

2024 Whitecourt Community Profile Book



Whitecourt



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Mayor's Message



On behalf of Town Council and our community, welcome!

Whitecourt has been a proud member of the Communities in Bloom program for close to 20 years, and over those years we have had the honour of being recognized both provincially and nationally. Being part of the Communities in Bloom Program provides us with the opportunity to showcase our community, and celebrate our local achievements and successes.

Whitecourt is a young, progressive, and innovative community. With our vision for a sustainable future, and considerable planning and forethought, we have managed to keep pace with growth and continue to enhance the quality of life for residents. I know this will be evident as you tour our community.

The Whitecourt Communities in Bloom Committee is made up of dedicated volunteers who have taken on a number of new initiatives the last several years since Whitecourt last competed provincially, including distribution of graffiti removal kits, garden-themed chat events, and the “Love Your Yard” initiative. On behalf of Town Council, I’d like to thank and recognize them for their continued efforts.

Whitecourt is proud to be a member of Communities in Bloom, and we look forward to sharing our community with you.

Sincerely,

Tom Pickard
Mayor

Whitecourt

Municipal Elected Officials & Staff



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Whitecourt Communities in Bloom (CIB) Committee Message



Welcome to Whitecourt!

We are a community-based Committee with representatives from various backgrounds. We all share the desire to make our community the best place to live, work and play. Town Council and Management have actively sought our input over the years on a variety of projects and initiatives; and we have developed an effective working relationship. Town Council appoints one member to sit on the Communities in Bloom Committee to provide a direct link between the two groups. To accomplish the continuity required between project inception and completion, the Manager of Recreation, Arts & Culture and the Parks and Open Spaces Coordinator also sit on the Committee.

Each year, the Committee establishes initiatives, often related to the most recent evaluations completed by Communities in Bloom judges, that we would like to accomplish. Some of these can be achieved by the Committee, whereas others may require specific action by Town Council and management. Monthly Communities in Bloom Committee meetings are held to coordinate implementation. We have highlighted our recent projects and commitments later in this profile book.

During your stay in Whitecourt, you will have the opportunity to meet Communities in Bloom Committee Members, Town Councillors, Town Administration, municipal staff and local residents. We are all looking forward to having the opportunity to talk about and show you some of the wonderful things happening in our community. We hope that by the end of your visit, you will see the pride we all feel for our community and our dedication to making it a great place to live, work and play!

On behalf of the Communities in Bloom Committee, we would like to welcome you to Whitecourt. We hope you enjoy your time here!

Sincerely,

Whitecourt Communities in Bloom Committee

Communities In Bloom 2024 Board Members



Public Members

Jeannine Steinke, Community Member
Ann Blackwell, Community Member
Darlene Chartrand, Community Member
Delia Dezan, Community Member
Joseph Kubelka, Community Member
Carmyn Gibson, Community Member

Town of Whitecourt Representatives

Tara Baker, Town Councillor
Kelly Magee, Parks & Open Spaces Coordinator
Kelly Sadoway, Manager of Recreation, Arts & Culture



About Our Community

Whitecourt is a young, vibrant and proactive community. We have been a proud member of the Communities in Bloom program for almost 20 years, and we are excited to be part of the provincial competition in 2024. Not only has our membership in the program provided us the opportunity to showcase our community, but it has also allowed us to celebrate our local achievements and successes.

With our vision for a sustainable future, and extensive long range planning and forethought, Whitecourt has managed to keep pace with growth as we continue to enhance the quality of life for our residents. Located in the midst of beautiful forests and alongside the scenic Athabasca and McLeod Rivers, Whitecourt is just an hour and a half drive northwest of Edmonton. We are a dynamic and growing community, with a population of 9,927. The majority of our community is an average age of 35; many with young families.

Whitecourt is home to a diverse group of industries – with forestry, oil and gas, and tourism playing key roles in the local economy. Forestry has played a vital role in our history and heritage, and will continue to be part of our growth and success into the future. For these reasons, Whitecourt was named the Forest Capital of Canada in both 2013 and 2014. Whitecourt continues to be a hub for oil and gas activities; and as the industry continues to explore innovative technologies and projects, the energy sector will continue to have a major impact on our community into the future.

