

Reflecting on 2018

**2018**  
**TOWN OF OKOTOKS**  
Annual Community Report

**Okotoks**  
Historic Past. Sustainable Future.



Council is pleased to share the 2018 Community Report highlighting the Town's activities over the past year. This report is a concise way for the Town to report back to residents on the progress and achievements towards the key strategic directions in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.

## 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.

## 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**

Cover photo provided by Lila Schoenthal, submitted for the nature photo contest.





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A day in the life  
of an Okotoks kid

# MESSAGE FROM Okotoks Council

2018 has been a busy and exciting year for our community. A significant highlight for Council was approving the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. This report provides a summary of the key initiatives undertaken in 2018 to achieve the strategic plan's directions. The diversity of core services the Town provides on a daily basis are also included in this report.

Completing the Pason Centennial Arenas Expansion was one of the highlights of 2018. The expansion added two new ice surfaces and more gathering spaces for our community. The new recreational ice surface is regularly used by our young skaters and the NHL-sized arena has provided outstanding facilities for our hockey leagues. You can read more about Okotoks' newest arenas under the Healthy and Safe Community section.

Enhancing transparency and increasing dialogue with residents has also been one of Council's priorities. The new Public Participation Policy and toolkit, which we approved in January, has certainly helped to expand the number and variety of public engagement activities undertaken over the past year. Learn more by reviewing the Public Participation section. This year's Household Satisfaction Survey was one of the largest public participation activities with more than 4,000 households participating. This was the first time it was offered online and the increase in response rate indicated that this is a very successful method to connect with our citizens. 98 percent of respondents continue to rate their quality of life in Okotoks as good or very good.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business recently released a report on municipal spending and ranked Okotoks as the second most fiscally responsible Alberta municipality in real operational spending between 2006 and 2016. This reflects Council and administration's ongoing efforts to be financially accountable while maintaining the high quality of life our residents enjoy.

Approving the Environmental Master Plan was a very important step forward for Okotoks, in setting the path for us to become the environmental leader in Alberta. It's an ambitious goal but one that is extremely important for the long-term sustainability of our community.

The first inclusive playground at Riverside Park is now open to the public. This was developed through a collaboration with Okotoks residents and local service organizations.

On behalf of Council, we invite you to learn more about the work being done on your behalf to continuously improve Okotoks. We would like to sincerely thank all our residents for your continued feedback and for working with us to make Okotoks the best community possible!

Sincerely,  
Mayor Bill Robertson  
*on behalf of Okotoks Town Council*

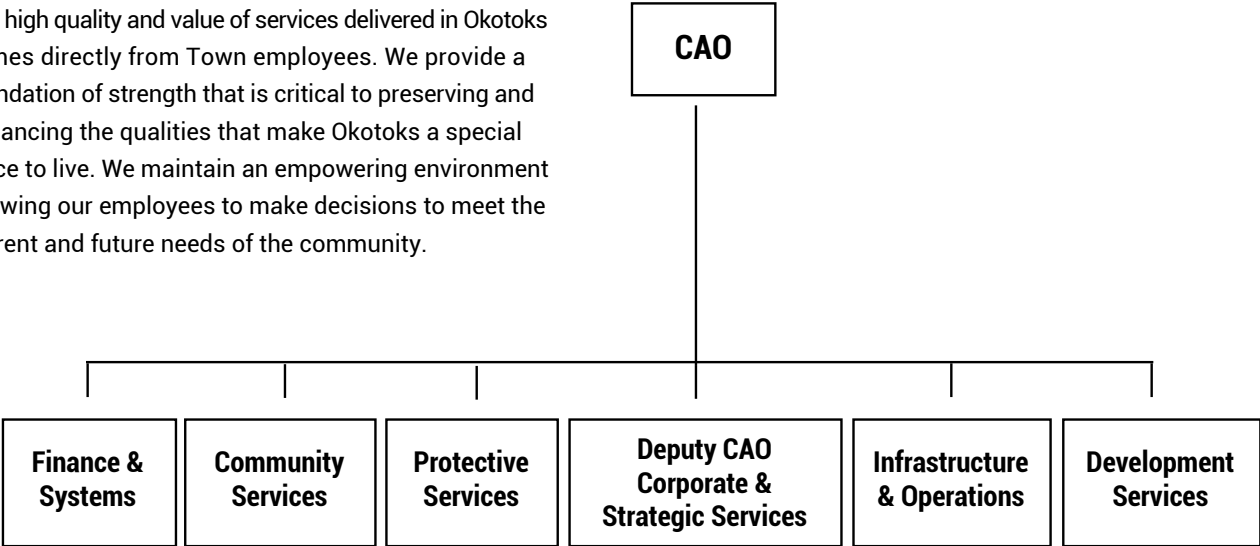




# CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

## Our Town Administration

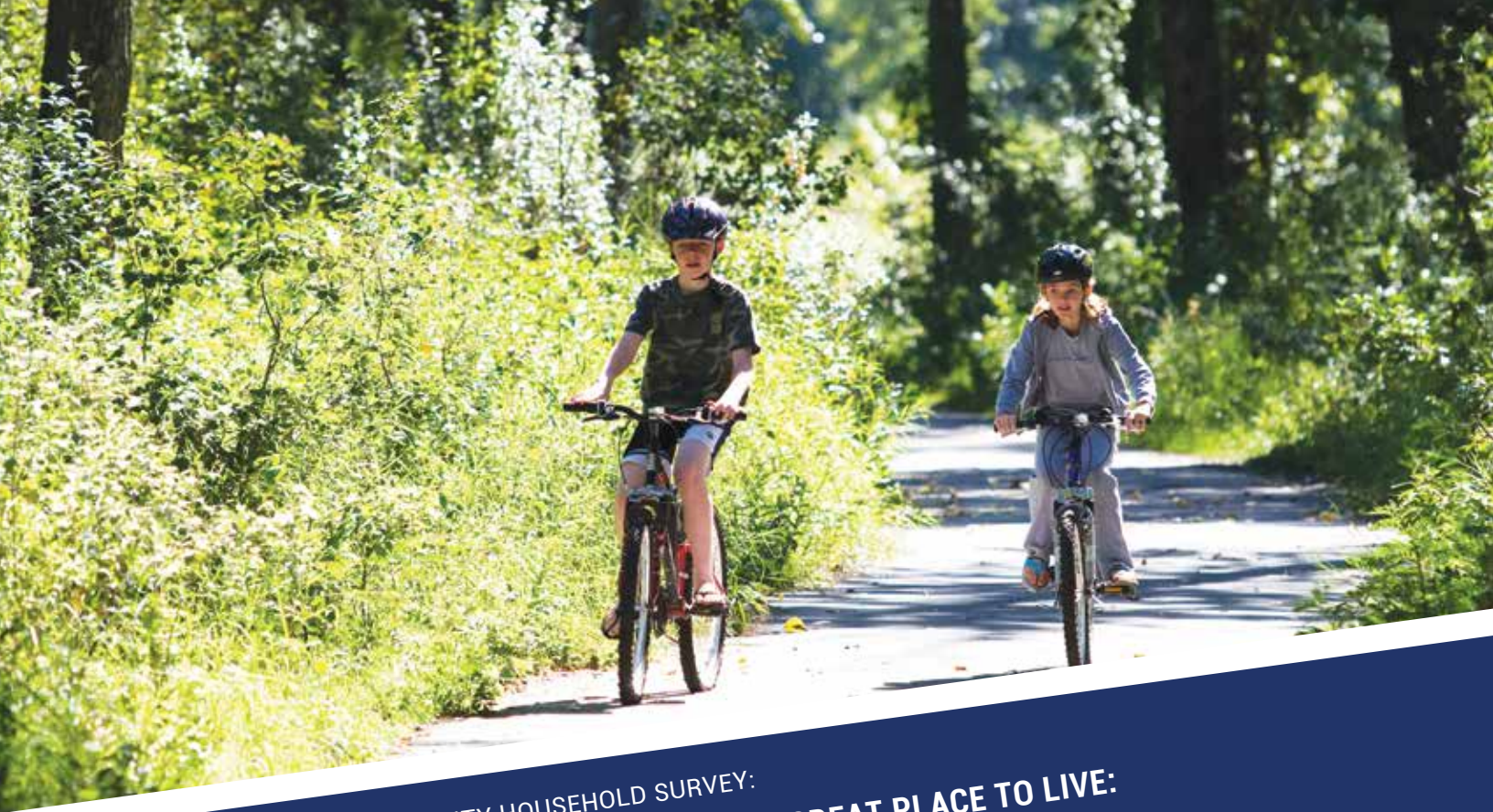
The high quality and value of services delivered in Okotoks comes directly from Town employees. We provide a foundation of strength that is critical to preserving and enhancing the qualities that make Okotoks a special place to live. We maintain an empowering environment allowing our employees to make decisions to meet the current and future needs of the community.



