractor (GFL) to deliver an educational campaign for better recycling habits and increasing waste diversion practices. This will include in-school presentations, flyers and educational materials for each household, and other education strategies to enhance recycling and waste diversion within the community. (CF\$5,000)

51 52 FCSS

Administration (51-01)

- 51.1 At this time, Family & Community Support Services function is continuing programming with a focus on increasing participation, and monitoring service levels for the needs and wants of the community for future consideration. The Community Services Advisory Board reviews service levels and program statistics monthly. Annually, the Board participates in a full day service review in addition to an in depth budget review prior to the interim budget being adopted. The full day service review occurred on April 12, 2025 and any proposed items have been included in the budget notes.

FCSS Youth Development (51-02)

- 51.2 The Community Services Advisory Board has identified expanding programming for youth in 2026 as one of their top priorities. A carry forward of approximately \$7,000 for new programming will be utilized along with reallocating funding within the budget and/or through some of the grants secured. Some examples of programs maybe backpacks that can be signed out by youth or parents at the Allan & Jean Millar Centre that have youth games that build developmental assets, youth resource cards etc.
- 51.3 The Community Services Advisory Board has identified highlighting youth and their contributions to our community on a spotlight page to be featured in the Community Spectrum as one of their top priorities for 2026 (\$760)
- 51.4 An Alberta Health Services Grant was secured to support Youth Advisory Council 2026 initiatives (\$2,200).

FCSS Community Programs (51-05)

- 51.5 The Community Services Advisory Board has identified adding additional Twinkle tours in 2026 as a top priority including a specialty tour for seniors (\$600).
- 51.6 Whitecourt received \$2,600 in funding through the Community Discovery Fund funded by the Canadian Mental Health Association and Centre for Suicide Prevention. The funding is to help the staff member that is trained as a Community Animator build relationships, spark conversations, and explore what matters most to their community in the first few months following their training. The funding helps ensure that Animators can take tangible first steps toward identifying and supporting small scale activities. Having an Animator build an action team allows the opportunity to apply for the Community Grant in December which can provide up to \$15,000 in funding for community projects.

FCSS Grant Program (51-06)

- 51.7 Continue with grant program (\$20,000).

Family Support Program (52-01)

- 52.1 The grant agreement between the Town of Whitecourt and Alberta Health Services for the provision of Psychological Services for the Whitecourt & Area Family Support Program was terminated at the end of June 2025 (\$30,365).
- 52.2 The grant agreement between the Town of Whitecourt and Children's Services for the provision of diversion and universal services through the Whitecourt & Area Family Support Program was granted a 2-year extension; the new expiry date of this agreement is March 31, 2026. The additional (\$30,365) that is no longer being received from Alberta Health Services will be incorporated in the new proposal.

Food Bank (52-02)

- 52.3 The Food Bank will be changing the frequency of distribution of food hampers from six per year with two weeks of food, to 12 per year with one week of food to meet accreditation standards and to improve service to the community. There is no cost associated with this change.

Family Violence Initiative (52-03)

- 52.4 The Whitecourt Family Violence Initiative was not successful in a grant application to continue programming as of September 30, 2025. Under the new grant guidelines municipalities were not eligible to apply. The Town partnered with McMann to submit an application, but it was not successful. Council and the Stakeholders group are advocating for funding.

Social Prescribing (52-08)

- 52.5 Administration applied for a Social Prescribing grant through Alberta Healthy Aging to fund a Seniors Resource Lead and programming for two years to support the senior population. The Lead provides assistance with forms, appointments, and connection within the community as well as linking agencies within the community that provide or could provide services to seniors. This was a gap identified in the preliminary results of the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment. The grant was successful. (\$152,024). The grant is for the duration of October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2025. The Town has been granted a three-year extension to the Program (\$161,500), ending September 30, 2028. The funding is 100% in Year I; 60% in Year II; and, 30% in Year III; however, the Province has been supportive of the program and has been discussing topping up the funding. If funding is not topped up, then resources will be reduced to fit within the allotted budget.

Home Supports (52-09)

- 52.6 Administration received a Non- Medical Home Supports grant through Alberta Healthy Aging and United Way to fund a 29-month Home Supports program ending March 31, 2027 (\$232,000.00). The program includes one Home Supports Lead and one Home Supports Worker to provide in home supports to seniors in order to assist them to age in place. Services include light house keeping, yard maintenance, grocery shopping etc.

56 Cemetery

- 56.1 As per the recommendations from the Cemetery Master Plan, established in 2022, Administration will be researching software options for better management and reporting of cemetery records.
- 56.2 Ongoing maintenance and improvements at the cemetery. (\$10,000)
- 56.3 No capital improvements planned for 2026. At this time, there is sufficient capacity for both plots and columbarium niches available for the region. Currently there are 55 columbarium niches available.

61 Planning and Development

- 61.1 The Department will continue with the implementation of the newly adopted Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and Municipal Development Plan (MDP), as well as with the administration of building permits. Comments to date have been very positive towards the Town's new planning policies and regulations, as well as with the ease of applying for both development and building permits directly through the Town. Building permit revenues and remittances back to the Safety Codes Agencies will continue to fluctuate depending on the types and amounts of permits that are issued throughout the year. They will continue to be monitored so that trends can be established for budgeting purposes.
- 61.2 Throughout 2025, the Town has been transitioning to a new Permitting & Licensing Software through Catalis (our Geographic information System (GIS) and permit database). With this transition, the department has been building permit workflows and integrating our finance and payment systems to allow users the ability to apply for their permits completely online. Workflows are complete and final quality control testing is underway. The online permit platform is anticipated to be rolled out to the public later this year.
- 61.3 Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB) members are required to complete a certified training course every three years. Previous budget estimates had relied on the Land and Property Rights Tribunal

(LPRT) offering these training courses online free of charge. However, Ministerial Order MA:001/25 established a fee of \$300 per course effective September 1, 2025. This will be reflected in the 2026 and future budgets to ensure our members continue to meet the legislated training requirements.

- 61.4 The Vitalization Grant was initiated in 2013 and has seen great success over the years. It is proposed to continue this program in 2026 with the regular annual funding of \$40,000 from Reserve.
- 61.5 Aerial photography and lidar information for the Town was last updated in 2019. While typical practice is to update this data every five years, it was postponed in 2024 and 2025 due to the limited development that had occurred since 2019. With several large projects now complete or anticipated to be complete by next year, including the Culture & Events Centre, Administration is proposing to obtain new imagery and lidar data in the fall of 2026 (\$38,000).
- 61.6 As part of the Asset Management Implementation Plan (AMIP), a request for proposals was issued in 2025 for an asset management database. After reviewing the vendor submissions, none of the software proposals met the Town's needs. Instead of purchasing new software, it was decided to utilize our consultant's in-house database to establish the initial asset management system.

