

Village of Macoun Water Update

September 14, 2026

Village Water Treatment Plant:

Village of Macoun Council wish to provide an update to the prolonged water turbidity issue. The high turbidity was first discovered in November 2024 when an annual inspection of the Village water system was performed by Saskatchewan Water Security. As soon as the high turbidity was noticed, a Precautionary Drinking Water Advisory (PDWA) was issued and immediate testing, tweaking and monitoring began in the water plant. It was discovered that the issue was not linked to the Village's underground cistern or sand and carbon material from the filtration process. The water well that feeds the Village was cleaned and inspected by Municipal Utilities and ruled out as a contributing factor to the high turbidity.

During this time, testing began for Trihalomethane (THMs) and Haloacetic Acids (HAAs), tests that were not previously required. It was through these tests that it was discovered that organics now form part of the water supply used to feed the Village water plant. These organics are becoming more evident in southeastern Saskatchewan, and it is believed to be related to the oil, gas and coal activity in the area. Unfortunately, these organics are not likely to go away as the industry remains active and after many conversations with water operators in other southeast communities, it is evident the problem is not unique to Macoun. The organics in the water react to the sodium hypochlorite used to treat the Village raw water, increasing Bromoform which in turn increases the turbidity levels above the allowable limit.

There have been many in person and online meetings with Water Security agents, engineers, sales reps in the water industry and other community water operators, to assist Council in determining the most cost-effective treatment to bring the turbidity levels back down below the allowable limit. Reverse Osmosis is a system that has been looked at but with the price tag of over one million dollars and higher maintenance costs going forward, Council is working to determine if another, cheaper option will work with our water quality.

Village Water and Sewer Rates:

During this time, Council has been reviewing water and sewer rates to ensure current expenses are paid for by annual water and sewer revenues. Water and sewer rates for the Village of Macoun have remained unchanged since January 1, 2018, when sewer rates were set at \$29.35 per month and water rates set at \$33.10 per month, 30% below the provincial average at the time they were set. The current sewer rates cover expenses from the new lagoon that was built in 2017, with the final loan payment to be issued in November 2037.

Water revenues are no longer covering the current expenses related to operating the Village water treatment plant. Without taking into consideration an upgrade to the Village water treatment plant to bring the turbidity below the allowable limit for the PDWA to be lifted, Council is working towards increasing the water rates for the Village to bring the revenue up to equal the current operating expenses.

Starting January 1, 2027, Village water rates will potentially be increasing to \$65.00 per month while sewer rates will remain the same at \$29.35 per month, pending approval from the Saskatchewan Municipal Board Local Government Committee. Council is aware this is a significant increase in water rates, however the increase is still in line with the provincial average for water rates and is necessary to continue to operate our Village water system.

As infrastructure funding continues to be less reliable from both federal and provincial governments, municipalities are being forced to ensure all costs for both current and future infrastructure needs are self sustaining through water and sewer rates and property tax revenue. With a property tax base in Macoun of only 154 taxable assessments and 105 homes to invoice for water and sewer fees, Council must consider all options to find the most cost-effective solutions for Macoun ratepayers.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Village office at 306-634-9352 and they will be forwarded to Council for response.