

June 23, 2024

To: Governance Standing Policy Committee

From: Braum Barber, Southern Alberta Group for the Environment (SAGE)

Re: Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (June 27th, 2024)

The Southern Alberta Group for the Environment (SAGE) has appreciated the opportunity to participate in the City of Lethbridge's Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan.

The Municipal Development Plan acknowledges that “Climate change is expected to be the most significant environmental issue in the coming years. In addition to creating challenges for ecosystem adaptation, a warming climate will bring changes that can affect the water supply, agriculture, power and transportation systems, the natural environment, cultural and heritage sites, and human health and safety. ... Mitigating, responding to, and adapting to the impacts of climate change, including constraints on water and increased severe weather, will become increasingly important” (p.184).

This is an important direction for policy-makers in our collective efforts to prepare Lethbridge for the impacts of climate change on how we live, work and recreate. For success, a robust adaptation plan is vital – the health of the natural environment, the effectiveness of our economy, and social cohesion are all in play.

The multi-stakeholder planning process was very well organized and presented, with a comprehensive evaluation of climate impacts on labour productivity, building performance, public health, and infrastructure damage from extreme weather events. The most important outcome from these analyses is that there is a real cost to inaction. In other words, there is tangible return-on-investment for adaptation interventions that protect our community.

Another important perspective is that this is not directly a mitigation plan that relates to various international protocols. It is an adaptation plan that prepares Lethbridge for anticipated impacts, and offers long-term actions to preserve a livable future.

We cannot express strongly enough how important this project is for Lethbridge. Successful implementation of adaptation goals will have profound impacts on our economy and our social well-being. SAGE encourages the Governance Standing Policy Committee to support the Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan.