

M E D I C I N E   H A T   C I T Y   C O U N C I L   M I D - T E R M   R E P O R T

# MID-TERM REPORT

November 2023





# MID-TERM REPORT

---

The council mid-term report provides a high-level summary of some of the significant achievements of City Council from November 2021 to November 2023.

This report is by no means an exhaustive list, but rather is intended to highlight **key priorities** that City Council has focused on progressing on behalf of the community.

For more detailed information on the activities of City Council and administration and to stay up to date on city-related news and initiatives, visit our website at [medicinehat.ca](https://www.medicinehat.ca) where you can:

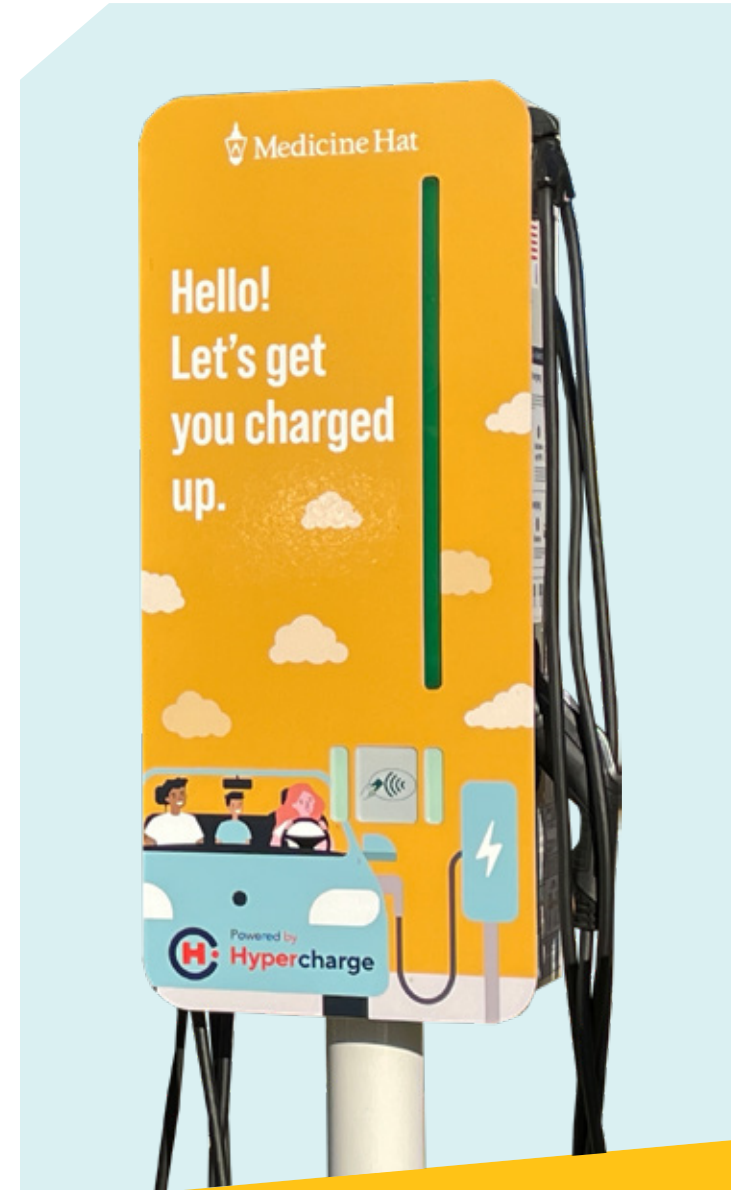
- Sign up for e-notifications and have City news delivered right to your inbox
- Check out both financial reports and annual reports
- Learn more about City services, projects and more



# Strategic Priority 1: INNOVATION

**City Council is committed to fostering a culture of innovation. This approach has given way to a number of successes.**

- Adopting a Strong Towns approach, encouraging administration and community to make incremental improvements that benefit the community such as traffic calming measures, water bottle refill stations, community microgrants, finding a solution for public access to washrooms downtown, and more.
- The addition of grant-funded EV charging stations at Towne Square.



# Strategic Priority 1: INNOVATION

## ENERGY TRANSITION



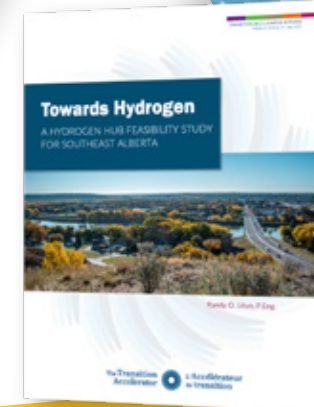
Approving \$7M budget to explore energy transition opportunities.



Progressing Project Clear Horizon to develop a carbon capture and storage hub in Medicine Hat, providing local hard to abate sectors an avenue to meet Canada's net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050.



Approving the City of Medicine Hat's participation in Decentralized Energy Canada's Next Generation Energy Innovation Challenge, a three-year project designed to develop capacity that supports Alberta energy transition and diversifies the energy economy. The challenge leverages provincial and federal investment in demonstration projects to create jobs and improve the competitiveness of Alberta's energy businesses and communities.



