



2018-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN

AUGUST 2021
PROGRESS REPORT



► Progress Reports

Town administration monitors progress towards meeting the strategic goals, key result areas and initiatives, and provides regular reports to Council throughout the year, which are available to the public on the Town website. The annual Community Report, which is published and delivered to households in February, is another way that progress is reported to citizens. Reporting provides greater accountability, transparency and understanding of the strategic goals, progress and accomplishments. Council and administration's regular review allows us to evaluate how we are performing towards our strategic goals and to make adjustments as necessary to realign for success.



Progress **H**ighlights

August 2021

Photo credit: Corrine B.





Nooks and
Crannies Festival

Photo credit: Julianna Aiello



Town Vision

The Town of Okotoks fosters a culture of resiliency - where people, businesses, ideas and sense of community thrive. Grounded by the Sheep River valley and supported by thoughtful planning and design, a strong local economy and a vibrant civic culture, Okotoks offers exceptional quality of life at every stage of life. Respect for each other and the natural environment makes Okotoks home.

Town Mission

The Town of Okotoks strives to create and nurture an environment in which people are able to pursue the fulfillment of their values, in harmony with the community.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles are the basis for long-term planning for our community and were developed by citizens.



Livable Okotoks



Inclusive neighbourhoods



Sustainable design



Vibrant civic culture and heritage



Active lifestyle



Strong local economy

More details descriptions of the principles, themes and values can be found at okotoks.ca/community-vision.

Progress Highlights

August 2021

Strategic Directions





Provide Quality Infrastructure

The Town of Okotoks will strategically manage, invest and plan for municipal infrastructure to meet the community’s current and future needs.

Key result areas & initiatives

Secure water and wastewater upgrades to meet community growth needs.

- Interim water solutions are secured to meet current growth needs.
- Long-term water solutions are secured and implemented.
- Wastewater upgrades are implemented.

Okotoks is a regional hub that helps the community to flourish.

- Partner and/or assist our regional neighbours with servicing gaps when feasible and seek partnerships with neighbours as required
- Create a long-term public facilities needs assessment and corporate land strategy that balances needs, funding availability, emerging trends and operating efficiencies.

We engage, promote and assist in seeking alternate infrastructure funding to meet the needs of arts, culture, recreation, sports and non-profits.

- Develop a partnership framework/model where users are partners as active community infrastructure contributors.
- Build community pride through and opportunities for philanthropic investment in the community.
- Develop a financing framework that clarifies shared responsibilities (including third-party stakeholders, & public, private, and non-profit grants) & links to the community accountability work.
- Build Phase 1 of the Arts and Learning Campus.

2018	2019	2020	2021	Status
				On track
				In progress
				On track
				On track
				In progress
				In progress
				In progress
				On track






Provide Quality Infrastructure



Progress Highlights

- ✓ Phase 1 of the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades have been successfully completed. Performance of the new infrastructure exceeds performance requirements while saving energy and providing better process control function. A new centrifuge unit is currently being installed, which will bring operational efficiency and provide redundancy. Screening and grit removal is a critical function to remove foreign material from wastewater. New screening equipment and a redundant grit system is being pre-purchased as part of the new headwork building, which is scheduled to be completed before the end of 2022. This project received grant funding as part of the province's economic stimulus funding.
- ✓ Construction of phase one of the Okotoks Arts & Learning Campus project is on schedule. Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools is scheduled to move-in starting August 3, followed by the Okotoks Public Library by the end of August. The new library space will be double the size of the current location, providing increased services to the community. This \$23.5M project is an exciting downtown initiative that will enhance learning, cultural & economic development opportunities.
- ✓ A long-term agreement for waste collection was signed with the towns of Black Diamond and Turner Valley.
- ✓ A long-term public facilities needs assessment and a corporate land strategy were completed. Both will help plan for, and balance the needs of, funding availability, emerging trends, and operating efficiencies.
- ✓ The Town of Okotoks entered into a three-year operating agreement with the Town of Turner Valley for the management of staff and programming at the outdoor Dr. Lander Memorial Pool.
- ✓ Progress on the regional water pipeline solution continued moving forward in 2021. This included completion of the preliminary design work, as well as submission of a provincial grant application for this project to share capital costs among the Province, Town, and Foothills County. The partnership also submitted the Water Treatment Plant Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act approval application in June.
- ✓ A new Water Allocation Policy was approved by Council that provides a simplified approach to managing the available amount of water capacity for new developments. This policy is necessary, as the Town must continue to manage its water supply to ensure it can effectively control the land use and development process until a long-term supplemental water source is operational.

