

# **2021 RATEPAYER MEETINGS**

# CHAIR'S UPDATE

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- Pandemic Operations & Response
- Municipal Election – October 18, 2021
- Red Tape Reduction Initiative
- Special Areas Water Supply Project
- Regional Irrigation Investigation Work

# CHAIR'S UPDATE

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## Pandemic Operations & Response

- Focus remains on protecting critical/essential services ratepayers rely on
- Modified operations to reduce in-person contact through remote working/work-from-home
- District Offices and Youngstown Service Center remain open to the public
- New online payment system was launched for taxes, utilities, and leases/rentals

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## 2021 Municipal Election – October 18, 2021

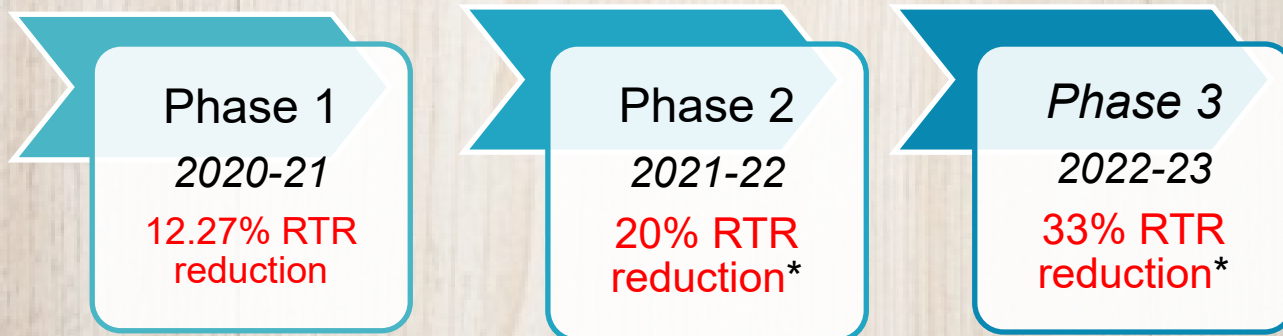
- Nominations accepted until noon on September 20
- Special Areas has 13 subdivisions which each elect a local representative to the Advisory Council
- Advisory Council confers with and advises the Special Areas Board and the Minister of Municipal Affairs on matters impacting the Special Areas
- First municipal election held in conjunction with potential senate election and/or referendum vote
- More information available at [www.specialareas.ab.ca/municipal-elections/](http://www.specialareas.ab.ca/municipal-elections/)

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## Red Tape Reduction Initiative

- Special Areas Board (as a crown agency) is participating in the Provincial Red Tape Reduction (RTR) Initiative
- Red Tape will be cut by 1/3 by 2023 to help save time, cut costs, and make our processes more user-friendly



*\*estimate based on RTR benchmarks*

- Learn more at [www.specialareas.ab.ca/cutredtape/](http://www.specialareas.ab.ca/cutredtape/)

# CHAIR'S UPDATE

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## Special Areas Water Supply Project

- Environmental Impact Assessment Report completed in 2019
- Report highlights included:
  - No major environmental red flags
  - Limited socio-economic benefits of project
  - Very low benefit-costs ratio compared to other Alberta irrigation/water infrastructure projects
    - *SAWSP has a 0.13 benefit-cost ratio*
    - *Most comparable projects have a ratio above 0.7*
- SAWSP would require subsidization of annual operational costs in current design



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## Special Areas Water Supply Project

- Public engagement in March 2020 including 3 community information sessions and online survey
  - Over 80 attendees & 118 online survey responses
- Advisory Council reviewed public consultation report Fall 2020
  - Feedback was divided between no additional work (\$0) and submission of EIA for technical review/NRCB determination (\$2M to \$10M)
- Decision was made at December 2020 Advisory Council meeting to not pursue any further work on SAWSP at that time.

# CHAIR'S UPDATE

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## New Irrigation Investigation Partnership

- Partnership formed to assess the technical and financial feasibility of developing irrigation in the region, including:
  - Special Areas Board
  - MD of Acadia
  - Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB)
  - Alberta Ag. & Forestry (AAF)
- Study report is expected fall/winter 2021
- Report will provide direction on the potential for further irrigation project development in the region



# CHAIR'S UPDATE

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## New Irrigation Investigation Partnership

- Partnership study is investigating technical and financial feasibility of developing irrigation in region
- Investigation areas include:
  - Soil suitability and potential for irrigation
  - Infrastructure & energy requirements
  - Water availability
  - Potential costs & business case information
  - Regulatory considerations
  - Environmental considerations

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# Questions?

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