

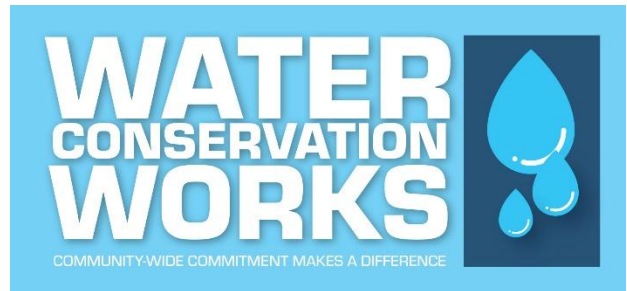


STIRLING

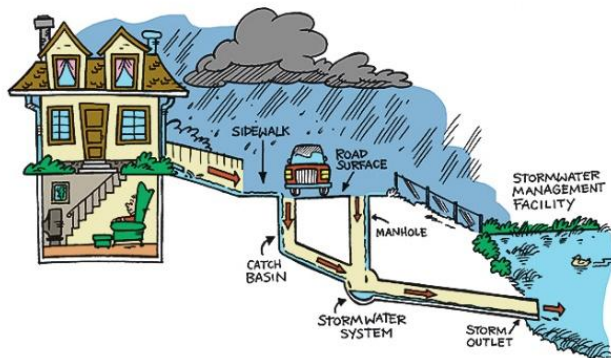
# Mayor's Monthly Message

February 2025

You may recall last year with fears of severe drought potentially affecting water availability across southern Alberta, the provincial government asked for all municipalities in our region to voluntarily find ways to reduce water use by 5 to 10%. The Village changed watering practices for parks and green spaces. The public works team changed practices at the pool and adjusted our procedures for washing vehicles. Our fire department cut back on training exercises requiring water from hydrants.



We also asked you to carefully consider your use of potable water and did you deliver! Stirling saw a water reduction of 40,381 cubic metres (or roughly 10.6 million gallons) in 2024 compared to 2023. That's represents a massive 14.5% reduction! Thanks for your support protecting water availability. The good news is that snow pack and water reservoir levels are closer to normal so far this year and there appears to be less drought risk as we head into the spring.



Council discussed the Village's application for the Alberta Drought and Flood Protection Program this month. Storm water management has been an area identified in Stirling's infrastructure master plan as requiring investment. Developing appropriate detention ponds to capture runoff during major rain events as well as connecting catch basins and other storm water infrastructure is important to

address the risk of overland flooding. Village Administration was directed to continue investigating options and report back with recommendations as part of future capital budgets.

Council approved the revised and modernized Land Use Bylaw (LUB) this month. The review of the bylaw took just over a year to carefully examine areas to reduce red tape to enable new development while at the same time protect the small town feel we all enjoy in our community. The foundation of the previous LUB was written in 2008 and no longer reflected updates in provincial legislation. Council also took steps to clarify Stirling's status as a "dry town" based on significant feedback received at a public hearing. Alcohol sales remain prohibited in all land use districts including any future restaurants. This does not affect special event permits which continue to be available for events at facilities like the Reunion Centre, Silver Saddle Club and Community Centre.

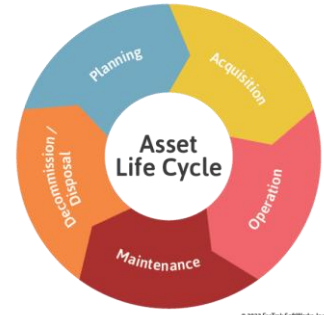
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Administration brought forward an Asset Management Policy which was approved by Council. The policy provides clear requirements for planning to replace Village assets like equipment, vehicles and buildings based on their respective useful life. The policy ensures that funds are set aside to repair or replace assets when needed. The policy should help improve planning processes and provide future councils with a clearer picture of financial needs in long term capital budget planning.



In other financial matters, Council has directed Administration to proactively explore budget scenarios that anticipate potential decreased provincial transfers and lower property tax revenues in 2026. The funding that municipalities receive under the province's Local Government Fiscal Framework is calculated as a function of provincial revenues which could drop in the face of a trade war with the United States. The Lethbridge region has been identified by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce as the 10<sup>th</sup> most "at risk" from the impact of tariffs due to the proportion of exports from our area that go south. Council believes that service level reductions and other budget constraints may be necessary to deal with any drop in revenues.

Council also discussed the municipal elections that will occur this fall. Council has asked Administration to conduct an advance poll to provide residents with another option to cast their ballots in addition to election day on October 20<sup>th</sup>. Changes in provincial legislation require municipalities to now develop a "Register of Electors". You must be on the Register in order to vote. The easiest way to ensure you are on the Voter Register is to check now if you are on the list and if not, add yourself before election day. **Register to vote here:**

<https://www.elections.ab.ca/voters/register-to-vote/>



Trevor Lewington

***"When you are in local government, you are on the ground, and you are looking into the eyes and hearts of the people you are there to serve. It teaches you to listen; it teaches you to be expansive in the people with whom you talk to, and I think that engagement gives you political judgment."*** - Valerie Jarrett

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