Key result areas & initiatives

-  Develop and implement strategies to attract the types of business that will make the downtown a repeat destination.
-  Begin to implement elements of the Urban Design Master Plan and create an inspiring public realm to enhance quality of life and drive the investment that attracts people to the downtown core more often.
-  Promote how downtown and its activities reflect our identity and distinctive character.
-  Develop an events strategy that links to our identity and balances the need to facilitate tourism with opportunities for the community to come together.
-  Prepare to host the 2023 Alberta Summer Games, should they be awarded to the Town, including engaging businesses and residents to showcase our community.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	Status
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Foster Economic Vitality



Progress Highlights

- ✓ Council approved the new Land Use Bylaw in June. The bylaw's purpose is to outline the rules and regulations for development of land in Okotoks for each district (zone), as well as the process of making decisions for development permit applications. The revised bylaw supports economic development and a liveable, walkable, and sustainable community. It is also highly visual and a more user-friendly document, with reduced cross-referencing and simpler requirements.
- ✓ The 2020 Economic Development Implementation Plan update and 2021/22 Action Plan was provided to Council and focuses on several areas that strengthen business relationships, identify the supports needed to survive the impacts of COVID-19, and ensure Okotoks has businesses that will thrive in the future.
- ✓ A Targeted Industrial Tax Incentive Policy was developed in order to incentivize development on land that is designated for industrial development by the Land Use Bylaw. This policy serves to help diversify Okotoks' tax base, as Okotoks has historically collected the majority of its tax revenue from residential development. Eligible projects include new developments or significant renovations that meet a minimum threshold of a \$2 million construction value. Applicants will receive tax cancellations the year following the application. An application requires a project to adhere to eligibility guidelines, and tax cancellation will cease if a project fails to maintain eligibility throughout the three-year program term. Properties will be allotted cancellation maximums of 75% in the first year, 50% in the second year and 25% in the third year. The Town can expect to see benefits from increased industrial development in year four onward.
- ✓ The Town is developing an Area Structure Plan in the northeast, to provide for the future development of employment (commercial and industrial) lands in proximity to Highway 2.
- ✓ The Temporary Patio program was extended in 2021 with more vendors participating than the previous year. An interactive map was developed and is available on the Town's website to encourage the public to take advantage of local outdoor experiences.
- ✓ An update to the Destination Okotoks website is underway, and three Walkotoks brochures were created to encourage people to visit the downtown area.
- ✓ Design of a Wayfinding System for Okotoks is expected to be complete by the end of July, with implementation (fabrication and installation) beginning shortly afterward.
- ✓ A Commercial and Industrial Development study was completed to identify potential development opportunities and priority projects that will become the focus for development and business attraction. The study looked at development from a real estate, economic and planning perspective, while also identifying immediate and medium-term opportunities.



Manage Community Growth

The Town of Okotoks will build a complete community that provides economic, social, and environmental sustainability for people to live work and play.

Key result areas & initiatives

Provide new innovative neighbourhoods that embrace complete neighbourhood design, including diversified housing options for all lifestyles at all stages of life.

