



WHITECOURT COMMUNITY PROFILE BOOK

2021





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Mayor	3
Municipal Officials and Staff	4
Message from Communities in Bloom Committee	5
Members of the 2021 Communities in Bloom Committee	6
Description of Whitecourt	7
Budget Highlights	8
Ongoing Projects	9
Tidiness	11
Environmental Action	14
Heritage Conservation	17
Urban Forestry	20
Landscaping	22
Floral Displays	24

A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of Town Council and our community, welcome!

Whitecourt has been a proud member of the Communities in Bloom Program for many years now, and our community is excited to be part of the evaluation process again in 2021. We have had the honour to be recognized both provincially and nationally throughout our years as Communities in Bloom members, and look forward to hearing the results of this year's evaluation in the coming weeks.

Whitecourt is a progressive, proactive, 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, sustain current levels, and maintain a stable tax rate. I know this will be evident as you tour our community, and I am extremely proud of all the projects and initiatives we have completed and initiated since the last time Communities in Bloom judges visited Whitecourt.

I have a great admiration for our local Communities in Bloom Committee, and I know they have been working hard over the last several months to promote the program and prepare for our participation in this competition. Like all other communities, the pandemic greatly impacted the programs and initiatives organized by the Committee. However, I admire how the local volunteers quickly adapted so that they could continue to engage and educate the public on a variety of topics, including the rearing of butterflies that they documented on Facebook and creation of the Sprouts & Sparrows family kits that were developed so that families could learn and craft at home.

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 proud to be a member of Communities in Bloom and we look forward to sharing with you the essence of Whitecourt.

Sincerely,
Maryann Chichak, Mayor



MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS AND STAFF

Whitecourt Town Council

Mayor Maryann Chichak
maryannchichak@whitecourt.ca

Deputy Mayor Derek Schlosser
derekschlosser@whitecourt.ca

Councillor Tom Pickard
tompickard@whitecourt.ca

Councillor Ray Hilts
rayhilts@whitecourt.ca

Councillor Matt Connell
mattconnell@whitecourt.ca

Councillor Bill McAree
billmcaree@whitecourt.ca

Councillor Paul Chauvet
paulchauvet@whitecourt.ca

Town Administration

Peter Smyl,
Chief Administrative Officer

Judy Barney,
Director of Corporate Services

Chelsea Grande,
Director of Community Services

Doug Tymchyshyn,
Director of Community Safety

Kamruz Zaman,
Director of Infrastructure Services

Jennine Loberg,
Director of Planning & Development



A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNITIES AND BLOOM COMMITTEE

Welcome to Whitecourt!

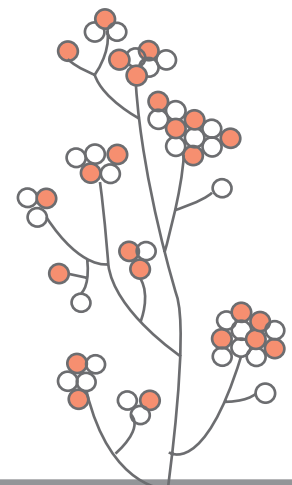
We are a community-based Committee with representatives from various backgrounds. We all share the desire to make our community the best place to live, work, and play. Town Council and Management have actively sought our input over the years on a variety of projects and initiatives and we have developed 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 also sits 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 Councilors, 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!

Whitecourt Communities in Bloom Committee



MEMBERS OF THE 2021 WHITECOURT COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM COMMITTEE

Jeannine Steinke	Community Member
Ann Blackwell	Community Member
Darlene Chartrand	Community Member
Darlene Vader	Community Member
Joseph Kubelka	Community Member
Shereen Trenchard	Community Member
Tammy Collins	Community Member
Kelly Magee	Parks and Open Spaces Coordinator Town of Whitecourt
Matt Connell	Town Councilor- Town of Whitecourt
Kelly Sadoway	Manager of Recreation, Arts and Culture Town of Whitecourt



DESCRIPTION OF WHITECOURT

Whitecourt is a young, vibrant and proactive community. We have been a proud member of the Communities in Bloom program for several years, and we are excited to be part of the provincial competition in 2021. 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 considerable 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 10,204. The majority of our community is between the ages of 25 and 44 years old, 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 in 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, 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

2021 CAPITAL BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The 2021 Street Improvement Program includes street, lighting, and sidewalk repairs at locations throughout the community. Following the allocation of \$1.25 million in funding from the Municipal Stimulus Program, drainage improvements and roadway enhancements will also be completed along Dahl Drive.