Tourism in the region continues to thrive as awareness and interest continues to grow. The lush forests and scenic rivers are the backdrop for year round adventures for people of all ages. Summer months bring avid fishermen, campers, mountain bikers, park-goers, hikers and all-terrain vehicle operators. Known across the province as the “Snowmobile Capital of Alberta,” Whitecourt is a winter playground for snowmobilers, as well as those who hunt, icefish, or cross-country ski.

For more information on our community please visit our website:
www.whitecourt.ca

Budget Highlights



2024 Operating

- Continued educational and promotional activities to encourage recycling with the goal of diverting waste from the Landfill.
- Continuation of the Free Clean Up Week and Take It or Leave It Campaign.
- Continued FireSmart vegetation management activities, and continued promotion of the FireSmart Home Assessments and accompanying rebate program Whitecourt offers.

2024 Capital

- Construction of the Culture & Events Centre will start in the summer of 2024.
- Phase 1 and 2 of the Centennial Park Pathway Improvements Project which involves 1,300m of pathway surface and drainage upgrades, as well as installation of root barriers along the edge of the pathway to mitigate future damage.
- Street Improvement Program, including street overlays and sidewalk and drainage maintenance.
- Completion of interpretive signage at the Athabasca River Erosion Project.
- Completion of energy projects at JDA Place and Allan & Jean Millar Centre, with funding support from the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre, to help reduce energy consumption, save utility costs, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



For more information, visit our website: www.whitecourt.ca



Ongoing Projects



Heritage Park Garden

The John & Audrey Dahl Heritage Park Garden is cared for by the Committee, and is a source of pride. Set amongst the heritage buildings at the Forest Interpretive Centre, residents and visitors gather here to rest, picnic, take photos and enjoy the display. In addition to the garden, the Committee commissioned a local artist to create a beautiful mural on the storage shed.



Library Pollinator Garden

Established several years ago through a Communities in Bloom pollinator workshop, the garden of perennials located at the Whitecourt & District Public Library continues to thrive under the care of the Town's Parks and Open Spaces staff.



Butterfly Education/Release

In an effort to educate about pollinators, we have brought butterflies in various stages of development to local events such as the Whitecourt Children's Festival and the Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce Annual Trade Fair, in addition to documenting the growth and release of butterflies on our Facebook page.

Ongoing Projects



Community Garden

The Committee has “grown for community” for the past four years in unclaimed plots at the Whitecourt Community Garden. We currently tend to seven plots and will distribute vegetables to the local soup kitchen, churches and shelters.



Public Education

Through events such as the Annual Trade Fair and Whitecourt Children’s Festival, the Committee has been able to share their love of gardening with the hopes of inspiring that love in others. Booths have included information on composting, recycling and the reduction of single use plastics. We encourage residents to try gardening, composting and recycling by providing giveaways of gardening gloves, composters and recycling bins.



Love Your Yard

The Committee likes to recognize those who have made efforts to beautify their corner of the community. Love Your Yard signs are placed in yards of those who have been nominated or are noticed by a Committee Member for the work that has been dedicated to making property space tidy and beautiful.

Ongoing Projects



Compost/Recycle Workshops

Workshops are held to help residents learn more about composting and/or recycling; and what they can do at home to contribute to less waste.



Coffee Time – Garden Group

Gardeners still want to talk about gardening, even when it's cold outside! In 2023, our Committee started offering monthly garden chats during the winter months at local garden related venues (and a few coffee shops) to discuss topics of interest or learn about something new.



Graffiti Removal Program

In an effort to encourage residents and businesses to remove graffiti from their properties, the Committee researched effective graffiti removal products and purchased several do-it-yourself kits. The kits have been offered at no cost for businesses and residents. The program is still gaining ground and we hope to see it continue to gain popularity.

Ongoing Projects



Heritage Society Collaboration

With interests closely aligned between the Communities in Bloom Committee and the Whitecourt & District Heritage Society, members have met several times over the years to discuss building placement, planting of native plants to complement the current buildings, and future plans of the John & Audrey Dahl Heritage Park.