**WHAT  
YOU  
SAID...**

2018 COMMUNITY HOUSEHOLD SURVEY:  
**86% OF CITIZENS FELT SATISFIED OR VERY SATISFIED  
WITH THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE TOWN.**





2018 COMMUNITY HOUSEHOLD SURVEY:

**3 THINGS THAT MAKE OKOTOKS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE:**

**38% MENTIONED THE SMALL-TOWN ATMOSPHERE**  
(FRIENDLY PEOPLE, FAMILY-ORIENTED, LIFESTYLE)

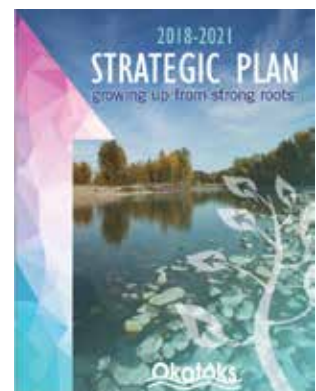
**32% MENTIONED PARKS, PATHWAYS, AND GREEN SPACES**

**26% MENTIONED TOWN'S SERVICES, AMENITIES, AND FACILITIES**

**WHAT  
YOU  
SAID...**

## Introduction

Council developed the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan: growing up from strong roots, and approved it in May 2018. It determines the strategic direction for Okotoks and the key result areas required to achieve them. Council remains committed to deliver services that maintain the high quality of life our residents enjoy.





The 2018 Community Report highlights specific projects the Town has undertaken since the plan was approved and provides a snapshot of the Town's progress to achieve these strategic priorities:

#### **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.

#### **Foster Economic Vitality**

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

#### **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.

#### **Promote Environmental Excellence**

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

#### **Provide Strong Governance**

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

#### **Strengthen a Healthy & Safe Community**

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

#### **Enhance Organizational Excellence**

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



## Implementation

In addition to the priorities in the Strategic Plan, the Town delivers a wide range of core services which are in the best interest of our citizens today and for our future citizens of tomorrow.

## Progress Reports

The Town 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. Reporting provides greater accountability, transparency and understanding of both the strategic goals, progress and accomplishments.

This annual Community Report provides a summary of the key activities and initiatives from 2018. The initiatives have been listed under the specific strategic goal where they are aligned. In some cases, the initiative or project may contribute to more than one strategic goal and often require more than one year to complete.

Long range plans and other policy documents, including area structure plans for different neighbourhoods and various overarching regional strategies, support the community in achieving its sustainability objectives. Public participation in the creation of each plan ensures that the community's priorities and vision for Okotoks are captured and reflected. The Town encourages resident engagement and welcomes the opportunity to obtain the public's input. The following long-range community planning documents and tools establish a foundation to guide the community's future over the next 20 years.



Learn more about these master plans and to find the complete documents please visit [Okotoks.ca/masterplans](http://Okotoks.ca/masterplans).





#### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

## Secure water and wastewater upgrades to meet community growth needs.

To ensure that the Town's growth is managed in a sustainable way, the Town only approves developments that comply with Council's Water Allocation System for Planning Approvals. Alberta Environment and Parks is expected to make a decision regarding the long-term pipeline approval in early 2019. The Town has short and long term plans in place while we await this decision.

### Flood Preparedness

The Town received \$80,000 in provincial funding to enhance the Town's flood and emergency preparations. The funds were used for emergency equipment, preparedness materials and other resources.

### Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades

Upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant are in the preliminary stages. Work is scheduled to begin in spring 2019. When the Phase II project is completed the Town's wastewater treatment plant will have two wastewater treatment trains (processes). The Town would be able to take one train out of service for maintenance while the other continues to provide wastewater treatment.

### Infrastructure Upgrades

Additional infrastructure was completed in the north end of Okotoks to increase sanitary capacity for the D'Arcy and Wedderburn developments.

The Town continues to focus on proactively maintaining all community infrastructure to ensure citizens continue to have efficient, quality services now and into the future.



#### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

### Master Shared Services Agreement

The Town has had a Master Shared Services agreement with Foothills County since 2012. Foothills County provides financial contributions to several Okotoks facilities, including recreation centres, the Okotoks Eco Centre, the Public Library, and Fire Services. The updated agreement was approved for a five - year period.

### Seaman Stadium upgrades

The Town provided capital funds for washroom facilities, which will be completed in 2019. We would like to remind residents that overflow parking is available at the Operations Centre.

### Champion Park

The Town hosted a public event at the park in the summer and it was a sell-out! Children's day camps were also very popular. The park is operated through a joint maintenance agreement between Okotoks and Foothills County and this partnership is currently conducting an Operating and Program Models Study that will define the future of the park. A public survey was offered in late 2018 to provide input on how the park will be developed and operated.

### Pason Centennial Arenas

Pason Centennial Arena expansion was opened to the public in January 2018. The expansion included the addition of an NHL-sized ice-surface, a leisure ice surface, five dressing rooms, three multi-purpose rooms, office space for Okotoks Minor Hockey Association (OMHA), referees' room, viewing areas, lobby areas, space for public art and supporting amenity space. The ice has been a very popular addition to recreational activities in Okotoks.

The new leisure ice offers 70 hours of drop-in leisure ice time, Learn-to-Skate classes and tiny tot hockey programs.

The barrier-free ice allows the surface to be utilized for sledge hockey and other on-ice opportunities for those with mobility challenges.



**5456** PEOPLE REGISTERED  
FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS  
NOT INCLUDING AQUATICS OR CULTURE & HERITAGE



**884** COMMUNITY  
PROGRAMS OFFERED  
NOT INCLUDING AQUATICS OR CULTURE & HERITAGE

PEOPLE REGISTERED FOR:

**8710** SWIM LESSONS

**3099** SCHOOL SWIM LESSONS

**5611** PUBLIC SWIM LESSONS



**20,608** PEOPLE ENJOYED  
FREE AND/OR DISCOUNTED  
SKATES AND SWIMS  
EXCLUDING LEISURE ICE

**3000** HOURS  
OF CHILDCARE  
PROVIDED  
AT OKOTOKS RECREATION CENTRE



## RENTAL HOURS

AT OKOTOKS RECREATION CENTRE,  
PASON CENTENNIAL ARENAS,  
AND OUTDOOR FIELDS



**ARENA**  
**9472 HRS**



**SPORTS FIELDS**  
**4220 HRS**



**GYMNASIUM**  
**573 HRS**

**197,725** DROP-IN  
FACILITY ADMISSIONS  
AT OUR RECREATION CENTRES





# FOSTER Economic Vitality

## KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

### Fibre Optics

The Telus Pure Fibre Project is approximately 95 percent complete and will offer access to high-speed broadband throughout Okotoks. Having access to the latest technology is a key strategy to attract more technology-reliant businesses. This work allows us to spark innovation locally to compete globally. Okotoks will be well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities to support local job opportunities for current and future citizens.

