

STRATEGIC PLAN

2027-2030



Okotoks

Vision

The Town of Okotoks is resilient, where people, businesses, ideas and a sense of community thrive.



Priority 1: People

A Community to Call Home

Goal 1: Belonging & Community Wellbeing

Strengthen belonging and improve access to day-to-day activities, services, and amenities that support community health and wellbeing.

Goal 2: Rooted in Relationship

Invest in relationships to build trust and strengthen community understanding, so decisions reflect what matters most to residents.



Priority 3: Business

A Thriving Local Economy

Goal 1: Business Retention & Attraction

Retain and attract a diversity of businesses and increase employment opportunities close to home.

Goal 2: Places for Business

Create opportunities for a variety of spaces so businesses of all sizes and kinds can thrive.



How this plan will be used

Along with the Budget Guidelines, these priorities inform how time and resources are allocated. Sometimes focusing on priorities will require trade-offs, while continuing to deliver services to defined levels and sustaining a strong organizational foundation.

STRATEGIC PLAN

2027–2030 at a Glance

Guiding Focus

Identity First

Protecting and enhancing the character and identity of Okotoks, with **Connection** as the thread running through the priorities and actions.
(Belonging, Nature, Movement, Access, Safety, Amenities)

Priority 2: Place

A Connected Community

Goal 1: Neighbourhood Connectivity & Daily Destinations

Make it easy to get to the places that matter so all neighbourhoods feel connected to the rest of the community.

Goal 2: Vibrant Public Spaces

Invest in well-designed, well-maintained public spaces and streets that reflect Okotoks' character and support everyday use.

Organizational

Foundations for Delivery

Enabling how we deliver: strong financial stewardship; capable people; clear, streamlined processes; and modern systems.

Goal 1: Financial Health

Ensure reliable, fair, and adequate funding streams that support long-term service levels and protect affordability.

Goal 2: Modernize Systems

Transition and replace the Town's financial and supporting systems.

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INTRODUCTION

Creating the Town of Okotoks Strategic Plan 2027-2030 was shaped by what each member of Council heard from residents on doorsteps during the election and from resident feedback in the 2025 Community Priorities Survey and 2025 Budget Engagement. Together, Council reflected on that input, explored the possibilities and decided what matters most to focus on.

This plan reflects those shared priorities and describes the areas that Council and Administration will collectively focus on over the next four years.



Council's Strategic Priorities:

2027 - 2030



Vision

The Town of Okotoks is resilient, where people, businesses, ideas and a 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.



Identity First

The guiding principle for this Plan is: **IDENTITY FIRST**
Okotoks is a community grounded in its identity—who we are and how we treat each other. People choose Okotoks for the everyday connections that make life feel good: a friendly welcome, a small-town feel, and a community that shows up for one another. This plan focuses on protecting and strengthening those values, with **Connection** as the thread that runs through the actions that follow.

- Belonging (connection to each other)
- Nature (connection to nature)
- Movement (connection between spaces and places)
- Access (connection to the things people need)
- Safety (connection to feeling safe in everyday life)
- Amenities (connection to the things that make life better)

Identity First means that Okotokians – new and old, of all ages and abilities – feel like this is their community, that they are able to participate fully in community life, and continue to see themselves reflected in Okotoks as we grow.

As we grow, welcoming new residents, businesses, and ideas, our identity becomes even more important. It is the foundation that transforms a growing town into a cohesive community. Being intentional about our identity ensures that change reflects who we are and what we value, while inviting new residents to become part of that shared fabric. By enhancing and protecting the character of Okotoks as we evolve, we build a community where people feel rooted, included, and confident that growth will strengthen the place they proudly call home.

A NARRATIVE FOR OKOTOKS

If we are guided by identity, what is that identity?

Okotoks is a place people fall in love with. They choose it for the mountain views and the Sheep River, for running into a neighbour at the grocery store, for the way their kids can safely walk to a friend's house. This plan is about the actions that foster what makes that true.

Community that connects

What sets Okotoks apart isn't just what's here, it's who's here and how we show up for each other. Neighbours know one another and people volunteer their time. The way we work together – our organizations, businesses, the Town and even our neighbouring communities – makes the town and the whole region stronger. It's a place where events bring us together and are a hallmark of life. We are a community that is active, inclusive, and genuinely diverse, and where every resident, regardless of age, income, or background, feels they belong. These aren't nice extras, they are integral to the community.

A place worth being proud of

There is something that happens when someone says 'I'm from Okotoks'. A quiet pride that comes from feeling genuinely connected to a place – to the natural environment that is uniquely Okotoks; between neighbourhoods so that no part of town feels far from the rest; access to the amenities that make life good. Our built environment – the way we plan communities, build infrastructure, create public spaces – is how we create a liveable community that is centred on the people who live here.

Opportunity, close to home

Okotoks is a place where a good idea can grow. A community thrives when ideas and the businesses that grow from them thrive. Okotoks is the kind of place where an entrepreneur can chase their dream knowing the community is behind them. Where local businesses find the conditions to grow, and where new businesses choose us because we're Okotoks. Whether through their work or at school, it's a place where people can learn, build skills, and find a career without having to leave to do it.



This approach is grounded in what makes Okotoks, Okotoks. The priorities and actions that follow are intended to protect and strengthen our identity and values as we grow, while guiding change in a way that reflects who we are as a community.



People

A Community to Call Home

Connection makes Okotoks not just a place where people live, but a place where they belong. By prioritizing opportunities for connections, we create a community where people look out for one another and participate together. In feeling connected to community, it reflects confidence that Town leadership is listening and responding with care. Strong relationships are the foundation of a resilient, welcoming community and they are essential to navigating change together.

