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CIC hears wastewater treatment plant update

Alejandra Pulido-Guzman
LETHBRIDGE HERALD
apulido@lethbridgeherald.com

The Community Issues Committee met Thursday to hear about the state of the wastewater treatment plant after an asset management plan was completed.

The CIC heard Thursday that aging infrastructure and rising demand are putting pressure on the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). And the asset management plan highlighted the level of investment needed to keep the plant safe, reliable and able to support future community growth.

A report presented to the CIC within the asset management plan, showed that the plant was last expanded in 1989, and many parts of the plant are now at or past their expected service life.

Director of Infrastructure Services, Joel Sanchez told reporters Thursday the plant is designed to treat 40 million litres of wastewater per day, and at this point it already operates at or above that level during normal conditions because the incoming wastewater is so strong.

"If the plant is not able to meet the capacity for treatment, the regulator, in this case Alberta Environment, can come down and request for us to stop any development," said Sanchez.

He said the plant still has capacity to operate at the moment, but it is limited and if there is an event where the industry or main contributors send more wastewater than they usually do, the plant may run into trouble.

"The main risk is that some of the components are in poor condition and they don't have any redundancy," said Sanchez.

He said the main contributor to the increase in wastewater is the industry growth experienced in the last decade.

Wastewater treatment upgrades/lifecycle projects are currently included within the City's approved 2022-2031 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). However, there is uncertainty regarding the optimal path forward given the scale of anticipated expansion requirements.

See **Estimate**, Page A2



HERALD PHOTO BY JOE MANIO

Bridge players gather in the hallway at the Holiday Inn as tournament staff post results from the previous round, while competitors scan the listings to see their next opponents at the Lethbridge Regional Bridge Tournament on Thursday. The tournament runs from April 13-19 and has attracted players from all over western Canada. Please see story on A2.

AI content should be labelled, heritage committee says

Anja Karadeglija
THE CANADIAN PRESS

The government should require that content generated by artificial intelligence be clearly labelled, a House of Commons committee said in a new report.

The members of Parliament on the committee are calling for standardized labels for AI content that are visible and that the public can understand. They say the requirement should apply to all relevant sectors, including digital platforms and broadcasters.

This would "promote transparency, maintain public trust and preserve the integrity of Canada's information and cultural ecosystem," the report said.

It called on the government to

establish "a framework governing the systematic and easily identifiable labelling of content created with the assistance of artificial intelligence, including through the use of metadata, digital watermarks or other robust technical solutions."

AI labelling is among 13 recommendations in a report released this week by the committee, following a study of the impacts of artificial intelligence on the cultural sector.

Most of the testimony the committee heard expressed "profound concerns" about how AI could threaten the long-term viability of the creative sector, the report said.

It cited witness testimony about the use of copyrighted works to train AI models without authorization or compensation, "the proliferation of synthetic content on distribution platforms," the way AI is compet-

ing with creative professionals, "the elimination of jobs and even entire occupational categories" and "the erosion of cultural sovereignty and cultural diversity under the dominance of tech giants."

The committee said the government should ensure the Copyright Act applies to AI-generated content and require that AI developers be more transparent about the use of copyrighted works to train their models, to allow for "proper authorization and licensing."

It also called on the government to "establish a clear opt-in consent requirement for the use of copyrighted works in the training of artificial intelligence systems, ensuring that creators' works may not be used for text and data mining or model development without their prior authorization."



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Estimated costs for wastewater treatment plant upgrades between \$250 and \$350 million

CONTINUED from page A1

The Asset Management Plan estimates that upgrades and expansion will cost between \$250 million and \$350 million and financial planning and budget manager, Mitch Stevenson said that reflects the size of the plant and the complexity of the work required.

“What that spend will ultimately achieve will be addressing the condition issues of the components within the plant, process redundancy issues, and capacity issues,” said Stevenson.

He said any funding that will be required to offset the borrowings that come with these capital expenditures will need to be through utility rates.

“We do have debt limit capacity within the prescribed

amounts within the municipal government act,” said Stevenson. “We have \$580 million that we can borrow today based on our current revenue structure.”

As of how much that will cost to residents when the utilities rate increases, Stevenson said that will be addressed in the May 13 CIC meeting.

The Asset Management Plan was received by the Committee as information. The next phase will focus on identifying funding options for the required upgrades to ensure the plant will serve the community for decades to come.

Administration will present these options, including detailed design of the expansion and possible rate impacts, at the May 13 CIC meeting. This discussion will be part of the 2027–2036 Capital Improvement Plan workshop.



HERALD PHOTO BY JOE MANIO

Bridge players fill a room at the Holiday Inn on Thursday during the Lethbridge Regional Bridge Tournament, where a strong turnout—despite weather-related travel delays—underscores the game's enduring blend of competition and community.

Bridge tournament brings strategy, skill and social connection to Lethbridge

Joe Manio
LETHBRIDGE HERALD
jmanio@lethbridgeherald.com

The quiet shuffle of cards and the soft rhythm of bidding are filling a southside hotel this week—but make no mistake, there's nothing casual about what's happening at the tables.

From April 13 to 19, the Holiday Inn on Mayor Magrath Drive is hosting the Lethbridge Regional Bridge Tournament, drawing players from across Western Canada and beyond for a week of competition, camaraderie and careful calculation.

For tournament chair Dianne King, the event represents both a growing competition and a thriving community.

“We're just thrilled with the attendance,” she said. “There are people here for the first time as well as many who are returning.”

