

Town of Whitecourt
POLICIES AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE
Monday, January 20, 2025 at 4:00 PM
TOWN OFFICE – LARGE BOARDROOM
5004 – 52 Avenue

Present:	Deputy Mayor McAree; Mayor Pickard; Councillors Baker, Chauvet, Lanctot, Lapointe, and Schlosser; CAO Smyl; Recording Secretary Grimstad-Davidson.	Recommended Start Time for Item
1.	Call to Order:	4:00pm
2.	Adoption of Agenda:	4:01pm
3.	Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Policies and Priorities Committee held December 9, 2024:	4:02pm
4.	Public Input Session:	4:03pm
5.	Wastewater Study Presentation:	4:05pm
6.	Urban Forest Guide:	4:50pm
7.	Adjournment:	5:00pm

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR
POLICIES AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING**
held on Monday, December 9, 2024

Present:	Mayor Pickard; Members Baker, Chauvet, Lanctot, Lapointe, and Schlosser; Chief Administrative Officer Smyl; and Recording Secretary Grimstad-Davidson.
Absent:	Deputy Mayor McAree.
Call to Order:	The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm; Acting Deputy Mayor Schlosser presiding.
Adoption of Agenda:	<p><u>24-068 Moved by Member Chauvet</u></p> <p>That the agenda be adopted as presented.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.</p>
Minutes - Regular Meeting of the Policies & Priorities Committee October 21, 2024:	<p><u>24-069 Moved by Member Lapointe</u></p> <p>That the Minutes of the October 21, 2024 Regular Policies and Priorities Committee Meeting be adopted as presented.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.</p>
Public Input Session:	A representative of Sobeys Inc. requested to speak; however, as the topic was an item on the agenda (Bylaw 1581 and Bylaw 1577-2), per policy, the issue could not be addressed. Additionally, the item was also related to a Public Hearing held November 25, 2024, which had closed.
Crime Prevention Programming Update:	<p>The Chief Administrative Officer introduced the Director of Community Safety and the Crime Prevention Coordinator to provide an overview of the Crime Prevention Initiatives undertaken in 2024 and upcoming programming for 2025. The Crime Prevention Coordinator noted that the RCMP Musical Ride would be performing in 2025.</p> <p><u>24-070 Moved by Member Lapointe</u></p> <p>That the Policies and Priorities Committee accept the Crime Prevention Programming Update as information.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.</p>
Bylaw 1581 to Rescind Bylaw 1421 and Bylaw 1577-2 to Rezone Part of NE 26-59-12-W5:	<p>The Chief Administrative Officer noted that further to a Public Hearing held on November 24, the Planning & Development Department was bringing forward proposed Bylaws 1581 and 1577-2 and introduced the Director of Planning and Development and Planner. The Planner reviewed the process to rescind Bylaw 1421, the Area Structure Plan (ASP) for Downtown South, and rezoning Bylaw 1577-2. She reviewed the public notification and consultation process, noting that several people had attended the public information session, and that two people spoke at the Public Hearing, along with a letter of opposition to the rescinding of the ASP from Sobey's, one of the property owners in the area. The Planner summarized comments received against the proposed rescinding of the ASP. The Planner indicated that ASPs are regularly rescinded as areas are built out and the guidelines required under the ASP are no longer required. It was noted that if the ASP is rescinded, road construction would be governed by the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw.</p> <p><u>24-071 Moved by Member Chauvet</u></p> <p>That the Policies and Priorities Committee forward a recommendation to Council to adopt Bylaw 1581 and Bylaw 1577-2.</p>

Votes in Favour of the Motion: Acting Deputy Mayor Schlosser, Mayor Pickard, Councillors Chauvet, and Lanctot.

Votes in Opposition of the Motion: Councillors Baker and Lapointe.

- MOTION CARRIED.

2025 Budget:

i.) Whitecourt Regional Solid Waste Management Authority Budget Presentation:

The Chief Administrative Officer introduced the Director of Infrastructure to provide information on the Whitecourt Regional Solid Waste Management Authority 2025 Budget. The Director advised that the Authority had reviewed and adopted the 2025 Operating and Capital Budget on December 5, 2024, which included a \$1,323,769 requisition from the Town, representing a 2.7% increase over 2024.

24-072 Moved by Member Chauvet

That the Policies and Priorities Committee defer the 2025 Whitecourt Regional Solid Waste Management Authority Operational and Capital Budget to 2025 budget deliberations.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ii.) Water and Sewer Rates:

The Chief Administrative Officer introduced the Directors of Corporate Services and Infrastructure to provide details on the proposed water and sewer rates for 2025. The Director of Corporate Services noted that water and sewer rates were proposed to increase 5.41% increase over 2024.

24-073 Moved by Member Lapointe

That the Policies and Priorities Committee forward changes to the Water and Sewer rates, effective for January 1, 2025, to be incorporated into Bylaw 1551-13 Fees, Rates and Charges.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

iii.) Bylaw 1551-13 – Fees, Rates, and Charges:

The Chief Administrative Officer noted that proposed Bylaw 1551-13 had been updated to reflect fees proposed as part of the 2025 budget process.

