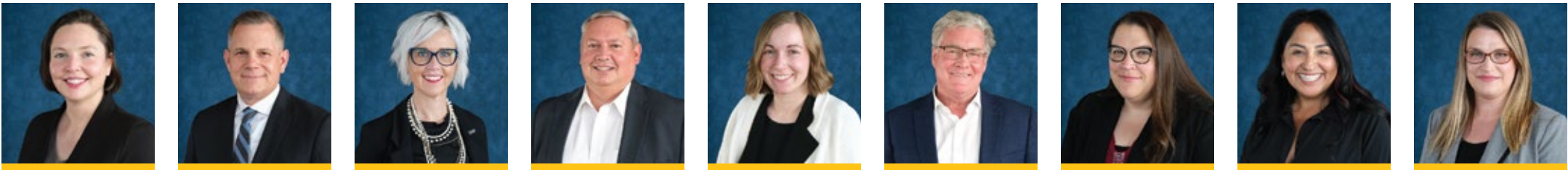


WE HAVE **ENERGY**

The background features a dark navy blue field. On the left, there is a faint, light blue silhouette of a person standing. Below the person, there is a stylized flame icon, also in a lighter shade of blue. A prominent graphic element is a thick yellow line that starts from the left and trends upwards towards the right, with a thinner light blue line running parallel just below it. A short, solid yellow horizontal bar is positioned to the left of the word 'ENERGY'.

Message from Council



We all want to live in a vibrant, prosperous, and sustainable community, where we feel a sense of belonging. Our community is facing a critical turning point as our economic, environmental, and social landscape shifts around us. This Council was elected to ensure that our City is resilient and positioned to thrive into the future.

Medicine Hat has a celebrated history of enterprise, forged by generations of industrious Hatters. Council is grateful for the opportunities this legacy has provided for our community and energized to continue building on this strong foundation.

The world has changed a great deal over the past two decades. Social media, smartphones, and video conferencing have changed how people work and communicate. The ubiquity of these innovations has also shaped consumer expectations. People expect their service providers to be responsive and easy to contact. When expectations are not met, people are not afraid to voice their complaints publicly and have an audience when they do. Environmental, social and governance performance and the ability to predict and adapt to rapid and constant change have become critical to organizational success.

To thrive in this new landscape, we must innovate at a rate that outpaces others and that is driven by data and the evolving demands of our community, economy, and environment. This is no easy task – especially for a municipal corporation.

To be truly innovative, we must empower the City's talent, break down cultural and structural obstacles, be nimble, willing to take some risk, and even fail – all while ensuring that we remain effective stewards of our community's assets and future.

As a municipality, systemic transformation and consistent provision of necessary services and programs within the existing systems, must occur simultaneously. The solution to this apparent

Right now the ability to innovate is not just critical to success. It is simply a requisite for survival. But the nature of innovation is changing. It is less about ‘eureka moments’ or silver bullet breakthroughs than about quickly responding to challenges, adopting new ideas and moving fast to seize opportunities.

Ruth Spellman

incongruity is incremental innovation. Incremental innovation balances the need for evidence collection, analysis, and stable delivery of services and programs, against the need for rapid real time adaptation and progress. Incremental yet discernible progress is achieved through low-risk, achievable, affordable, and meaningful action deployed and tested within the context of open-ended program, policy, and service development and responsive feedback loops.

Responsive feedback loops and good decision making depend on the collection of complete, reliable, and timely information. However, many large organizations, including municipalities, focus only on pushing out, often highly restrained, communication to their stakeholders, including residents, customers, government agencies, and employees. Successful organizations recognize that this approach stifles innovation and is ineffectual in the age of social media.

When an organization fails to empower, cultivate, analyze, and respond to information from its stakeholders the feedback collected, about their environment is incomplete and their decision making

and service delivery reflect that. The results are stagnation, reputational damage, and wasted effort and dollars, as the organization becomes increasingly detached from its stakeholders.

Therefore, the City must be situationally aware and foster exceptional relationships, recognizing our interdependence with our stakeholders. We need to be listening, responding, and communicating where our stakeholders are communicating. We need to foster trust, empower others, swiftly and proactively respond to issues and problems, and learn from our mistakes.

No matter how brilliant your mind or strategy, if you’re playing a solo game, you’ll always lose out to a team.

Reid Hoffman

This Council is alive to the complexity of our times and the inextricable interconnection between the success of our people, partnerships, environment, economy, and organization. We are determined to adopt a ‘Strong Towns’ⁱ and ‘Antifragile’ⁱⁱ approach and to champion an outcome focused, innovative organizational and community culture where our partnerships flourish, and people and businesses, are empowered to create, experiment, and take action for the betterment of our City.

About this Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan is a living document and is intended to evolve with the needs and priorities of our community.