### Economic Development Strategy

An economic development strategy was approved in December 2018. This included an industry profile that assessed the state of existing business enterprise in Okotoks according to standardized Industry sector categories and a labour force analysis. This is the best way to position the town to grow and diversify business, and establishes a realistic understanding of the potential for business growth.

### Downtown Urban Design Master Plan

The Downtown Urban Design Master Plan has been purposefully designed to provide a bold new direction for the future of downtown. It embraces environmentally friendly infrastructure, inviting public spaces, active streetscapes, and architectural innovation, while maintaining the downtown's historical character. Several projects have been included in the 2019 budget to begin implementing this long range plan.

## 192 NEW BUSINESSES

81   
STORE FRONTS

111   
HOME BASED



320 JOBS  
CREATED WITHIN OKOTOKS

NEARLY

2000 BUSINESS  
LICENSES ISSUED

INCLUDES OUT OF TOWN LICENSES



\$67 MILLION  
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION VALUE



\$24 MILLION  
INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL  
AND INSTITUTIONAL (ICI)  
CONSTRUCTION



\$43 MILLION  
RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

148 NEW HOMES STARTED



3700  
INSPECTIONS COMPLETED





## WE ARE LISTENING...

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN 2018 INCLUDED:

**56** EVENTS, OPEN HOUSES ETC.

**+31,200** PARTICIPANTS

**9** ONLINE SURVEYS



### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

**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.**

#### Land Use Bylaw Amendments

The Land Use Bylaw was amended to better accommodate craft breweries and distilleries.

Proposed changes to the studio suite bylaw are being developed based on recommendations from the Affordable Housing Task Force. In 2019, the public will be invited to provide input on these amendments.

#### Municipal Development Plan (MDP)

The MDP is the essential plan that will define Okotoks' future-built environment. It is in the process of being rewritten to better reflect Okotoks' long-term strategic priorities. Numerous public participation opportunities are being held for residents and key stakeholders to provide input, ideas and comments that will be incorporated into the final document. The new plan is expected to be completed in 2019.

### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

Community events continue to be very popular and several new ones were introduced in 2018, including the Off the Vine Wine Festival, which attracted more than 300 attendees, the Okotoks Light Tour and the Gingerbread Station.

A number of trees along Elizabeth Street had reached the end of their life cycle and were replaced. As these mature, they will enhance the aesthetic appeal of the downtown area.

2018 brought another opportunity for film production in Okotoks, as a Netflix original series, Wynonna Earp, featured Elma Street in some scenes of this supernatural western.



# MANAGE Community Growth

## 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.**

### **Affordable Housing**

For several years affordable housing has been an identified need to diversify and increase the variety of housing options in Okotoks. Council approved recommendations from the Affordable Housing Task Force to create a more inclusive community by easing the requirements for legal secondary suites, securing land for future affordable housing opportunities, and implementing a monitoring system to measure affordable housing needs.

Short-term improvements include exploring Land Use Bylaw changes to allow suites in both regular and walk out basements in many single-detached land use districts. The Town is now reviewing the Task Force recommendations, which include additional revisions to the regulations around secondary and back lane suites.

Okotoks participated in a Rural Homelessness Estimation Project, which is the largest survey of this kind to be undertaken in Alberta.

The Task Force will be working throughout 2019 to develop a long-term affordable housing strategy for Okotoks.







LAURIE BOYD BRIDGE

#### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

### New Pedestrian Bridges

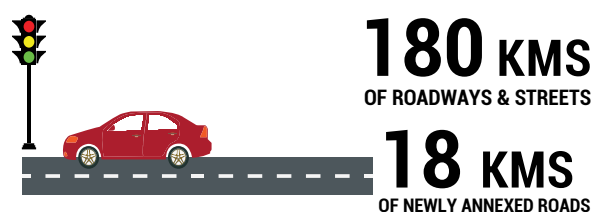
The new Laurie Boyd Pedestrian Bridge is now open to the public. It provides greater access to all residents and enhances the active transportation network for Okotoks. The bridge was built with crime prevention and environmental design principles in mind. A shallower bridge camber, or arch, and the installation of handrail lighting, has allowed for easier pedestrian access, better visibility and enhanced safety.

The water treatment plant bridge is also open to the public. As well as providing essential access to staff during an emergency, it is also one of the busiest pedestrian routes in Okotoks as it is an essential link between the south and north.

### Snow Clearing

In 2018 pathway snow clearing was enhanced with a total of 62 km of pathways cleared seven days per week to support active transportation on main routes within our community.

The Town also assumed roadway snow clearing responsibilities in the annexed areas.



**YEAR-ROUND  
STREET CLEANING  
& SNOW REMOVAL**  
ON PRIORITY ROADS AND PATHWAYS



### Local Transit

Local transit will be implemented in fall 2019 through a proposed on-demand service. By providing an alternative to personal vehicles, many residents without vehicles will finally have the freedom to move around town on their own schedules. This new system should also ease parking congestion over time at several popular destinations around town and will help reduce Okotoks' overall carbon footprint.

POPULATION OF OKOTOKS

**29,002**

INCREASE OF

**121**

RESIDENTS

PROJECTION  
OKOTOKS POPULATION IN

**60 YEARS**

**= 80,000 PEOPLE**



**CULTURAL & HERITAGE  
PUBLIC PROGRAMS IN 2018**

**67 PROGRAMS**

**1687 PARTICIPANTS**

**7 CULTURAL & HERITAGE  
SPECIAL EVENTS**

KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

**Municipal Heritage Designation Program**

The new program was developed in consultation with the public and stakeholders and will provide the tools needed to identify, protect and celebrate Okotoks' rich and diverse heritage and provide the processes necessary to ensure preservation of its historical buildings and landscapes.

**Culture, Heritage and Arts Master Plan**

Growing Together: A Culture, Heritage & Arts Master Plan (CHAMP II) was updated in 2018 after gathering feedback from 438 stakeholders through a series of workshops, interviews and an online survey. The plan focuses on connecting and engaging citizens of all ages and backgrounds to nurture grassroots cultural development.

Art in the Hall featured new sites in 2018 including the Pason Centennial Arenas. There are a total of seven locations in Okotoks exhibiting 34 artists.

**CULTURE &  
HERITAGE  
# OF VISITORS  
ATTENDING**



**9678**



**8064**



**7206**







**+60KM**  
**OF PRIMARY INTER-CONNECTED  
PATHWAY SYSTEMS**  
SNOW-CLEARED 7 DAYS PER WEEK TO  
PROMOTE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION



**172** HECTARES  
**OF PUBLIC PARKS  
AND OPEN SPACES**

**325** HECTARES  
**OF NATURALIZED  
AREA/RIVER VALLEY**



## Cemetery

Several upgrades were completed at the cemetery in 2018. A lovely gathering space, complete with a pergola and flower table was added. A new columbaria was installed as well as the River of Memories memorial wall, which allows for loved ones to be memorialised with a plaque without being interred. The Big Rock Scattering Garden is the first of its kind for Okotoks, where ashes are placed in the garden and a plaque affixed to the wall.