24-074 Moved by Member Lanctot

That the Policies and Priorities Committee forward a recommendation to Council to adopt Fees, Rates and Charges Bylaw 1551-13 as presented.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2025 Municipal
Census:

The Chief Administrative Officer advised that Administration had conducted a review of potential population forecasts and their relation to the benefits of conducting a census in 2025 and introduced the Director of Corporate Services and Legislative Manager. It was noted that based on current population projections, Administration recommended not proceeding with a municipal census in 2025.

Local Authorities
Election Act
Amendments:

24-075 Moved by Mayor Pickard

That the Policies and Priorities Committee accept the 2025 Municipal Census as information.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Chief Administrative Officer reviewed recent changes to the Local Authorities Election Act and introduced the Legislative Manager who provided highlights of changes to the election process.

24-076 Moved by Member Baker

That the Policies and Priorities Committee accept the Local Authorities Election Act Amendments as information.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Adjournment:

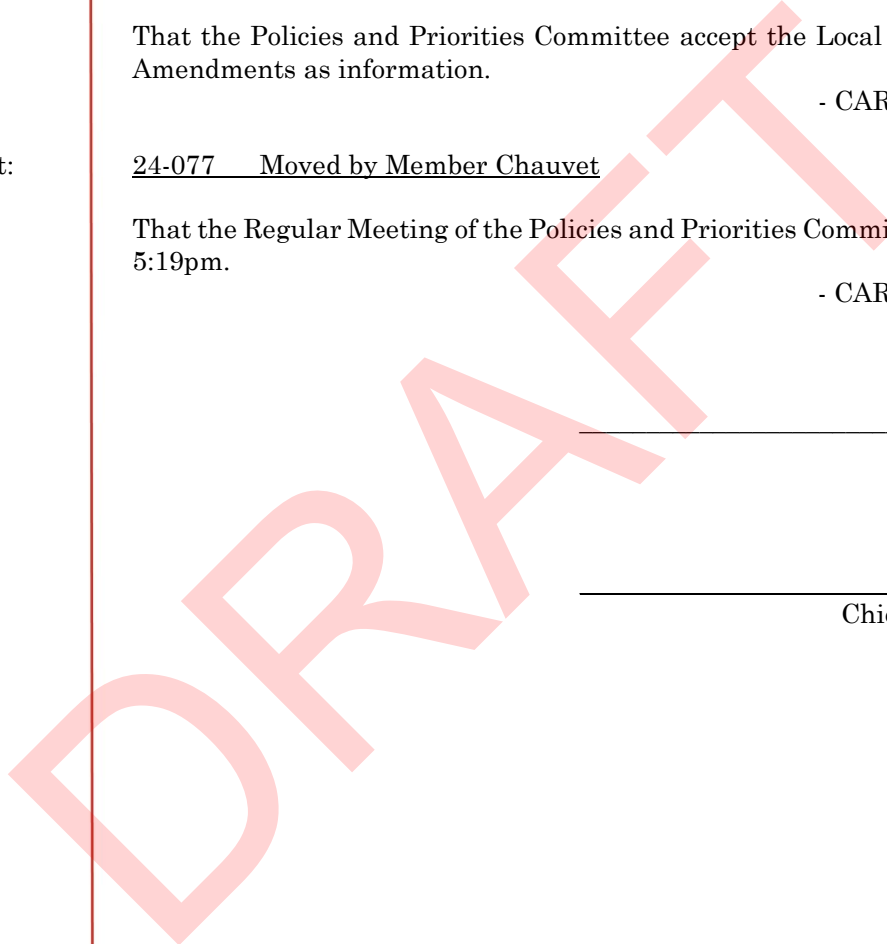
24-077 Moved by Member Chauvet

That the Regular Meeting of the Policies and Priorities Committee be adjourned. Time: 5:19pm.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair

Chief Administrative Officer





Council Meetings Public Input Session: Terms of Reference

The purpose of the Public Input Session is to provide a venue that allows community members the opportunity to voice opinions and to bring attention to pertinent local issues. Council may ask for clarification regarding matters presented by public members, however, this session is not intended as a forum for debate.

1. Members of the public wishing to address Council are asked to complete the sheet available at the delegation table with their name, address and topic they will be addressing.
2. The public member shall begin comments by stating their name.
3. Public members shall direct comments to the Mayor/Chair.
4. Each public member shall have two minutes to speak as a maximum; however, the Mayor/Chair may reduce time allotments per speaker depending on the number of public members wishing to speak at each meeting.
5. Public members are not permitted to discuss matters that include personnel, legal matters, land issues, or other items included in Section 16 to 29 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act. Items pertaining to a scheduled Public Hearing or appeal will also not be permitted for discussion during the Public Input Session, and will be referred to the scheduled hearing or appeal.
6. Public members cannot discuss matters that are already included as items on the agenda for that meeting unless permission is granted by the Mayor/Chair.
 - a. The Mayor/Chair will not allow discussion on agenda items that are time sensitive in nature, or items that have previously been deferred.
 - b. If a public member is permitted to speak on a matter that is an item on that meeting agenda, and the presentation provides new information which could result in a different course of action, the item will be deferred to a future meeting.
7. Public Input Session issues shall be either:
 - a. accepted as information,
 - b. referred to Administration for further information, or
 - c. deferred for further discussion.

We appreciate your comments and Council thanks you for your input.



