

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY PHASE 3

OKOTOKS
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE



AUGUST 2, 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The Town of Okotoks is updating our Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The update to this provincially required plan will guide long-term growth and development and identify how to achieve our community vision.

A lot has changed since the MDP was last updated. Until recently, growth and development were limited by our land base and supply of fresh water, and the existing 1998 MDP reflected those constraints. In 2012, with increasing pressure in the region (after three years of community consultation), Okotoks switched from a finite growth approach to a managed growth approach and in 2017 annexed additional lands outside of the current Town boundary. Okotoks is also working to secure a long-term supply of water. This will help to accommodate expected growth over the next 60 years to a population of 86,000 (from our current population of 29,000).

Many people have been involved. During the last 15-months, the Town has been asking residents, business owners, stakeholders and community groups to weigh in on how community strengths can be built upon while planning for the future.



- **In Phase 1**, the process began with an interactive public event and questionnaire to explore priorities and big ideas for Okotoks' future. Click link to review the [Phase 1 Snapshot](#). Click link to review the [Phase 1 What We Heard report](#).
- **In Phase 2**, we explored specific topics and discussed key policy options and trade-offs. Click link to review the [Phase 2 Snapshot](#). Click here to review the [Phase 2 What We Heard report](#).
- **In Phase 3**, all the feedback received to date was used to develop a draft of the updated MDP and was brought back to the community to make sure we are on the right track before it is presented to Council for approval.

The feedback from Phase 3 is helping to directly shape the next draft of the updated Municipal Development Plan. Assessment of current policy and context in Okotoks has helped us to identify what we have today and what needs updating, as well as bringing best practices and examples from elsewhere in the world for us to learn from. The feedback from all phases, along with technical analysis and Council direction, will help us further refine and shape the next draft of the update to the Municipal Development Plan. **Thank you for helping us shape the updated Municipal Development Plan!**

This report provides a summary of public engagement in Phase 3, from April to July 2019.

WHAT WE DID

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

From April-July 2019, MODUS and Town staff engaged with Council, hosted two public open houses and an online questionnaire, attended the Seniors' Tea event and led discussions with developers, the School Districts, and Foothills County. Phase 3 presented the full draft of the new MDP as well as a 12-page 'snapshot' for public review and comment. Both documents were available online and at in-person events. The online survey and open houses walked the community through core elements of the new plan and gathered input to check if we are on the right track before the plan is finalized and presented to Council. The goal was to gather meaningful input to revise and refine the plan before presentation to Council.

Council Workshops



6

Council members
at Council
workshops

In April 2019, MODUS staff conducted a workshop with Town Council for the Municipal Development Plan.

The goal of the workshop was to present initial key policy directions, increase Council's understanding of policy options and implications, and identify where changes in initial policy directions were required.

In July 2019, Town staff conducted a workshop with Town Council to discuss key policies within the draft Municipal Development Plan and initial public and stakeholder feedback on the first draft.



2

Open Houses
Hosted

Open Houses

On June 6 and 8, 2019, Okotoks hosted drop-in open houses on the draft MDP in the lobby of the Okotoks Recreation Centre. The purpose of the open houses was to thank participants for their input throughout the process and gather final comments to check if we are on the right track.

Participants were able to ask questions and have discussion with Okotoks' staff members and were encouraged to provide feedback via the online survey.



14

Attended
Stakeholder
Workshops

Stakeholder Workshops

In June 2019, Okotoks hosted three discussions with stakeholder groups: one with developers, one with the School Districts/schools in Okotoks, and one with Foothills County. A total of 14 stakeholders attended and participated in the events.

These stakeholder groups reviewed and provided feedback on the draft MDP as a whole and on specific policies in the draft MDP.



225

Completed
the Online
Survey

Online Survey

A public survey was available online from June 6 to July 12. Participants could rate their level of support for each policy direction in the MDP, provide qualitative feedback and comments on that policy, suggest additional ideas, and indicate the importance of each MDP chapter to them. A total of 225 survey responses were received.

PROMOTION

The third phase of engagement, from June – July 2019, used similar branding as the first two phases to continue broad recognition of the process. The “Okotoks – Get Involved” branding goal is to be inviting and engaging to encourage people to join the conversation. Engagement activities were promoted extensively and in advance to reach as many people as possible.

Online Promotion

- Dedicated project webpage to promote upcoming engagement events and activities.
- Project information on main Okotoks homepage news item and homepage banner
- Project information on Planning webpage banner.
- Social media: Facebook posts, paid ads and updates; Twitter posts and updates.
- Information included in Town e-newsletter
- Project information on Okotoks Online website.

Print Notices and Community Signage

- Newspaper ads ran in the Western Wheel consistently to promote the open houses, online survey, and the project. There have been several articles about the project as well.
- Information was included in Town utility bills that were mailed to all households in Okotoks.
- Posters distributed at public and Town facilities and local businesses throughout the community.
- Information about the project also on digital signs at Southridge Drive and 32nd St throughout project.

Radio Ads

- Was included in the Mayor's monthly message promoting the open houses and online survey on The Eagle, 100.9 FM. Several on-air interviews were also done with project staff.



WHAT WE HEARD

The following section summarizes what we heard from all public engagement, including the online survey and three stakeholder workshops. Comments from the open houses are not included as participants were directed to the online survey to provide their feedback on the draft plan.

The online survey and stakeholder workshops both asked for feedback on the draft MDP, including specific policy options. All qualitative feedback was summarized by common theme. The feedback from the online survey and the stakeholder workshops were summarized separately.

At stakeholder workshops, participants gave qualitative feedback and comments on the draft MDP as a whole and any specific policies they wanted to comment on.

On the online survey, participants could rate their level of support for each policy, provide qualitative feedback and comments on that policy, suggest additional ideas, and indicate the importance of each MDP chapter to them.

The feedback from the online survey is summarized by policy option, and is categorized by overall level of support for that policy option. When rating their agreement with each policy, participants could vote for one of five options: “Totally Oppose”, “Slightly Oppose”, “Neutral”, “Slightly Support”, and “100% Support”. The level of support was calculated by calculating a weighted average from these votes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The details are not quite right: In Phase 2, we heard strong support for most policy directions. In this phase, support was not as strong for the detailed policies. We will reconsider the specific details and wording for policies that received low levels of support in this phase.

Needs more clarification: More explanation and information is needed for some terms and concepts. Use plain language and explain what the MDP does and does not do. Many policies in the MDP allow or facilitate a type of development or program, but are not necessarily funded by the Town. This was not clear enough in the draft MDP and will need to be clarified, as many participants thought that municipal funding would be required.