## Day Use Areas

A day use area is being developed on the north side of the river, south of Mountain View. It will include a fenced parking lot, picnic area, seating, natural trails, tree planting, and interpretive signage. The area is expected to be opened to the public in the summer of 2019.





# PROMOTE Environmental Excellence



## KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

### **Environmental Master Plan**

The new Environmental Master Plan (EMP) connects the Town's Community Sustainability Plan, the Municipal Development Plan and the Town's long-term vision to develop a community and culture of resiliency in the most holistic and sustainable manner possible. This plan has 7 areas of focus including ecosystems and agriculture; land use and urban design; energy, emissions and air quality; waste systems; water systems; climate adaptation and resilience; and, fostering a green economy. This plan reflects Council's desire for the Town of Okotoks to be the leader in environmental excellence in Alberta.

### **Climate Change Action Planning**

A Climate Resilience Express Action Plan was completed in 2018 and is the first step in developing a comprehensive climate change action plan over the next several years. The plan included a climate change impact analysis that forecasts to 2050 for the region, showing the effects of climate change already apparent in Okotoks and projections on how these will become more severe over time. Water supply shortage, drought and river flooding were prioritized as a result of the plan. This work will continue throughout 2019 with the support of a federal grant and will include funding for a specialized staff position.

### **WE HEARD YOU...**

ENVIRONMENTAL MASTER PLAN:

**12 EVENTS**

**+1000 PARTICIPANTS**

**2 ONLINE SURVEYS**





**600 VISITORS**  
FOR EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS



### **EPCOR Environmental Education Centre**

The Environmental Education Centre received over 600 visitors in 2018, consisting mainly of school tours. The second and final phase of the Centre's interior space was designed and fabricated. The new installations consist of a native tree display, an interactive watershed bench, and seating. Come check us out!

### **Conservation Education Program**

Okotoks' conservation education program increases citizens' awareness, understanding and participation in environmentally conscious activities. A total of 2,765 households were visited in 2018 and over 1,150 additional residents were reached through education booths. Educators also hosted in-depth school presentations and workshops for 375 children.



**500 PARTICIPANTS**  
AT ENVIRONMENT WEEK  
PROGRAMS & EVENTS



**1,572 HOMES**  
SIGNED UP FOR **WASTE**  
**REMINDERS**  
ON WASTE APP IN 2018

## Environmental Initiatives

Several energy efficiency projects have been completed to decrease the amount of energy used in municipal buildings. LED lighting was installed at the Pason Centennial Arenas, Foothills Centennial Centre, and Seaman Stadium parking lots, and at the EMS bay at the Fire Station, Stockton Block building, and the Okotoks Library. The Town received \$30,770 from Energy Efficiency Alberta for several of the lighting upgrades.

In 2018, an environmental liquid product was successfully used for ice control across the town's road network and will continue to be used in 2019. The product aggressively melts snow and ice down to -45°C, and has a bitter taste, that does not attract wildlife to roads.

## Storm System Maintenance

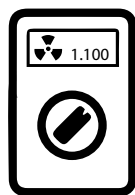
The Town acquired a storm utility flushing and vacuum unit vehicle to perform proactive storm sewer catch basin cleaning activities, using GIS technology to track and record progress. In 2018, almost 800 catch basins (40 percent) were inspected and cleaned. Other municipalities are interested in learning about Okotoks' innovative program and how GIS has been incorporated to increase accuracy and efficiency.

### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

The Town continues to explore potential partnerships for several new innovative environmental projects, including a proposed ecovillage that would include small homes, community buildings, a greenhouse for year-round local food production, and community gardens. Ecovillages are focused on social connectivity and the concept of leaving a smaller environmental footprint, through advanced conservation measures and renewable energy technologies.

The Town continued to enhance its partnership with the University of Calgary, through an additional stormwater and groundwater research project at its main Bioretention Research Site located within the Town's Operations yard and a new stormwater research and demonstration site at the Community Campus site.



**2 D-I-Y ENERGY KITS**  
(INCLUDED RADON LEVEL TESTERS)  
**BOOKED 94 TIMES**

To book a kit visit [okotoks.ca/diykit](http://okotoks.ca/diykit)



## KEY RESULT AREAS &amp; INITIATIVES

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

The Town hosted its first Repair Café where residents had broken appliances and small items fixed by volunteers, extending their life and keeping them out of the landfill. Four more are planned in 2019.

Waste Services undertook a pilot project in two neighbourhoods where their garbage collection was adjusted to every second week collection for a four month period. 668 homes participated in the waste pilot.

### Water Rebate Program

A total of 426 rebates totalling approximately \$40,000 were awarded to Okotoks residents in 2018. Items eligible for a rebate were organic and inorganic mulch, drought tolerant plants, rain barrels, Watersense irrigation controllers and rain sensors, residential rainwater harvesting systems, and drought tolerant ground cover.

Okotoks residents purchased 752 water-conserving items. Drought tolerant plants were new to the 2018 program and made up 25 percent of the rebates awarded. Also new was a xeriscape pilot program. Three \$1,000 rebates were available for selected residents who designed and installed a comprehensive xeriscape project (*minimum 500ft<sup>2</sup> in size and 50% plant coverage*).

### Waste Services

Changes to the organics collection program in 2018 allowed residents to have extra yard waste collected at the curb in May and October for spring and fall clean-up. This change, along with changes to the drop-off area at the Eco Centre, resulted in 156 fewer trips to the landfill in 2018. That is 2,901 less kms traveled on the roads.



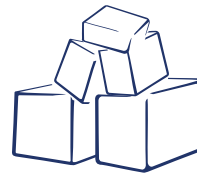
CLOTHING DIVERTED  
**FROM LANDFILL**  
**590** TONNES



BLUE CART  
TONNAGE  
COLLECTED  
**1703**



GREEN CART  
TONNAGE  
COLLECTED  
**2168**



STYROFOAM  
COLLECTED  
**2.7** TONNES

### GARBAGE TONNAGE TO LANDFILL

**3014**   
FROM CURBSIDE WASTE COLLECTION



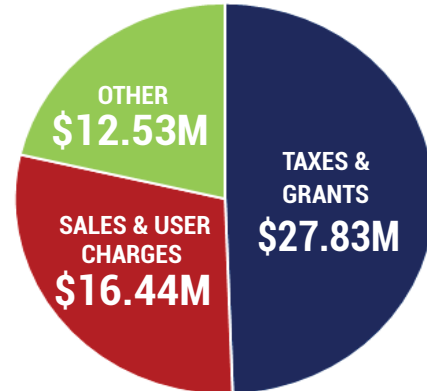
Repair Café



# PROVIDE STRONG GOVERNANCE

## 2018 BUDGET

### WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



#### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

A baseline data analysis for all utility rates has been completed including costs for water, wastewater, and transportation. The initiative started in 2018 and will be completed in 2019, along with a revised utility rate policy that aligns with Town visioning and our corporate strategic direction.

## Financial Management

### 2018 Budget

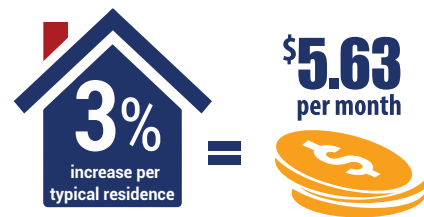
The Town of Okotoks' revenue comes from a variety of sources:

**Property Taxes:** Paid by residents and businesses to help cover the costs of the municipal services they use. Requisitions (levies) are collected through taxes on behalf of the Province of Alberta for education, the Westwinds Foundation for local senior housing and the Okotoks Library. The Town does not set or control these levies and passes this revenue directly on to the province, the Okotoks Library and the Westwinds Foundation.