REQUEST FOR DECISION

Date: January 17, 2025
Meeting: January 20, 2025 Policies and Priorities Committee
Originated by: Drew Hadfield, Director of Infrastructure
Title: **WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES – MPE PRESENTATION**

PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND:

MPE has been working with the Town to review and provide options for upgrades to the Waste Water Treatment Plan to address both current issues and to provide upgrades to allow for future growth within the community. The current plant was built in 1976 and was expanded in 2000.

The feasibility report provides recommendations for phased upgrades to meet the capacity and treated effluent requirements over the next 25+ years.

REFERENCES:

- MPE – Town of Whitecourt Wastewater Treatment Plan Upgrades Feasibility Study – Nov 2024 – Executive Summary attached

BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES AND OPTIONS:

The consultant's report outlines a number of conclusions from their investigations, consultation with staff and undertaking a design review to develop scenarios to assess the preferred option(s). Moving forward, this will provide an efficient operating facility, utilize the existing site and footprint, allow for staged growth within the community and a financially sustainable approach to phase the upgrades between 2026 and 2049.

COST AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Administration will be developing a funding strategy for the proposed upgrade, which will include researching grant funding options from both the Federal and Provincial governments.

COMMENTS:

MPE's presentation will outline upgrades needed to support growth and a phased approach to deliver the project.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Policies and Priorities Committee accept the Wastewater Treatment Plant presentation as information.

APPROVAL:

Department Director:

CAO:



Background

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Whitecourt (Town) has retained MPE, a division of Englobe (MPE) to complete a review of their Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and provide recommendations for upgrades that will meet the projected capacity demand and treated effluent requirements over the next 25-year design period. The purpose of this report is to assess the current treatment system, review influent flows and solid characteristics, and provide a feasibility assessment of proposed conceptual upgrades to improve the existing WWTP.

The existing WWTP services Whitecourt's residential, commercial, and industrial users. It was constructed in 1976 and consists of influent pumping, grit removal, comminution of large solids, one Smith & Loveless Model R Treatment Plant for conventional activated sludge treatment (extended aeration), secondary clarification, aerobic digestion, and biosolids handling ponds for storage prior to land application of solids. In 2000, a new Smith & Loveless Model RT Treatment plant was installed complete with two (2) digester zones, two (2) 150 HP and one (1) 60 HP positive displacement blowers and both coarse (aeration) and fine bubble (digester) diffusers. The two (2) bioreactors operate in parallel and continuously discharge via a 400 mm diameter gravity outfall pipe to the Athabasca River.

MPE conducted a site inspection of the existing WWTP on January 24th, 2023. Following this MPE completed a Technical Memorandum, 'Town of Whitecourt's WWTP – Conceptual Upgrade Options', on June 9th, 2023, that evaluated four (4) potential upgrade options, with various further sub options, for technical and financial viability.

These options were as follows:

- Option 1 – Primary Clarification
New Headworks, New Primary Clarifier, Refurbish Bioreactors, Separate Digester
- Option 2 – Primary Filtration
New Headworks, New Primary Filter, Refurbish Bioreactors, Separate Digester
- Option 3 – Secondary Treatment Expansion
New Headworks, Additional Secondary Treatment Reactors
- Option 4 – Primary Filtration & Sludge Processing
New Headworks, New Primary Filter, Refurbish Bioreactors, Separate Digester, Sludge Processing

After reviewing the Technical Memorandum and internal discussions, Option 2 – Primary Filtration was chosen by the Town for further review, on the basis of limited expansion to site footprint, possibility for additional odour containment, and lower capital and lifecycle cost estimates. This feasibility study builds upon the work already completed in the Technical Memorandum. Per the Town's request this report also explores scenarios for phased construction for the upgrades proposed in Option 2 – Primary Filtration, to help reduce upfront project expenditure.

Objectives

The scope of this study includes the following:

- Collect and review previous relevant studies and assessments.
- Review applicable provincial and federal regulatory requirements.
- Compile population projections based on past municipal and federal censuses and previous studies.
- Review historical flow data and project wastewater production for a 25-year design period.
- Evaluate wastewater characteristics from recorded analytical results.
- Review proposed upgrades and relevant design criteria.
- Review different construction scenarios, including a Complete, 2-Phased and 5-Phased project delivery



approach to construction.

- Review option for continuous disposal of sludge into new BHPs approximately 8 km to the east of existing BHPs.
- Prepare Class C capital cost estimates for each phase and scenario.
- Prepare a O&M cost estimate for each phase and scenario.
- Prepare a present worth analysis for each option.
- Recommend most viable construction scenario for the WWTP upgrade to the Town.
- Review existing grant programs for potential funding.