Phase 3 of the AMIP will be initiated in 2026 and will include the collection of asset condition assessments for input into the database. A budget program for the outsourcing of condition data collection will be brought forward for 2026 final budget deliberations. This will include a CCTV inspection program for the Town's sewer lines, as well as the testing and assessment of watermain that are removed during maintenance activities. Since there is no cost or licensing fees for the use of our consultant's asset management database, the funds set aside for the software in 2025 could be reallocated towards the collection of asset condition data in 2026, as well as the customization of the asset management database to integrate with current and future data collection practices.

- 61.7 In order to sustain future growth and development, the Town of Whitecourt is undertaking a comprehensive review and update to Off-Site Levy Bylaw 1532. The list of off-site levy projects essential for accommodating growth over the next 25 years has been completed, and associated costs for those projects have been estimated. Levy calculations and models are now being developed for future presentation to Council and stakeholders.
- 61.8 A Transportation Master Plan is currently underway that will provide a strategy for the orderly, timely, and economical development of roadway systems in the Whitecourt area to serve the future growth of the community. Traffic counts through Town have been completed and the data has been compiled into traffic modeling software to analyze the existing state of conditions. Future growth modeling is now being analyzed to prepare recommendations and cost estimates for improvements to the Town's traffic systems. Any short term improvements will be brought forward for final budget considerations if required.
- 61.9 An update to the design for the Downtown Vitalization Phase 1 and 2 projects was completed in 2025 to include the renewal of the water and sanitary infrastructure in these areas. Cost estimates were also updated to include this renewal work as well as reflect current construction pricing. Administration will be reviewing the updated costs to incorporate into the 20 Year Capital & Major Maintenance Plan and to research grant opportunities that may assist with funding for this work.
- 61.10 The Town was successful in a funding application through the Northern and Regional Economic Development (NRED) program to complete a Utilities Master Plan. This Plan will assess the Town's existing water, sanitary, and storm systems; and provide recommendations for future servicing and development of lands in Whitecourt. Terms of reference for the project have been compiled and a Request for Proposals for consulting services has been issued. The project is expected to commence in 2026.

62 Economic Development

- 62.1 Results of the recent strategic planning session, which reviewed previous projects and identified economic development initiatives, have been compiled to develop a Work Plan. The Strategic Plan will be brought to Council for adoption and any budget revisions and recommendation to support the Plan will be brought back to

future budget deliberations.

- 62.2 The Economic Development and Whitecourt Tourism budgets will be combined into a single, cohesive budget to streamline planning and improve alignment across initiatives that serve both economic development and tourism objectives.
- 62.3 Review recommendations from the Business Market Analysis Attraction and Retention Strategy to support opportunities for business retention, expansion and attraction. The project will be completed in the fall and identifies consumer spending, service leakage, and gaps in the market. Any budget revisions to support opportunities identified will be brought back to final budget deliberations.
- 62.4 Attend the ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) event and engage potential investors with a targeted pitch to promote Whitecourt, attract investment, and build strategic contacts, with a clear plan for pre-event outreach, on-site engagement, and post-event follow up.
- 62.5 Meet with school boards to discuss expanding post-secondary options, identify synergies with economic development goals, and identify objectives to increase accessible post-secondary opportunities.
- 62.6 Implement a Tuition Assistance Bursary Program in partnership with the University of Alberta for Whitecourt students and adult learners. Seed funding was provided by the University of Alberta to launch a pilot project in partnership with the Town of Drayton Valley. (\$10,000)
- 62.7 Continue with the Whitecourt Launch Program to support the growth and expansion of local business and assist community entrepreneurs and innovators with the opportunity to start up or expand an existing business. As part of the program, new and existing businesses can access funding contribution to start or grow their business. (\$10,000)
- 62.8 Explore business development opportunities and retention strategies through enhanced partnerships (i.e. Community Futures and Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce projects/partnerships, mentorship and coaching programs, succession planning for owners nearing retirement, entrepreneurial development, employee recruitment etc.).
- 62.9 Continue with the Sports Hosting Partnership Grant Program to support and grow the economic impact that is experienced through hosting sporting activities in the community. The hosting incentive program provides opportunities for direct assistance to the sport community to host provincially or nationally recognized events in Whitecourt. (\$10,000)
- 62.10 Increase business awareness and business community promotions with storytelling, business video spotlights, and testimonials highlighting successful businesses to strengthen community pride and bring awareness to local products and services.
- 62.11 As a result of the economic benefit to the community, the Town is entering year two of the three-year marketing partnership with the Whitecourt Wolverines. \$20,000 for ice fee rentals, and 25 Allan & Jean Millar Centre player memberships. No change to annual budget.
- 62.12 Participate in the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Rally by hosting a checkpoint for one day of the event weekend.
- 62.13 The Economic Development Committee will be reviewing a request for support at an upcoming meeting from the Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce (WDCC). A recommendation will be brought back to Council for the Interim Budget (Western Canadian Rib Fest Tour, Economic Forum, Business Awards, Golf Tournament, Christmas Is For Kids, Shop Local Promotions, Alberta Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting, and Trade Fair).
- 62.14 Continue to enhance the efforts for attraction and retention of health care professionals in the community. \$2,500 has been included for projects and initiatives identified through the Health Professionals Attraction and Retention Committee (HPARC). A request to Woodlands County for the same contribution has been made by

the Committee. No change to the annual budget.

- 62.15 Review the Tourism Enhancement (\$15,000) and Tourism Product Development Grant (\$5,000) programs to assess outcomes, evaluate current goals, and identify opportunities to better maximize the return on investment. Recommendations will be brought back to Council for consideration. No change to annual budget.
- 62.16 Enhance targeted marketing that attract visitors to the community and drive overnight stays utilizing current assets (multi-day itineraries, partnerships to develop stay and play packages, sports tourism, and supporting the attraction of conferences aligned with the new Culture & Events Centre).
- 62.17 Continue to provide support for tourism products that have a positive economic impact on Whitecourt through annual grants to the following:
 - Golden Triangle (\$15,000),
 - Whitecourt Trailblazers Groomer Operation and Trail Maintenance (\$7,500).

Forest Interpretive Centre (62-03)

- 62.18 One-time maintenance, materials and repairs include:
 - a) Carpet tile replacement in meeting room (\$2,000)
 - b) Miscellaneous repairs (\$1,500)
 - c) Allocation of (\$8,200) to the New Council Chambers for misc. furniture & equipment
- 62.19 The Town of Whitecourt has received \$96,000 for the Whitecourt & District Heritage Society through the Forest Resource Improvement Program to begin articling items that the Society has acquired and to commence upgrading some of the displays.
- 62.20 The Town of Whitecourt has received \$125,000 through the Forest Resource Improvement Program to construct an outdoor classroom at the Forest Interpretive Centre.