Construction on the Water System Upgrade Project will be completed. The project includes construction of a dedicated supply main and other system upgrades, including pressure reducing measures to improve the distribution network and fire flows, as well as the extension of the waterline from east of Dahl Drive to the bottom of Eastlink Park.

2021 OPERATING BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Continue with the Odour Control Program at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (chemical treatment, permitting of haulers, etc.).

Continued collaboration and development of new agreements through voluntary arbitration with Woodlands County for services that benefit residents of both municipalities.

Following the receipt of \$15.6 million for the construction of an Arts & Culture Centre and new library from the Investing in Canadian Infrastructure Program, the Town of Whitecourt will be re-engaging community stakeholders and members, and undertaking a public education campaign.

Conduct the general municipal election in October 2021.

Implement enhancements to online services to the community, including a website redesign; development of an app/ website to connect organizations with community volunteers; and, launch of an online e-send system to allow the Town to provide utility and tax customers with the option for online billing.

ONGOING PROJECTS

POLLINATOR WORKSHOPS/LIBRARY GARDEN

For the past few years, the committee has promoted the planting of pollinator loving plants. These annual workshops have taught participants about pollinators, which plants they like best and how to care for the plants.

BUTTERFLY RELEASE

To complement our pollinator education, we have documented the growth and release of butterflies on our Facebook page. It's always fun to watch their development. This past year, a vlog segment was added to the presentation.

HERITAGE GARDEN

A source of pride for the committee. Set amongst the heritage buildings at the Forest Interpretive Centre, visitors can rest, picnic and enjoy the display.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

This year, the committee is contributing to the community by planting and caring for vegetables for our local food bank. The committee also partners with the Community Garden plot holders to host work bees to keep the garden area looking great.

PLANT SWAP

An annual plant swap is hosted by our Communities in Bloom committee to encourage residents to contribute a plant or two, try something new and meet other local gardeners.



ONGOING PROJECTS



SCHOOL GARDENING SUPPORT

Over the last two summers, the committee has donated supplies to all of our local schools to encourage gardening projects, especially during the limiting time of the pandemic. The committee recently donated equipment to an urban gardening program at the local high school and are looking forward to seeing the results.

PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP

The committee is often invited to participate in a variety of programs offered by the Town and other local organizations including Children's Festivals, Women's conferences, early childhood programming and more. We are always happy to participate and share our love of gardening!

TRADE FAIR AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

The annual Trade Fair is a great opportunity for the committee to promote their latest projects and share information to attendees. Past focuses have included the decrease of single use plastics at local businesses, recycling, landscaping and flower garden design and more. We also give away gardening gloves to promote the community getting their hands in the dirt.

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY

We like to recognize residents who make an effort to beautify their corner of the community. Homes and businesses are photographed and celebrated on our Facebook page for a variety of reasons – decorating for the holidays, Canadian pride and for having a beautiful floral display.



INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT
TIDINESS



MUNICIPAL BYLAWS

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

WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION

Curbside waste and recycling collection is available weekly for households in Whitecourt. When services are not available at some residences (for those living in mobile home parks, four-plex or apartment buildings) or if waste exceeds the waste cart capacity, the Whitecourt Transfer Station accepts all household waste as well as items for composting and recycling. Items such as wood, metal, furniture, mattresses or appliances can be 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 for each hour of service and a cleaner community!

FREE CLEAN-UP WEEK

Each Spring, the Town offers free disposal of larger household items at the Whitecourt Regional Landfill for a week to increase the accessibility of waste disposal to all residents.



TIDINESS



TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

Whitecourt's Community wide celebration of reducing, reusing and recycling. Residents are offered an opportunity to place unwanted but reusable items at the front of their property. If other residents choose, they can take those items to reuse – for free. Any leftover items are collected and removed during regular waste collection in the following days.

VITALIZATION GRANT

The Town of Whitecourt offers local businesses and organizations support to improve the exterior appearance of their business or 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 the Scott Safety Centre (local arena) and has developed a partnership with the Town to reduce litter through contributions to litter collection costs and student education.

TIDINESS



INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT
ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION



ELECTRONICS

The Town is participating in an expanded electronic recycling pilot program. Over 600 items are accepted at the Whitecourt Transfer Station.

ASPHALT RUBBLE RECYCLING

The Town accepts concrete and asphalt for recycling. The material is crushed and used as a base or subbase for driveways, trails, roads and parking lots.