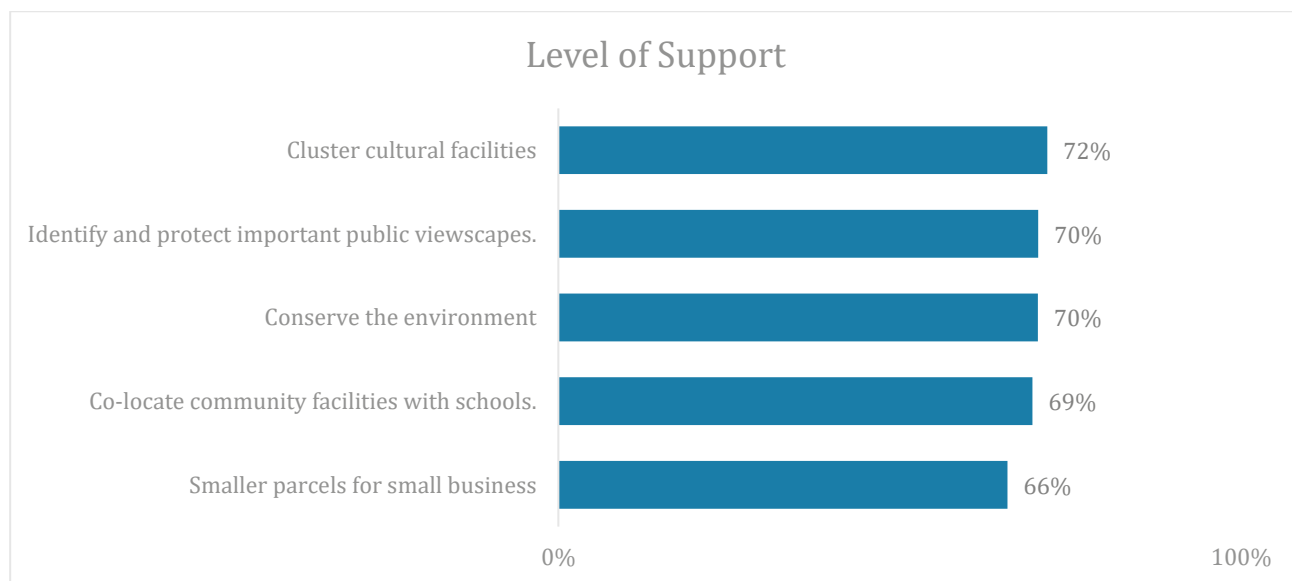
Be clear about trade-offs: Consequences and trade-offs for policy directions need to be more clear in the MDP. One example is the lower cost to service and maintain higher density development (per unit) than traditional development.

Be flexible: Some participants want to provide more flexibility with fewer strict requirements in regulations so that the “market can decide” what is developed. In some cases incentives may be more effective than regulation.

Be careful about tax dollars: Although the MDP does not include specific funding decisions, participants are concerned about what municipal money is used for. Ensure municipal funds are used efficiently.

STRONGLY SUPPORTED POLICIES

These policies had levels of support above 65%.



Neighbourhood Planning and Design: Cluster cultural facilities

Cluster cultural facilities with complementary uses like schools, parks, and libraries.

Level of support: 72%

Comments (15 total):

- **General support** (7 comments)
- **Multiple uses can be challenging:** Using a space for multiple uses can be really effective – but can be challenging on-the-ground. (2 comments)
- **Ensure adequate parking** (2 comments)
- **Keeping uses separately is often more effective** (1 comment)
- **Stop building** (1 comment)
- **Neighbourhood parks are more important than facilities** (1 comment)
- **Plan for another aquatic and recreation centre** (1 comment)

Neighbourhood Planning and Design: Identify and protect important public views

Identify and protect important public views.

Level of support: 70%

Comments (24 total):

- **There are a lack of views:** There are not any remaining views. D'Arcy has now blocked what was an important view. (12 comments)
- **Needs clarification:** The terminology and question need to be clearly defined. (5 comments)
- **General opposition** (3 comment)
- **Balance growth with existing residents:** Need to balance growth while protecting views and quality of life for existing residents. (2 comments)
- **Views are part of the charm of Okotoks** (1 comment)
- **Public consensus on which views to protect is difficult** (1 comment)

Managing Growth: Conserve the environment

Conserve environmentally sensitive and valuable areas.

Level of support: 70%

Comments (19 total):

- **Too costly:** The Town has taken "sustainability" too far and should return to a basic return-on-investment analysis. (7 comments)
- **Prohibit development in sensitive areas:** Prohibit new development on and around environmentally sensitive areas and waterways, including the river valley. (4 comments)
- **Conserve views:** Conserve important views, such as prairie and mountain vistas. (1 comment)
- **General support** (3 comments)
- **Needs clarification:** The terminology "sustainability" needs to be clearly defined. (1 comment)
- **Ensure green spaces have proper maintenance** (1 comment)
- **Survey is poorly designed** (1 comment)
- **Educate the public:** Provide more public education on protecting and conserving green spaces/wetlands. (1 comment)
- **Manage the Sheep River:** Dredge the river to mitigate flooding, and create a reservoir upstream. (1 comment)

Neighbourhood Planning and Design: Co-locate community facilities with schools

Co-locate community facilities with schools.

Level of support: 69%

Comments (15 total):

- **General support** (8 comments)
- **General opposition** (3 comments)
- **Ensure adequate parking** (2 comments)
- **Design spaces to be flexible:** School Districts would have to be willing to design flexible spaces. (1 comment)
- **Needs clarification:** The question needs clarification. (1 comment)

Employment Focused Lands: Smaller parcels for small business

Encourage a variety of parcel sizes, including smaller parcels affordable for small businesses.

Level of support: 66%

Comments (14 total comments):