- ➡ Ensure the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is innovative and reflective of strategic priorities.
- ➡ Offer new affordable housing options.
- ➡ Pilot innovative development on underutilized sites.
- ➡ Complete neighbourhood principles are modelled within a new development.
- ➡ Create a fiscal impact analysis framework to evaluate the costs of all forms of development.

Provide a variety of mobility options including active transportation and local transit that meet citizen's needs.

- ➡ Implement the outstanding short term Active Transportation Plan recommendations to improve connectivity and access.
- ➡ Align the mobility options currently under development in the Environmental Master Plan (EMP), Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), and Active Transportation Plan (ATP) with the MDP.
- ➡ Develop and implement a local transit strategy that is accessible while considering evolving technologies and their impact on traditional transit delivery models; monitor and adjust.
- ➡ Explore linkages of local and regional transit and pathways to provide multi-modal transportation options within the region.

Okotoks has distinctive character and identity that is identified in our built form.

- ➡ Complete and implement the Municipal Heritage Designation initiative.
- ➡ Ensure the MDP captures a distinctive character and identity for Okotoks.
- ➡ Ensure that the Culture, Arts & Heritage Master Plan and the MDP are aligned.
- ➡ Develop a Trails Master Plan and implement prioritized strategies.
- ➡ Align all master plans with the annexed area.
- ➡ Develop a distinct character for Downtown while also protecting its heritage.
- ➡ Incorporate a distinct character into several new and re-purposed developments.

Status	2021	2020	2019	2018
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Manage Community Growth



Progress Highlights

- ✓ The new Municipal Development Plan (MDP) was approved by Council and the Calgary Metropolitan Region Growth Management Board (CMRB). The MDP is a policy document that guides long-term growth and development in Okotoks, and it works within the broader regional sustainability planning of the CMRB.
- ✓ As an active participant in the CMRB, an overview of the revised final draft of the CMRB Growth and Servicing Plan was presented to Council in April. This plan is to guide long-term sustainable growth in the region and was officially approved in May 2021.
- ✓ Administration completed the Affordable Housing Five-Year Action Plan to create a roadmap for all 77 action items in the Affordable Housing Strategy.
- ✓ Council approved a new Below Market Housing Incentive Grant Program. This program incentivizes developers to build below market housing units, which will then be sold to affordable housing providers and used as intended for a minimum of 20 years.
- ✓ Council approved a Secondary Suite and Accessory Dwelling Grant Policy and program. The policy and program were created to incent homeowners to upgrade or construct secondary suites and accessory dwelling units. This grant program and supportive policy supports the Affordable Housing Strategy in stimulating the influx of additional safe and permitted dwelling units in Okotoks, thereby increasing housing choice and available options for affordable housing. The focus of this program is on the safe provision of additional affordable housing units in the community.
- ✓ Council approved a motion to transfer 2.3 acres in the D'Arcy neighbourhood to the Brenda Strafford Foundation (BSS) and Westwinds Communities (WWC) to advance affordable housing choices in Okotoks. WWC proposes to build 50 below-market rental units in two buildings, which will be completed in two phases, and provide housing primarily for seniors, families and some youth who are currently on housing waitlists. The BSS proposes to build 42 transitional housing units with common amenity spaces and staff accommodations for women and families fleeing domestic violence. An additional 48 units are planned as at-market rental housing and may be acquired by a private builder through a formal RFP.



Promote Environmental Excellence

The Town of Okotoks will be the leader in environmental protection and preservation in the Province of Alberta.

Key result areas & initiatives

Promote and provide incentives for environmental related businesses to move and/or locate pilot projects in Okotoks.

- ★ Develop an aggressive strategy, including incentives, to attract environmental businesses to Okotoks.
- ★ Make strategic capital investment in infrastructure to incent innovative green-business/light industrial development/employment centres.
- ★ Create opportunities to pilot environmental projects with public, private & non-profit partnerships.
- ★ Capitalize on public, private and non-profit relationships to increase business and/or employment opportunities that are aligned with environmental identity.

