Business Plan

2026-2028

Wetaskiwin & Area Lodge Authority



Wetaskiwin & Area Lodge Authority wala

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The top priorities of the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority are:

1. Completion of room renovations and tub to shower conversions at West Pine Lodge and obtaining the Small Lodge operating grant.
2. To secure an enhanced services/community hub agreement with Assisted Living Alberta for West Pine Lodge.
3. Assess the recommendations of the forthcoming Lodge Program Review report, and advocate for sustainable and fair funding for the lodge program and to promote equity between urban and rural lodges services.

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This Business Plan was prepared under the direction of the Board of Directors of the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority in accordance with legislation and associated ministerial guidelines, and in consideration of all policy decisions and material, economic or fiscal implications of which the Board is aware. This business plan was approved by the Board of Directors on June 25, 2025.

WETASKIWIN AND AREA LODGE AUTHORITY

The Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority operates pursuant to the Alberta Housing Act under the purpose to enable the efficient provision of a basic level of housing accommodations for persons, who because of financial, social or other circumstances, require assistance to obtain or maintain housing accommodation.

- Member Municipalities are the City of Wetaskiwin, the County of Wetaskiwin, and the Town of Millet.
- Housing Accommodations under operations are:
    a) 79-unit Peace Hills Senior Citizens Lodge in Wetaskiwin, owned by the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority.
    b) 37-unit West Pine Lodge in the Hamlet of Winfield, owned by the Province of Alberta through the Alberta Social Housing Corporation.
- The Bethany Group has a contract, currently with Alberta Health Services for the delivery of Home Care Services to residents of the Peace Hills Lodge.
- The Bethany Group has a contract, currently with Alberta Health Services for the delivery of an Adult Day Support program for community residents in the Wetaskiwin area operating out of the Peace Hills Lodge.

- Resident Profile and Waiting Lists - Current Average Age of 85 at the Peace Hills Lodge and 80 at West Pine Lodge. Average stay is 4 years at Peace Hills Lodge and 3 Years at the West Pine Lodge. As of March 31, 2025 Peace Hills Lodge is operating at 97% capacity and the West Pine Lodge operates at 30% capacity. There is a waitlist of 11 applicants for Peace Hills Lodge.
- Staffing Profile and Organizational Structure - Staffing for operations are through The Bethany Group, including 28 permanent and 11 casual working directly at the Lodges. The Bethany Group acts as the Chief Executive Officer per the Ministerial Order; working with local resources to provide support to the Board of Directors and in any of the following areas: Business Planning, Management & Administration, IT Systems, Financial Services, Property Assessment & Management, Payroll, Workplace Health & Safety, Human Resources and Education.
- Financial Profile and Budgets - The annual consolidated expenses for the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority are $3.04 million, including debt service payment on the Peace Hills Lodge. Revenues include accommodation and rental recoveries of $1.8 million, LAP Grant funding from the Provincial Government of $454,000 and Municipal contributions to the Lodge operations from member municipalities through requisition totaling $975,000. Local annual payroll is $2.03 million.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority enjoys a positive relationship with The Bethany Group and the other Housing Management Bodies that use The Bethany Group as CEO. WALA is a member of the Alberta Seniors and Community Housing Association. WALA is participating in the local FCSS sponsored interagency meetings in Wetaskiwin in order to build relationships and identify opportunities with community-based organizations in the catchment area.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Activities undertaken by the Board in the development of this plan:

- Board Business Planning session May 7, 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The primary impacts on the strategic environment are:

- Establishment of Assisted Living Alberta (ALA), under the Ministry of Assisted Living and Social Services.
- Implementation of the Continuing Care Act 2024.
- 2021 Stronger Foundations Affordable Housing Strategy.
- 2024/2025 Lodge Program Review.
- Continuing Care – Capital now under the Ministry of Assisted Living and Social Services.

- Health Care System Refocusing initiative has led to delays in decision making.
- Participation in the Continuing Care Alliance.
- Participation in ASCHA Seniors Housing and Continuing Care Task Force and the Affordable Housing Task Force.
- Participation in industry, provincial and community-based consultations and committees.
- Impact of tariffs, and other factors that impact provincial and federal economic outlooks.

- Federal and Provincial governments both highlighting the need for affordable housing, but needing clarity and improved coordination of available programs and supports.
- Limited grant opportunities for affordable housing (% of support for capital construction) that impact the ability to create a sustainable operating model while providing achievable affordable rental rates.
- Inflationary Pressures on organizations and individuals.
- Household Income and Housing Affordability.
- Availability of Affordable Housing and deep subsidy housing units.
- Availability of Rental Assistance Benefits.
- Pressure on market housing availability.
- Capital Maintenance and Renewal and needing to protect, maintain and upgrade existing assets.
- Local Demographic information with next Federal Census occurring in 2026.
- Aging population and shifts to home and community care.
- Government is looking to operators and associations for solutions.
- Workforce issues including recruitment and retention. Potential increases to WCB costs related to psychological health and safety and long covid.
- Union contract negotiations began in 2024, with no agreement reached yet in June 2025.
- Municipal Elections in October 2025 and changes to board members.

