

Moved by:

Councillor Dodic

OFFICIAL BUSINESS MOTION

St Laurent Exchange Program - Funding Increase Request

6.2

WHEREAS:

- a. In 1967, as part of a Centennial project, the Canadian Federal Government encouraged municipalities from the 'West' and the 'East' to enter into city-to-city twinning arrangements; and
- b. Lethbridge embraced the project and since 1967 has been in a formal twinning relationship with the borough of Saint-Laurent, which is part of Montreal, Quebec; and
- c. The communities of Saint-Laurent and Lethbridge are of a similar size in terms of population; and
- d. The details of the program are attached to this Motion and which is information that was posted on the City of Lethbridge Website on January 1, 2026. Additionally, a photo from 1967 depicting the launch of the exchange program is attached; and
- e. The exchange has occurred every year since 1967 except for two years when the COVID pandemic prevented the exchange from occurring; and
- f. Since 1967, more than 330 residents have participated in this exchange and anecdotal information from the participants has indicated that their experience has been extremely positive and they have enduring memories of the experience; and
- g. The hosting budget for Lethbridge with respect to the exchange has remained at \$25,000 for at least the past 15 years and has never been adjusted for inflation, whereas, the current budget for Saint-Laurent has been \$60,000; and
- h. The relationship between the two communities is a tradition that is worth maintaining and should be continued and fostered; and

- i. There should be equity *vis a vis* the financial contributions from each community to continue the exchange program and to ensure that the experience for the participants is comparable as they visit their twin City and surrounding area:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Lethbridge, 2026 and 2027 operating budget allocations for the exchange program between Lethbridge and Saint-Laurent be increased by \$25,000 in each year, totaling \$50,000, to be funded as a one-time allocation from Council Contingencies; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the \$25,000 annual increase together with yearly Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) be referred to the 2028-2031 Operating Budget deliberations as a new initiative.

Material included with OBM:

1. *City of Lethbridge Website information on Lethbridge/St. Laurent Exchange, 2026.*
2. *Photograph from 1967 of the launch of the twinning of the two cities.*