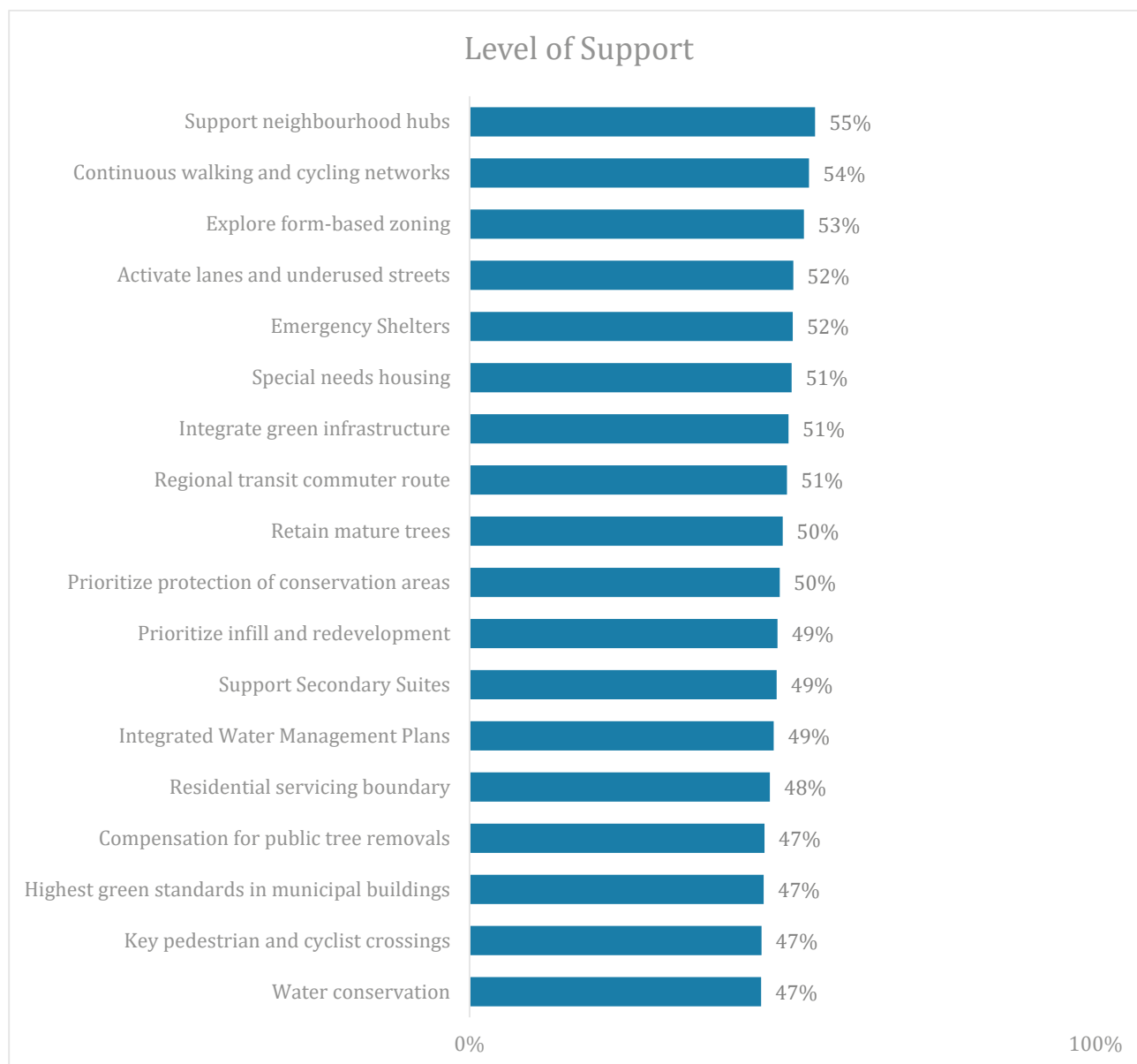
- **Let the market decide:** Let the market decide what businesses and parcel sizes are viable. (6 comments)
- **Reduce taxes:** Reduce taxes to support businesses instead. (3 comments)
- **General support** (2 comments)
- **Stop building:** Stop building when many buildings are already vacant. (1 comment)
- **Start gradually:** Start gradually and build as you go to learn what works best. (1 comment)
- **Does not work:** Okotoks already has small parcels and businesses fail due to a lack of population. (1 comment)

SLIGHTLY SUPPORTED POLICIES

No policies had support between 56% and 65%.

NEUTRALLY SUPPORTED POLICIES

These policies had levels of support between 46%-55%.



Neighbourhood Planning and Design: Support neighbourhood hubs

Support neighbourhood hubs as community focal points by encouraging small-scale mixed-use development that includes public spaces.

Level of support: 55%

Comments (26 total):

- **Let the market decide:** Let the market decide what types of developments are viable to build. (7 comments)
- **Spend money elsewhere:** Support with zoning – but do not use municipal funding to build this. (7 comments)
- **General support** (4 comments)
- **Ensure good design:** Neighbourhood hubs and public spaces should be well-designed for people to spend time in and enhance the character of neighbourhoods. (3 comments)
- **General opposition** (3 comments)
- **Ensure maintenance is considered** (1 comment)
- **Green spaces would be better than neighbourhood hubs** (1 comment)

Sustainable Transportation: Continuous walking and cycling networks

Walking and cycling networks should be continuous, connected, and direct. Prioritize generous, unobstructed sidewalks over additional vehicle capacity and on-street parking.

Level of support: 54%

Comments (31 comments):

- **Balance with the vehicle network:** Most people are dependent on cars to get around. Balance the vehicle network and active transportation, and provide access and parking to pathways. (12 comments)
- **Winter Town:** Okotoks experiences winter conditions for a large portion of the year, and people do not want to walk in winter. (10 comments)
- **General support** (4 comments)
- **May be too expensive:** Development will become more expensive and maintenance will be an ongoing cost. (3 comments)
- **General opposition** (2 comments)

Employment-Focused Lands: Explore form-based zoning

Explore form-based zoning to allow a wider range of businesses and other uses to co-locate.

Level of support: 53%

Comments (19 total comments):

- **Let the market decide:** Lessen regulations and let the market determine viable businesses. (4 comments)
- **More regulation:** More regulations are needed on separating uses and maintaining attractive developments. (3 comments)
- **General opposition** (3 comments)
- **General support** (3 comments)
- **Use money elsewhere:** This will be costly for the Town to manage. (2 comments)
- **Support local businesses:** Encourage small and local businesses through incentives and making rents affordable. (2 comments)
- **The Town is over-planned and lacks character** (1 comment)
- **Needs clarification:** The terminology “form-based zoning” needs clarification. (1 comment)

Downtown: Activate lanes and underused streets

Activate lanes and underused streets (like Daggett Street) with stores and patios.

Level of support: 52%

Comments (20 total comments):

- **Reduce regulation:** Reduce regulations and “red tape” so that businesses can develop if the market is there. (4 comments)
- **Needs clarification:** The terminology, question, and idea need more explanation and clarification. (4 comments)
- **Need service access:** Laneways need to be used for service access, rather than for patios or as a thoroughfare. (3 comments)
- **General opposition** (3 comments)
- **Let the market decide:** Let the market decide which businesses are viable. (2 comments)
- **Attract pedestrians:** Support shops and services to attract people Downtown. (1 comment)
- **Focus on Main Street:** Focus on more patios and higher standards of development on Main Street instead. (1 comment)
- **Later business hours:** Businesses need to be open during evenings and the weekend for this to work. (1 comment)
- **Town can’t relocate train tracks** (1 comment)

Housing: Emergency shelters

Allow emergency shelters in locations in close proximity to relevant amenities and services.

Level of support: 52%

Comments (15 comments total):

- **Allow, but do not fund:** Emergency shelters should be allowed through zoning, but not municipal-funded or run – they should be run by non-profits with expertise. (6 comments)
- **Needs clarification:** The terminology and question need more explanation and clarification. (5 comments)
- **Only family emergency shelters:** Family emergency shelters are okay, but other emergency or detox shelters need more consultation. (2 comments)
- **General support** (1 comment)
- **Use public buildings:** Require new public buildings to include the ability to act as a shelter in emergencies. (1 comment)

Housing: Special needs housing

Partner and support special needs housing across the community. Prioritize locations in close proximity to relevant amenities and services.

Level of support: 51%

Comments (15 total):

- **Spend money elsewhere:** Do not use municipal funding to support this. (4 comments)
- **Town should not develop:** The Town should not develop special needs housing but only support and incentivize. (3 comments)
- **Partner with non-profits:** Non-profits know how to fill this need best. Support them through zoning and ease of regulation – but not financially. (3 comments)
- **General opposition** (2 comments)
- **Integrate into neighbourhoods:** Integrate – rather than separate – special needs housing into neighbourhoods. (1 comment)
- **Prioritize locations close to amenities and services** (1 comment)

Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas: Integrate green infrastructure

Integrate green infrastructure and low-impact approaches into new developments.