TRAIL SYSTEMS

Whitecourt has a trail system complete with over 100kms 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 BINS ALONG TRAILS

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.

RECYCLING SERVICES SURVEY

In early 2021, the Town of Whitecourt launched an online survey about waste and recycling services currently offered and current recycling habits of the community. Input from Town residents showed that there is lots of support for the current waste disposal programs in Whitecourt and many residents would like to see it grow to include a residential composting program.

ENERGY CONSERVATION PROJECTS

A number of energy conservation initiatives put into play at the Scott Safety Centre and Allan & Jean Millar Centre, including low cost energy conservation measures to reduce electricity, natural gas and water consumption. The Town has also replaced the ice plant at the Scott Safety Centre which will reduce the annual greenhouse gas emissions and electricity use.

WHITECOURT REGIONAL LANDFILL UPGRADES

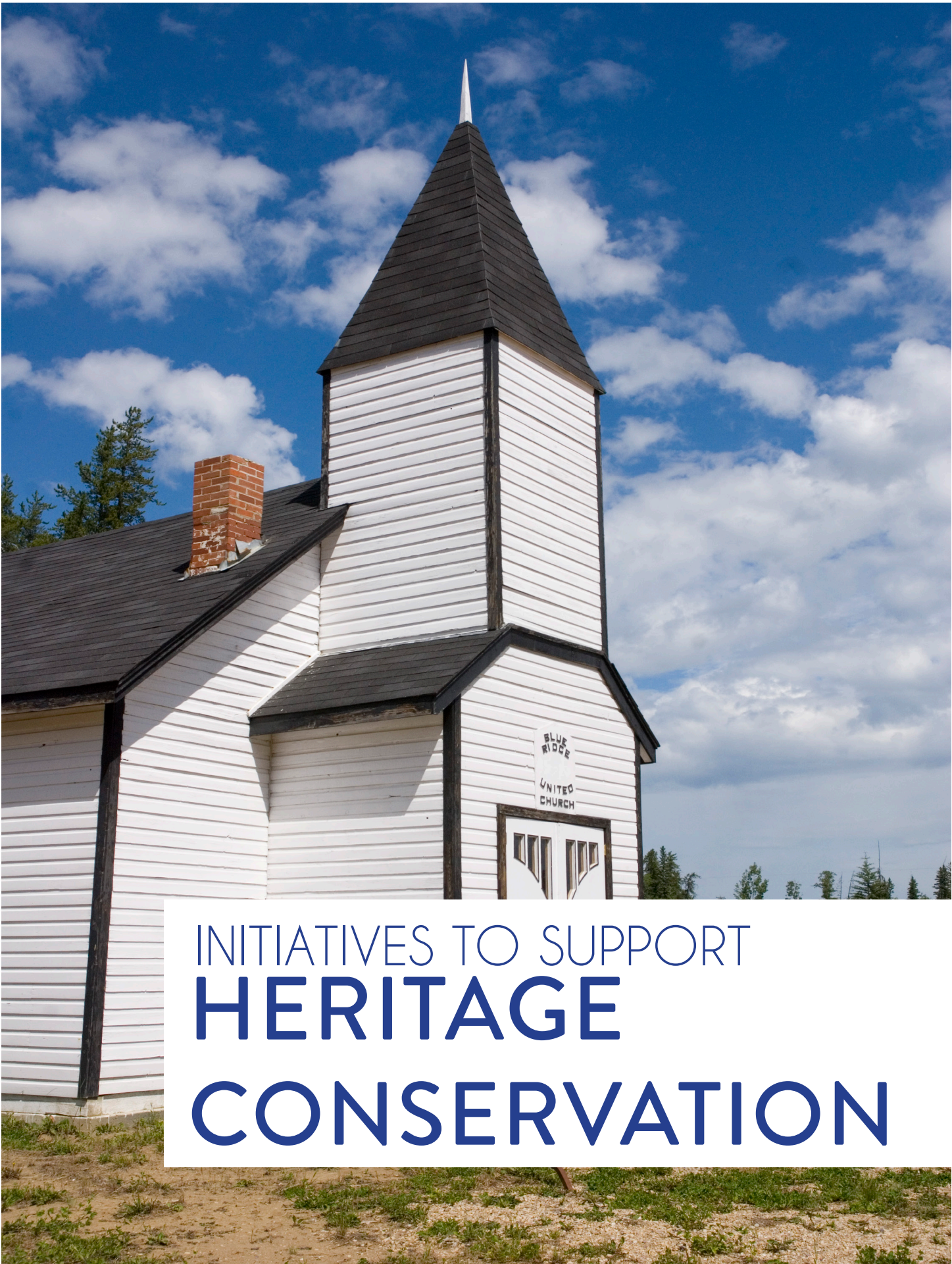
Upgrades have been made to the Wastewater Treatment Plant to improve the quality of life for the residents and lessen the overall impact of the plant. Some of these upgrades included restricting the amount of waste arriving at the plant, implementing an odour control program and planting over 300 trees to create a green buffer between the lagoon and residential/recreational areas of the Town.

