# 2018-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2019 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 Highlights September, 2019





## 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 fulfilment of their values, in harmony with the community.

# **G**uiding 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 Mid Year 2019

# Strategic Directions



#### Strengthen Healthy and Safe Community

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



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.
- **L**ong-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.

2018	2019	2020	2021	Status
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On track

In progress

Off target

# Provide Quality Infrastructure



- ✓ Short-term water needs have been secured to meet projected growth/new development needs for next 2-3 years.
- Long-term water solutions require regional collaboration and senior government approval. Two solutions have been explored with neighbour municipalities that will assist Okotoks, as well as benefiting other municipalities within our region. Long-term water solutions require provincial regulatory approval changes and funding. Formal approval of the preferred solution by Alberta Environment & Parks as the water resource regulator remains outstanding. Advocacy efforts are ongoing with new provincial elected officials to educate on Okotoks water needs.
- Significant investment in wastewater treatment infrastructure upgrades will occur over the next 3 years. Upgrades will enhance processes, increase redundancy and meet growth needs. Contract has been awarded and work began in spring 2019.
- ✓ Waste (garbage, organics, recycling) servicing gaps within foothills region are being studied to consider future solutions and collaboration opportunities.
- ✓ Corporate land strategy consultant has been contracted to assist the organization in determining long-term corporate needs, identify gaps (2019) and develop long-term strategies (2020).
- ✓ Partnerships for infrastructure funding include work with Arts & Learning Campus partners (Bow Valley College, school divisions and public library), affordable housing (Westwinds, and Rowan House) with all parties applying grant funds to these future projects.



# Foster Economic Vitality

The Town of Okotoks will facilitate a healthy economy where quality jobs and business opportunities are abundant.

#### Key result areas & initiatives

## Contribute to an environment necessary for the business community to grow at a rate that is faster than residential growth.

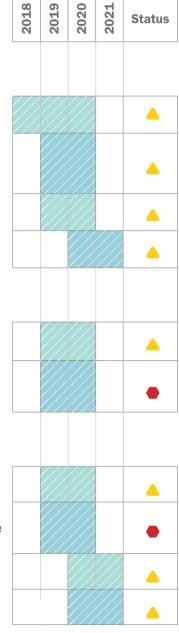
- Determine what is most important for economic development success for Okotoks as a whole and adjust systems and actions to achieve the new direction.
- Determine the most appropriate economic development model for success, including partnerships with other economic providers (public, non-profit and private) and clarify roles and responsibilities for each partner to leverage opportunities.
- Align education, labour force, business, environment, innovation and technology, recreation and entertainment, health and social initiatives to achieve economic success.
- Capitalize on regional opportunities to strengthen the local/regional economic vibrancy, enabling the Foothills region to be more economically self-sufficient.

## Improve the ease of doing business in the Town of Okotoks by progressive policies, demonstrating a can-do attitude with alternative solutions and streamlined processes.

- Complete two comprehensive system and process reviews per year, prioritized by the largest potential impact and including both customer input and industry best practices.
- Review, adjust and streamline the processes required to facilitate alignment with the new Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw, making it easier for businesses to locate in Okotoks and ultimately attract more investment.

## The downtown is a destination used by a wide range of people and for an increasing range of activities.

- 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.





8

On track

In progress

Off target

# Foster Economic Vitality



# Progress Highlights

- The 2018 update to the Economic Development Strategic Plan focused on industry analysis to predict growth sectors where business attraction and retention are most likely to be successful. The March 2019 Implementation Plan focuses on three strategies: minding our business (including streamlining our business processes and regulations), the downtown, and investment readiness. Six feedback sessions with stakeholders are underway to spark dialogue about issues and potential solutions between the Town and the business community. Two have been completed with public reports and action plans; the remainder are scheduled for fall 2019. Business investment attraction marketing initiatives are underway including a video and virtual reality project, and a website refresh to include industry profiles.
- ✓ Business attraction and retention relies on having current technology infrastructure. The Telus fibre optics installation will provide technology enhancement options to current and future business and is 95% complete. The Town's contribution was to facilitate the fast installation timelines by prioritizing the permitting process to enable service availability.
- One stop shop philosophy is being implemented for business development to improve communications and our internal processes to assist businesses to open faster.
- Removing red tape improving regulations through Land Use Bylaw amendments for commercial and industrial districts will assist with business development; examples include breweries and distilleries being allowed in downtown, which will contribute to downtown revitilization. Business change-of-use process review is complete with a streamlined process and digital forms being created for year end. Reduced fees for business change-of-use, home occupations and signage were approved in August 2019.
- ✓ The new Arts & Learning Campus is an example of institutions aligning to spark innovation
  and partnerships as well as serve as an anchor in the downtown, contributing to long-term
  economic success for businesses.