Council is the governing body of our municipal corporation. Each person on Council has one equal vote and we are tasked with developing and evaluating the policies and programs of our City.

This Strategic Plan outlines Council's strategic priorities and is intended to communicate Council's vision and goals to our community, and partners, and provide strategic direction to City Administration. The City Manager is responsible for executing on Council's strategic priorities and establishing and reporting on metrics to measure Administration's success in delivering on Council's strategic priorities. Council is then responsible for evaluating this success and refining this Strategic Plan, as required.



1

Innovation

Creativity is thinking up new things.
Innovation is doing new things.

Theodore Levitt

The City's organizational culture will encourage and celebrate innovation, creativity, and multidisciplinary collaboration. We will empower individuals in our organization and community to present solutions to problems.ⁱⁱⁱ Administration will:

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| 1.1 | Be alive to and chase opportunity, while mitigating risk. | 1.6 | Recognize, admit, and learn from mistakes. |
| 1.2 | Train employees on experimental methodologies. | 1.7 | Attract exceptional talent to our community and organization. |
| 1.3 | Develop clear channels for employees and community members to communicate and review new ideas and solutions. | 1.8 | Put the right people in the right places with the right resources and drive decision making and implementation to the level most proximal to an issue or problem (including into the community). |
| 1.4 | Reward the innovative achievements of employees and community members. | 1.9 | Actively pursue opportunities to remove obstacles to success, innovation, and incremental development, while ensuring regulatory compliance. |
| 1.5 | Employ a minimum viable project approach when developing solutions – taking achievable and affordable action to test and develop solutions and iterating and refining these actions over time. | | |

A background image of a city street scene. In the foreground, there's a cafe with yellow umbrellas and outdoor seating. In the background, there are multi-story buildings and a clear sky. A large white number '2' is overlaid on a dark blue square in the top left corner.

2

Economic Evolution

Economic growth is driven by creativity, so if we want to increase it, we have to tap into the creativity of everyone. That's what makes me optimistic. For the first time in human history, the basic logic of our economy dictates that further economic development requires the further development and use of human creative capabilities. The great challenge of our time is to find ways to tap into every human's creativity.

Richard Florida

We will have a strong, diversified regional economy and an economic ecosystem that encourages entrepreneurship. Administration will:

2.1

Identify and understand our comparative advantages as a City, community and region and rapidly capitalize on those advantages.

2.3

Mitigate our region's carbon risk for municipalities, business, and industry, including by continuing to pursue a CCUS hub and hydrogen hub.

2.2

Work with our regional partners to develop a regional economic development strategy, that addresses business retention, expansion, and attraction (including carbon capture, utilization, and storage [CCUS]), tourism, workforce development, infrastructure, policy/process reform and developing an economic ecosystem that encourages entrepreneurship.

2.4

Ensure that our policies, procedures and bylaws are transparent, clear, purposeful, and necessary, and where applicable aligned with those of the Province of Alberta to facilitate efficient and cost-effective development.



3

Service Orientation

What users want is convenience and results. But all that they see is the interface. As far as the customer is concerned, the interface is the product. ...

An interface is humane if it is responsive to human needs and considerate of human frailties. If you want to create a humane interface, you must have an understanding of the relevant information on how both humans and machines operate. In addition, you must cultivate in yourself a sensitivity to the difficulties that people experience. That is not necessarily a simple undertaking. We become accustomed to the ways that products work to the extent that we come to accept their methods as a given, even when their interfaces are unnecessarily complex, confusing, wasteful, and provocative of human error.

Jef Raskin

We will be intentional and proactive. We will understand and be responsive to our community and changing circumstances and people will find it easy to deal with the City. Administration will:

3.1

Provide exceptional resident and customer experience, including by having a 'how can I help attitude.'

3.2

Develop and implement a cost effective, elegant solution for receiving and responding to community input, questions, ideas, and requests for support, targeting a 'one-window' approach.^{iv}

3.3

Adapt our policies, procedures, and technologies to meet the needs of the people using them.

3.4

Ensure exceptional issues management, anchored in an issues management strategy.^v

3.5

Ensure systems thinking^{vi} and behavioural economics^{vii} are an integral part of our practices, planning, and operations.

3.6

Ensure exceptional government relations, anchored in a government relations strategy.

3.7

Attract and unleash great talent.

3.8

Humbly observe where people in our community are struggling to use our City as it has been built, then ask, 'what is the next smallest thing we can do right now to address that struggle?'^{viii}

4

Partnerships & Governance



By ourselves we suffer serious limitations. Together we can be something wonderful.

Max De Pree



We will succeed through collaboration with our community and government partners and be a trusted partner in our community and region. Administration will:

4.1

Enable and empower our community partners and volunteer groups, including neighbourhood and area associations, to accomplish our collective goals.