**Sales & User Fees:** Includes utility charges, franchise fees, fines, permits and facility rentals.

**Government Transfers:** Funds received from the provincial and federal governments, as well as neighbouring municipalities.

### Municipal Property Taxes



### WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

	Community Services	\$10.35M
	Protective Services	\$9.51M
	Administration	\$8.89M
	Operations & Infrastructure	\$8.73M
	Water, Sewer & Waste Management	\$10.30M
	Development Services	\$4.24M
	Major Project Support	\$1.60M
	Debt Principal Payments	\$3.20M



The 2018 budget proposed to utilize \$5.5 million in grants for operating and capital projects. Which Included:

- Municipal Sustainability Initiative
- Base Municipal Transportation
- Gas Tax Fund

**Budget Highlights:**

- Continue construction on Okotoks Community Campus Lands
- Laurie Boyd Pedestrian Bridge Replacement
- Pason Centennial Arena Expansion

## Efficiencies

- Incorporating partnerships and practicum personnel
- Introducing numerous technology enhancements to assist staff with data
- Focusing facility maintenance on energy efficiencies
- Investing in equipment to provide more efficient services (*garbage collection, snow removal*)
- Enhancing investment returns in alignment with policy
- Energy procurement (*electricity, natural gas and fuel*)

## Municipal Taxation

The province compares municipal taxes through Financial Indicator graphs. In 2017, these graphs indicate that Okotoks is averaging along the median of comparable municipalities. In 2017 the difference between Okotoks and the group median for equalized residential rates was one percent lower than the group median.

In Okotoks, the industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) assessment percentage of total equalized assessment also remained below the group median for the last six years. In 2017 ICI assessment for Okotoks was 8.3 percent lower than the group median.

Net Municipal Property Taxes as a revenue source, was still one of the lowest amongst comparable municipalities.

## Requisitions

In 2018, requisitions on behalf of other organizations represent approximately 36 percent of the total Town tax bill. These organizations included:

- Alberta School Foundation Fund
- Okotoks Public Library Board
- Westwinds Communities

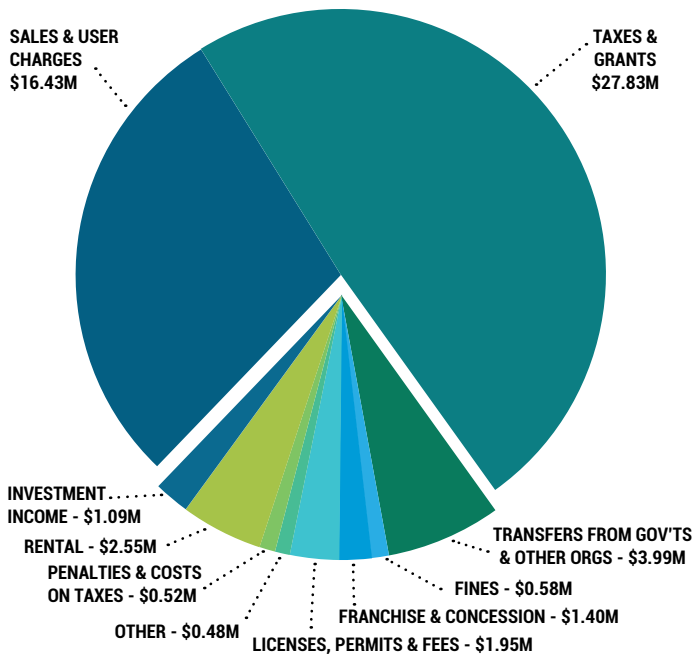


## Revenue by Sources

This chart illustrates all the Town's revenue sources in the operating budget including utilities.

### TOTAL REVENUE BY CATEGORY 2018 (\$M)

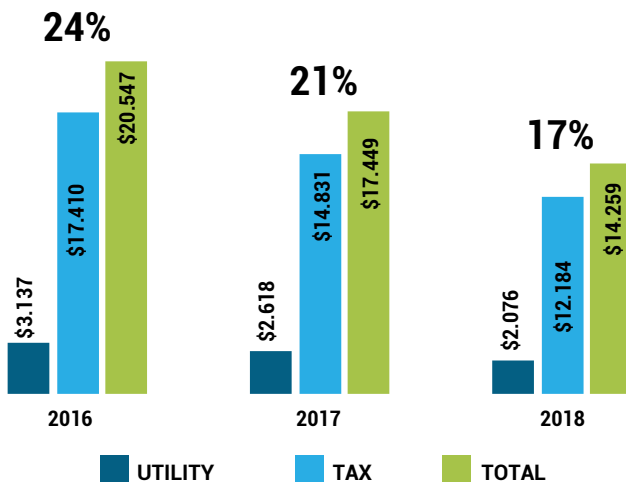
REVENUE \$56.8M



## Long Term Debt Balance

The Town of Okotoks will continue to balance service to the community with maintaining the financial health and sustainability of the organization.

### LONG TERM DEBT BALANCE (\$M)

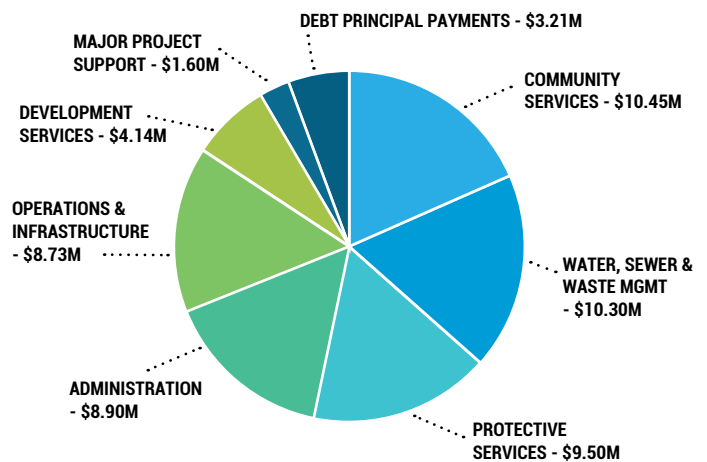


## Expenses by Divisions

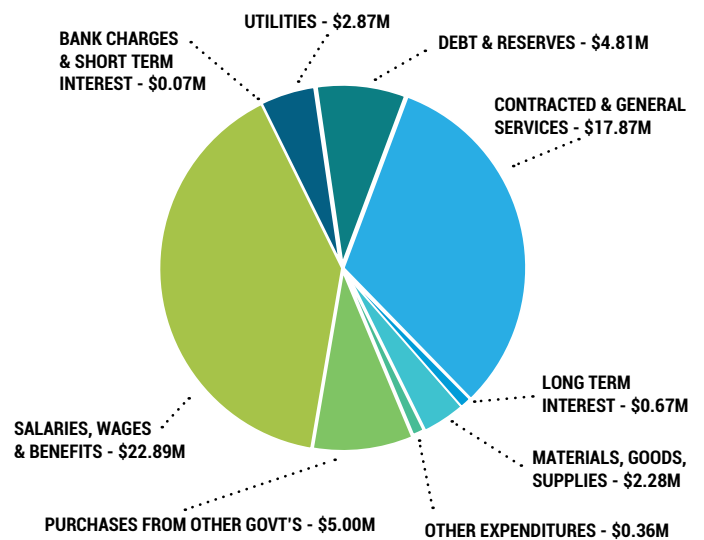
This chart illustrates the amount of expenses by division. These divisions are summarized from the financial statements.

