



Claresholm

The Town of Claresholm, like many Alberta municipalities, faces growing challenges in maintaining and upgrading critical infrastructure such as water systems, roads, and public facilities. These essential services are the backbone of our community, yet local resources alone cannot keep pace with aging infrastructure and increasing demand. The Province of Alberta must step up to provide consistent, equitable support to municipalities—recognizing that strong communities depend on reliable infrastructure to thrive, grow, and support local economic development.

Claresholm’s infrastructure deficit and capital needs based on its budget documents and infrastructure planning:

- The **2025 capital budget** allocated **\$3.73 million** (~ \$3,727,705) toward equipment and infrastructure projects.
- The town’s infrastructure condition is flagged under provincial benchmarks: it scores poorly for “**infrastructure age**”, indicating significant deferred maintenance—particularly around **roads, sidewalks, and recreation/cultural facilities**
- Alberta-wide studies (e.g., Alberta Municipalities, RMA) estimate a **province-wide infrastructure deficit of roughly \$30 billion**, with municipalities receiving about \$3 billion less than what is needed (i.e., about \$2 billion over three years fell short), and rural areas alone requiring \$2.96 billion for water and wastewater systems.
- Claresholm’s asset-management strategy (adopted in 2021) relies on long-term planning to assess lifecycle and replacement needs—but lacks publicly available quantified deficit amounts in the master plan summary documents.

What’s Needed Ahead

1. **Provincial support:** Alberta’s funding programs (e.g. MSI, water/wastewater grants) must be increased or restored, especially for small communities like Claresholm facing a backlog of aging roads, utilities, and recreation assets.
2. **Asset-based budgeting:** Ongoing capital planning that aligns asset condition data with grants and reserve funds to prioritize the most critical infrastructure before it fails.

In short, while Claresholm has taken steps—adopting an asset management strategy and budgeting for capital projects—the town faces real gaps in infrastructure maintenance. The province should be aiding municipalities by restoring consistent, needs-based capital funding; otherwise small towns will continue relying on empty reserves or deferred work, deepening the infrastructure deficit over time.

Town of Claresholm's Infrastructure Master Plan (May 2021), the total **infrastructure deficit**—reflecting the amount required to address existing infrastructure that is at or near the end of its service life—is estimated at approximately **\$33.2 million**.

Infrastructure Deficit Breakdown:

- **Roads and Sidewalks:** \$20.2 million
- **Water Infrastructure:** \$7.7 million
- **Sanitary Sewer:** \$2.6 million
- **Storm Sewer:** \$2.7 million

Key Needs Identified:

- Upgrades and replacements for aging or undersized water mains and sewers.
- Road and sidewalk reconstruction, especially in older parts of town.
- Stormwater management improvements in areas prone to flooding or poor drainage.
- Sanitary sewer capacity upgrades to accommodate current and future demand.

These figures are based on condition assessments and lifecycle expectations of municipal assets. The Plan notes that additional funds will be required for growth-related projects and for infrastructure improvements needed to support new development.