Application to host 2022 summer games has been submitted as it is an economic driver for our business community. Announcement of the award for host community is expected by December, 2019.



# 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.

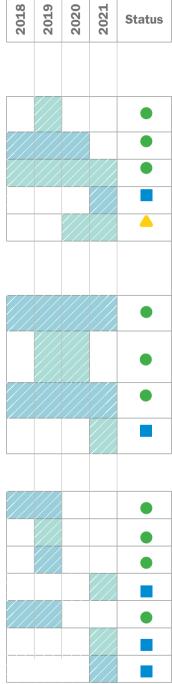
- Ensure the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is innovative and reflective of strategic priorities.
- Offer new affordable housing options.
- Pilot innovative development on underutilized sites.
- Complete neighbourhood principles are modelled within a new development.
- Create a fiscal impact analysis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





In progress

Off target



# Manage Community Growth



# Progress Highlights

- The new Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is under development with broad public, Council and stakeholder participation. The Plan will guide the community's future built environment for new development over the next 25+ years. The policies consider the long-term community vision, values and principles while also aligning with our master plans. It will also ensure our community has a distinctive character that aligns with the Calgary Metropolitan Plan, yet distinguishes Okotoks as a separate, unique and complete community. Anticipated final draft in fall 2019.
- New affordable housing options include partnerships with Westwind Communities and Rowan House where land has been purchased in the D'Arcy neighbourhood. Partnership agreements and conceptual design for ~ 70 units anticipated by year end with construction anticipated in late 2020. Ecovillage portion of the Homestead project in D'Arcy (~42 tiny homes) will not move forward in its current form due to petition. Projects are financed through senior government grants to non-profit partners and supported by Town loans with payback agreements. Affordable Housing Task Force working on Strategy and Policy for finalization in fall 2019. Secondary suite land use bylaw amendments were approved to reduce barriers.
- On-demand local transit will begin service in December 2019, piloting innovative technology to provide an efficient service that is right-sized for our community. Three transit vans are on order, a third party service contract negotiation is nearing finalization, on-demand transit app has been selected, and the communications plan ready for implementation in fall 2019.
- ✓ Active transportation improvements include Veteran's Way sidewalk enhancements and two new bridges in the Sheep River valley that enhance multiple pedestrian, bike and stroller movements. Mobility considerations were also included in the policy direction of the EMP and MDP.
- The newly approved Culture, Heritage & Arts Master Plan was updated with public input in 2018. 2019 is the first year of prioritized actions to close gaps. Examples include the approval of the Municipal Heritage Designation Plan and designating the first municipal heritage property, which is the former United Church / Rotary Performing Arts Centre. The future Arts & Learning Campus on Riverside Drive and the distillery on the former Town-owned Landmark site both plan to utilize innovative designs on these underutilized lands.



A new Land Use Bylaw (LUB) is being developed that reflects the new MDP policies and offers streamlined processes; project is anticipated to take 18 months with broad public participation. Consultant will be selected in September and start in fall 2019. Interim amendments to the current LUB will continue, as needed, to support business and streamline processes. 2019 examples of LUB amendments include adjustments to the Central Commercial District and industrial districts to assist businesses and a process amendment for secondary suites.

# 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.

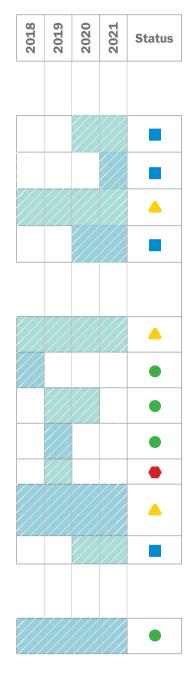
- Develop an aggressive strategy, including incentives, to attract environmental businesses to Okotoks.
- Make strategic capital Investment in infrastructure to incent innovative green-business/light industrial development/ employment centres.
- Create opportunities to pilot environmental projects with 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, microgeneration, 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.