### TOTAL EXPENDITURE BY DIVISION 2018 (\$M)

EXPENDITURES: \$56.8M



## Expenses by Category





## 2019 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The approved 2019 budget focuses on investing in quality of place to create inclusivity and diversity in the town. The approved budget is \$58.9 million for operations and \$26.8 million for capital expenditures including \$19 million for 2019 capital projects and \$7.8 in multi-year projects. The budget will raise an additional \$2.2 million in revenue to support services and sustainability while also preparing Okotoks for future growth.

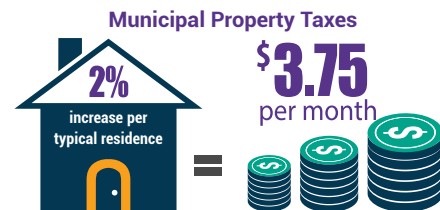
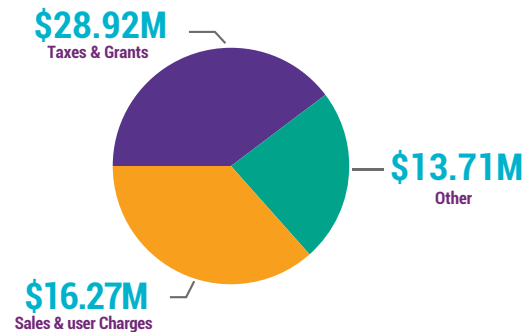
The 2019 budget allocates funds to implement a new local transit service, with its infrastructure largely funded by grants and the Town funding operating costs. The new service is appropriately scaled for Okotoks' needs and uses current on-demand technology. Funding is also allocated for necessary enhancements to the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is essential for ensuring ongoing quality of service for residents.

The budget includes \$200,000 for economic development initiatives to support the updated economic development plan to promote business growth and retention. The Town recognizes that business attraction and retention is the key to a stronger local economy.

Community input was a key consideration during the budget process, which was represented in multiple public participation activities, such as the Local Transit Action plan, the Environmental Master Plan, and the Municipal Development Plan. Additionally, more than 4,200 households completed the 2018 Household Satisfaction Survey, which included four questions specifically around budget. Public participation will also be important in developing the 2020 budget – watch for opportunities in spring 2019.

One of the key challenges that all Alberta municipalities are facing for future planning is the province's decision to end the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) grant in 2021, which represents a significant funding source. The 2019 budget considers this future loss in revenue. The Town will be starting a grant review and developing a strategy to align off-site levies to current and future financial realities to ensure alternate funding opportunities are maximized. Okotoks currently receives approximately \$5 million in MSI funding annually.

## 2019 BUDGET WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



## WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

	<b>Community Services</b>	\$11.41M
	<b>Protective Services</b>	\$9.95M
	<b>Administration</b>	\$8.98M
	<b>Operations &amp; Infrastructure</b>	\$8.97M
	<b>Water, Sewer &amp; Waste Management</b>	\$8.29M
	<b>Development Services</b>	\$4.38M
	<b>Major Project Support</b>	\$3.58M
	<b>Debt Principal Payments</b>	\$3.34M



2019 BUDGETED OPERATING  
EXPENSES (\$ MILLIONS)  
Municipal \$45.50M  
Utilities \$13.36M  
Total \$58.86M

## 2019 Operational Budget: EXPENDITURE BY DIVISION

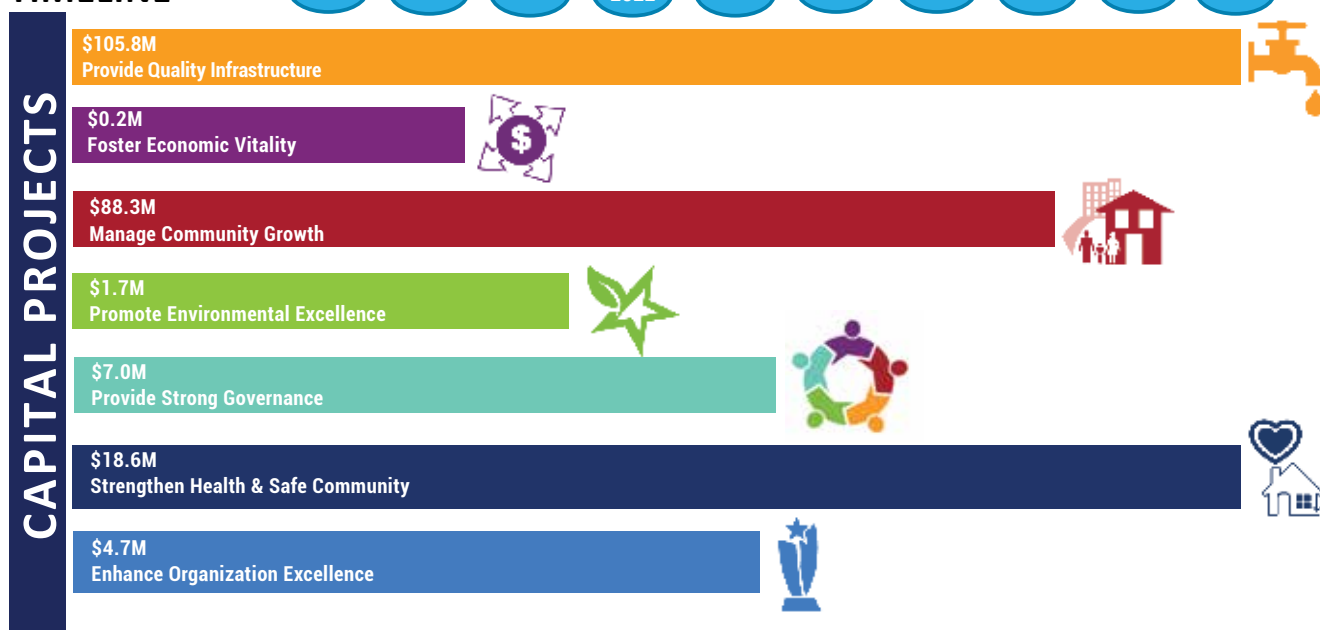
PLANNED DISTRIBUTION OF A MUNICIPAL TAX DOLLAR

Community Services	\$0.19
Protective Services	\$0.17
Operations & Infrastructure	\$0.15
Administration	\$0.15
Water Sewer & Waste Management	\$0.14
Development Services	\$0.08
Major Project Support	\$0.06
Debt Principal Payments	\$0.06
= \$1.00 Dollar	



## 10 Year Capital Plan by Strategic Direction (\$226M Total Projects)

### TIMELINE





## KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

**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.**

### Youth Initiatives

The Town is looking for ways to involve and engage local youth. The Town hosted a one-day "Shaping the Vision – Youth Friendly Okotoks" conference, where over 80 youth and adults came together to listen, learn and share ideas to create a more youth-friendly community for residents. (e.g., financial, quality of life, health and safety, environmental, lifestyle).

Youth were also invited to participate in selecting a new logo for "Okotoks Youth." More than 100 youth, aged 12-18, voted on their preferred design and approximately 70 percent selected the design that has now become the official youth logo.



## WE HEARD YOU...

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS:

**RATE THE VALUE OF SERVICE THEY RECEIVED FOR THEIR TAX DOLLARS.**

**46%** VERY GOOD OR GOOD VALUE

**32%** FAIR VALUE

**14%** POOR VALUE



**Room To Improve!**

### Public Engagement & Communications

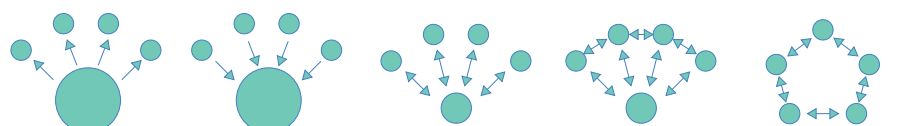
Council approved the Public Participation Policy and Toolkit to increase transparency and foster conversations with residents and stakeholders. This provides guidelines, strategies and tactics to increase opportunities and diversity in how the Town includes citizens in decision making.