Expand on Okotoks' identity/reputation with new bold, innovative initiatives that demonstrate we are the leaders in environmental stewardship.

- ★ Focus energy on our identity as environmental leaders, bringing bold initiatives to Okotoks.
- ★ Complete the Environmental Master Plan (EMP) and select the highest priority actions to implement.
- ★ Complete the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) and select the highest priority actions to implement.
- ★ Ensure that the EMP and CCAP are aligned with the MDP to create synergy and reinforce primary focus.
- ★ Align updated provincial flood mapping with all master plans.
- ★ Partner with energy providers, & explore long-term energy generation options for Okotoks to increase self-sufficiency & reduce costs (e.g. solar, district energy, micro-generation, storage technologies).
- ★ Reduce energy consumption in Town buildings and fleet.

Promote and provide incentives for new environmental initiatives for both residential and commercial.

- ★ Create annual environmental initiatives to attract and reward residential and commercial businesses for environmental excellence.

[illegible]

Promote Environmental Excellence

Progress Highlights

- ✓ The annual progress report on the Town's Environmental Master Plan (EMP) was presented to Council on August 16 and will be available on Okotoks.ca/EMP.
- ✓ The Resilient Okotoks: Climate Action Plan (CAP) was approved by Council in March. This plan lays out a path forward over the next four to 12 years in order to meet the Town's target of carbon neutrality by 2050. It also informs the development of the wetlands policy and supports the goals of the new Municipal Development Plan (MDP).
- ✓ New sustainable, cold water ice flooding systems have been installed at all Town indoor ice surfaces, with help from a 75% rebate from the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre. The new sustainable ice flooding systems will save \$20,000 in annual utilities and more than 300 tonnes of carbon. Pason Centennial Arenas will recover its upfront capital costs in one year, while the Recreation Centre will pay back its costs in approximately two years' time.
- ✓ The Town launched a new Okotoks Neighbourhood Community Garden program in June to support residents in establishing community garden projects in Town parks and green spaces. Community gardens contribute to developing a healthier community by encouraging residents to grow food and build social connections in their neighbourhoods. The new program is designed for the community, and will be led by the community.
- ✓ In May, Council approved the Clean Energy Improvement Program Bylaw, authorizing Okotoks to participate in the Alberta-based Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program. This program allows property owners to obtain low-interest loans through the municipality for energy-efficient property renovations, with repayment facilitated through the property tax structure. This enables payments for improvements to stay with the property, even upon its sale to new owners. Some examples of eligible energy-efficiency improvements include increased insulation, , triple pane windows, energy efficient appliances (like furnaces, hot water heaters) or adding solar panels.



Provide Strong Governance

The Town of Okotoks will provide strong governance including fiscal responsibility, open communication, public participation and strong inter-governmental relationships.

Key result areas & initiatives

Ensure that the Town's fiscal health is defined and communicated.

- Create a Financial Policy Framework including Reserves, Debt, Investment and Utility Policies.
- Ensure the Financial Policy Framework drives the updated budget process; adjusting where necessary.
- Conduct a comprehensive Utility Rate Review.
- Review offsite levies and align them with the new financial framework.
- Introduce an asset management framework and align with the new financial framework.
- Include public participation as part of the annual budget process in order to educate on services and costs, and gain understanding of community priorities.

Increase understanding of the issues various diverse Okotokian audiences have and adjust practices to ensure that Okotoks is known as a respectful and inclusive community.

- Gain an understanding of Okotokian audiences through various sources to better understand sociodemographic groups.
- Align Town services and programs with best practices for the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities initiative and the Truth & Reconciliation document.

Be active participants in regional governance, planning and partnership opportunities.

- Actively participate in Calgary Metropolitan Regional Growth Management Board to guide planning for the region, including opportunities for collaboration to meet the region's short- and long-term needs.
- Seek opportunities for partnerships with public, private & non-profit organizations to deliver services that align with our community vision and strategic directions.