# Strategic Priority 2: ECONOMIC EVOLUTION

City Council has shown their support for building a strong, diversified economy.

- Approving the NW Industrial Park Area Structure Plan, providing the vision and framework for future development of ±388.0 hectares (±958.7 ac) of land in northwest Medicine Hat.



**±1,902 jobs**



Flexible development opportunities for light/medium and heavy industrial uses within the Plan Area



**±388 ha (±959 ac)**  
Overall Plan Area



New Rail opportunities for industrial land connections to CP Rail Network



**±192 ha (±474 ac)**  
of new heavy industrial lands



Integrated servicing for the Plan Area, utilizing a logical and organized staging approach



## Political Advocacy Strategy



Council completed this strategy to maximize the value of engaging with other levels of government, with implementation underway.



## Rural Renewal Stream designation



Council directed the successful pursuit of a Rural Renewal Stream designation. This provincial program empowers rural communities to attract, recruit, screen, and retain newcomers who intend to live, work, and settle in their communities. The City of Medicine Hat program is expected to be up and running in 2024.



## Updating the Off-Site Levy bylaw



To ensure a balance amongst the City, developers, builders, taxpayers, and ratepayers when allocating servicing costs of development within the City.

- Supporting a refreshed vision for economic development for the City of Medicine Hat focusing on business retention and expansion, workforce development and investment attraction.
- Emphasizing regional collaboration and partnerships by leading the successful application of a provincial grant that will ensure the City of Medicine Hat and other south-eastern municipal partners and stakeholders collectively participate in the development of a regional economic development strategy.
- Cultivating an environment conducive to business development, welcoming several noteworthy businesses including BEVO Farms and S3 Group.

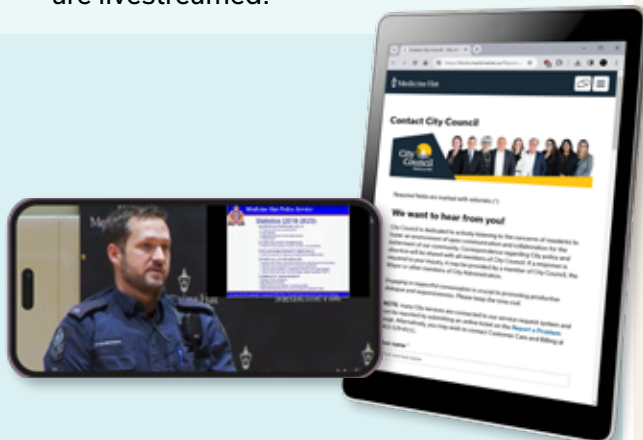


# Strategic Priority 3: SERVICE ORIENTATION

City Council has pushed for transparency and meaningful engagement with residents, businesses and other stakeholders, and demonstrated their commitment to process and policy improvements.

## FOCUS ON TRANSPARENCY

- Encouraging open discussion and only having closed meetings when necessary.
- Launching an improved digital inquiry process for residents to submit questions or concerns to City Council, creating an opportunity for residents to engage with and ask questions of City Council members.
- Ensuring Police Commission meetings are livestreamed.



## BYLAW UPDATES



Updating the Procedural Bylaw to support current legislative requirements regarding the functions of Council and Council Committee meetings, the roles of elected officials, and the rights of the public to participate.



Updating the Urban Wildlife bylaw to address the concerns of residents feeding wildlife within city limits.



Updating the Outdoor Smoking and Vaping bylaw, seeking to balance the rights and preferences of community members in outdoor spaces.



Updating the Responsible Animal Ownership Bylaw to allow humane societies in the city to conduct trap, neuter and return programs with the goal of reducing the feral cat population.



Updating the Municipal Police Commission Bylaw to modernize language and add a layer of transparency and accountability regarding financial stewardship, and to consider cultural diversity when appointing members.

# Strategic Priority 4: PARTNERSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE

**City Council has strived to be a trusted partner by increasing collaboration with community and government partners, improving communications, and offering greater opportunities for engagement.**

- Working with external stakeholders, updates were made to the procurement policy to increase efficiency and ensure open and transparent procurement practices.
- Commitment to accommodate recreation clubs in the NW Industrial area with a number of options including a 20-year lease extension.
- Completing the sale of the Monarch Theatre, ensuring the ongoing operation of this heritage property.



## COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS



Working with community partners to address affordable housing in our community, City Council approved a land donation to the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society for the development of 80 housing units.



Working with community partners, City Council introduced community town halls hosted by partner organizations. In 2023, town halls were hosted by the Veiner Centre, Chamber of Commerce, and Medicine Hat Public Library, offering residents an opportunity to engage with City Council on a variety of community topics.



Extensive collaboration occurred with the Medicine Hat Curling Club in 2023 to support the sustainability of their club. Council approved the purchase of their building and directed administration to negotiate an operating and maintenance lease agreement to ensure their ongoing operations.

- City Council launched a series of podcasts designed to enhance community awareness of City decisions, challenges and initiatives, demonstrate transparency, and be responsive to the information needs of the community. In 2023, Council produced podcasts on Strong Towns, taxes and assessment, potholes and road construction, and homelessness.