Goal 1: Belonging & Community Wellbeing

We strengthen belonging and improve access to day-to-day activities, services, and amenities that support community health and wellbeing.

- Review opportunities to enhance access to recreation amenities, aligned with affordability and long-term financial sustainability
- Improve awareness of bookable arts spaces to increase access and usage, and to understand functional gaps in arts spaces
- Strengthen belonging by supporting inclusive, community-building programs and partnerships that reduce barriers to participation

Goal 2: Rooted in Relationship

Council invests in relationships to build trust and strengthen community understanding, so decisions reflect what matters most to residents.

- Create consistent, relationship-based engagement practices (e.g. neighbourhood conversations, community roundtables, and targeted outreach) that complement formal public participation processes
- Strengthen partnerships with community organizations, volunteer groups, and neighbouring municipalities to align efforts, and share insights
- Improve feedback loops by clearly communicating what we heard, what we decided, and why so residents can see how input informed outcomes
- Support Council and Administration in understanding community needs and trends (e.g. orientation, listening sessions, data-informed community dashboards)





Place

A Connected Community

Okotoks is a special place where the river valley and open sky, neighborhood character, and every day public spaces make it not just where we live, but home. Careful planning shapes the spaces we live in and creates the places where people linger, meet, and feel like they belong. Thoughtful investment cares for, maintains, and adapts the places and infrastructure we have. These actions focus on the built and natural environments that shape daily life, strengthen quality of life, and ensure Okotoks continue to feel like the town we know and love.



Goal 1: Neighbourhood Connectivity & Daily Destinations

We make it easy to get to the places that matter – parks, schools, shops, services, and gathering spaces – so all neighbourhoods feel connected to the rest of the community.

- Identify and address gaps in everyday access (e.g. safe crossings, improved pathway links, barriers to mobility) to strengthen connection between neighbourhoods
- Focus targeted investment in the transportation network to improve movement around the community
- Review transit access pilot for opportunities to improve transit access, ridership, and service levels
- Prioritize safety and comfort for all ages and abilities (e.g. crossings, visibility, winter maintenance, traffic calming) in key walking and cycling routes

Goal 2: Vibrant Public Spaces

We invest in well-designed, well-maintained public spaces and streets that reflect Okotoks' character and support everyday use.

- Prioritize placemaking and streetscape improvements in high-use areas (e.g. downtown, civic facilities, key corridors) to strengthen identity and comfort
- Strengthen expectations for community design (e.g. human-scale built form, walkability, attractive public realm) through policy and development review
- Define and communicate service levels for public-space maintenance (cleanliness, landscaping, visibility, seasonal care) to support pride and usability
- Support a mix of local-serving amenities and gathering places within or near neighbourhoods, aligned with community needs and affordability
- Protect and enhance the Sheep River valley and natural areas to strengthen connection to nature and the unique landscape that anchors Okotoks



Business

A Thriving Local Economy

A strong and diverse local economy means expanding access to meaningful work close to home at all stages of a career, and giving people more choice in how and where they build their livelihoods. Economic diversification strengthens municipal financial sustainability, reduces reliance on residential taxes, and attracts new investment that benefits the entire community. As businesses grow, they fuel local nonprofits, create spaces for innovation, and ensure that the dollars earned in Okotoks continue to circulate here, reinforcing a resilient, inclusive economy for generations to come.

Goal 1: Business Retention & Attraction

We attract and retain a diversity of businesses and increase employment opportunities closer to home and flipping the commute.

- Support investment attraction for businesses that align with Okotoks' values and create an environment that encourages a 'Made in Okotoks' mindset
- Focus on the attraction and growth of professional and industrial employment opportunities
- Improve ease of doing business by streamlining Town processes (e.g. improve permitting)
- Develop the Arts & Culture sector, recognizing its value as an employer, as a way to build a more livable community, and as an attraction tool for other business investment
- Promote tourism as a tool for supporting local entrepreneurs, small business, and economic diversification

Goal 2: Places for Business

We create opportunities for a variety of spaces so businesses of all sizes and kinds can thrive.

- Encourage targeted built-form to meet the needs of small independent businesses, including through the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw
- Investment in downtown development and activation activities



Organizational Foundations for Delivery

Putting these principles into practice requires strong internal foundations. The enablers below focus on how we deliver this plan in a sustainable, accountable way.

Enabling How We Deliver

These enablers are our commitment to organizational excellence: strong financial stewardship; capable people; clear, streamlined processes; and modern systems. Together, these contribute to reliable services, support good decision-making, build trust, and keep the Town efficient, effective, and affordable.

Goal 1: Financial Health

We ensure that the Town has reliable, fair, and adequate funding streams that support long-term service levels and protect affordability for residents and businesses.

- Update the Town's Off-site Levy bylaw to ensure funding tools are fair, transparent, and aligned with the infrastructure and capital costs required to serve the community
- Develop a renewed Long-Term Financial Health Framework to balance today's needs with the long-range financial picture—using the full set of municipal levers to manage tax impacts, improve affordability, and support sustainable investment (e.g., sponsorships, Community Investment Fund)

Goal 2: Modernize Systems

- Replace the Town's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, including core financial systems



What's Next: How Will This Plan be Used?

Along with the Budget Guidelines, this plan will help guide how Administration balances these priorities with the day-to-day delivery of services.

This plan is a living guide. Council and Administration will regularly review our progress, reflect on what we're hearing from the community and make adjustments as needed to stay focused on what matters most.

Through it all, we will continue looking for ways to continuously improve how we deliver on these priorities and the services that support our community.

Okotoks