Develop a clear understanding of the Town's Strategic Plan and vision for the future; promote and inspire actions that contribute to, and enhance that vision throughout the community.

- Assist Council in developing an ownership linkage strategy (i.e. a community charter including vision check-in) to enhance alignment and provide clarity around responsibilities, accountabilities & objectives.
- Review 2018-2020 Strategic Plan in early 2020 to adjust strategies and actions after all master plans have been created.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	Status
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● On track ● Off target
▲ In progress ■ Future initiative

Provide Strong Governance



Progress Highlights

- ✓ Council approved the Okotoks Policy Governance Framework in May. This framework provides clear roles and responsibilities for Council and administration, sets up the CAO as the one employee of Council and delegates authority flows through the CAO for the organization and the different types and categories of policies. The framework confirms the services provided by the organization, Committees of Council and policies that support this framework. It provides transparency and accountability to the organizational framework.
- ✓ A new four-year budget cycle was approved for the 2022 Budget onward that will provide Council with the ability to approve both the base budget and annual updates. This approach will reduce the administrative cost to create annual budgets and shift the focus to only the incremental changes that require Council approval. This budget cycle will also align with the term of Council. It supports continuity of decision-making through the four-year process.
- ✓ In May, Council approved a zero percent tax rate increase for the second year in a row. This zero percent tax increase was achieved by continuing service level reductions. The amendment to the Tax Penalty Bylaw also provided a 50% reduction in penalty fees for any unpaid property taxes for the months of July through December 2021.
- ✓ The Town continues to engage the public to provide input on decision-making. The 2022 Municipal Budget invited residents and businesses to provide input through an online survey for three weeks in June. Through Council's public participation policy, the Town ensures the community has an opportunity for input into decisions that will have an impact on residents and businesses. The information gathered through the survey will help build the budget, based on community priorities and values. Responses will also help identify residents' impressions around the value for property tax dollars in Okotoks, the Town's economic response to COVID-19, and the priorities the community wants to focus on over the next four-year Council term.
- ✓ Work has been completed on the 2020 Annual Community Report. As a result of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) reporting requirements, the annual report will include the complete audited financial statements rather than having them published separately.



The Town of Okotoks will strengthen our social fabric and enhance the health and safety of our residents.

Promote community accountability where residents actively contribute to the safety, health and wellbeing within their neighbourhood and their community in a variety of ways.

- | | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Status |
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- Update policies and bylaws to incorporate cannabis legalization plans at the local level.
- Develop a holistic, community-wide approach to the legalization of cannabis ensuring community safety is maintained.
- Develop a communications plan for residents, visitors and business on the Okotoks cannabis model.

Strengthen Healthy and Safe Community



Progress Highlights

- ✓ In June Council approved amendments to the Good Order and Civil Conduct Policy that will promote greater civil discourse. The amendments clarify the expectations for civil conduct expected from residents and anyone using Town facilities who interact with staff or other members of the community. These amendments reflect the Town's commitment to establishing a Civility Charter where all residents can provide constructive input and opinions on decisions that affect them.
- ✓ Throughout the spring and summer months, Municipal Enforcement and Fire Services launched additional safety programs to deliver communication and guidance. Some of these includes "Slow Down and Share the Path", "River Safety" and "Staying Safe in the Heat."
- ✓ The Town opened space in Pason Centennial Arenas and the Okotoks Recreation Centre to give residents a chance to cool off during the record-setting heatwave in July.
- ✓ The Open Spaces Bylaw was amended to remove the provision requiring cyclists and skateboarders to walk across footbridges. This policy was updated to reflect new wider bridges constructed when the original policy was approved.
- ✓ With the province enacting Stage 3 of the Open for Summer Plan, Council reviewed and repealed the Town of Okotoks Mask Bylaw 31-20, in order to follow the Alberta Government's guidelines to lift mandatory mask requirements, effective July 1, 2021.
- ✓ In the first half of 2021, under COVID-19 restrictions, Okotoks Transit completed 18,703 trips. The first-year goal for transit trips was 18,000 for the entire year! During the second half of 2021, administration will conduct a transit cost review. Findings and recommendations will guide decisions on transit operations in 2022 and beyond.
- ✓ A shared e-scooter pilot program launched on June 1 at no cost to the Town. This program provides another recreational opportunity to the community and supports the Town's active transportation goals. The pilot is set to run until October this year. The pilot has been a big success in Okotoks! From launch on June 1 through July 11, 3,378 rides have been taken and 14,352 km travelled.