Level of support: 51%

Comments (16 total):

- **Needs clarification:** The idea needs more explanation and clarification. (7 comments)
- **Let the market decide:** Let developers include green infrastructure if the market is there. (4 comments)
- **Calculate cost-benefit:** Only integrate green infrastructure if the cost-benefit analysis is positive. (3 comments)
- **General opposition** (2 comments)

Sustainable Transportation: Regional transit commuter route

Collaborate with the Calgary Metropolitan Region member municipalities for a regional transit commuter route.

Level of support: 51%

Comments (21 total):

- **Do not subsidize:** A regional transit route should be user-pay and not subsidized by the Town. (7 comments)
- **General support** (5 comments)
- **General opposition** (5 comments)
- **Public transit is beneficial:** Public transit's benefits apply to all – not just those who use it. (1 comment)

Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas: Retain mature trees

Encourage and incentivize the retention of mature trees on private lands where practical.

Level of support: 50%

Comments (17 total):

- **Encourage – but don't incentivize:** Don't use municipal funds to incentivize retention of mature trees. (12 comments)
- **Don't regulate private property:** Don't regulate trees or landscaping on private properties. (3 comments)
- **Encourage tree maintenance:** Encourage reasonable maintenance within the tree's natural lifecycle. (1 comment)
- **General support** (1 comment)

Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas: Prioritize protection of conservation areas

Encourage development to prioritize protection of conservation areas by clustering density.

Level of support: 50%

Comments (18 total):

- **General support** (5 comments)
- **General opposition** (4 comments)
- **Town needs to show leadership:** The Town has not shown leadership on this yet – but should. (3 comments)
- **Oppose higher densities:** Should conserve land – but not build higher densities. (3 comments)
- **Needs clarification:** The idea and terminology needs more explanation and clarification. (3 comments)
- **Use approval process:** Do not approve development that impacts conservation areas. (1 comment)

Managing Growth: Prioritize infill and redevelopment

Prioritize infill and redevelopment over new greenfield neighbourhoods.

Level of support: 49%

Comments (27 total):

- **Ensure public services are addressed:** Infill and redevelopment increasing density will require additional public services, infrastructure, amenities, and additional water supply. (11 comments)
- **Let the market decide:** Let the market decide where and when development should occur. Let development occur through the normal channels. If variety is wanted, zone the land accordingly and let the market decide. (5 comments)
- **Manage cost of services:** Carefully balance who funds infrastructure and manage the costs of municipal service delivery in order to keep taxes low. (3 comments)
- **This is unnecessary:** There is minimal need for infill in Okotoks. (2 comments)
- **Ensure affordability:** This policy will make Okotoks less affordable and is not market-driven. (1 comment)
- **Have higher standards:** The Town should hold developers to higher standards (e.g., for attractiveness, amenities, and architectural design). (1 comment)
- **Keep a small Town character:** People move to Okotoks for a small Town character – don't turn into another Calgary or require too much density. (3 comments)
- **Halt residential development:** Until an additional water supply is secured, halt all residential development. (1 comment)
- **Create more choice:** Consumers currently do not have a choice for housing except what is provided by the developer. (1 comment)

Housing: Support secondary suites

Support and foster secondary suites and accessory dwelling units in residential neighbourhoods.

Level of support: 49%

Comments (19 total):

- **Maintain suite conditions:** Secondary suites must meet building code, be permitted, and inspected properly. Limit the number of suites in an individual neighbourhood. (7 comments)
- **General support** (6 comments)
- **Need additional parking:** There needs to be additional parking provided for the demand from secondary suites. (5 comments)
- **Spend money elsewhere:** Do not use municipal funding to promote or develop. (1 comment)

Infrastructure: Integrated Water Management Plans

Require Integrated Water Management Plans (that holistically examine all aspects of water use) for large new developments.

Level of support: 49%

Comments (16 total):

- **Needs clarification:** This terminology requires further clarification. (11 comments)
- **Halt new developments:** Stop approving development until water supply is secured. (4 comments)
- **Implement greywater reuse** (1 comment)

Managing Growth: Residential servicing boundary

Consider a temporary residential servicing boundary within the annexed area.

Level of support: 48%

Comments (27 total):

- **Needs clarification:** The terminology needs more explanation. (9 comments)
- **Prioritize water supply:** Prioritize and address water supply before setting residential boundaries. (8 comments)
- **Halt developing new areas:** Stop developing and annexing new lands – focus on servicing and improving existing developed area. (4 comments)
- **Balance growth and cost:** Balance growth and the municipal cost and ensure there is a return-on-investment. (2 comments)
- **Ensure affordability:** Artificial growth boundaries will lessen affordability. (1 comment)
- **Specify the timeline:** A boundary needs a timeline for study in the future. (1 comment)
- **Let the market decide** (1 comment)
- **The Town should not play “winners and losers” with developers.** (1 comment)

Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas: Compensation for public tree removals

Require compensation, based on valuation, for any public trees removed.

Level of support: 47%

Comments (21 total):

- **Needs clarification:** The idea needs more explanation. (6 comments)
- **General opposition** (5 comments)
- **General support** (3 comments)
- **Do not require on private lands:** Homeowners should be allowed to do what they like. Consider a simple approval process instead. (3 comments)
- **Prohibit tree removal:** Trees should not be allowed to be removed (2 comments)
- **Require from developers:** Require compensation from developers. (2 comments)
- **Relocate trees instead** (1 comment)
- **Compensate homeowners:** Compensate homeowners for trees that damaged private properties. (1 comment)

Green Buildings and Energy Systems: Highest green standards in municipal buildings

Show municipal leadership by using the highest standards of green building and sustainable site design for new municipal buildings.

Level of support: 47%

In “Green Buildings and Energy Systems”, all comments were for the overall theme and can be found under “Highest standards for green building”.

Sustainable Transportation: Key pedestrian and cyclist crossings

Plan for key pedestrian and cyclist crossings across Highway 2A and Highway 7.

Level of support: 47%

Comments (19 total):

- **General opposition** (6 comments)
- **Needs a Provincial partnership:** The highways are Provincial jurisdiction, and crossings should be paid for by the Province. (4 comments)
- **General support.** (4 comments)
- **Use existing crossings:** Use existing lights or stop signs – don’t build grade-separated crossings. (2 comments)
- **May not be cost-effective:** Complete a cost-benefit analysis and evaluate if these are cost-effective. (2 comments)
- **Needs clarification:** The idea needs additional clarification. (1 comment)

Infrastructure: Water conservation

Continue to strengthen water conservation standards, including drought-tolerant landscaping.