66 Land

- 66.1 Funding will be carried forward to complete the Resource Plan for the SW 6-60-11-W5 to prepare for future development on this parcel and aid in the development of the remainder of the Athabasca Flats East area. The Area Structure Plan (ASP) and zoning for these lands was adopted in July 2024 allowing the next steps in this project to be initiated. Provincial application is underway and is anticipated to be submitted by the end of the year.
- 66.2 Land Sales – proposed land sales for 2026 may include the following:
 - a) Continue to market our land within the Athabasca Flats East area (neighbourhood commercial, high density, and residential).
 - b) Continue to seek interest for our remaining 1.96-acre commercial parcel within the downtown south area.
 - c) Depending on the economy and interest in the parcel, Administration may initiate an appraisal and marketing of the former Southlands school site that was rezoned in 2025.
 - d) Continue to market the Town Office and Library buildings in anticipation of the relocation of these functions to the new Culture & Events Centre in the fall of 2026.

71, 72 & 73 Parks and Recreation

Administration (72-01)

- 72.1 The Recreation function is focusing on attraction and retention of members and staying up to date on trends, while offering a variety of community programs. Administration continues to monitor service levels and the needs and wants of the community for future consideration. The Community Services Advisory Board (CSAB) reviews service levels and program statistics monthly. Annually, the CSAB participates in a full day service review in addition to an in depth budget review prior to the interim budget being adopted. The full day service review occurred on April 12, 2025, and any items identified for Council consideration have been included in the notes.

Carlan Services Community Resource Centre (72-03)

- 72.2 All areas of the Carlan Services Community Resource Centre continue to be leased (\$73,253.64)
- 72.3 As per the facility lifecycle plan the following items are due for replacement in 2026 and it is being recommended that:
- a) Boiler replacements that are slated in 2026 be increased from \$19,000 to \$26,000 as per quotes
 - b) Hot water heater replacements slated for 2026 occur in 2026 (\$10,000)
 - c) Millwork upgrades (\$22,000) slated for 2026 be moved to 2036
 - d) Fire suppression system maintenance continue as scheduled in 2026 (\$12,000)
- 72.4 One-time maintenance, materials and repairs includes:
- a) Miscellaneous maintenance (\$1,600)
 - b) Addition of a Fire Suppression system under the Food Bank mezzanine to meet new code requirements (\$5,100)

Arena (72-06)

- 72.5 As per the facility lifecycle plan the following items are due for replacement in 2026 and it is being recommended that:
- a) Bottom ends CF from 2025 to 2026 (\$14,000);
 - b) Top ends be added to the plan for 2026 (\$10,000);
 - c) Overhead door (\$32,000) to be replaced;
 - d) Athabasca Lighting (\$50,000) slated for 2026 be reduced to \$20,000 and then \$35,000 in following cycles;
 - e) McLeod Lighting (\$45,000) slated for 2026 be reduced reduce to \$32,000;
 - f) PRV change outs occur in 2026 (\$5,000);
 - g) McLeod Stereo slated for 2029 be moved to 2026 (\$12,000);
 - h) A portion of McLeod Hallway Flooring (\$24,000) scheduled for 2035 be moved to 2026.
- 72.6 One-time materials, maintenance and repairs include:
- a) Combustion Analyzer (\$3,000);
 - b) Parking Lot Lights (\$4,500 Carry Forward + \$5,000 New);
 - c) Outdoor Canopy Lights (\$3,500);
 - d) Portion of Scissor Lift (\$24,000);
 - e) Upper Concourse Flooring (\$8,000);
 - f) Portion of Exterior Painting where signage was (\$3,000);
 - g) Drapes (\$3,000 Carry Forward and \$2,000 New);
 - h) CF Paint Pumps (\$2,000);
 - i) Unit Heater for Plant Room (\$3,000).
- 72.7 Add a fence around the dehumidifier to increase security (\$4,200).
- 72.8 Replace fire alarm panel as it is at end of life and can no longer get parts for it \$29,000.

Outdoor Rinks (72-07)

- 72.9 Community Services Board to review need to continue offering an ice track at Festival Park or another location. Current location has low usage when the pond is accessible.
- 72.10 As per the lifecycle plan, \$35,000 is slated for repairs at the rink at Central School. However, upon inspection, it is recommended that repairs at Central School be deferred to 2027 and that the repairs at Southlands that were slated for 2027 occur in 2026 instead.

Parks (72-08)

- 72.11 Playground replacement in 2026 will be at the Forest Interpretive Centre (\$50,000) This will see the playground at Athabasca Playground shifted to 2027
- 72.12 Contributions for new playground structures are collected from developers as they subdivide. Once fully collected for, new park equipment is installed by the Town in these new subdivision. Although identified in the 20 Year Capital & Major Maintenance Plan for 2026, a new playground will not be required next year and will be deferred until fully paid for.

- 72.13 Administration is advancing the Forest Management Plan to address the 54 locations identified in the community that have existing or planned tree planting. This will help to address hazardous tree removal, thinning, replacements, and additional planting required in the community. Information of current inventory will be collected to assist with cataloging the trees in to the Forest Management Plan by location, species, age and overall health. The phasing for the plan is underway and will be incorporated into future budgets.

Sportfields (72-10)

- 72.14 Future capital sportfield projects identified in the Sportfield Master Plan will be determined based on grant availability and will be included in the final budget.
- 72.15 Continue to encourage Whitecourt Minor Ball to explore grant opportunities for the options to construct an accessible pathway from Diamond #3 to the washrooms and upgrade Diamond # 2 to shale at Graham Acres.
- 72.16 Replace existing drums with bear-proof garbage cans at Graham Acres to maintain the cleanliness of the sports field. The upgrades will enhance the safety and ergonomics during garbage collection and ensure the area remains safe from bears. (Grant dependent)
- 72.17 As per the lifecycle plan, the east washroom fixtures at Graham Acres are slated to be replaced, upon inspection this item will be deferred to 2027.

Regional Parks (72-11)

- 72.18 In 2025, Town staff completed minor improvements for site drainage and painting of metal structures in the park. The remaining measures at the Skate Park that include concrete repairs to the fixtures will be completed by a contractor in 2026 (Carry Forward \$10,000 and New \$5,000)
- 72.19 The annual Geese control in Festival Park was successful in 2025 and will continue in 2026.
- 72.20 Explore options and funding for Splash Park upgrades in 2026.
- 72.21 Investigation is underway to undertake some additional slide repairs in 2026. There are two locations that require repair. (Carry Forward \$6,000)
- 72.22 It is recommended that the drinking water fountain be replaced (\$3,500).
- 72.23 The Rotary Club of Whitecourt received the Active Communities Initiative Grant for half of the construction cost of the multipurpose courts that are in the Sportfield Master Plan for Festival Park (\$395,366). They have also committed an additional \$54,634 to the project. An application to Alberta Blue Cross was also submitted for a portion of the matching funds (\$50,000). Remaining funding will be allocated from MSI.
- 72.24 Funding was received through the Forest Resource Improvement Program Grant (\$125,000) for an outdoor classroom at Festival Park as identified in the Sportfield Master Plan.