Hosted by the Lethbridge Bridge Club, the regional tournament has been running since roughly the 1990s and continues to attract a mix of local players and seasoned competitors chasing ranking points and titles.

“I think it's just grown in popularity,” King said. “People are taking it very seriously—getting their points, working toward life master and beyond.”

At the same time, she says, the game's appeal goes far beyond competition.

“People come to learn, but they find really strong friendships,” she said. “For some, the social side plays an even greater role. Their friendship circles become their fellow bridge players.”

That balance between social connection and high-level play is reflected in the different ways the game is played. Social, or “contract,” bridge is often played casually among friends, sometimes over dinner or in small groups at home.

Tournament play, however, uses “duplicate bridge,” a more structured and competitive format where the same hands are played at multiple tables and scores are compared.

This week's event falls firmly into the latter category.

Tournament director Doug Rankin likens his role to that of a coordinator at a golf tournament—organizing players and ensuring everything runs smoothly.

“What we do is organize all the players, and if something goes wrong, we help fix it,” he said.

Attendance has been strong, even with some early disruptions. A brief but intense spring flurry created treacherous driving conditions from Calgary Wednesday, preventing some players from making the trip.

“A number of people we were expecting got delayed by the weather,” Rankin said.

Despite that, turnout remains ahead of expectations. Rankin noted attendance on Wednesday was about 30 per cent higher than the previous tournament, before dipping slightly Thursday, when 148 players were counted on site.

Typically, participation builds as the week progresses.

“Attendance will start low at the beginning of the week, increase through Thursday or Friday, and then drop off on the weekend,” he said.

Players have travelled significant distances to take part, from cities like Vancouver, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Saskatoon, as well as communities in Montana and B.C.'s Interior.

That wide draw reflects both the competitive appeal of the tournament and the enduring popularity of bridge itself—a game that blends memory, logic and partnership.

For Vancouver-based player Brad Bart, who has been playing for about 35 years, the competitive side of bridge is what keeps him engaged.

“To be an excellent player, you need a good memory,” Bart said. “You have to know what the cards are as they go by and remember them.”

That skill develops over time, he added, as players gradually learn to track more and more of the game in real time.

Bart, who travelled from the West Coast to compete, practices regularly with his partner—despite the distance between them.

“My partner lives in Winnipeg, so we can't practise in person very much,” he said. “We practise by playing and bidding over the internet. It's definitely better than nothing.”

Even at a high level, he says, there's still room for personality and style.

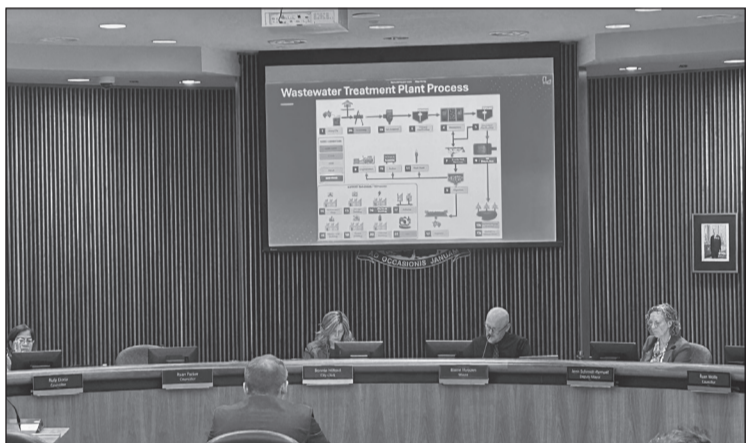
“My partner and I favour natural systems, but we bid very aggressively,” Bart said. “It can throw the opponents off-balance—and it's more fun. The more you get to bid, the more fun it is.”

That mix of strategy and enjoyment is part of what has sustained bridge for generations. Originating from earlier trick-taking games, the modern form of contract bridge took shape in the early 20th century and quickly became a global pastime.

Today, despite the rise of digital entertainment, local clubs like Lethbridge's continue to thrive—offering both structured competition and a place to connect.

“I would say it's the most wonderful thing you could ever do,” King said of the game. “And it will keep you learning for the rest of your life.”

As the tournament continues through Friday, Saturday and Sunday, players will keep testing their skills—and their partnerships—one hand at a time, proving that even in a fast-paced world, a deck of cards and a good partner still hold lasting appeal.



HERALD PHOTO BY ALEJANDRA-PULIDO GUZMAN

Financial planning and budget manager, Mitch Stevenson presents an asset management plan for the wastewater treatment plant during the Community Issues Committee meeting Thursday at city hall.

SAVE OUR CHURCHES ASSOCIATION (SOCA) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, April 19, 2026
2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Sts. Peter and Paul Parish Hall
(639 - 12B Street North)

AGENDA

- Annual reports
- Election of Directors (2026-2027)
- Some important motions regarding the future of SOCA will be discussed
- Members are asked to be present to vote

Note: SOCA is a registered society open to all Lethbridge residents who are interested in the welfare of All Saints Parish.

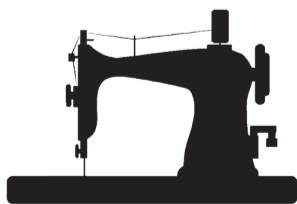
Only members may attend and vote at an A.G.M.

If you are not a member, membership will be available at the door from 1:30 p.m. onwards. The one-time membership fee is \$5.00. Any donation of \$5.00 or more counts as a membership fee. The annual subscription fee has been waived this year. No donations are needed from members this year.

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