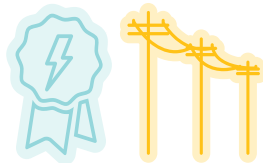


# Strategic Priority 5: COMMUNITY WELLNESS

City Council has put community wellness at the forefront by enabling several initiatives and improvements.

## RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEED

- In response to electricity pricing concerns from the community, council directed a full business review of the City's electric generation business (COMCO). They also approved:
  - » \$33.2 million in cost relief distributed through City of Medicine Hat utility bills (and additional measures for condos and other such entities), resulting in \$800 in relief for residential customers, and \$2000 for small/medium business customers.
  - » Electric Utility Bylaw No. 2244, bringing into force a single best of market interim electricity rate, not to exceed a maximum rate of 11 cents per KWh or a minimum rate of 7 cents per KWh, charged to all residential, small business, and commercial customers.



- Council approved a contribution of up to \$500,000 per year for 2023 and 2024 for HALO Air Ambulance operations (recognizing that future year contributions would be considered as part of the 2025-2026 budget and business plan process) and committed the City of Medicine Hat to advocate on behalf of HALO to the Minister of Health to provide 50% operational funding for HALO on an ongoing basis.

- The Fair Entry program, which helps low-income families and individuals afford popular city programs, was updated to increase subsidy levels from 50 to 75 per cent and expanded to include Medicine Hat Transit. Council also introduced Fair Entry relief credit increases for families meeting the low-income cut-off standard, and subsequently increased them from \$300 in 2022 to \$1,200 in 2023.





# Strategic Priority 5: COMMUNITY WELLNESS

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITY VIBRANCY



Learn more at [medicinehat.ca/ancestors](https://medicinehat.ca/ancestors)

- City Council has advanced the City of Medicine Hat's Truth and Reconciliation efforts by approving a plan that includes mandatory education and training for City of Medicine Hat employees and City Council, sharing and celebrating local Indigenous history, and much more. The City of Medicine Hat, the Miwasin Friendship Centre, and the University of Alberta also worked together to rebury the remains and associated burial artifacts of three ancestors that were held in public trust at the University of Alberta.

- Recognizing the immediate need for additional recreation services in the community, City Council approved the re-opening of both the Moose and Crestwood Recreation Centres. Soon after, Council approved the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, setting the near and long-term vision for supporting a healthy community through the offering of recreation amenities, park spaces and accessible programs. The plan also outlines a need for an increased focus on environmental stewardship to protect the environmentally sensitive areas and biodiversity in our community. The focus is now on the Facilities for the Future plan, which proposes options for the long-term vision for recreation facilities in the community.



*A deteriorated slab at the Moose Recreation Centre required a fresh pour prior to re-opening in September of 2022*



*Crestwood Recreation Centre began offering swimming in early February of 2022*

# Strategic Priority 5: COMMUNITY WELLNESS

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITY VIBRANCY

- Council initiated the development of a Transportation Master Plan, which will lay out the long-term vision for our transportation network for the next 30 years, taking into account evolving transportation infrastructure requirements to accommodate growth and cater to the changing needs of travelers. This includes an active transportation strategy that supports multi-modal transportation like walking, cycling and other active transportation methods. The ultimate goal of the plan is to foster a healthy, sustainable, community and drive economic growth by ensuring safe, dependable travel and efficient movement of goods.



- City Council endorsed the development of a Community Well-Being Plan that will lay the framework for priorities and actions that support well-being. The strategy document will define community well-being and our current state, develop a vision for our community's well-being, define roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and levels of government and specify actions required to achieve the vision of well-being in Medicine Hat.



- The Community Microgrants program was launched, offering funding of up to \$500 for local residents looking to organize activities and events that strengthen bonds within their community and neighbourhood.



*The Community Microgrants program was well received and utilized among Hatters*

# Strategic Priority 6: RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

To support a vibrant, sustainable, enduring community, City Council has shown action by endorsing several efforts.



- Council encouraged participation in the Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP), an affordable, flexible, and streamlined approach to financing that helps residents invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades to their homes. Through CEIP, the City of Medicine Hat will be able to provide financing to applicants for eligible clean energy projects that is repayable through property taxes.

- Participation in the Strong Towns Community Action Lab, a two-year pilot to introduce Strong Towns ideas to City staff and the public, advocating for good city planning in all realms including transportation, neighbourhoods, and city infrastructure – all with a focus on fiscal sustainability and overall community well-being. The pilot is also designed to show how to implement these ideas to ensure Medicine Hat has a prosperous future and remains a great, livable community.



- A cohesive Environmental Framework that provides strategic direction for integrated resource management and climate risk mitigation. The framework will demonstrate the City's leadership and commitment to our community and environment, develop actions and strategies that are clear, compelling, relevant, and implementable in redevelopment plans and city policies. Council will consider the draft framework in December 2023.





MEDICINE HAT CITY COUNCIL  
**MID-TERM REPORT**

November 2023