In progress

Off target



# Promote Environmental Excellence



- ✓ Environmental Master Plan approved in 2018 and implementing first year, major initiatives for 2019 include: GHG inventory, forecast and actions (Dec 2019), solar installation at Operations Centre (Enmax awarded contract, install by Dec 2019), Environmental Education Centre interpretive enhancements (July 2019), eco asset inventory to begin fall 2019 (consultant selected Oct.)
- Nurturing partnerships for future innovative pilot projects, including continued work with post secondary institutions; enhancing Drake Landing Solar Community (NRCan) to test electric and heat combined panels as well as a long-term goal of creating a net zero community; exploring community solar generation (public/private partners). Also providing input on major projects to use leading environmental practices for the Arts & Learning Campus. Senior government grant funding has been sought for all projects.





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.

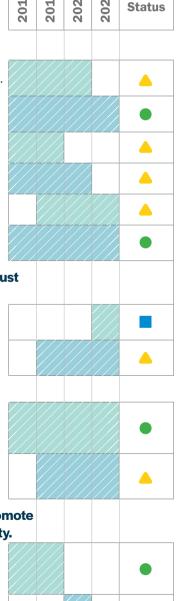
- Gain an understanding of Okotokian audiences through various sources to better understand sociodemographic groups.
- Align Town services and programs with best practices for the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities initiative and the Truth & Reconciliation document.

#### 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.



On track

In progress

Off target

# Provide Strong Governance



- The long-term Financial Health Framework was created as a comprehensive document to guide the Town's financial health, including overarching principles and strategies for assets, reserves, debt, etc. Reviews of utility rates (water, sewer, storm and waste services) and offsite levies (developer costs) are underway with consultants to ensure the Town's future rates are adequately covering service delivery as well as the costs of assets, including maintenance and replacement. Utility rate recommendations will be complete in fall 2019 while the off-site levy review will be completed in 2020. Broader public participation in the annual budget has been promoted through surveys and video recording of annual budget presentations for increased information, access, and transparency.
- Review of the Truth and Reconciliation Report and best practices is complete. A First Nations Blanket Exercise was conducted for Okotoks and area municipalities to raise awareness in June 2019.
- Regional municipal collaboration activities are focused heavily on participating as a member of the Calgary Metropolitan Regional Board (CMRB) who are fulfilling their regulated mandate of promoting long-term sustainability of the region. Focus over 2018-2019 has largely been on the CMRB governance framework as well as land use and growth management. Some regional infrastructure investment and service delivery discussions have occurred, such as water management.
- Several opportunities with public, private and non-profit organizations to deliver services have occurred with the most recent being the future affordable homes through Westwind Communities and Rowan House, and the Homestead Project. The Arts & Learning Campus brings together education and library for shared spaces.
- With a goal of connecting with citizens and businesses as a group on a regular basis, Council gathered for its first Council Community Connector event in April 2019. Council has also enhanced its governance framework through its Governance and Priorities Committee work in 2018/19 and is prioritizing and reviewing draft governance policies to document principles, philosophies and clarify roles and responsibilities.



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

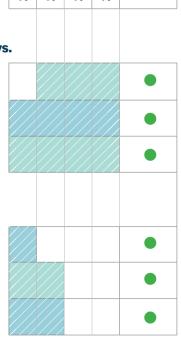
### Key result areas & initiatives

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

- Evaluate progress towards the community Social Wellness Framework to identify successes and gaps and adjust actions accordingly.
- Create opportunities for community members to actively participate in their community, to enhance governance, safety, social connections and overall health and wellness.
- Strengthen our emergency management by updating our Emergency Management Plan, Flood Action Plan, and Business Continuity Plan to ensure the Town is adequately prepared to respond.

Develop strategies to incorporate the legalization of cannabis into Okotoks' policies and practices to ensure a continued healthy and safe community.

- 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.



**Status** 

On trackIn progressOff targetFuture initiative

Strengthen Healthy and Safe Community



- ✓ Social Wellness Framework was reviewed through extensive public participation with the gap analysis and recommendations to be presented in fall 2019. Actions to identify and reduce gaps has been ongoing such as participating in an affordable housing review, numerous new programs for youth and older adults and developing a dementia and age-friendly strategy.
- The Public Participation Strategy, Policy and Toolkit was adopted and implemented in 2018. Opportunities for public participation have been numerous over 2018/19, using a wide variety of methods to enhance opportunities for involvement and to attract diverse audiences. A few 2019 examples include focused input such as the Municipal Development Plan and Northridge Drive future improvements, public transit, secondary suites, central commercial business district amendments and industry focused round tables.
- ✓ Emergency Management Plan and Flood Action Plan are updated annually and mock exercises with Town staff and protective services are facilitated 2-3 times per year. The Incident Command model is used for all community events and as a means to train staff and provide extra resources. Phase one of the Business Continuity Plan focuses on essential public services that cannot be inactive for more than 1-3 days and staff are developing and/or documenting back-up plans in 2019.
- ✓ Cannabis bylaws were created/amended in 2018 and the communications plan implemented in 2018/19. The community has responded well and use has not been an issue to date, although activities continue to be monitored in 2019 with local retail outlets opening.