Conclusions

The major findings of this report are summarized as follows:

- For the purposes of this study, a population growth rate of 1.82% was used for the Town. The corresponding 25 year population estimate is 16,155 in 2048.
- The projected 2048 average day, max month and maximum day influent flows are 6,459 m³/d, 8,499 m³/d and 12,849 m³/d, respectively.
- The existing treatment system meets limits as set out in its approval, however, daily TSS concentrations may periodically exceed monthly average limits.
- The facility is not currently regulated on effluent ammonia and phosphorus concentrations. These parameters will likely be regulated following any major upgrade.
- Upgrades are required to the wastewater treatment system for both current and projected influent flows.
- The existing site meets AEP requirements for setback limits for recommended upgrades.
- Flows in the Athabasca River meet the 10:1 dilution requirement for continuous discharge.
- A *Receiving Water Quality Assessment* report was conducted by the Town to characterize influent quality.
- Anticipated Recommend End of Pipe Limits are as follows:

Recommended End of Pipe Limits							
Parameter	Unit	Instream Objectives			WSER	Recommended Limits	Recommended WSP Receiving Water Assessment Limits
		AEP	CCME	Best Industry Practices			
BOD	(mg/L)	-	-	5	25	25	25
TSS	(mg/L)	12.5	-	-	20	25	25
Total Ammonia - N (Jul. 1 to Sep. 30)	(mg/L)	0.159	-	-	-	5	50
Total Ammonia - N (Oct. 1 - Jun. 30)	(mg/L)	0.412	-	-	-	10	
Unionized Ammonia	(mg/L)	0.016	-	-	1.25	1.25	
Total Phosphorus	(mg/L)	0.5	0.1	-	-	1	25
Fecal Coliform	(CFU/100 mL)	-	100	-	-	200	-
Acute Lethality	-	-	-	-	-	Non-Acute Lethal	-

- Further correspondence with AEPA is required to define actual treated effluent disposal requirements for the end-of-pipe limits at the point of discharge in the Athabasca River.
- The proposed upgrade will meet the following target effluent parameters:
 - TSS and BOD: < 5 mg/L
 - Total Ammonia-N < 5 mg/L (Summer); 10 mg/L (Winter)
 - TN < 10 mg/L
 - Total phosphorus: < 1 mg/L
 - Fecal Coliform: < 1 CFU / 100 mL after disinfection
- Three construction scenarios for the proposed WWTP upgrades were reviewed. These include: 1) Complete Project Delivery; 2) 2-Phased Project Delivery; and (3) 5-Phased Project Delivery. A Remote BHPs option was also reviewed as an optional addition to any of the above delivery methods.



Wastewater Treatment Facility
Feasibility Study

- All three approaches will provide consistent high-quality effluent through the lifecycle of the project.
- Capital cost estimates for the three scenarios have been refined and are shown in the table below, along with the remote BHPs option. Scenario 1 – Complete Project Delivery is approximately \$6.8 million cheaper than Scenario 2 - 2-Phased delivery option and \$15.1 million cheaper than Scenario 3 - 5-Phased delivery option, but requires \$21.3 million and \$22.5 million more in upfront expenditure, respectively.

Capital Cost of Construction			
Scenario	Description	NPV (\$2024)	Capital Cost ¹
Scenario 1: Complete Project Delivery		\$ 45,900,000.00	\$ 49,700,000.00
Phase 1 [2025 Funding; 2028 Completion]	Complete Upgrade	\$ 45,900,000.00	\$ 49,700,000.00
Scenario 2: Phased Project Delivery (2 Phase)		\$ 46,700,000.00	\$ 56,500,000.00
Phase 1 [2025 Funding; 2028 Completion]	Bioreactors, Digesters, Blower System, Pumping, UV, Thickening	\$ 26,200,000.00	\$ 28,370,000.00
Phase 2 [2033 Funding; 2036 Completion]	Headworks; Primary Filter/Pumping/Thickening; Tertiary Filter/Pumping; Anoxic Zone	\$ 20,500,000.00	\$ 28,130,000.00
Scenario 3: Phased Project Delivery (5 Phase)		\$ 48,300,000.00	\$ 64,840,000.00
Phase 1/2 [2026 Funding; 2029 Completion]	Bioreactors, Digesters, Blowers, Sludge Pumping, Thickening, Plant 2 Aeration Upgrades	\$ 24,400,000.00	\$ 27,210,000.00
Phase 3 [2036 Funding; 2039 Completion]	Influent Pumping, Screening, Grit Removal, Primary Filtration, Pumping, Thickeners	\$ 19,700,000.00	\$ 29,530,000.00
Phase 4 [2041 Funding; 2044 Completion]	Aeration Blowers Upgrade	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ 2,260,000.00
Phase 5 [2046 Funding; 2049 Completion]	Alum, UV, Tertiary Filtration, Non-Potable Water System	\$ 2,900,000.00	\$ 5,840,000.00
Remote BHPs Option		\$ 8,400,000.00	\$ 18,510,000.00
Remote BHP Option [2049 Funding; 2052 Completion]	Remote BHPs, Supernatant Return Station	\$ 8,400,000.00	\$ 18,510,000.00

¹ Capital cost consists of 20% Contingency and Professional Consultation Fee.