The Town encourages all residents to participate in as many public participation opportunities as possible to help shape the community. Resident feedback is instrumental in developing plans that are referenced regularly.

Throughout 2018 over 31,000 people participated in a diversity of workshops, surveys, pop-up sessions etc. on many projects and initiatives.

### Spectrum of Public Participation

produced by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). Like many local governments, the Town of Okotoks uses the spectrum to have internal discussions about what level of public participation is needed for a given issue, and to properly communicate "the promise to the public" both internally and externally. Each type of participation, from "inform" to "empower," can be useful and appropriate in different circumstances. Many factors determine the level of public participation required in a process, such as Council priorities, history of and context for the issue, and potential impacts of the initiative (e.g., financial, quality of life, health and safety, environmental, lifestyle, etc.).



	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives, and decisions.	To work with public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE	"We will keep you informed."	"We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns."	"We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made."	"We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible."	"We will implement what you decide."



Riverside Inclusive Playground

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

#### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

Okotoks is an active member of the newly formed Calgary Metropolitan Region Board, which guides planning for the region, including opportunities for collaboration to meet the region's short and long-term needs.

Council approved changes to Public Advisory Committees (PACs) that will support greater community influence in the Town's decision-making processes. Council re-categorized the following PACs to become governance committees: Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Committee, the United Way/Okotoks Partnership Committee and the Finance and Audit Committee, which support greater decision-making authority. Council also approved discontinuing the following committees: Post-Secondary Education; Culture Parks and Recreation; Public Safety and Security, Economic Development and the Brand Leadership Team. The change in direction reflects the key priorities in the Public Participation Policy, strategy and toolkit.

#### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

### 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.

*Council's strategic plan for 2018-2021 was approved in May 2018.*

### Community Connector Policy and Plan

The new Community Connector Policy establishes Council's commitment to implement a long-term focus on supporting community connection dialogues to gather diverse viewpoints from residents and local business owners. The Council Community Connector Plan's primary goals are to:

- ensure that community-wide stakeholders are taken into account in the overall development and prioritization of Ends (purpose statements);
- discover owners' sense of the "at what cost" element of Ends;
- define how the Town will apply the community's input towards Ends in budget development;
- educate owners about the concept of ownership and expand their knowledge and understanding of ownership issues;
- report back to the owners on the impact of their input and the Town's performance.





## STRENGTHEN A Healthy & Safe Community



### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

#### Emergency Preparedness

Okotoks hosted a regional "New Reality" Emergency Management Special Events Conference, the first of its kind in Alberta. An expert from the Canada Conference Board was the keynote speaker who provided insights on creating future safe community events for Alberta municipalities.

An Emergency Preparedness Week Open House was hosted in May 2018, which included local and regional emergency responders, with on-site emergency and safety demonstrations.

#### Safe Communities Alert Network (SCAN)

In a crisis, the Safe Communities Alert Network allows individuals access to time sensitive information on how to protect themselves or their families in the event of a disaster. This system is similar to the new Alert Ready national test system but SCAN is specific to Okotoks and area, and provides personalized, immediate, life-saving information directly impacting the Town of Okotoks.

**SAFE COMMUNITIES))**  
Alert Network



**10,148**  
PEOPLE REGISTERED

#### Riverside Inclusive Playground

Okotoks' first inclusive playground was constructed at Riverside Community Park (1400 North Railway Street). Stakeholders assisted the Town in designing the playground, which is accessible to all children and opened to the public in November. The Rotary Club is also generously contributing a group picnic shelter to enhance the site, which will be installed in 2019.

#### Urban Deer Count

An urban deer count was completed in September using a free online app, NatureLynx, where residents were invited to upload photos and locations of deer in real time. The results were comparable to the previous count in 2015, with 65 counted in 2018, compared to 66 in 2015.

380 respondents also completed a survey, where 30 percent reported damage they wished to be resolved and 42 percent reported that they do not mind the damage from deer. 90 percent of respondents were aware of the bylaw that prohibits feeding wildlife. Residents are reminded to please not feed the deer.



**65 DEER**  
CALL OKOTOKS HOME



## Fire Services

Okotoks Fire Services officially opened Fire Station No. 2 with 24/7 emergency response.

# FIRE SERVICES

TOTAL NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

**1081** - 2018



**12** PUBLIC  
FIRE DRILLS



**23%** ALARM ACTIVATIONS



**11%** FIRES



**15%** VEHICLE COLLISIONS



**11%** SERVICE CALLS & HAZARDS



**23%** MEDICAL ASSISTANCE



**736** COMMERCIAL FIRE  
SAFETY INSPECTIONS

**33** FREE HOME FIRE  
SAFETY INSPECTIONS

## RCMP

The Okotoks detachment is contracted to the Town of Okotoks and the Town pays for 24-hour policing provided by 25 RCMP officers and eight support staff.

Officers expanded the delivery of the WITS (Walk away, Ignore, Talk it out, Seek help) program to grade 4 students at Dr. Morris Gibson and St. Mary's schools and had presentations from RCMP Police Dog Services. They attended DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) class graduations and coordinated the partnership "Project Keep Straight" with the Okotoks Oilers. An "Option Four Program" allowed officers to provide distracted drivers the opportunity to take an education course and they also delivered the Journeys Program for adults.

Municipal Enforcement and RCMP partner on community policing initiatives such as Victim Services, Citizens on Patrol and public education initiatives such as DARE, Anti-Bullying, internet safety, block/neighbourhood watch, and more. Okotoks continues to be one of the safest communities in Alberta. To foster a safe community residents are encouraged to get involved and get to know their neighbours!



**5-7%** DECLINE  
IN CRIME STATS



## Municipal Enforcement

Municipal Enforcement works to educate the public, raise awareness and gain compliance on Town bylaws and Provincial Acts and Regulations.

Municipal Enforcement started an Adopt-a-School program. Each officer was assigned to a specific school where they could personally interact with youth in a positive way. A number of public service clinics were also held for the community:

- Officers offered complimentary inspections to any commercial vehicle and provided information on deficiencies and how drivers could achieve compliance.
- A Reunite With Your Bike event provided an opportunity for anyone whose bike had been stolen to identify whether any of those found by Municipal Enforcement belonged to them. Any bikes not claimed were donated to charity.
- A Positive Ticketing campaign was introduced to reward youth for positive behaviour. Over 300 tickets were distributed and included a free treat from McDonald's.
- The annual Charity Check Stop was very successful with four truck-loads of food and more than \$6,000 being donated to the local food bank.
- Officers also provided age-appropriate courses to youth such as distracted driving and information around cannabis legislation, in addition to the DARE program.



## Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)

In 2018, FCSS provided \$280,000 in Community Grants to 17 social service programs that provide preventative social services to enhance the well-being of individuals, families and the community.

Over \$100,000 was provided in Innovation Funding for Pilot Projects that met the FCSS mandate.

The Elder Abuse Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model, created by a collaboration of key service providers, is providing regional support in recognizing and responding to elder abuse in the Foothills region.

## Okotoks Family Resource Centre (OFRC)

OFRC handled approximately 5,000 inquiries, supporting and connecting residents with available resources and social services and making referrals. OFRC's social programs and services directly supported over 1,500 residents in need, with an increase from 2017 in most programs.