Mini-Library Repairs

In cooperation with the local Rotary Club and their mini-library program, Communities in Bloom Committee Members and youth volunteers have begun repairing and installing previously broken mini-library structures around the community.

INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY APPEARANCE





Municipal Bylaws

The Community Standards Bylaw 1475 is in place to encourage and enforce maintenance and tidiness for residential, commercial, and industrial properties throughout Whitecourt.



Vitalization Grant

The Town of Whitecourt offers local businesses and organizations support to improve the exterior appearance of their business/property through this grant.



School Partnerships

Local schools manage their own school yard tidiness with student participation. One local high school shares a parking lot with JDA Place (local arena) and has developed a partnership with the Town to reduce litter through contributions to litter collection costs and student education.



Waste & Recycling Collection

Curbside waste and recycling collection is available weekly for households in Whitecourt. When services are not available at some residences, or if waste exceeds cart capacity, the Whitecourt Transfer Station accepts all household waste, and offers stations for compost and recycling. Larger items are disposed of at the Whitecourt Regional Landfill.



Community Clean Up Program

Local groups and organizations can fundraise by taking on 50 to 100 hours of clean up in various areas of the community. If approved, groups receive \$12/hr of service. In 2024, 12 groups applied for the program to help keep Whitecourt a clean and beautiful community!



Free Clean Up Week & Take It or Leave It

Each spring, the Town offers free disposal at the Whitecourt Regional Landfill to increase accessibility of waste disposal to all residents. In addition to the Free Clean Up Week Event, the Town runs a Take it or Leave It Event, offering residents an opportunity to place unwanted (but reusable) items at the front of their property for other residents to take for free. In 2024, the Town partnered with Woodlands County to run the 2024 Free Clean Up Week Event.

INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION





Transfer Station Recycling

The Town of Whitecourt has a strong Recycling Program. Over 600 items (including electronics) are accepted at the Whitecourt Transfer Station. The Town also accepts concrete for recycling that is crushed and used as a base or sub-base for trails, roadways, parking lots and driveways.



Trail System

Whitecourt's Trail System has over 100km of paved and unpaved maintained trails. A partnership with the Whitecourt Mountain Bike Association has led to the development of additional recreational trails that allow residents and visitors to connect with nature.



Recycling & Garbage Receptacles

The Whitecourt Communities in Bloom Committee was awarded an Alberta Beverage Container Recycling Corporation Grant for the purchase and installation of waste, recycling, and beverage container bins along some of the major trail routes in Centennial Park. Committee members collect, tally, and report the number of beverage containers collected each month.



**THINK
CONSERVE
ENERGY**

Energy Conservation Projects

A number of energy conservation initiatives have been put in place at JDA Place and the Allan & Jean Millar Centre, including measures to reduce natural gas, water and electricity consumption. The Town has replaced the ice plant at JDA Place, which will reduce the annual greenhouse gas emissions and electricity use.



Utility and Landfill Upgrades

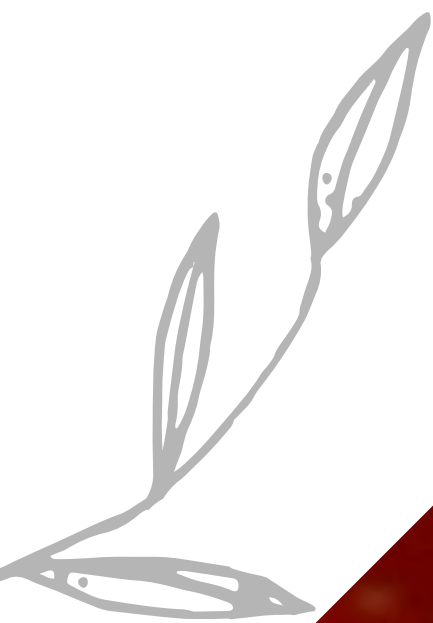
Upgrades have been made to both the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Whitecourt Regional Landfill. The Wastewater Plant restricts the amount of waste that arrives to the plant, has implemented an odor control program, and has planted over 300 trees to create a green buffer between the lagoon and the residential/recreational areas of Whitecourt. The Landfill constructed a new cell in 2023 to accept waste.