- The annual O&M costs for the WWTP are estimated to be about \$579,000 (\$0.38/m³) in 2024, with the total cost over next 30 years estimated to be \$32.4 million (\$19.4 million in 2024 dollars). The overall O&M cost between the three Scenarios is relatively similar, being approximately \$46.7 million (\$27.6 million in 2024 dollars), \$46.4 million (\$27.4 million in 2024 dollars), and \$46.1 million (\$27.1 million in 2024 dollars), for Scenario 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Year	Estimated Operating Costs									
	Existing WWTP		Scenario 1: Complete Project Delivery		Scenario 2: Phased Project Delivery (2 Phase)		Scenario 3: Phased Project Delivery (5 Phase)		Remote BHPs Option	
	Annual Cost (\$)	Unit Cost (\$/m ³)	Annual Cost (\$)	Unit Cost (\$/m ³)	Annual Cost (\$)	Unit Cost (\$/m ³)	Annual Cost (\$)	Unit Cost (\$/m ³)	Annual Cost (\$)	Unit Cost (\$/m ³)
2024 (Year 1)	\$579,000	\$0.38	\$579,000	\$0.38	\$579,000	\$0.38	\$579,000	\$0.38	-	-
2029 (Year 6)	\$703,000	\$0.42	\$1,012,000	\$0.60	\$973,000	\$0.58	\$986,000	\$0.58	-	-
2034 (Year 11)	\$853,000	\$0.46	\$1,258,000	\$0.68	\$1,258,000	\$0.68	\$1,226,000	\$0.67	-	-
2039 (Year 16)	\$1,036,000	\$0.51	\$1,537,000	\$0.76	\$1,537,000	\$0.76	\$1,541,000	\$0.77	-	-
2049 (Year 26)	\$1,535,000	\$0.64	\$2,270,000	\$0.95	\$2,270,000	\$0.95	\$2,270,000	\$0.95	\$15,000	\$0.01
2053 (Year 30)	\$1,826,000	\$0.71	\$2,752,000	\$1.07	\$2,752,000	\$1.07	\$2,752,000	\$1.07	\$20,000	\$0.01
Total Operating Cost (30 Years)		\$32,359,000		\$46,683,000		\$46,439,000		\$46,134,000		\$345,000
Net Present Operating Cost (\$2024)		\$19,397,000		\$27,551,000		\$27,356,000		\$27,102,000		\$210,000

- Grant funding is available through federal and provincial programs. Of note, the AMWWP and ICIP programs are both potential sources of funding for this project. This project would benefit the Town and therefore, it has been assumed that the WWTP Upgrade project would be eligible for a combined funding allocation of up to 75.1%.

Grant Funding & Municipal Portion						
Scenario	Capital Cost	Contribution Allocation		Federal Funding Contribution	Provincial Funding Contribution	Municipal Funding Contribution
		Federal	Provincial			
Scenario 1: Complete Project Delivery	\$ 49,700,000.00	40%	35.1%	\$ 19,880,000.00	\$ 17,430,000.00	\$ 12,390,000.00
Scenario 2: 2-Phased Project Delivery	\$ 56,500,000.00	40%	35.1%	\$ 22,600,000.00	\$ 19,815,000.00	\$ 14,085,000.00
Scenario 3: 5-Phased Project Delivery	\$ 64,840,000.00	40%	35.1%	\$ 25,936,000.00	\$ 22,739,000.00	\$ 16,165,000.00
Scenario 1: Complete Project Delivery w/ Remote BHP	\$ 68,210,000.00	40%	35.1%	\$ 27,284,000.00	\$ 23,921,000.00	\$ 17,005,000.00
Scenario 2: 2-Phased Project Delivery w/ Remote BHP	\$ 75,010,000.00	40%	35.1%	\$ 30,004,000.00	\$ 26,306,000.00	\$ 18,700,000.00
Scenario 3: 5-Phased Project Delivery w/ Remote BHP	\$ 83,350,000.00	40%	35.1%	\$ 33,340,000.00	\$ 29,231,000.00	\$ 20,779,000.00

- Based on 3% inflation, 75.1% grant funding, and the remaining balance being a 25-year fixed loan at 4.92%, the net present values for the three scenarios are provided in the table below. Overall, the net present cost for Scenario 1 – Complete Project Delivery is estimated to be \$65,000 and \$335,000 cheaper than Scenario 2 - 2-Phased and Scenario 3 - 5-Phased delivery option, respectively.



Net Present Cost Breakdown				
Option	Scenario	Total Net Present Value	2024 Unit Cost (\$/m ³)	2049 Unit Cost (\$/m ³)
Scenario 1	Complete Project Delivery	\$ 42,295,000.00	\$ 0.38	\$ 1.31
Scenario 2	2-Phased Project Delivery	\$ 42,360,000.00	\$ 0.38	\$ 1.36
Scenario 3	5-Phased Project Delivery	\$ 42,630,000.00	\$ 0.38	\$ 1.42
Scenario 1B	Complete Project Delivery w/ Remote BHP	\$ 45,060,000.00	\$ 0.38	\$ 1.45
Scenario 2B	2-Phased Project Delivery w/ Remote BHP	\$ 45,125,000.00	\$ 0.38	\$ 1.50
Scenario 3B	5-Phased Project Delivery w/ Remote BHP	\$ 45,395,000.00	\$ 0.38	\$ 1.56

- The proposed upgrades will increase the WWTP treatment classification to a Class III facility.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made:

- Determine which project delivery approach the Town would like to proceed with.
- Proceed with the Remote Biosolids Holding Ponds (BHPs) option if odor issues persist at the WWTP.
- Present this study to Council for discussion.
- Adopt this study and its recommendations.
- Submit report to Alberta Environment and Parks for their review and comment.
- Conduct a primary filter pilot study prior to installation of primary filter.
- Meet with AEPA to define treated effluent disposal requirements for the end-of-pipe limits at the point of discharge in the Athabasca River.
- Submit report to Alberta Transportation and make application for consideration of funding as the project should be eligible for both the federal ICIP (Green Infrastructure Stream) and the provincial AMWWP programs.
- Meet with Alberta Transportation and review funding allocations for both the federal ICIP and provincial AMWWP programs for the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades.
- Begin lab analytical testing of the influent raw wastewater for various parameters as recommended in the *Technical Memorandum* as prepared by *MPE Engineering Ltd* and in this report.
- Odour control for the headworks and primary filter should be reviewed further during detailed design.
- Proceed with preliminary engineering following successful application of grant funding.
- Following preliminary engineering, proceed with detailed design, tender document preparation, tendering, construction, and commissioning.