# Enhance Organizational Excellence

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

#### 2021 Key result areas & initiatives **Status** 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 multiyear 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. Be active participants in regional governance, planning and partnership opportunities. 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.

# Enhance Organizational Excellence

- Service delivery review options are requested annually by Council and reviewed during budget deliberations. The 2019 focus is on Champion Park and Crescent Point Indoor Fieldhouse, in which the Town is a partner with Foothills County. The Champion Park public input survey to develop an operational needs plan was completed in spring 2019.
- ✓ Smart City initiative research reviewed award winning initiatives from other cities to determine priorities for Okotoks. Initial opportunities identified for Okotoks are open data to increase public transparency and automatic vehicle location software.
- ✓ Documentation of core service levels within new software has begun with a focus on external facing public services such as operations and community services.
- Customer service is tracked primarily through the household survey, which indicated an overall good to very good satisfaction with most services in 2018. A crossfunctional front line committee received customer experience training and are developing a corporate customer experience plan to enhance our corporate culture, clarify expectations and be more citizen focused in our approaches to public participation and service delivery
- Resourcing needs are identified and prioritized on an annual basis during the budget process and strive to balance core service delivery with strategic initiatives and internal services with external providers.
- A focus on continous improvement through each business centre, researching best practices and implementing those that are cost effective and serve the best interests of the community and/or organization. Examples include emerging trends such as transparent records management, which digitize work flows and records for more efficient access to information, piloting 3D crosswalks, incorporating after-the-fire conversations between fire crews and affected residents.

# Off-track initiatives AND Recovery Plans

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

#### Provide Quality Infrastructure



✓ Water – Newly elected Provincial government requires education of local and regional water issues and solutions. Advocacy efforts will continue with provincial, elected officials and staff.

#### Economic Vitality (\$)



✓ Economic Development – some staff have been reassigned to help move projects forward for spring 2020 execution (i.e. downtown façade improvement plan, downtown gateway signage; regular summer event strategy with business collaboration ) and to streamline business processes (e.g. business change of use) for one-stop service.

#### Community Growth .....



- ✓ Updated flood mapping awaiting new flood mapping from Province; anticipate delay until early 2020. Risk of delay to Okotoks is the immediate effect of outdated information while designing the new Arts & Learning Campus. As well, the new MDP and LUB may need to be amended when mapping is received.
- MDP Okotoks' growth over the next 20 years is largely concentrated in the north. The built environment resulting from the new MDP will not be realized until development occurs, which may not happen for a decade. The Growth Plan (currently under development) will identify when and where the town grows and is linked to other projects such as the off-site levy review and financial indicator analysis, which has been delayed until 2020.

#### Strong Governance \*\*\*



- ✓ Offsite levy reviews have taken longer than anticipated and will continue into 2020.
- Asset and risk management plans are lower corporate priorities as the current focus is on utility and offsite levy reviews. Asset and risk management work continues to focus solely on high priority tasks (e.g. IT security risk, and enterprise risk management software) and will pick up momentum in 2021.

#### Environmental Excellence



- EMP first year implementation plan some initiatives are delayed due to staff capacity and other priorities (i.e. Arts & Learning Campus). Triple Bottom Line project has been postponed to early 2020. Annual commercial environmental incentive program is delayed to 2020 to align with utility rate redesign.
- New bold initiatives demonstrating we are the leaders in environmental stewardship is at risk with investment needed in the current economic climate.

#### Heathy & Safe Community A



✓ There will be a significant number of volunteers. required should Okotoks be awarded the 2022 Summer Games. Steering committee established by January 2020, events planning through 2021 and significant volunteers will be required for execution in summer 2022.

#### Organizational Excellence

- Business transformation efforts within Development Services Division are a priority and require staff capacity including other business units such as IT, Parks. Fire and Communications. The focus is on business attraction and retention, and customer experience first (in-person) while digitizing business processes is a secondary priority. Reassigning resources to this priority task and hiring experts to assist is required for 2019 and 2020 to be able to make noticeable differences.
- Multi-year service delivery reviews are at risk due to staff capacity being focused on providing daily services. The focus is on external facing services such as Waste Services (completed in 2019) and Water/ EPCOR transition (in 2019/2020).