Communities In Bloom (72-12)

- 72.25 Continue to utilize recycling initiative funding from Environmental Services to promote Communities in Bloom initiatives such as recycling and composting etc. (\$9,500).
- 72.26 The current Communities in Bloom committee has been focusing on the recruitment and retention of committee members and will continue to work towards this in 2026.

Transfer to Others (72-16)

- 72.27 The Career Exposure Summer Bootcamps has requested that the Town partner again in 2026 and will be coming to Council to present highlights of their program.

Mountain Bike (72-18)

- 72.28 Continue with the Mountain Bike Association operating contribution from the Town for annual Bike Park maintenance (\$5,000).

Allan & Jean Millar Centre Shared (72-40)

- 72.29 Several items slated for replacement as per the lifecycle plan do not need replacement in 2026 and will be deferred until 2027 as they are still in good working order. These include:
- a) Boardroom furniture (\$115,000)
 - b) Tip and roll bleachers (\$11,000)
 - c) Window coverings (\$25,000)
 - d) The Go Active Zone flooring (\$23,000)
 - e) The Go Active Zone play structure (\$45,000)

Allan & Jean Millar Centre Fitness (72-41)

- 72.30 Continue with the annual purchase of trending equipment as per the sponsorship agreement. (\$10,000)
- 72.31 The Jacob's Ladder received some maintenance and continues to function properly. It was scheduled to be replaced in 2025, however based on usage and guest requests, it will be carried forward to 2026 and may be replaced with an alternate type of equipment (\$12,000).
- 72.32 Dumbbell replacement is slated for 2026 (\$11,250), several are showing signs of wear. This amount is sufficient to replace the portion that is required.
- 72.33 Two portable stereo/microphone system for fitness classes need to be replaced in 2026 (\$2,500).
- 72.34 All other fitness items listed in the lifecycle plan for replacement in 2026 are still in good working order due to decreased use during the pandemic and a preventative maintenance plan. These items will be deferred until 2027:
- a) One large piece of strength equipment (\$14,600);
 - b) Stretching cage and racks (\$5,750);
 - c) Mirrors (\$14,000);
 - d) 6 treadmills, 5 elliptical, a stepper and powermill (\$111,487);
 - e) Remaining cardio equipment (\$56,000).

Allan & Jean Millar Centre Maintenance (72-42)

- 72.35 As per the facility lifecycle plan:
- a) Complete the exterior Painting (\$50,000).
 - b) Carry forward the Spray Feature replacement budgeted in 2025 (\$87,000) as proposals came in higher than budgeted. Re-budget for interim or final budget after site visits are complete.
 - c) Add \$30,000 for pumps and impellers to the plan for 2026 as all of the impellers could not be replaced in 2025 due to increased cost (\$44,000).
- 72.36 Proposed One-Time maintenance, repairs or materials include:
- a) Walking Track Roof Repair (\$5,000);
 - b) Baby Change Tables (\$4,000);
 - c) Parking Lot light fixture replacement (\$5,000);
 - d) Hot tub pump (\$6,000);
 - e) Pool Roof Study (\$5,800);
 - f) LED UFO fixtures for fieldhouse (Carry Forward \$9,000 and \$9,000 New);
 - g) Plumbing Tools to be used at all indoor and outdoor recreation facilities (\$10,100);
 - h) Portion of Scissor Lift (\$10,000).
- 72.37 Due to new code a Fire Suppression System Fire Connection and Check Valve Inspection will need to be added to the budget.

Allan & Jean Millar Centre Fieldhouse (72-44)

- 72.38 As per the lifecycle plan, replacement of folding tables and chairs was slated for 2025 (\$48,264). Only a portion will be replaced in 2025. Replacement of the remainder will be determined in 2027 after the Culture & Events Centre opens.

Allan & Jean Millar Centre Aquatics (72-46)

- 72.39 As per the lifecycle plan, the wheelchair lift was scheduled for replacement in 2025 but it has been repaired and thus it will be deferred for three years (\$14,000).

72.40 Two Tot docks used for swimming lessons are nearing end of life and will need replacement.in 2026 (\$6,500).

72.41 Investigate adding another set of valuables lockers closer to or on the pool deck for guests (\$5,000).

Community Recreation Programs (73-01)

72.42 As per the lifecycle plan, the obstacle course inflatable is scheduled for replacement in 2026. Minor repairs completed in 2025 continue to hold and the inflatable is functioning well. Replacement will be planned for 2027 (\$10,000).

72.43 Through FRIP the Town has received funding for an Extension Program Summer Programmer for three summers 2026-2028 (\$90,000). The Programmer will deliver interactive, forestry related programming at Festival Park, FIC and /or Centennial Park each summer.

Community Recreation Events (73-02)

72.44 The Community Services Advisory Board identified expanding the Adults only section at Party In The Park, additional tents for inclement weather at Party In the Park and adding a Food Truck Competition at Party In the Park as top priorities for 2026. Options are being explored but will not have an impact on the Town budget.

Municipal Twinning (73-03)

72.45 Students from Yubetsu will visit Whitecourt in 2026 and Whitecourt students plan to travel to Yubetsu in the summer of 2027.

Library (74-01)

72.46 The Library Board will present its 2026 budget at the November Policies and Priorities Committee Meeting.



REQUEST FOR DECISION

Date: September 28, 2025
Meeting: October 7, 2025 Special Meeting of Council
Originated by: Judy Barney, Director of Corporate Services
Title: 2026 BUDGET - POWER FRANCHISE FEE

PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND:

Every year Council has the opportunity to review the franchise fee charged for the delivery of electricity to our residents as per the Electric Distribution System Franchise Agreement. If the franchise fee rate is to be changed, FortisAlberta requires a decision from Council prior to November 1, 2025. Our current franchise fee rate is 5.34% as per year three of the five-year plan.

The Plan that was adopted at the June 23, 2025 Regular Meeting of Council forecasts the annual franchise fee revenue required plus any growth in the community to determine the annual franchise fee rate. Since the Plan was adopted, Administration has learned that the forecasted franchise fee revenue for 2025 is anticipated to be approximately \$136,000 less than budgeted due to following:

- lower consumption of power than forecasted due to the impact of the economy; and,
- lower transmission revenue due to transmission rates that were lower by 10.65% than what was used in the rate calculator.

Based on the FortisAlberta rate calculator, the five-year rate plan and funding of the 2025 shortfall, the franchise fee rate is proposed to increase to 7.09% for 2026.

POWER FRANCHISE FEE FIVE YEAR PLAN

Year	Power Franchise Fee Revenue	Estimated Rate	Average Annual Resident Change	Average Annual Non-Resident Change
2026	\$1,297,067	7.09%	\$ 17.10	\$ 77.95

The anticipated franchise fee for the average resident will increase by \$1.43 per month and for the non-residential average customer will increase by \$6.49 per month.