Enhance Organizational Excellence

The Town of Okotoks will be recognized as leaders in public service.

Key result areas & initiatives

Review internal sustainability to develop a staffing and resourcing plan that meets the vision, while creating a resilient and agile Administration that anticipates and responds to a rapidly changing environment.

- ★ Document core service levels and create a resourcing strategy to meet required service levels.
- ★ Review strategic and master plans to determine the resourcing needs necessary to achieve the prioritized outcomes.
- ★ Monitor and maintain a high level of customer satisfaction, obtaining third party verification and adjusting practices as necessary.
- ★ Research emerging trends and implement best practices to secure Okotoks as a leader in public service.

Regularly review Town services and service delivery options to determine sustainable community service delivery and gain a better understanding of needs versus wants.

- ★ Develop and implement a multi-year schedule to review service and service delivery options, prioritized based on cost, impact and regional growth plans, along with identified areas of interest for residents.
- ★ Research 'smart city' initiatives to determine opportunities and needs for Okotoks.

Continue to expand strategic conversations between Council, Administration and the community to ensure we continue to work together to advance the quality of life for all.

- ★ Regular strategic conversations are held between Council and administration to ensure alignment, clarity and necessary adjustments are made, and a strong relationship is maintained.
- ★ Provide public participation opportunities that engage the public in strategic conversations, including introducing focused task forces with specific mandates and timelines.
- ★ Develop a process for amending the Strategic Plan.
- ★ Demonstrate achievement of all strategic and master plans through progress reporting of accomplishments and corporate performance measures.
- ★ Develop and publish performance measures for core services.

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Enhance Organizational Excellence



Progress Highlights

- ✓ Effective March 8, the Town implemented a new organizational structure. The leadership structure changed from six directors and 22 managers to five directors and 17 managers. By 2023, the organizational structure will further reduce management positions to four directors and 15 managers.
- ✓ During this reporting period, the Town has been focusing on the priorities of Council and essential business needs. The focus was on delivering services in as many methods as possible while complying with Alberta Health Services guidelines. With the provincial phase three re-opening, the Town is working through the transition as other organizations get back to business as usual.
- ✓ Council approved Bylaw 38-20 – Subdivision Authority, which formalized the authority of the Municipal Planning Commission and the Subdivision Officer in subdivision decisions as well as streamlined the subdivision approval process.
- ✓ In May, Council approved the Urban Deer Task Force's report and recommendations, including creating a comprehensive Urban Deer Management Strategy with annual action plans based on options and tactics within the strategy. The Town has recently implemented two additional recommendations in the report including the approval of a deer fencing pilot project in late spring, and the approval of a new bylaw in July designed to regulate the intentional and unintentional feeding of deer and other wildlife on private property.



Off-track initiatives

The Town administration has put the following into place for off track initiatives.

Although excellent progress has been made on many Council strategic priorities, some initiatives were delayed due to COVID-19. Since the onset of the pandemic, attention has shifted to top priority initiatives, as identified by Council, as well as business continuity and essential services. An example of these deferred strategic priorities, as directed by Council, includes the Economic Vitality Strategic Priorities.





supporting the
2018-2021

STRATEGIC PLAN

growing up from strong roots