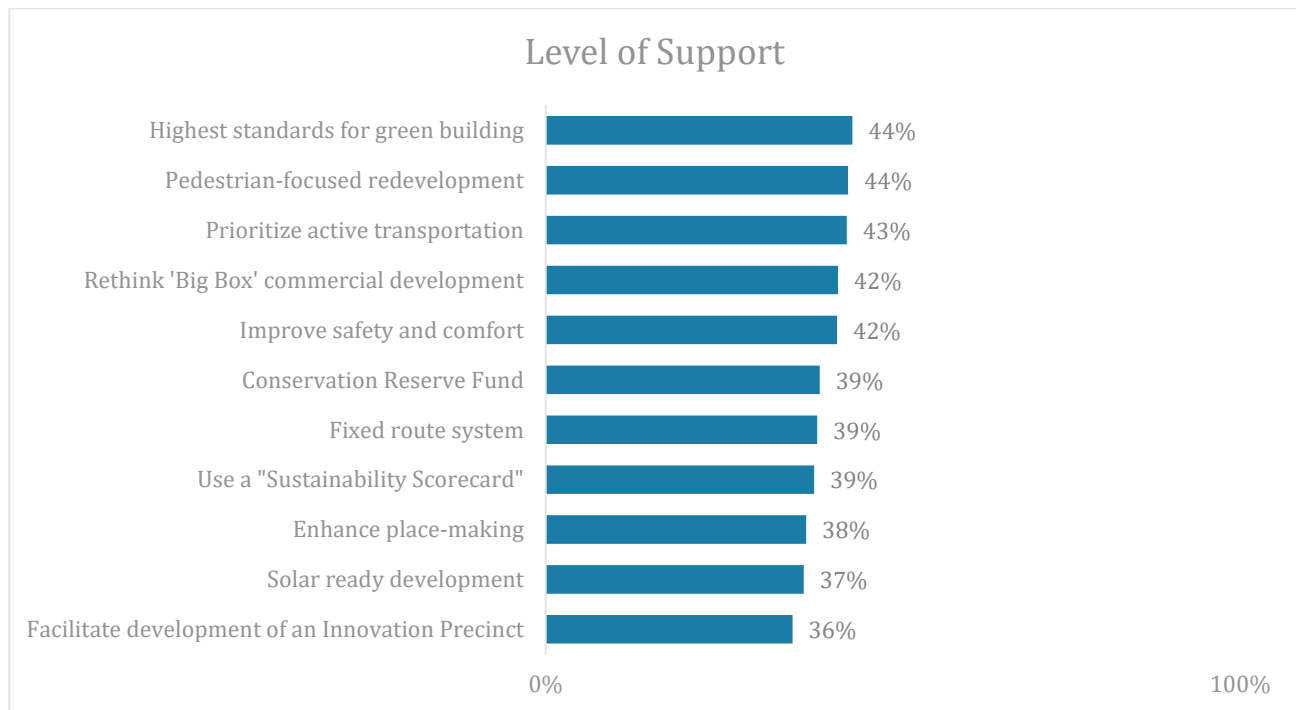
Level of support: 47%

Comments (17 comments):

- **Spend more elsewhere:** Do not use tax money to pay for or incentivize water conservation and drought tolerant landscaping. (3 comments)
- **General support.** (3 comments)
- **Green spaces:** Encourage greenery – not just concrete and desert landscaping. (2 comments)
- **Increase water supply:** Increase the water supply instead, and stop developing until there is additional water supply. (3 comments)
- **Do not regulate private land:** Do not regulate landscaping on private properties. (4 comments)
- **Reuse water:** Retain and reuse stormwater and greywater. (2 comments)
- **Build into standards:** Continue to encourage and require through community development standards. (1 comment)
- **Provide public education:** Provide xeriscaping examples and show people how attractive it can be. (1 comment)

SLIGHTLY NON-SUPPORTED POLICIES

These policies had levels of support between 36-45%.



Green Buildings and Energy Systems: Highest standards for green building

Require the highest standards of green building and sustainable site design (e.g. passive house).

Level of support: 44%

This includes all comments for the overall theme of “Green Buildings and Energy Systems”.

Comments (30 total):

- **Too expensive:** Requiring green buildings shouldn't be funded by the municipality and would make housing more expensive. (12 comments)
- **General opposition**(4 comments)
- **Let the market decide:** Let the market decide if green buildings are viable to build. (3 comments)
- **Don't use solar power:** Solar panels are carbon intensive and do not provide an adequate return on investment. (5 comments)
- **Encourage – don't require:** Town programs and policy should support green building where effective – but don't impose requirements on private development. (1 comment)
- **Enforce further standards:** Consider further requirements or standards for green buildings and proper enforcement methods. (3 comments)
- **To be sustainable, stop building** (1 comment)
- **Sync traffic lights** (1 comment)

Downtown: Pedestrian-focused redevelopment

Redevelopment should be pedestrian-focused, with a focus on small businesses, attractive buildings, and parking that does not dominate the streetscape.

Level of support: 44%

Comments (27 total comments):

- **Provide additional parking:** Prioritize additional parking close to businesses, or people will not visit Downtown. (8 comments)
- **Focus on people driving, not walking:** More people travel by car than on foot, so ensure it is easy to drive Downtown. (5 comments)
- **Let the market decide:** Let the market decide which businesses and land uses are viable, rather than directing specific form. (4 comments)
- **Winter Town:** Okotoks experiences winter conditions for a large portion of the year, and people do not want to walk in winter. (4 comments)
- **General support:** It has been done in Calgary – no reason it can't be done in Okotoks. It requires a vision of an alternate future that doesn't currently exist in Okotoks, rather than current habits. (3 comments)
- **Spend money elsewhere:** Tax money should not be used for pedestrian-focused redevelopment. (3 comments)

Sustainable Transportation: Prioritize active transportation

Prioritize active transportation, and public transit in all transportation decisions throughout town.

Level of support: 43%

Comments (28 comments):

- **Lack of demand:** There is a lack of demand for public transit. The focus should be on private vehicles. (8 comments)
- **Spend money elsewhere:** Do not use municipal funding to fund public transit as it is too expensive to run. (7 comments)
- **Invest in sustainable modes:** Strive to become a more sustainable community and invest in transit and active transportation. (4 comment)
- **General opposition** (3 comments)
- **Consider alternatives:** Have a small bus or ride-sharing. (2 comments)
- **Partner regionally:** Partner with regional municipalities to create public transit and an active transportation network. (1 comment)
- **Needs clarification:** The question needs more explanation. (1 comment)
- **Winter Town:** Active transportation can be hard in a cold climate. (1 comment)
- **Consider all modes equally.** (1 comment)

Employment-Focused Lands: Rethink “big box” commercial development

Rethink conventional ‘big box’ commercial development and require commercial uses to be mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly.

Level of support: 42%

Comments (28 total comments):

- **Let the market decide:** Let the market decide which businesses are viable with minimal interference from the Town. (11 comments).
- **Support local businesses:** Need support and incentives for small local businesses to make it affordable for owners to operate. (3 comments)
- **General support** (3 comments)
- **Focus on employment:** Focus on meaningful employment instead. Big box stores can provide employment. (2 comments)
- **Need vehicle access:** Big box stores need vehicle access. (2 comments)
- **Winter Town:** Stores need easy vehicle access for the winter. (2 comments)
- **Need big box stores to maintain affordability** (1 comment)
- **Big box stores act as anchors:** Big box stores attract shoppers from Calgary, who then might visit Main Street. (1 comment)
- **Need tax revenue:** The Town needs the tax dollars that these developments provide. (1 comment)
- **General opposition** (1 comment)

Downtown: Improve safety and comfort

Design all downtown streets to improve safety and comfort for pedestrians.