REFERENCES:

- FortisAlberta – Franchise Fee Estimating Tool – (displays average monthly franchise fee cost for an average resident is \$5.61 per month) Option - attached
- FortisAlberta Municipal Franchise Fee Riders Comparison – attached
- Residential – Average Annual Cost of Living – attached
- Non-residential – Average Annual Cost of Living – attached

BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES AND OPTIONS:

The five-year rate plan calculates the franchise fee rate based on the projected franchise fee revenue amount required plus growth. By predetermining revenue amount required, the impact for increasing distribution and transmission charges will be eliminated. This increase will bring the Town's franchise fee rate a little closer but still considerably lower than comparable averages (10.08%).

The power franchise fee will provide for an increase to the residential/non-residential fees and additional revenue that is collected from renters as well exempt organizations that do not pay municipal taxes directly.

COST AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Franchise Fee Revenue for 2026 - \$1,297,067

COMMENTS:

The franchise fee is paid in exchange for giving FortisAlberta the exclusive right to supply power distribution in the Town. FortisAlberta also compensates the municipality for the company's usage of municipal right-of-ways and provides the Town with annual reporting on power outages, streetlight failures and other performance measures.

The annual maximum allowable Franchise Fee Percent is 20% and comparable rates for the Town's proposed franchise fee rate of 7.09% are:

- the average Franchise Fee Percent for Alberta municipalities is 10.08%; and
- the average for the Town's 14 comparable municipalities average is 13.04%.

Growth has been determined based on the total sites added provided by FortisAlberta for all rate classes. For 2025 there has been minimal growth.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve an increase to the franchise fee rate for 2025 to 7.09% as the Power Franchise Fee Rate as of January 1, 2026.

APPROVAL:

Department Director:

CAO:





Franchise Fee Estimating Tool is For Information Purposes Only

This tool is designed for the municipalities to estimate the monthly charges based on a sample fee.

Consumption **625 kWh**
Billing Period **30 Days**

Existing (Current) Typical Residential Customer Monthly Costs

Rate 11 (Effective Jan.1, 2025) Distribution Tariff Estimated Rate Filing) Based on Current 5.34% Franchise Fee

Delivery Service Charge

All kWh Delivered	\$	0.076776	625 kWh	\$47.99
Basic Daily Charge	\$	1.01375	30 Days	\$30.41
				<u>\$78.40</u>

Current Franchise Fee		5.34%		\$4.19
	GST	5.0%		\$4.13
				<u>\$86.71</u>

Current Annual Franchise Fee Costs: $\$4.19 \times 12 = \50.23

Proposed Residential Customer Monthly Costs

Rate 11 (Proposed January 2026 Estimated Distribution Tariff) Based on NEW 7.09% Franchise Fee

Delivery Service Charge

All kWh Delivered*	\$	0.076717	625 kWh	\$47.95
Basic Daily Charge*	\$	1.04001	30 Days	\$31.20
				<u>\$79.15</u>

Estimated Proposed Franchise Fee		7.09%		\$5.61
	GST	5.0%		\$4.24
				<u>\$89.00</u>

Proposed Annual Franchise Fee Cost: $\$5.61 \times 12 = \67.33

* Includes estimated Rate changes.



MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE FEE RIDERS

Availability: Effective for all consumption, estimated or actual, on and after the first of the month following Commission approval, the following franchise fee riders apply to each rate class.

Price Adjustment:

A percentage surcharge per the table below will be added to the total distribution tariff, including both the transmission and distribution charges, and excluding any Riders, calculated for every Point of Service within each Municipality and will be billed to the applicable Retailer.

FortisAlberta will pay to each Municipality each month, in accordance with the franchise agreements between FortisAlberta and the Municipalities or an agreement with a non-municipality, the franchise fee revenue collected from the Retailers.

Muni Code	Municipality	Rider	Effective	Muni Code	Municipality	Rider	Effective
03-0002	Acme	3%	2013/07/01	02-0040	Bowden	15%	2017/01/01
01-0003	Airdrie	20%	2021/04/01	03-0041	Boyle	20%	2021/01/01
03-0005	Alix	8.50%	2019/01/01	03-0042	Breton	20%	2015/01/01
03-0004	Alberta Beach	8%	2021/01/01	01-0043	Brooks	14%	2021/01/01
03-0007	Amisk	0%	2014/01/01	02-0044	Bruderheim	4%	2024/04/01
02-0011	Athabasca	20%	2024/01/01	02-0047	Calmar	20%	2013/07/01
04-0009	Argentia Beach	0%	2017/01/01	01-0048	Camrose	18%	2025/04/01
03-0010	Arrowwood	12%	2015/07/01	02-0050	Canmore	16%	2024/01/01
02-0387	Banff	8%	2025/01/01	03-0054	Carmangay	15%	2021/01/01
07-0164	Banff Park	6%	2025/01/01	03-0055	Caroline	12%	2021/01/01
03-0363	Barnwell	15%	2025/01/01	02-0056	Carstairs	10%	2015/01/01
03-0013	Barons	5%	2015/04/01	03-0061	Champion	15%	2015/04/01
02-0014	Barrhead	14%	2023/04/01	03-0062	Chauvin	11%	2016/01/01
02-0016	Bashaw	2%	2021/01/01	01-0356	Chestermere	11.50%	2014/01/01
02-0017	Bassano	14.40%	2019/01/01	03-0064	Chipman	0%	2016/01/01
03-0018	Bawlf	9%	2025/01/01	02-0065	Claresholm	7%	2025/01/01
01-0019	Beaumont	17.25%	2020/01/01	03-0066	Clive	11%	2023/01/01
03-0022	Beiseker	3.50%	2019/01/01	03-0068	Clyde	18%	2024/01/01
02-0024	Bentley	10%	2019/01/01	02-0069	Coaldale	20%	2025/04/01
04-0026	Betula Beach	0%	2017/01/01	02-0360	Coalhurst	7.5%	2023/01/01
03-0029	Bittern Lake	8%	2025/01/01	02-0070	Cochrane	17%	2020/01/01
02-0031	Blackfalds	20%	2013/10/01	03-0076	Coutts	3%	2017/01/01
02-0034	Bon Accord	19%	2022/01/01	03-0077	Cowley	5%	2016/01/01
02-0039	Bow Island	17%	2024/01/01	03-0078	Cremona	10%	2016/01/01
				02-0079	Crossfield	17%	2023/01/01



Rates, Options, and Riders Schedules
 Approved in AUC Decision 29609-D01-2024
 Approved in AUC Decision 29889-D01-2025
 Effective April 1, 2025