REQUEST FOR DECISION

Date: January 17, 2025
Meeting: January 20, 2025 Policies and Priorities Committee
Originated by: Drew Hadfield, Director of Infrastructure
Title: **URBAN FOREST GUIDE**

PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND:

Trees have many benefits for our community such as conservation of water, reduced soil erosion, nuisance and noise buffers, and reduced air pollution. A healthy and well maintained urban forest requires forethought, planning, and resource commitment.

Utilizing industry best practices, and existing municipal policies and regulations, Administration has developed a field guide for Parks and Open Spaces. The guide aims to provide key information for data collection to help forecast and plan regular maintenance and renewal schedules, as well as to develop a sustainable annual budget. The goal with this guide is to create a proactive approach to tree management for the Town. Currently, staff deal with dead or dangerous trees as the needs arise.

An inventory of Town-owned trees located within parks, green spaces (including paved trails), streets, and municipal facilities has been compiled. Data regarding the condition of trees will be collected using the tree risk assessment form, found within the guide. This data will aid the Parks and Open Spaces Coordinator in identifying areas with the highest likelihood of failure, and potential impact for risk to people, property, and the environment.

Parks and Open Spaces staff intend to prioritize the completion of tree risk assessments as follows:

1. Town parks that contain play equipment;
2. Open space parks that contain furniture (benches, tables, etc.);
3. Areas along paved trail networks.

Adjacent trails or pathways may be included with risk assessment of parks.

Once the priority areas have been identified, maintenance and renewal schedules for these areas can be developed and implemented. Maintenance schedules will include mitigation tasks such as pruning, staking, or other protective/preventive methods to prolong the longevity of the trees and reduce the likelihood of hazards occurring. Re-assessment schedules will also be established at this time. Renewal plans will be developed for each area depending upon site specific considerations (i.e. soil type, environmental factors such as wind and topography, etc.) or any existing plans already in place for the area (i.e. vitalization plans, community facility planting plans, Sportfield Master Plan, etc.). Renewal plans are proposed to be implemented in a phased approach, depending on budget availability.

REFERENCES:

- Town of Whitecourt Urban Forest Guide – Appendices 6 and 7 only attached
- Municipal Development Plan - Bylaw 1576: available online: [MDP 1576](#)
 - Section 4 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Section 9 - Parks, Open Space and Recreation Policies
- Land Use Bylaw 1577 available online: [LUB 1577](#)
 - Section 6.10 - Landscaping and Site Grading
- Municipal Design Standards: available online: [Municipal Design Standards](#)
 - Sections 8 - 11 Landscaping Standards
 - Appendix D - 3 Steps to Tree Preservation B,

- Appendix E - Landscaping Templates for Buffers and Perimeter Planting
- Policy No. 31-014 – Boulevard Tree Maintenance
- Highway 43 and Downtown Vitalization Design Plans
- [Sportfield Master Plan](#)
- [Whitecourt Cemetery Master Plan](#)

BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES AND OPTIONS:

Plans for additional tree inventories in the Town of Whitecourt are primarily dealt with through the Town’s Master Plans (i.e. the Highway 43 and Downtown Vitalization Plans, the Sportfield Master Plan, etc.) and through the Municipal Design Standards at time of subdivision. The Municipal Design Standards includes the requirement for Developers to plant trees along any new arterial roadway, as well as within any new park or public space area. Other areas may be negotiated with a Developer, including traffic islands and landscape buffers.

As the Town continues to grow its tree inventories, the Urban Forest Guide will help with the collection of data required to develop comprehensive maintenance and renewal plans to keep our urban forest healthy and thriving.

COST AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A – Urban Forest Guide created in-house.

Additional resources are anticipated over the next three to five years as the department gets caught up with replanting areas that have had recent tree removals, and as the department progresses with completing tree risk assessments and building maintenance and renewal plans for all of the Town’s treed areas. Proposed phasing and costs will be brought back to Council following completion of the maintenance and renewal plans.

COMMENTS:

Given the population of aging trees in some areas of the Town, it is important to preserve Town trees for as long as possible until renewal efforts begin to catch up. Combined with our current policies and regulations, the Urban Forest Guide will assist the Town in planning for the preservation of its urban forest, as well as for the management of tree removals and replacements.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Policies and Priorities Committee accept the Urban Forest Guide as information.

