



CITY OF  
*Lethbridge*



## NEWS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

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### **City and County reach agreement to transfer ownership of the Lethbridge Airport**

**Lethbridge, AB** – An agreement in principle has been reached to transfer ownership of the Lethbridge Airport to the City of Lethbridge from Lethbridge County.

At a special joint meeting held today, members of County and City councils voted to approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the ownership and governance of the airport to be transferred to the City by June 1, 2018. The County and City will now work together to draft all formal agreements necessary to fulfill the intent of the MOU.

“The transfer of ownership of the Lethbridge Airport to the City of Lethbridge will mean new opportunities for expansion and growth,” says Reeve Lorne Hickey. “Lethbridge County and the City of Lethbridge have worked diligently together to bring forth improvements, and this agreement is another way in which we can help the Airport thrive. We are confident in the City’s ability to continue the work we have done to ensure the Lethbridge Airport remains a strong economic asset to the region.”

Under the MOU, the County agrees that during the transfer period, governance of the airport becomes the responsibility of the City. Until the City determines a new operating and governance model for the airport, the County will continue to operate it on a fee-for-service basis.

“Lethbridge County has done an excellent job of operating and maintaining the airport for the past 22 years. The County and the City have been working together the past eight years to enhance service at the Lethbridge Airport. We all recognize that the airport needs investment and expansion to support economic development in our region,” says Lethbridge Mayor Chris Spearman.

“This MOU is an agreement in principle that allows us, as the City of Lethbridge, to immediately begin working to seek federal and provincial grants to help fund the improvements and expansion that are needed to enhance the airport’s viability,” Spearman says. “The airport is an important economic asset for economic growth in Lethbridge and our surrounding communities.”

A 2016 airport study, commissioned jointly by the County and the City, recommended that the two parties negotiate a new ownership structure and implement a new governance model. The study also

recommended preparing an Airport Master Plan, which is currently being developed, as well as considering improvements and expansion of the Air Terminal Building in order to improve the airport's competitive position.

The County has owned and operated the airport since 1997, when Transport Canada relinquished ownership of regional and local airports to regional and community interests. Established in 1938 as a municipal airport by the City of Lethbridge, the airport was later leased to the Government of Canada during the Second World War as a military and civil aerodrome. After the war, the federal Department of Transportation assumed the operation of the airport and eventually assumed full ownership in the 1960s.

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