Page 41 of 49

Muni Code	Municipality	Rider	Effective	Muni Code	Municipality	Rider	Effective
09-0361	Crowsnest Pass	16%	2016/01/01	02-0188	Killam	10%	2024/01/01
04-0080	Crystal Springs	0%	2016/01/01	01-0194	Lacombe	17.63%	2024/01/01
03-0081	Czar	5%	2013/10/01	04-0196	Lakeview	2%	2016/01/01
02-0082	Daysland	10%	2024/01/01	02-0197	Lamont	7.50%	2020/01/01
02-0086	Devon	18.50%	2025/01/01	04-0378	Larkspur	3%	2020/04/01
02-7662	Diamond Valley	10%	2023/01/01	01-0200	Leduc	16%	2014/01/01
02-0088	Didsbury	17%	2016/01/01	02-0202	Legal	20%	2024/01/01
02-0091	Drayton Valley	13.40%	2025/01/01	03-0207	Lomond	15%	2017/01/01
03-0093	Duchess	15%	2018/01/01	03-0208	Longview	17%	2017/01/01
02-0095	Eckville	10%	2015/01/01	03-0209	Lougheed	8%	2025/01/01
03-0096	Edberg	13%	2021/01/01	02-0211	Magrath	15%	2023/01/01
03-0097	Edgerton	15%	2022/01/01	04-0210	Ma-Me-O Beach	0%	2016/01/01
02-0100	Edson	4.70%	2024/01/01	02-0215	Mayerthorpe	14.75%	2025/01/01
03-0109	Ferintosh	11%	2016/01/01	04-0359	Mewatha Beach	2%	2016/10/01
03-0112	Foremost	7%	2016/01/01	02-0218	Milk River	12%	2017/01/01
02-0115	Fort Macleod	15%	2018/10/01	02-0219	Millet	18%	2024/01/01
01-0117	Fort Saskatchewan	0%	2013/10/01	03-0220	Milo	20%	2017/01/01
02-0124	Gibbons	10%	2013/01/01	02-0224	Morinville	20%	2013/07/01
03-0128	Glenwood	5%	2022/04/01	04-0230	Nakamun Park	0%	2013/10/01
04-0129	Golden Days	0%	2017/01/01	02-0232	Nanton	9%	2019/01/01
02-0135	Granum	0%	2024/02/01	02-0236	Nobleford	5%	2023/01/01
04-0134	Grandview	0%	2016/01/01	03-0233	New Norway	6%	2009/01/01
04-0138	Gull Lake	0%	2016/01/01	04-0237	Norglenwold	5%	2015/01/01
04-0358	Half Moon Bay	0%	2021/01/01	04-0385	Norris Beach	0%	2016/01/01
02-0143	Hardisty	9.50%	2021/01/01	02-0238	Okotoks	20%	2021/01/01
03-0144	Hay Lakes	9%	2021/01/01	02-0239	Olds	20%	2025/01/01
02-0148	High River	20%	2015/07/01	02-0240	Onoway	10.50%	2024/01/01
03-0149	Hill Spring	5%	2014/01/01	04-0374	Parkland Beach	0%	2015/01/01
02-0151	Hinton	11.73%	2022/01/01	02-0248	Penhold	19%	2014/01/01
03-0152	Holden	4%	2016/01/01	02-0249	Picture Butte	11%	2022/01/01
03-0153	Hughenden	5%	2016/01/01	02-0250	Pincher Creek	20%	2024/01/01
03-0154	Hussar	12.50%	2017/01/01	04-0253	Point Alison	0%	2017/01/23
02-0180	Innisfail	18%	2025/04/01	04-0256	Poplar Bay	0%	2016/01/01
03-0182	Irma	20%	2015/01/01	02-0257	Provost	20%	2015/01/01
02-0183	Irricana	8%	2023/05/01	02-0261	Raymond	16%	2022/01/01
04-0185	Island Lake	0%	2016/01/01	02-0265	Redwater	10%	2023/04/01
04-0186	Itaska Beach	0%	2017/10/01	02-0266	Rimbey	20%	2022/01/01
04-0379	Jarvis Bay	0%	2015/10/08	02-0268	Rocky Mtn House	16.80%	2025/01/01
04-0187	Kapasiwin	0%	2018/04/01	03-0270	Rockyford	7%	2024/01/01



Rates, Options, and Riders Schedules
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 Approved in AUC Decision 29889-D01-2025
 Effective April 1, 2025

Page 42 of 49

Muni Code	Municipality	Rider	Effective	Muni Code	Municipality	Rider	Effective
03-0272	Rosemary	15.50%	2023/01/01	02-0310	Sylvan Lake	18%	2023/01/01
04-0273	Ross Haven	0%	2016/01/01	02-0311	Taber	18%	2020/07/01
03-0276	Ryley	3%	2016/01/01	02-0315	Thorsby	20%	2014/01/01
04-0279	Seba Beach	4%	2014/01/01	02-0318	Tofield	5%	2015/01/01
02-0280	Sedgewick	12%	2025/01/01	04-0324	Val Quentin	0%	2016/01/01
04-0283	Silver Sands	3%	2018/01/01	02-0326	Vauxhall	8%	2022/01/01
04-0369	South Baptiste	0%	2005/05/01	02-0331	Viking	8%	2013/01/01
04-0288	South View	3%	2019/01/01	02-0333	Vulcan	20%	2013/10/01
03-0099	Spring Lake, V.	0%	2025/04/01	03-0364	Wabamun	10%	2017/01/01
01-0291	Spruce Grove	20%	2016/01/01	02-0335	Wainwright	12%	2024/01/01
01-0292	St. Albert	15%	2023/01/01	07-0159	Waterton Park	8%	2018/10/01
03-0295	Standard	4%	2024/04/01	03-0338	Warburg	10%	2015/01/01
02-0297	Stavely	6%	2021/01/01	03-0339	Warner	7%	2024/01/01
03-0300	Stirling	12%	2019/01/01	04-0344	West Cove	3%	2025/01/01
02-0301	Stony Plain	20%	2013/01/01	02-0345	Westlock	16.25%	2024/01/01
09-0302	Strathcona County	0%	TBD	01-0347	Wetaskiwin	18%	2024/01/01
02-0303	Strathmore	20%	2020/07/01	04-0371	Whispering Hills	5%	2016/10/01
03-0304	Strome	9%	2022/01/01	02-0350	Whitecourt	5.34%	2025/01/01
02-0307	Sundre	12%	2024/01/01	04-0354	Yellowstone	13%	2025/01/01
04-0386	Sunrise Beach	0%	2018/01/01				
04-0308	Sunset Point	10%	2017/01/01				

RESIDENTIAL COMPARISON
Average Annual Cost of Living
Based on 2025/2026 Proposed Rates