TRANSIT SYSTEM

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



ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION



INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT
HERITAGE
CONSERVATION

WHITECOURT AND DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY

The local Heritage Society (incorporated in 1979) has seen a rejuvenation over the past year. The group has been meeting regularly and making plans to inventory heritage items found at Heritage Park and further develop the park to include new features and attractions. The five buildings currently located at Heritage Park are the Blue Ridge United Church, the Leary Log home, the Leo Baxter house, the Gibson barn, and a trapper's cabin. The Society has also completed work in the past to identify and document information about several homes and buildings of historical significance located throughout the town.

HISTORY BOOKS

Whitecourt boasts two history books that have depicted some of the history of the area. The "Sagittawah Saga" documents history from 1900 to 1975 and "Whitecourt- A History 1975 – 2010" reflects on the history from that time period.

HISTORICAL SIGNS

Many of our streets, schools and buildings are named after the pioneers of Whitecourt. As development continues, naming that reflects on our history continues to be a priority.



HERITAGE CONSERVATION



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 pandemics have not made exchanges easy, Whitecourt maintains a strong relationship with our sister city in Yubetsu, Japan. While restrictions continue to ease, it is the hope that regular community exchanges will resume.

ANNIVERSARY SQUARE

Established to celebrate the Town's 50th anniversary in 2009, this downtown park is home to a chiming clock tower and a buried time capsule to be opened in 2059.

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 15 years and will resume in 2022.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION



INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT
**URBAN
FORESTRY**



FIRESMART PROGRAM

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, creation of the Dahl Drive FireSmart Demonstration Site, and hazard reduction treatments to areas throughout town. For the last 5 years, FireSmart summer students have completed maintenance and priority work within town limits. Whitecourt was the first community to complete this type of project, and it is hoped that other communities will see the success of this program and implement their own programs within their communities and surrounding areas.

MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE PROGRAM

In order to decrease the threat that the Mountain Pine Beetle poses to the forested area in and around the town, Whitecourt has implemented a Mountain Pine Beetle Control Program. The program involves assessing areas throughout the community for infected trees, and performing control activities.

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 in the Whitecourt area are encouraged to look for Black Knot on their properties and to do their part to stop the spread.



INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT
LANDSCAPE





LANDSCAPE

LAND USE BYLAW NO. 1429

The Town of Whitecourt has a requirement as per Land Use Bylaw 1429 to plant one tree for every 185 m squared of paving in new subdivisions. The Town encourages developers to preserve mature trees wherever possible, as well as perform their own landscaping to keep neighborhoods 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 the residents and visitors to continue to enjoy them.

VITALIZATION GRANT

The Town of Whitecourt Community Vitalization Grant offers local businesses and organizations support to improve the exterior appearance of their business or property. This grant enhances the quality of life and wellbeing of the residents of Whitecourt by increasing the aesthetic appeal of our Town.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

The current Community Garden was built in 2009. The 50+ garden plots are rented to members of the community seeking a space to grow their own produce for a rental fee of \$40.00 per year. Unclaimed plots are planted by volunteers to provide fresh produce to the local food bank.



INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT
FLORAL DISPLAYS



FLOWER BEDS AND 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 color, during the summer season.

Parks, the Forest Interpretive Centre, and the Cemetary are adorned by flower beds and hanging baskets, which are filled with drought tolerant and animal resistant annuals. Other Town Facilites such as the Town Office, Transfer Station and Allan & Jean Millar Centre also have maintained flower beds and shrubbery to liven up the grounds.

The Town of Whitecourt Infrastructure Services Department waters the flowers two to three times per week depending on the weather, using mountain spring water from the Athabasca and McLeod rivers. Weeding and dead heading is done as needed at the time of watering. Proper planting mixtures, fertilizers, mulch and drainage are standard in our Town maintenance practices.

FLORAL DISPLAYS



THANK-YOU FOR
LEARNING ABOUT
OUR COMMUNITY
IN BLOOM.

