

COUNCIL CONNECT PLAN

Issue

The Council Connect Plan outlining a four-year phased approach to strengthening relationships between Council and the community, along with Year One (2026) implementation opportunities, is presented to Council as a planning tool to guide Council's relationship-building efforts over their term.

Motion Proposed by Administration

That the Council Connect Plan be received as information, with the 2026 implementation plan informing Year One activities approved as a planning tool to guide Council's relationship-building efforts over their term, and future years' plans (2027-2029) brought forward annually for refinement and consideration.

Report, Analysis and Financial Implications

Council has identified building trust with the community as a priority, with relationships at the centre of that work. The Council Connect Plan responds directly to this direction by establishing a structured, four-year phased approach to how Council connects with residents and community partners over the course of the term.

The Plan recognizes that trust is built over time through consistent, visible and approachable interactions. It is designed to support Council's governance role by strengthening relationships early in the term, enhancing shared understanding over time, and creating space for more meaningful, decision-informed conversations as relationships mature.

The four-year phased approach provides clear and intentional progression:

- Year One (2026): Strengthen Relationships – Focus on visibility, accessibility and informal, relationship-based connection
- Year Two (2027): Enhance Relationships – Introduce more intentional and targeted conversations with key audiences
- Year Three (2028): Maintain Relationships – Sustain connection while balancing scope and Council capacity
- Year Four (2029): Sustain Trust and Continuity – Reinforce trust and maintain stability during the transition to the next Council term

The Council Connect Plan is intended to serve as a planning tool for Council over the term, providing a structured approach to relationship-building while maintaining flexibility. The 2026 implementation plan establishes the foundation for this work, with future years to be brought forward annually for Council consideration and refinement based on experience, emerging priorities and capacity.

The 2026 implementation plan focuses on how Council shows up in the community, prioritizing visibility and informal connection through participation in existing events, gatherings and partner-led opportunities. This approach supports residents in experiencing Council as approachable, accessible and engaged in everyday community life.

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Activities will be supported within existing operating budgets.

Strategic Plan Goals

<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibly Managed Growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrated Environmental Leadership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strong Local Economy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Culture & Community Health
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Organizational Excellence		

Equity/Diversity/Inclusivity Impacts and Strategy

The Council Connect Plan is designed to be inclusive by approach, ensuring opportunities are accessible, welcoming and reflective of the diverse community of Okotoks. The Plan prioritizes connection with a broad range of audiences, including youth, older adults, newcomers, and marginalized or underrepresented groups. By focusing on relationship-building in familiar, community-based settings, the approach reduces barriers to participation and creates more inclusive opportunities for connection. This approach supports equitable access to Council by meeting residents where they are, rather than relying solely on formal engagement processes.

Environmental Impacts

n/a

Governing Policies/Bylaws/Legislation or Agreements

Council’s Community Engagement Policy GP-D-2.6

Community Engagement Strategy

Through Council workshops and discussions, Administration heard that Council is seeking to:

- Strengthening relationships with residents and community partners
- Improve clarity and understanding of Council’s role
- Share knowledge more consistently and accessibly
- Ensure community insight meaningfully informs Council discussions over time

The Council Connect Plan reflects this direction by prioritizing relationship-based connection in Year One, with a phased approach that evolves toward deeper dialogue and decision-informing engagement over the Council term.

Alternatives for Consideration

n/a

CAO Comments

Council's governance role is to be the voice of the community, and that responsibility is advanced through strong, ongoing relationships with residents and community partners. This Plan focuses on building and strengthening those relationships, providing a clear and phased approach to guide Council's efforts over the term.

Attachment(s)

1. Council Connect Plan: Building Trust Through Relationships
2. Council's Community Engagement Policy GP-D-2.6

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April 09, 2026