Transit System

In the fall of 2014, public transit was introduced to Whitecourt. Since that time, ridership has continued to increase. Because of this, an additional bus has been added to the route at peak times.

INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT HERITAGE CONSERVATION





Whitecourt & District Heritage Society

The local Heritage Society (incorporated in 1979) has seen a rejuvenation over the past several years. The group meets regularly and plans to inventory heritage items found at the John & Audrey Dahl Heritage Park, and to further develop the park by including new features and attractions. The five buildings located at the Heritage Park include the Blue Ridge Church, The Leary Log Home, the Leo Baxter House, the Gibson Barn, and the Trapper's Cabin.



History Books

Whitecourt boasts two history books that have depicted some of the history of the area. "Sagitawah Saga" documents history from 1900 to 1975, and "Whitecourt - A History" documents history from 1975 to 2010.



Historical Signage & Naming

Many of our streets, schools and buildings are named after the pioneers of Whitecourt (including the Allan & Jean Millar Centre and the John & Audrey Dahl Heritage Park). As development continues in the Town, naming that reflects our community's history continues to be a priority.



Sculptures and Monuments

Throughout Town, there are several monuments and sculptures that honour Whitecourt's pride and value of those who have sacrificed to provide safety and protection for others. Examples of these can be seen at the RCMP Station, Fire Hall, on Memorial Point, the Seniors Circle and our local Legion.



Twinning Program

While the COVID-19 Pandemic has not made exchanges easy in the past few years, Whitecourt maintains a strong relationship with our sister city in Yubetsu, Japan. A delegation of 10 students and 2 chaperones plan to visit Whitecourt in September 2024. In 2025, Whitecourt students are making plans to travel to Japan in the summer.



Party In The Park

Local traditions have been formed with our own 2-day music festival, Party In The Park. This event has been bringing people together in celebration for the past 18 years and will continue to run for years to come.

INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT TREE MANAGEMENT





FireSmart Programming

Since 2010, the Town of Whitecourt has completed a variety of FireSmart related projects, including the completion of a community assessment report, the creation of a local FireSmart Community Protection Plan, the creation of the Whitecourt FireSmart Working Group, and most notably the hiring of FireSmart Summer Students who complete hazard reduction treatments throughout Whitecourt. In addition, the Whitecourt Fire Department offers a free FireSmart Home Assessment Program to help residents learn to better protect their properties from the risk of wildfire. Are you interested in learning more about protecting your property from the risk of wildfire? Scan the QR Code to watch the Whitecourt Fire Department's video for tips and tricks to protect your home!



Mountain Pine Beetle Mitigation

Mountain pine beetles pose a significant threat to Alberta's pine forests. Once attacked, healthy pine trees can die within one year. Residents should monitor pine trees on their property and remove any mountain pine beetle infested pine trees. Early detection and control is critical in managing infestations and preventing further spread.



Black Knot Control

Black Knot is recognized by clumpy-looking, black masses of abnormal growths on the branches of trees. The Town of Whitecourt is working to control Black Knot within the Town's parks, boulevards and public spaces. Residents and businesses are encouraged to look for Black Knot on their properties and do their part to mitigate the spread.

INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT LANDSCAPE





Land Use Bylaw 1577

The Town of Whitecourt has a requirement as per Land Use Bylaw 1577 to plant one tree for every 185m² of paving in new subdivisions. The Town encourages developers to preserve mature trees wherever possible, as well as perform their own landscaping to keep neighbourhoods and subdivisions nicely landscaped.



Greenspace and Park Development

The Town of Whitecourt has multiple parks that the residents of the community enjoy and take pride in. Throughout the parks, landscaping, decorations and seating are maintained to allow residents and visitors to continue to enjoy them.