Municipality	2025 Municipal Taxes			2025/2026 Estimated Franchise Fees				Total
	Residential Rates	Residential Levies		Power		Gas		Annual Charges
				Rate	Fees	Rate	Fees	
		\$		%	\$	%	\$	\$
Town of Hinton	5.6148	1,934.00		11.73%	111.40	12.00%	74.43	2,119.83
Town of High River	5.1586	1,777.00		20.00%	189.95	20.00%	124.05	2,091.00
Town of Edson	6.9121	2,381.00		4.70%	44.63	22.54%	139.81	2,565.44
Town of Whitecourt	6.7245	2,317.00		7.09%	67.33	33.55%	208.10	2,592.43
Town of Drayton Valley	7.5127	2,588.00		13.40%	127.27	22.00%	136.46	2,851.73
City of Cold Lake	8.5116	2,932.00		7.25%	68.85	15.50%	96.14	3,096.99
Town of Drumheller	8.4353	2,906.00		9.00%	85.48	27.00%	167.47	3,158.95
City of Lacombe	8.2348	2,837.00		17.63%	167.44	29.25%	181.43	3,185.87
Town of Rocky Mt. House	8.4800	2,921.00		16.80%	159.56	30.00%	186.08	3,266.64
Town of Morinville	8.6434	2,978.00		20.00%	189.95	19.00%	117.85	3,285.80
Town of Slave Lake	9.0301	3,111.00		14.40%	136.76	29.50%	182.98	3,430.74
City of Grande Prairie	9.7258	3,351.00		10.00%	94.97	25.00%	155.07	3,601.04
Town of Peace River	10.1280	3,489.00		12.50%	118.72	32.00%	198.48	3,806.20
City of Wetaskiwin	11.3409	3,907.00		18.00%	170.96	33.00%	204.69	4,282.65

Average

8.17518

13.04%

25.02%

\$ 3,095

Assumptions:

(1) Residential assessed value estimate

\$344,500

(2) Estimated using FortisAlberta and ATCO Gas Calculator for average annual cost for resident

NON-RESIDENTIAL COMPARISON
Average Annual Cost of Living
Based on 2025/2026 Proposed Rates

Municipality	2025 Municipal Taxes			2025/2026 Estimated Franchise Fees						Total
				Power			Gas			
	Non-Residential Rates		Non-Residential Levies		Rate	Fees		Rate	Fees	Annual Charges
			\$		%	\$		%	\$	\$
Town of High River	6.7061		10,059.00		20.00%	988.70		20.00%	715.62	11,763.32
Town of Hinton	9.5461		14,319.00		11.73%	627.76		12.00%	429.37	15,376.13
City of Lacombe	9.7073		14,561.00		17.63%	630.30		29.25%	1,046.60	16,237.90
Town of Whitecourt	11.4228		17,134.00		7.09%	250.32		33.55%	1,200.46	18,584.78
Town of Morinville	12.9651		19,448.00		20.00%	988.70		19.00%	679.84	21,116.54
City of Cold Lake	13.6782		20,517.00		7.25%	342.00		15.50%	554.61	21,413.61
Town of Slave Lake	13.3838		20,076.00		14.40%	693.00		29.50%	1,055.54	21,824.54
Town of Drumheller	15.4798		23,220.00		9.00%	419.64		27.00%	966.09	24,605.73
Town of Rocky Mt. House	14.4940		21,741.00		16.80%	820.00		30.00%	1,073.43	23,634.43
Town of Drayton Valley	15.4494		23,174.00		13.40%	646.00		22.00%	787.18	24,607.18
Town of Edson	15.9370		23,906.00		4.70%	222.00		22.54%	806.51	24,934.51
City of Grande Prairie	19.3983		29,097.00		10.00%	494.42		25.00%	894.53	30,485.95
City of Wetaskiwin	22.6818		34,023.00		18.00%	823.00		33.00%	1,180.78	36,026.78
Town of Peace River	21.8098		32,715.00		12.50%	366.00		32.00%	1,145.00	34,226.00

Average

14.47568**13.04%****25.02%****\$ 23,203****Assumptions:**

(1) Industrial assessed value estimate

\$1,500,000

(2) Estimated using FortisAlberta and ATCO Gas Calculator for average annual cost for a Medium Non-residential ratepayer



REQUEST FOR DECISION

Date: September 28, 2025
Meeting: October 7, 2025 Special Meeting of Council
Originated by: Judy Barney, Director of Corporate Services
Title: 2026 BUDGET - GAS FRANCHISE FEE

PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND:

Every year, Council has the opportunity to review the franchise fee charged for the delivery of natural gas to our residents as per the Natural Gas Distribution System Franchise Agreement. Our current franchise fee rate is 33.55% and if the franchise fee rate is to be changed, then ATCO Gas and Pipelines Limited (ATCO Gas) requires a decision from Council prior to November 1.

As requested by Council, Administration brought forth options for a new five-year plan for 2026 – 2030 that considered an alignment of the franchise fee revenues for power and gas utilities. The Plan that was adopted at the June 23, 2025 Regular Meeting of Council recommended that no five-year plan for the natural gas franchise fee be adopted due to the current rate being very close to the maximum rate allowed. To align the franchise fee revenues, the natural gas franchise revenue will be maintained at the 2025 level that should result in a future reduction of the natural gas franchise fee rate.

Administration has compared the forecasted franchise fee revenue to budget for 2025 and is not anticipating a shortfall. Based on the ACTO gas calculator, a minimal shortfall is anticipated of \$10,829 for 2026 revenue as compared to the previous year; however, no change is proposed to the franchise fee rate. Administration is recommending that the rate remain the same as 2025 at 33.55%.

GAS FRANCHISE FEE REVENUE FIVE YEAR PLAN

Year	Gas Franchise Fee Revenue	Estimated Rate %	Average Annual Resident Change	Average Annual Non-Resident Change
2026	\$1,192,971	33.55%	\$ (7.29)	\$ (35.47)

In comparing the current and proposed rate, the anticipated franchise fee for the average resident will be lower by \$0.61 per month and for the average small non-residential customer it will be lower as well by \$2.96 per month.

REFERENCES:

- ATCO Gas and Pipelines Limited – North Rider “A” – attached
- ATCO Gas and Pipelines Limited Historic and Forecasted Franchise Fee Calculations – attached

BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES AND OPTIONS:

The gas franchise fee will provide for additional revenue that is collected from renters as well as exempt organizations that do not pay municipal taxes directly. It will also result in a minimal increase to the residential and non-residential franchise rate fees.

COST AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Franchise Fee Revenue for 2026 - \$1,192,971

COMMENTS:

The annual maximum allowable Franchise Fee Percent is 35% and comparisons of the Town's proposed franchise fee rate of 33.55% are:

- the average Franchise Fee Percent for North Rider "A", Alberta Municipalities is 20.34%;
- the average for the Town's 14 comparable municipalities average is 25.02%; and,
- there is a \$10,000 maximum annual allowable assessment (MAX) on any individual metered account.

The ATCO Gas rate plan calculator includes the proposed distribution rates and average residential consumption.

There has been minimal growth based on the total sites added for 2025.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council accept the 2026 Budget Gas Franchise Fee as information.

APPROVAL:

Department Director:

CAO:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P Smyl', is written over a horizontal line.