Level of support: 42%

Comments: (26 total comments):

- **No change is needed:** Pedestrian access and safety have already been addressed – sidewalks are fine as they are now. Money should be used elsewhere. (12 comments)
- **Ensure proper snow removal:** Ensure snow is cleared safely for people driving and walking. (2 comments).
- **Make the sidewalks more accessible:** Sidewalks need to be more accessible, especially for people with disabilities, children, and seniors. (2 comments)
- **General support** (2 comment)
- **Include people cycling:** Multi-use should include people cycling. (1 comment)
- **Complete small changes:** Complete small changes as needed, but a major overhaul is not needed. (1 comment)
- **Walk on the sidewalk:** People should walk on the sidewalk, rather than the street. (1 comment)

Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas: Conservation reserve fund

Create a Conservation Reserve Fund for the protection of valuable ecosystems.

Level of support: 39%

Comments (20 total):

- **Spend money elsewhere:** This may result in a tax increase or take away funding from essential public services. (10 comments)
- **Needs clarification:** The idea and how the fund would work require more explanation. (3 comments)
- **General support** (2 comments)
- **General opposition** (2 comments)
- **Developers should be responsible:** Developers should protect environmentally sensitive areas through the approvals process. (2 comments)
- **Let natural areas be wild:** Don't develop on natural areas. (1 comment)

Sustainable Transportation: Fixed-route system

Continue to assess transit needs and consider a future fixed-route transit system.

Level of support: 39%

Comments (15 total):

- **Plan for “modes of the future” instead:** Focus on “modes of the future” such as on-demand transit options and ride-share programs that offer door-to-door service (e.g., Uber). (8 comments)
- **Too small population:** Okotoks' population is too small to support a fixed-route transit system. (2 comments)
- **Start small:** May be needed in the future – but start with small vehicles. (2 comments)
- **Spend money elsewhere:** Do not use municipal funding for this, as it should be provided by private groups. (2 comments)
- **Needs clarification:** The question needs more explanation. (1 comment)
- **General opposition** (1 comment)

Neighbourhood Planning and Design: Use a “sustainability scorecard”

Use a “Sustainability Scorecard” to help developers, Town Council and staff in making decisions on proposed neighbourhood plans and development projects.

Level of support: 39%

Comments (22 total):

- **Needs clarification:** The terminology and idea need more explanation and clarification. (10 comments)
- **Not realistic:** A scorecard is not realistic and not a substitute for professional judgement. (5 comments)
- **General support:** Greener neighbourhood with a mix of densities and types of housing can appeal to diverse families. (3 comments)
- **General opposition** (2 comments)
- **Let the market decide:** Let the market decide whether it is viable. (1 comment)
- **No higher density neighbourhoods** (1 comment)

Neighbourhood Planning and Design: Enhance placemaking

Use public art and civic buildings and spaces to enhance placemaking.

Level of support: 38%

Comments (30 total):

- **Needs clarification:** The terminology, question, and idea need more explanation and clarification. (9 comments)
- **Spend money elsewhere:** Do not use municipal funding to support this. (8 comments)
- **Should be private initiatives:** Art and place-making initiatives should be fundraised for and implemented by citizens, not the Town. (4 comments)
- **General opposition** (7 comments)
- **General support** (2 comments)

Green Buildings and Energy Systems: Solar ready development

Require new development to be built “solar ready.”

Level of support: 37%

In “Green Buildings and Energy Systems”, all comments were for the overall theme and can be found under “Highest standards for green building”.

Employment-Focused Lands: Facilitate development of an Innovation Precinct

Facilitate development of an Innovation Precinct centered on innovation and sustainability. This would include shared resource use and programming, and by-product synergies.

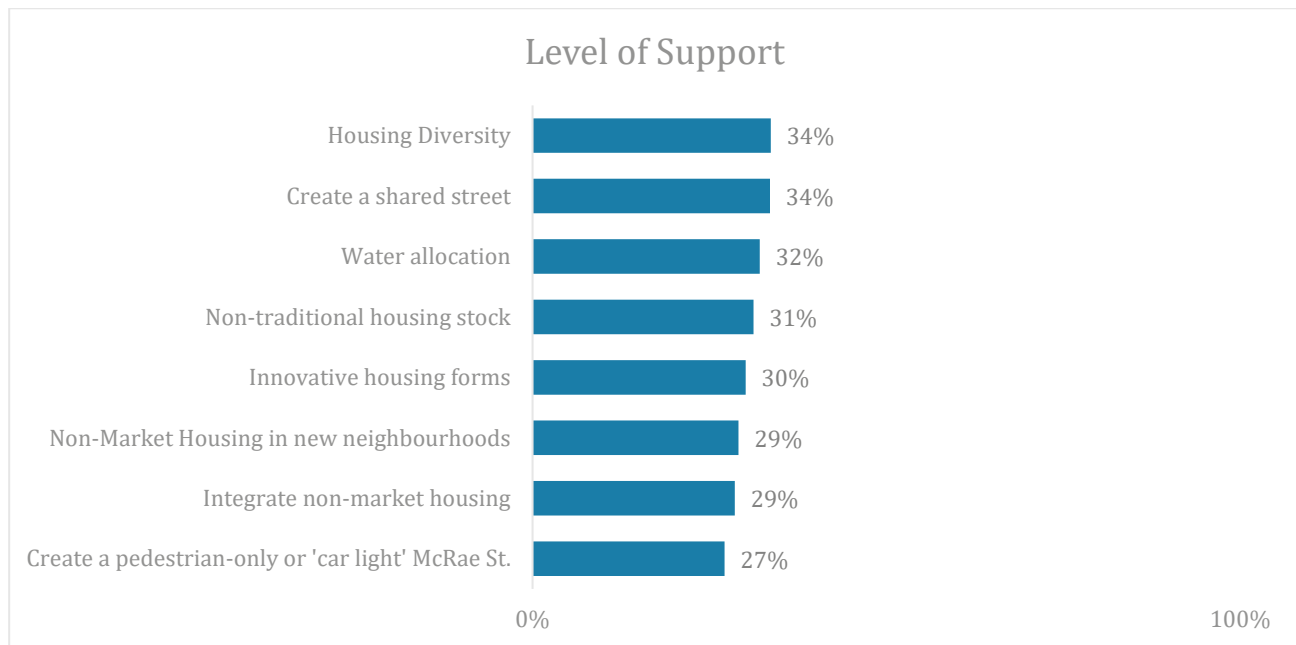
Level of support: 36%

Comments (28 total comments):

- **Spend money elsewhere:** Do not use municipal funding to support this. (7 comments)
- **Needs clarification:** The terminology, question, and idea need more explanation and clarification. (6 comments)
- **Let the market decide:** Let businesses decide where to locate. If there is demand, businesses will build it and the Town can support through zoning. (5 comments).
- **General opposition** (4 comments)
- **Reduce regulations:** Reduce regulations and let businesses develop organically instead. (2 comments)
- **Identify competitive advantage:** Identify Okotoks' competitive advantage and pursue the type of development that will thrive. (1 comment)
- **Infrastructure is needed:** Infrastructure to support innovative businesses is important – but co-locating businesses in a precinct is not needed. (1 comment)
- **Engage with other precincts:** Consult with similar spaces in Calgary and beyond to see if there is demand for one in Okotoks. (1 comment)
- **No more dance studios that become arts studios** (1 comment)

STRONGLY NON-SUPPORTED POLICIES

These policies had levels of support below 35%.