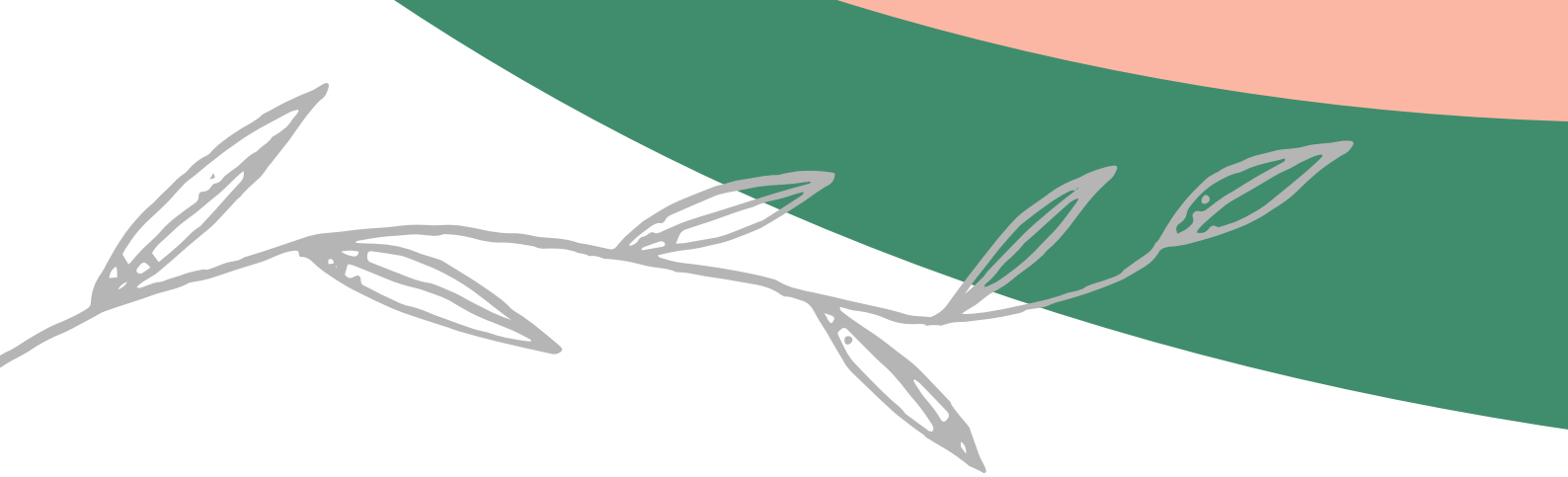


Whitecourt Community Garden

The current Community Garden was built in 2009. 50+ garden plots are rented to members of the community seeking a space to grow their own produce for a rental fee of \$40/year. The Committee has “grown for community” for the past four years in unclaimed plots at the Whitecourt Community Garden. We currently tend to seven plots and will distribute vegetables to the local soup kitchen, churches and shelters.

INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT PLANT & FLORAL DISPLAYS





Flower Beds & Hanging Baskets



The Town of Whitecourt enjoys the short flowering season to the fullest. With the abundance of parks and open spaces around the community, the Town seizes the opportunity to bring some colour during the summer season.



Parks, the Forest Interpretive Centre, the John & Audrey Dahl Heritage Park and the Cemetery are adorned by flower beds and hanging baskets, which are filled with drought tolerant and animal resistant annuals. Other Town facilities, such as the Town Administration Office, Whitecourt Transfer Station, Allan & Jean Millar Centre, Carlan Community Resource Centre, Carbonex Curling Rink, Whitecourt Regional Library, Whitecourt Fire Hall, Whitecourt RCMP Station, Sanitation Station on Caxton Street and the Public Works Shop also have maintained flower beds and/or shrubbery to liven up the grounds.



Roadway medians in Whitecourt along Mink Creek Road have maintained flower beds and greenery to brighten up the street scape. In addition, multiple streets throughout downtown Whitecourt have hanging baskets and planter pots to beautify the community.

The Infrastructure Services Department waters the flowers two to three times per week, weather dependent. Weeding and dead heading is done as needed at the time of watering. Proper plant mixtures, fertilizers, mulch and drainage are standard in our Town maintenance practices.

Thank You



Whitecourt is proud to be a
community in bloom!

Contact Information



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www.whitecourt.ca



facebook.com/whitecourtcib



Whitecourt, Alberta, Canada