**5776 CALLS  
RESPONDED BY RCMP**  
INCLUDING FRONT COUNTER  
COMPLAINTS AND WALK INS

**1843 CALLS RESPONDED  
BY PEACE OFFICERS**

**64 COMMERCIAL  
VEHICLE  
INSPECTIONS**



**305 HOURS  
OF POLICE CAR  
PRESENCE / PATROLLING**





**271 RESIDENTS**  
UTILIZED THE VOLUNTEER  
INCOME TAX PROGRAM

**366** REGISTERED  
VOLUNTEERS  
**4820**  
PROVIDED  
VOLUNTEER HOURS



### Volunteer Services

Okotoks continues to be a generous, caring community with 328 adult and youth registered as volunteers. 2018 was the 23rd year for the Annual Leadership Awards, where those who make this community stronger through volunteerism were highlighted and appreciated. More volunteers are always needed.

### Recreational Cannabis

As the retail sale of cannabis is now legal in Canada, the Town is accepting applications from businesses for the retail sale of cannabis and its derivative products. In June, the Land Use Bylaw was amended so retail cannabis stores are allowed as a discretionary use in some commercial and industrial districts, such as the downtown core. Six permits have been received for retail outlets, and the Town is currently waiting for the provincial approval process to be completed before moving forward with the Town's approval.

While Council followed Calgary's position in prohibiting any public use of recreational cannabis, the new Cannabis Consumption Bylaw does include a provision to allow event organizers to apply for a designated area for cannabis consumption at adult-only outdoor events.

#### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

In preparation for the legalization of cannabis, more than 1,000 residents participated in a survey. Based on these results, provincial guidelines and staff recommendations, the following bylaws were developed or amended to incorporate cannabis use:

- 1) Cannabis Consumption Bylaw;
- 2) Smoking Bylaw (includes vaping); and
- 3) Community Standards Bylaw amended to include Nuisance Odors.

The Town hosted five Cannabis Let's Talk Alberta sessions to foster respectful conversations about the use of recreational cannabis and to encourage citizens to talk about and understand the facts about cannabis and the impact legalization will have on the community.

#### WE'RE LISTENING.....



**1,146 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED**  
IN AN ONLINE SURVEY ON RECREATIONAL  
CANNABIS USE IN OKOTOKS.





## ENHANCE Organizational Excellence

### KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

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

#### Active Okotoks

The Town of Okotoks launched a new registration software system in July 2018. The new system was necessary as the old system was outdated and no longer supported.

To register for community programs visit <https://www.activeokotoks.ca>.



#### Water Utilities

After a comprehensive utility system review, the Town determined that resuming control of the water and wastewater systems would be more efficient. This will take effect at the end of 2019. Because the Town owns all the infrastructure and water treatment facilities, customers will not experience any change in water and waste water services.

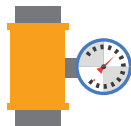
Residents can monitor their water use in real time through the online water meter portal and set alerts when individually-determined thresholds are surpassed. Costly leaks can be caught much earlier, saving customers money. Utility customers can sign up for the portal at [Okotoks.ca/watermeter](http://Okotoks.ca/watermeter).

The Town began offering a \$2 credit incentive to encourage utility customers to sign up for paperless billing and a utility bill calculator was added to the Okotoks website. Information on ebilling and access to the calculator can be found at [Okotoks.ca/utilities](http://Okotoks.ca/utilities).



**3112 CLIENTS**  
ON PAPERLESS BILLING

**1025 PEOPLE**  
SIGNED UP TO THE  
WATER METER PORTAL



#### Waste Collection Changes

Waste Services adjusted the collection schedule to a four-day system for all three carts. The collection routes have been streamlined so they are more efficient and to prepare for future growth.

#### Foothills Centennial Centre

The Town assumed control of the Foothills Centennial Centre effective January 1, 2019, at the request of the former board. This will be a seamless transition since the Pason Centennial Arenas expansion created a connector between the two buildings. This will provide efficiencies and increase booking opportunities.



**THANK YOU FOR DOING YOUR  
PART IN MAKING OKOTOKS A LEADER  
IN WATER CONSERVATION IN CANADA!**

**235 CANADIAN**  
AVERAGE DAILY RESIDENTIAL USE

**174 OKOTOKS**  
AVERAGE DAILY RESIDENTIAL USE

PER CAPITA OF THE POPULATION SERVED (LITRES PER PERSON PER DAY)

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.**

With the approval of several long-range plans, including the Environmental Master Plan, the Town has identified priority positions to help prepare Okotoks for growth while also providing the services that contribute to a high quality of life for residents.



KEY RESULT AREAS & INITIATIVES

**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.**

Residents were invited to numerous public participation opportunities in 2018 including workshops, online surveys, and pop-up information sessions for the Environmental Master Plan, Culture, Heritage and Arts Master Plan, Municipal Development Plan, Tiny Homes Eco Village, local art for Paint-A-Potty, art policy, local transit, and Municipal Heritage Designation Plan.

## AWARDS



Federation of Canadian Municipalities Award

### **2018 MARCOM AWARD GROWING GREENER TOGETHER GUIDE**

The Growing Greener Together Guide won a Gold MarCom Award in 2018 in the category of Informational Publication and is presented to those entries judged to exceed the high standards of the industry norm. There were more than 6,500 entries from 18 countries with only 24 percent receiving the Gold Award.

### **NATIONAL RECOGNITION ENVIRONMENTAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has selected Okotoks' Living Soils Filtration Project as one of the nine recipients for its 2018 Sustainable Communities Award. The award showcases the most innovative environmental initiatives in communities of all sizes across Canada.

### **OKOTOKS RANKED SECOND SUSTAINABLE SPENDING**

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) has ranked Okotoks as the second most fiscally responsible Alberta municipality in real operating spending between 2006-2016. This is particularly impressive as this represents a period when our community was experiencing significant population growth with increased pressure to provide municipal services.





## Promoting Economic Growth

Council has identified economic development as a main priority for 2019 and has allocated resources to support the updated economic development plan with initiatives and activities to achieve the strategic priorities.

These include:

- Launching a business retention and expansion program through initiatives such as expanded business visitation, providing business program information and support, and assisting business owners in navigating development approvals.
- Becoming investment ready, with a plan that incorporates an integrated approach to providing the infrastructure, services and policy framework to support investment readiness.
- Building on collaborative regional economic development efforts.
- Focusing on increasing activity in the downtown core, and offering businesses incentives to increase customers such as a façade program, permits for pop-up-patios etc.
- Enhancing partnerships with key stakeholders such as the Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures and local business organizations;
- Targeting specific industry sectors such as professional, scientific and technical services; manufacturing; agri-business services; food and beverage and the film industry.

Some initiatives that foster economic growth are already underway, such as Land Use Bylaw amendments that expand business opportunities for microbreweries and distilleries, the adoption of the Downtown Urban Design Master Plan, and internal changes that actively lead entrepreneurs and small businesses through the development process.

## Hometown Hockey in Okotoks

Okotoks was selected as a host community for this season's Rogers Hometown Hockey tour coming to town in February. Hometown Hockey is a great opportunity to showcase our beautiful town and community spirit to the many visitors who will attend the festival, and to television audiences across Canada on Sportsnet.

## Driving into 2019 like....



Photo by: Brent Calver, Okotoks Western Wheel

## 2019 Investing in Quality of Place:

- Advancing affordable housing through partnerships
- Exploring partnerships for a downtown arts and learning campus
- Beginning the Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion
- Implementing local in-town transit
- Managing Foothills Centennial Centre
- Beginning to rewrite the Land Use Bylaw
- Reviewing the development permit process
- Enhancing the landscape around Laurie Boyd Bridge

Learn more about the 2019 budget and how we will be investing in quality of place at [Okotoks.ca/bigthingsin2019](http://Okotoks.ca/bigthingsin2019).



See you next year!



Please recycle this  
document when finished.



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