ATCO Gas Distribution

Effective April 1, 2025 by AUC Disposition 29907-D01-2025
 This Replaces Rider "A"
 Previously Effective January 1, 2025

ATCO GAS AND PIPELINES LTD. – NORTH RIDER "A" MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE FEE TO ALL RATES AND ANY OTHER RIDERS THERETO

All charges under the Rates, including any charges under other Riders, to Customers situated within the communities listed on this Rider "A" Municipal Franchise Fee are subject to the addition of the percentage shown. The percentage shown is to be applied as an addition to the billings calculated under the Rates including charges as allowed under other Riders in effect.

Method A. - Applied to gross revenues*.

<u>Municipalities</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Municipalities</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Municipalities</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Alberta Beach	8.00	20/03/01	Fort Saskatchewan	0.00	04/09/28	Oyen	30.00	08/01/17
Alix	12.00	19/01/01	Fox Creek	15.00	20/01/01	Peace River	32.00	22/01/01
Amisk	9.10	00/04/18	Gibbons	30.00	05/10/01	Point Alison	15.00	07/10/12
Andrew	12.00	24/05/01	Girouxville	26.00	19/01/01	Ponoka	31.00	24/02/01
Argentia Beach	0.00	10/07/09	Golden Days	25.00	04/06/15	Provost	22.00	13/01/01
Bashaw	13.00	23/01/01	Grande Prairie	25.00	06/03/07	Red Deer	35.00	17/01/01
Beaverlodge	11.50	20/01/01	Grimshaw	30.00	12/02/14	Rimbey	26.00	18/01/01
Bentley	12.00	20/01/01	Hardisty	22.00	18/01/01	Rocky Mtn. House	30.00	15/01/01
Berwyn	30.00	24/12/01	Hines Creek	30.00	05/08/02	Rycroft	30.00	16/02/10
Bittern Lake	8.00	25/01/01	Hinton ***	12.00	23/01/01	Ryley	10.00	10/06/03
Blackfalds	35.00	10/01/01	Holden	3.50	14/01/01	Seba Beach	20.00	07/04/24
Bon Accord	23.00	22/01/01	Hughenden	10.98	00/07/18	Sexsmith	25.00	07/04/24
Breton	15.00	17/01/01	Hythe	12.00	18/02/01	Sherwood Park	22.00	10/07/01
Bruderheim	20.00	21/01/01	Innisfree	25.00	08/09/08	Silver Beach	20.00	05/03/24
Camrose	32.00	25/04/01	Irma	20.00	04/10/15	Slave Lake	29.50	24/01/01
Caroline	35.00	21/01/01	Itaska	12.00	04/09/21	Spirit River	24.00	01/06/18
Chipman	0.00	06/05/12	Jasper Muni	19.10	22/01/01	Spruce Grove	35.00	23/01/01
Clive	17.17	23/01/01	Jasper Ntl Pk	17.10	06/09/01	St. Albert	25.00	25/01/01
Clyde	11.00	24/01/01	Kitscoty	15.00	24/01/01	Stony Plain	35.00	21/02/01
Cold Lake	15.50	24/01/01	Lacombe	29.25	25/01/01	Swan Hills	10.00	21/01/01
Consort	22.00	04/05/07	Lamont	35.00	04/05/10	Sylvan Lake	32.00	23/01/01
Coronation	10.05	09/07/14	Lavoy	16.61	09/10/23	Thorsby	35.00	23/03/01
Czar	11.84	00/04/27	Legal	25.00	22/01/01	Tofield	10.00	04/05/04
Donnelly	30.00	05/09/06	Lloydminster	28.50	25/01/01	Vegreville	33.00	04/10/12
Drayton Valley***	22.00	04/10/22	Lougheed	15.00	12/09/17	Vermilion	22.00	21/01/01
Eaglesham	10.00	25/01/01	Mannville	25.00	20/01/01	Veteran	6.00	17/01/01
Eckville	20.00	16/03/01	Mayerthorpe	20.20	24/01/01	Viking	21.51	04/09/29
Edgerton	15.00	22/01/01	McLennan	24.00	05/05/19	Wabamun	15.00	18/06/01
Edmonton	35.00	19/01/01	Millet	22.00	08/01/01	Warburg	10.00	09/01/01
Edson***	22.54	23/01/01	Minburn	16.61	16/01/01	Wembly	25.00	08/07/01
Entwistle	17.32	10/02/22	Mirror	12.60	06/07/13	Wetaskiwin	33.00	21/01/01
Fairview	19.31	23/01/01	Mundare	23.00	20/04/01	Whitecourt ***	33.55	24/01/01
Falher	18.00	23/01/01	Nampa	16.84	04/04/22			
Fort McMurray	10.00	21/03/01	Onoway	10.50	24/01/01			

* Gross Revenues are ATCO Gas total charges, less GST.

*** Includes a \$10,000 maximum annual allowable assessment (Max) on any individual metered account.

The Company's Terms and Conditions apply to all retailers and customers provided with System and/or Distribution Access Service by the Company. The Terms and Conditions are available at ATCO Gas offices during normal working hours or on the website www.atcogas.com.

ATCO Gas & Pipelines Ltd.

Historic and Forecast Franchise Fee and Property Tax Information for the Town of Whitecourt

Historic Information

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Five Year Average
Franchise Fees						
ATCO Gas	\$739,124	\$776,909	\$945,143	\$893,254	\$1,138,469	\$898,580
ATCO Pipelines	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Total	\$749,124	\$786,909	\$955,143	\$903,254	\$1,148,469	\$908,580
Average Annual Franchise Fees Per Average Residential Customer Using 105 GJ's per Year	\$131.03	\$145.57	\$165.51	\$153.20	\$207.61	\$160.58
Franchise Fee Percentage	25.68%	26.58%	25.92%	27.17%	33.55%	
Company Delivery Revenue						
ATCO Gas	\$2,913,025	\$2,933,430	\$3,634,894	\$3,308,741	\$3,444,684	
ATCO Pipelines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Forecast Information

Current	Franchise Fee Method "A"	Estimated 2026 Annual Fee Total	Estimated 2026 Annual Fee Average Residential	Estimated 2026 Company Delivery Revenue	Estimated 2026 Delivery Revenue Per Average Residential Customer Consuming 105 GJs/year
ATCO Gas	33.55%	\$1,182,971	\$208.40	\$3,525,995 N/A	\$621.15
ATCO Pipelines	\$10,000 maximum annual allowable assessment	\$10,000	N/A		
Total		\$1,192,971			

Proposed			
ATCO Gas	33.55%	\$1,182,971	\$208.40
ATCO Pipelines	\$10,000 maximum annual allowable assessment	\$10,000	N/A
Total		\$1,192,971	

Estimated annual increase/decrease to average residential customer bill:

\$0.00

NOTE: THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE FRANCHISE FEE IS 35.00%

This spreadsheet was created on 8 September 2025