STRATEGIC RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The primary impacts on the strategic environment for Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority are:

- Waiting for the release of the Lodge Program review and its recommendations. Plans for implementation and preparation for any province-wide changes will have to be considered by the Board once the review is released.
- Awarded funding for West Pine Lodge in April 2025 to remodel 8 small rooms into 4 larger suites and to replace tubs with walk-in showers throughout the building. The funding awarded represents 50% of the costs with 50% of the funding coming from WALA.
- Renovations will reduce the number of rooms to 33, which will make West Pine Lodge eligible for the Small Lodge grant.
- Growing demand for services that support Age in Place philosophies demonstrated by the high number of Lodge residents receiving home care.
- The Bethany Group holds contracts to deliver Home Care and Adult Day Support programming at Peace Hills Lodge.
- Ensuring lodge services are available in both the urban center and rural setting within the catchment area and that equitable quality and programs are available in both locations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority has identified the following strategic priority areas:

1. CMR and New Capital
2. The Resident Experience
3. Community Connections
4. Sustainable Operations

This business plan is developed in keeping with the Purpose of the Alberta Housing Act and the obligations of the Board of Directors of the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority pursuant to the Management Body Operations and Administration Regulation.

OUTCOMES, KEY STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Outcome One: Capital Maintenance & Renewal and New Capital

Housing Accommodations operated by the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority will meet or exceed minimum housing standards.

Key Strategies:

1.1 Improve and maintain the condition of existing affordable housing

Performance Measures and Indicators

- Funding is approved for the items requested under the 3-Year Capital Maintenance and Renewal List supplied by the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority to the Ministry of Assisted Living and Social Services.

2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	Total
$ 286,000	**$ 140,000**	**$ 0**	**$ 426,000**

- Completion of the Suite renewal project at West Pine Lodge.
- Completion of an Amenities, Furniture, Fixture and Equipment assessment of the two lodges. We will proactively ensure that buildings are modernized and maintained to align with the evolving needs and standards.
- All capital projects are completed in accordance with approved standards, scope and specifications; on time; and on budget.

Outcome Two: The Resident Experience

Residents of Lodge Accommodations offered by the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority have access to programs and services that enhance and enrich their quality of life and promote maximum independence within the supported living environment. Residents of Lodge Accommodations offered by the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority have access to community services and supports for a robust living experience.

Key Strategies:

2.1 Identify needs based on resident input
2.2 Staff training and support
2.3 Monitor industry trends

Performance Measures and Indicators

- WALA will engage with and survey residents to identify improvement opportunities and to identify successes.
- WALA will engage in new Quality Improvement Initiatives, as identified through consultative processes.
- WALA will build on the work of the previous QI assessments (e.g., meal time experience and Move-ins).
- WALA will complete a review of the health, wellness and social activities offered at the lodges to ensure a multi-faceted, rich resident experience that meets the residents' identified needs.
- Staffing recruitment and retention plans will support a well-trained and stable workforce that is invested in the well-being of the residents.

Outcome Three: Community Connections

The operations of the housing accommodations and support programs offered by the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority allow residents to easily access services that enable them to be affordably and safely housed, as well as successfully transition out of the system when necessary or able. Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority will be a trusted partner of Assisted Living Alberta, member municipalities and other community organizations.

Key Strategies:

3.1 Enable transitions through the continuum of housing and supports
3.2 Support the desire of Albertans to age in their community

Performance Measures and Indicators

- The Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority participates in social services/FCSS based interagency meetings and activities in the service area.

- Together with The Bethany Group, WALA will explore options for an enhanced services/community hub model at West Pine Lodge.
- WALA will collaborate with and support any municipalities or organizations that are leading a community or housing needs assessment process to develop a business case for new local affordable housing or new supportive living projects.
- WALA will collaborate with and support organizations that are developing new or expanded programs that support residents of our housing accommodations.

Outcome Four: Sustainable Operations

The operations of the housing accommodations and support service programs that are mindful of resident needs, respectful of costs, flexible and responsive.

The Governance model of the Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority is sustainable based on competency and collaboration. The financial operations of WALA are sustainable based on predictable funding, stewardship and innovative funding models.

Key Strategies:

4.1 Understand the regulatory framework to support equitable treatment and housing stability
4.2 Improve System access and navigation
4.3 Promote enhanced understanding and coordinated response to rural and urban needs
4.4 Support operational and environmental sustainability of affordable housing projects
4.5 Partner with other governments to support a sustainable system and meet the housing and support needs of Albertans
4.6 Improve the knowledge of the housing and support needs of Albertans

Performance Measures and Indicators

- Wetaskiwin and Area Lodge Authority will evaluate costs related to inflationary pressures and will maximize revenues and stabilize expenses where possible.
- WALA will review the findings of the Lodge Program review once it is released and create strategies for implementation of its recommendations.
- WALA will maintain occupancy levels at Peace Hills Lodge at an average of 95%.
- Occupancy levels at West Pine Lodge will improve.
- WALA will receive Small Lodge grant funding for West Pine Lodge once the room conversion project is complete.
- WALA will advocate for changes to the Lodge Assistance Grant program to be more consistent and predictable and to better reflect the needs of rural lodges.
- An orientation plan and educational supports for board members to increase understanding of the lodge program will be available.

- WALA board members will have tools and supports to advocate for the lodge program and the residents within the large ministry that holds both housing and assisted living.

APPENDICES

- **Appendix A – Board Skills Matrix**
- **Appendix B – Non-Schedule A (no submission)**
- **Appendix C - Financial Budgets and Forecasts Y1**
- **Appendix D - Capital Maintenance and Renewal Program**
- **Appendix E – Federal Funding and Capital Priorities (no submission)**
- **Appendix F - Asset Management (no submission)**
- **Appendix G - Capital Assets**