Housing: Housing diversity

Facilitate housing diversity in existing neighbourhoods. Support "sensitive infill" and encourage mixed-use. This may include allowing duplexes, triplexes, and townhouses in all residential districts, reducing parking requirements, and reducing minimum lot and setback requirements.

Level of support: 34%

Comments (31 total comments):

- **Needs parking:** Maintain or increase parking requirements to accommodate added density from diverse housing. (11 comments)
- **Need diverse and affordable housing:** Need multiple affordable housing options, including for younger families and housing options for seniors. (7 comments)
- **Don't integrate housing types:** A mix of housing types in single-detached house neighbourhoods will reduce real estate values in neighbourhoods and negatively impact homeowners. Other housing types should be built in clusters rather than mixed-in with single-detached houses. (5 comments)
- **Keep single-detached houses:** Single-detached houses are needed and popular. (3 comments)
- **General opposition** (2 comments)
- **Let the market decide** (1 comment)
- **Need visualization:** Need examples of what housing integration and diversity looks like. (1 comment)
- **Only in new neighbourhoods:** It is counterproductive to retrofit existing neighbourhoods for diverse housing. This should be done in new neighbourhoods. (1 comment)

Downtown: Create a shared street

Create a shared street at the foot of Veterans Way where pedestrians and traffic mix in a very slow-moving environment.

Level of support: 34%

Comments (19 total comments):

- **General opposition** (8 comments)
- **Ensure safety for people walking:** This could be dangerous for people walking if they are sharing the street with vehicles. Keep people walking and driving separate. (5 comments)
- **General support** (2 comments)
- **Spend money elsewhere:** Don't spend money on "nice to have" items. (1 comment)
- **Improve infrastructure:** Improve pedestrian infrastructure to Downtown so that people walking can access this safely. (1 comment)
- **Lack of attractions:** Downtown doesn't have enough attractions to create a need for a pedestrian-priority area. (1 comment)
- **Vehicle traffic:** Comments indicating that if there was less space on the road for vehicles, there would be more traffic elsewhere and a lack of parking. (1 comment)

Infrastructure: Water allocation

Prioritize water allocation for industrial, commercial, or mixed-use developments over residential developments.

Level of support: 32%

Comments (31 total):

- **Halt new development:** Stop approving new development until there is additional water supply. (11 comments)
- **Address the water supply shortage:** Address and prioritize additional water supply so that there is no need for water conservation or allocation. (10 comments)
- **Stop approving residential development:** Stop approving new residential development. (2 comments)
- **General opposition** (2 comments)
- **General support** (2 comments)
- **Current water use regulations are too strict** (1 comment)
- **Promote a market-driven tax base** (1 comment)
- **Need more facts about the water supply** (1 comment)
- **Remain flexible:** to meet both community and business growth needs. (2 comments)

Housing: Non-traditional housing stock

Require at least 50% "non-traditional" housing stock in new neighbourhoods.

Level of support: 31%

Comments (26 total):

- **Let the market decide:** The market is the best indicator of what needs to be built. Do not require specific types of housing to be built. (14 comments)
- **General support** (4 comments)
- **Single-detached houses are desired:** Availability of traditional and single-detached housing are some of the primary reasons people move to Okotoks. (3 comments)
- **More parking:** Need adequate parking to be available. (1 comment)
- **Integrate diverse housing:** Integrate non-traditional housing into the surrounding neighbourhoods rather than just one neighbourhood. (1 comment)
- **Spend money elsewhere:** Tax money should not be used to fund this housing. (1 comment)
- **Do not include estate homes:** Estate homes should not be considered "non-traditional". (1 comment)
- **Need visualization:** Need examples of what non-traditional housing looks like. (1 comment)

Housing: Innovative housing forms

Encourage and incentivize innovative housing forms, co-housing, and co-op housing.

Level of support: 30%

Comments (24 total comments):

- **Spend money elsewhere:** Tax money should not be used to fund these housing types. (11 comments)
- **Co-operative housing is hard to create:** Don't spend much time on co-operative housing. (1 comment)
- **General support** (1 comment)
- **Let the market decide:** Do not incentivize particular types of housing. (7 comments)
- **Need visualization:** Need examples of what innovative housing forms looks like. (1 comment)
- **Encourage traditional housing instead** (1 comment)
- **Partner to provide support services:** Partner with agencies to provide support services rather than just providing below-market housing. (1 comment)

Housing: Non-market housing in new neighbourhoods

Require at least 10% non-market housing units in new neighbourhoods.

Level of support: 29%

Comments (21 total):

- **Needs clarification:** The terminology and idea need more explanation and clarification. (6 comments)
- **General support** (4 comments)
- **General opposition** (3 comments)
- **Let the market decide:** The market is the best indicator of what needs to be built. Do not require non-market housing to be built. (4 comments)
- **Spend money elsewhere:** Tax money should not be used to fund this housing. (1 comment)
- **Require purpose-built rentals:** Incentivize or require building purpose-built rentals. (1 comment)
- **Only in new neighbourhoods:** It does not make sense to try to build these in existing neighbourhoods. (1 comment)

Housing: Integrate non-market housing

Integrate non-market housing across each neighbourhood and the whole community.

Level of support: 29%

Comments (11 total):

- **Let the market decide:** The market is the best indicator of what needs to be built. (4 comments).
- **Creates car dependency:** Residents needs a car if non-market housing is integrated across Okotoks. (2 comments)
- **General support** (2 comments)
- **General opposition** (2 comments)
- **Spend money elsewhere:** Tax money should not be used to fund this housing. (1 comment)

Downtown: Create a pedestrian-only or 'car light' McRae St.

Create a pedestrian-only or 'car light' McRae St. from Veterans Way to Olde Towne Plaza.

Level of support: 27%

Comments (28 total comments):

- **Additional parking:** More parking is needed Downtown in order to promote pedestrian activity. (6 comments)
- **General opposition** (6 comments)
- **Lack of attractions:** Downtown doesn't have enough attractions to create a need for a pedestrian-only or 'car light' street. (4 comments)
- **Winter Town:** Okotoks experiences winter conditions for a large portion of the year, and people do not want to walk in winter. (4 comments)
- **Create connections from the rest of Okotoks:** This needs a network of connections for active transportation to the rest of Okotoks in order to be successful. (3 comments)
- **General support** (2 comments)
- **Involve businesses:** Businesses should be involved in the planning process as they will be impacted. (1 comment)
- **Only for special events:** This policy should only be implemented during special Townwide events. (1 comment)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Participants were able to submit any additional comments they had.