APPROVAL:

Department Director:

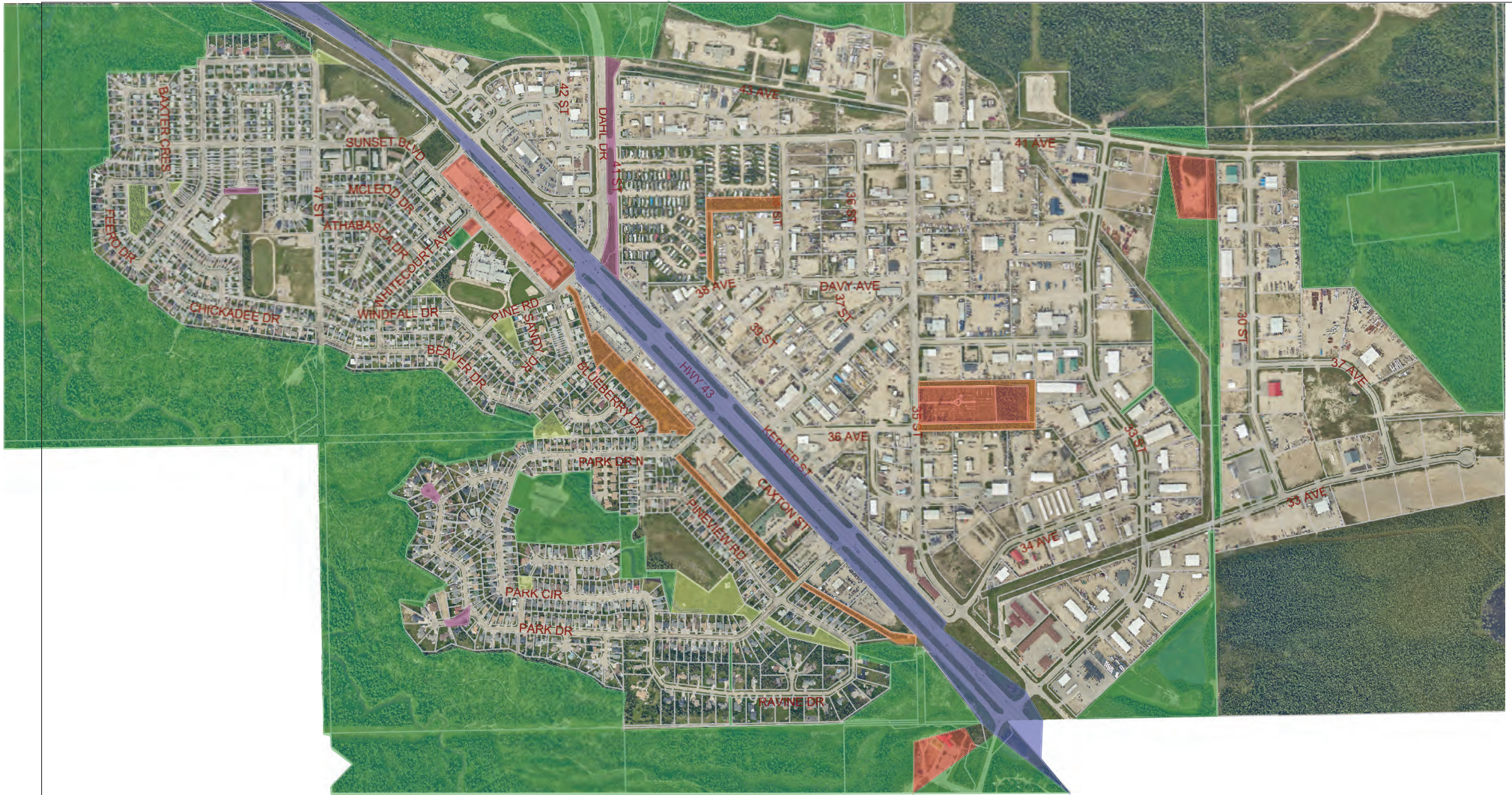
CAO:



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Appendix 6 Recommended Action Steps - itemized by area/classification

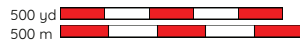
Area / Classification	Tree Removal / Replacement Guideline
Streets / Boulevards / Traffic Islands	<p>Should plantings need replacement, they should be removed and replaced within the next planting season. If unable to meet current Design Standards, plantings should be replaced with same or similar species.</p> <p>In areas where there has been a deviation from Design Standards, plantings should be replaced in compliance with the Design Standards.</p>
Parks / Open Spaces	<p>Replacement plantings to be reviewed on a case by case basis, with consideration to park classification i.e. regional park or pocket park.</p> <p>Considerations should correspond with the Park Replacement Program and/or recommendations or policies contained in a Master Plan.</p>
Facilities	<p>Should plantings need replacement, they should be removed and replaced within the next planting season, or sooner as budget permits.</p>
Vitalization Plan Area	<p>Dead or diseased trees in the <u>downtown</u> are to be removed and replaced with shrubs (in the existing tree trenches only) until infrastructure has been installed per the Vitalization Plan.</p> <p>Dead or diseased trees along <u>Highway 43</u> are only to be removed with no replacement until commencement of the Vitalization Plan in this area.</p>
Ravine/Natural Areas	<p>Considered a moderate to low priority. If a large area or number of trees require removal, professional involvement may be required.</p> <p>Only where a large number of trees are marked to be removed, or a large bare patch has been identified, should trees be replanted; with native species.</p> <p>Tree removal within or adjacent to steep slope escarpments shall be avoided. When removal is required within ravine/natural areas, trees shall be stumped on a case by case basis.</p>
Buffer Areas	<p>Replacement is considered a high priority. If a large number of trees are marked to be removed or a large bare patch has been identified plant trees in accordance with <i>Municipal Design Standards: Appendix E</i>.</p> <p>If a landscaped buffer is required abutting a residential use, the landscaped buffer shall meet the regulations of the Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Design Standards.</p>