Comments (23 total):

- **Planning process is skewed:** Participants do not feel listened to by Council and staff or that their feedback is incorporated into final plans and policies. There is no need for a new Town "identity" or direction. (7 comments)
- **Survey frustrations:** Participants felt that the survey was too long, lacking in contextual information, lacking in accessible language or definitions, too vague, did not focus on the right timeline or scope, biased, and did not seek real feedback. (8 comments)
- **Halt growth:** Halt additional growth in order to maintain the character of Okotoks and infrastructure. (4 comments)
- **Affordable housing needed:** Affordable rental housing is needed in Okotoks. (1 comment)
- **Loss of farmland:** Conserve farmland and preserve local food security. (1 comment)
- **Additional questions:** Two participants left additional questions:
 - Is there a possibility of moving the rail line?
 - Is the Future Growth Strategy publicly available?

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Okotoks staff hosted three stakeholder workshops for specific stakeholder groups: with developers (June 26, 2019), School Districts with schools in Okotoks (June 27, 2019), and Foothills County (June 28, 2019). The stakeholders were able to review and provide feedback on the draft MDP, which is summarized below.

Workshop with Developers

General Feedback

- **Provide more flexibility:** Flexibility on density requirements and housing mix are desired. The 50% non-traditional housing mix is considered too high and it should include narrow lot single detached or “green” single-detached within the definition. (4 comments)
- **Let the market decide:** Let the market decide and provide the product that people wish to buy rather than trying to create a market where one may not exist. Buyers still want single-detached houses – narrow lots can help create affordability. (4 comments)
- **Calculate financial implications:** Look at financial consequences of policies for developers. The success of the Town is tied to the success of developers. (3 comments)
- **Provide examples:** Provide examples and visual representation of where specific policies have been applied (i.e., 12 units per acre density, sustainability scorecards, Neighbourhood Area Structure Plans, 50% non-traditional housing). (2 comments)
- **Policy should be “made in Okotoks”:** Policy should reflect Okotoks’ beautiful surrounding and environmental initiatives, and not just best practices in other communities. (2 comments)
- **Clarify defensive areas:** Clarify developability within defensive areas. (1 comment)
- **ASPs should be developer-driven:** The Town should not create ASPs as it uses Town resources and can delay and create uncertainty for the developer. (1 comment)
- **Be careful about NASP requirements:** Requiring a Concept Plan and Architectural Guidelines at the Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (NASP) stage is too early. (1 comment)
- **Inclusionary housing should not be a percentage** (1 comment)
- **Allow traditional growth:** Growth is necessary to support and encourage infill. (1 comment)

Housing:

- **Reduce overly prescriptive policies:** Requirement to demonstrate proposals address the range of current and anticipated housing need (Policy 1.1) is overly prescriptive. (1 comment)
- **Do not require affordable housing:** Requiring 10% affordable housing makes the rest of housing less affordable. New home buyers pay the price of government policies. (1 comment)
- **Require less non-traditional housing:** Requiring 50% non-traditional housing can affect marketability and does not deliver needed housing choice or affordability. (1 comment)
- **Housing should be market-supported:** Housing to meet the community’s diverse needs (Objective 3) should only be done if market-supported, otherwise it is an inefficient use of land. (1 comment)

Employment-focused lands:

- **Encourage all investment:** Don’t favour employment growth over residential growth, which doesn’t create a good atmosphere for new businesses or home buyers. (1 comment)
- **Don’t require mixed-use centres:** Mixed-use centres should not be mandated by the Town as they only work in areas with large enough populations. (1 comment)

Neighbourhood Planning and Design:

- **Don't require mixed-use:** Mixed-use may not be marketable, will increase the amount of land required for growth, and may not be financially feasible. (3 comments)
- **Don't specify allowable uses in neighbourhood hubs** (1 comment)
- **Be careful about NASP requirements:** Requiring a Concept Plan and architectural details at the Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (NASP) stage is too early as the commercial site developer has not been engaged yet. (1 comment)
- **Parking should be visible:** Parking needs to be visible to make the site marketable. (1 comment)

Sustainable Transportation:

- **Don't prioritize paths and sidewalks:** Paths and sidewalks are underutilized and expensive to maintain. They should not be prioritized over vehicle movement. (2 comments)
- **Minimize road cross-section widths to increase density** (1 comment)
- **Do not require EV chargers:** Private industry should not fund EV chargers. (1 comment)
- **Should not be trying to reduce car ownership:** Objective to reduce car ownership is contrary to growth of electric vehicles and commuter nature of Okotoks. (1 comment)
- **Don't ban drive-thrus:** Banning drive-thrus ignores winter conditions and family needs. (1 comment)

Infrastructure:

- **A long-term water supply:** The Town needs to build a long-term water solution and developers are willing to help. (1 comment)
- **Don't use water to prioritize developments:** Town should not use water as a tool to pick certain developments over others. (1 comment)

Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas:

- **Ensure policies are MGA compliant:** Follow the MGA and industry standards for preservation of existing natural assets, including when considering lands as non-credit reserve. Considering nature as infrastructure when updating the Off-Site Levies Bylaw may not be allowed under the MGA and would risk development investment. (3 comments)
- **Reconsider funding:** The Town must purchase lands it wants to designate as environmentally sensitive areas from developers, and needs a plan for funding conservation reserves beyond taxing development. (2 comments)
- **Don't require biophysical impact assessments:** Mandatory biophysical impact assessments will decrease affordability by increasing cost and time to develop. (1 comment)
- **Don't maximize Reserve Lands:** Need for Municipal and School Reserves should be decided development by development in order to develop land responsibly and efficiently, not maximized as a point of policy. (1 comment)

Green Buildings and Energy Systems:

- **Green initiatives reduce affordability:** Green initiatives are expensive and can decrease affordability. (2 comments)
- **Green initiatives should be market driven:** Green initiatives should be encouraged and market driven – not mandated. (2 comments)
- **Strive for an efficient approval process:** Don't use the approval process as a tool to force or leverage certain kinds of development, and instead strive for an efficient process. (1 comment)

Workshop with School Districts

The School Districts generally agree with all policies related to school sites. They suggested that the required mix of uses for mixed-use neighbourhood hubs (Policy 4.12) should include school sites.

Meeting with Foothills County

General:

- **Clarify context sections:** Clarify which sections represent policy; some of the preamble appears to be worded as policy rather than context. (1 comment)
- **Include more regional context:** Provide more attention in the document to intermunicipal and regional context and relationships. (1 comment)

Neighbourhood Planning and Design:

- **Consider adjacent agricultural uses:** The policy requiring developers to consider adjacent agricultural uses should apply to all land uses. (1 comment)

Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas

- **Partner with municipal neighbours:** The policy on partnering regionally on conservation initiatives and biodiversity should speak to partnering with municipal neighbours, not just organizations. (1 comment)

Infrastructure: Utilities and Servicing

- **Consider regional infrastructure:** Include a policy on development in the Town paying for infrastructure in the County that is impacted by town residents, and working in coordination with Foothills County. (1 comment)

NEXT STEPS

Thank you for your feedback on the first full draft and 'snapshot' of the new MDP. We will be using this feedback to create revisions to the draft MDP.

The next draft MDP will be released in Fall 2019. The draft MDP may undergo further refinement prior to presentation to Council for first reading, anticipated to happen in November 2019.

Please visit www.okotoks.ca/MDP for further details.