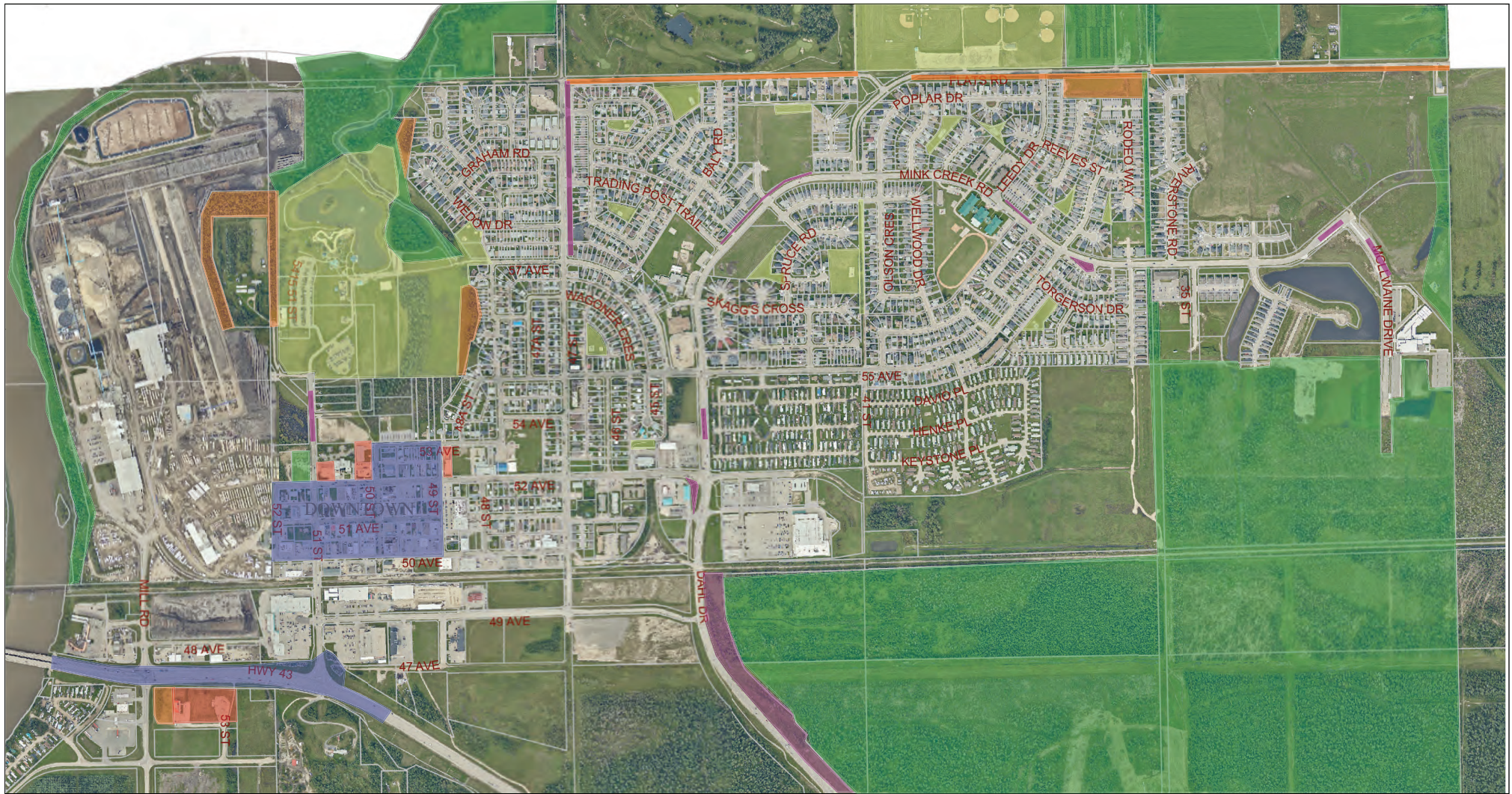


Urban Forest Guideline Map - Hilltop

Legend

- Street / Boulevards / Traffic Islands
- Vitalization Plan
- Buffer
- Parks / Open Spaces
- Ravine / Natural Areas
- Facilities

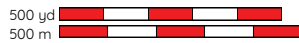




URBAN FOREST GUIDELINE MAP DOWNTOWN & VALLEY

Legend

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ■ Street / Boulevards / Traffic Islands | ■ Vitalization Plan | ■ Buffer |
| ■ Parks / Open Spaces | ■ Ravine / Natural Areas | ■ Facilities |





URBAN FOREST GUIDELINE MAP WEST WHITECOURT

Legend

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
|  Street / Boulevards / Traffic Islands |  Vitalization Plan |  Buffer |
|  Parks / Open Spaces |  Ravine / Natural Areas | |