4.6

Foster an organizational culture that seeks and values public participation and create consistent, and meaningful opportunities for our community to engage with the City in problem solving and decision making.

4.2

Use the expertise and best practice of government, institutions, not-for-profit, and private industry in planning and delivery of programs and services.

4.7

Ensure governance excellence and define benchmarks for measuring our success in achieving governance excellence.

4.3

Bring groups together to solve problems collectively and collaboratively. Recognize and seek alignment with our regional and community partners and work with them to identify and fill gaps and to maximize the value of our collective resources and the funding dollars coming into our community.

4.8

Ensure that economic development, community development, environmental sustainability and exceptional governance are themes integrated into each City department.

4.4

Proactively communicate internally and externally in a way that is, clear, open and honest.

4.9

Make decisions, organization wide, that are transparent, justifiable and in the public interest.

4.5

Earn trust through accountability.

4.10

Begin and end with data.

4.11

Measure and report our performance in accordance with an ESG framework.

5

Community Wellness



Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.



Jane Jacobs

People will love living and being in our City. Our community will be vibrant and lifelong residents and newcomers alike, from all walks of life, will feel a sense of security and belonging in Medicine Hat. Administration will:

5.1

Recognize that the success of our City's most vulnerable, including those struggling with housing insecurity, mental health issues and substance use issues, is a critical measure of our success as a community.

5.6

Ensure that the City's actions reflect our commitment to food security in our City.

5.2

Ensure that the City's actions reflect our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, including with respect to access to City services and facilitating cultural diversity in our community.

5.7

Build our City using the best available data in relation to healthy built environments and social and environmental determinants of health.

5.3

Ensure that the City's actions reflect our commitment to honouring the Indigenous people in Medicine Hat and their past, present and future.

5.8

Ensure that it is easy to get from one place to another for automobiles and other modes of transportation, including active transportation and micromobility options.

5.4

Focus on community outcomes.

5.9

Continue to develop a downtown that is vibrant, safe and welcoming and that is a destination for people of all ages.

5.5

Take meaningful action to support the physical, mental, and emotional health of our community, including providing, supporting, and facilitating opportunities for arts and culture, education, and literacy as well as physical activities.

5.10

Consider the needs of youth and their importance in our community in current policy development, with the aim of creating a community where youth want to live and stay.

5.11

Recognize and celebrate our accomplishments as an organization and a community.



6

Resilience & Sustainability



Being financially sustainable will include not only the overall impact of short-term construction costs (i.e. major water transmission line to suburban growth area) but the long-term and continual replacement of all infrastructure (i.e. the roads, pipes, etc. of suburban areas). Therefore, to account for these long-term liabilities, the servicing levels of neighbourhoods will need to match the revenue potential of the contributing developed land.

City of Medicine Hat 2019
Growth Management Study



We understand the importance and interdependency of the success of our people, partnerships, environment, economy, and organization to accomplishing our goal of being a vibrant, sustainable, enduring community. Administration will:

6.1

Ensure the City has healthy finances and long-term financial stability, while maintaining organizational health and resilience.

6.2

Ensure that the City's resources are aligned with community needs and prioritize needs over wants and the urgent and essential over the optional.

6.3

Optimize the value of the City's energy portfolio over the near and long term and implement an energy transition strategy.

6.4

Establish a people first approach that addresses all aspects of the employee experience and supports a positive culture that encourages problem solving, recognizes achievement, and values health and wellness.

6.5

Demonstrate that we value the important role our natural environment (including green infrastructure, ecosystem services, air quality, water quality and security, and biodiversity) plays in our continued economic and community success, including by implementing an Environmental Framework with prioritized strategies and actions.

6.6

Include social and environmental return on investment when calculating our return on investment, recognizing the importance of these contributions to the health of our community, economy, and environment.

6.7

Understand, successfully manage, and report on our long-term maintenance obligations and infrastructure liabilities.

6.8

Maximize infill and brownfield development and revitalization of existing areas, including by implementing a brownfield redevelopment strategy.

6.9

Implement community lifecycle infrastructure costing and understand and communicate our sustaining capital reinvestment requirements.

6.10

Expand our industrial and commercial tax base, including by improving regulatory conditions, infrastructure, and service delivery.

Endnotes

ⁱ Marohn, Charles. *Build Community Wealth with Incremental Investment*. Strong Towns. 2021. <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2021/5/26/rbc2021-build-community-wealth-with-incremental-investment#rbcseries6>

ⁱⁱ [Alliance for Innovation. Antifragile. 2020. transformgov.org](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ See for example, Pfizer's "Dare to Try" initiative; Travelers' Innovation Evangelist Network and Experimentation Partners; Google rewarding most "at-bats"/unit of time and money; AARP "Listening Rooms", "Innovation Labs" and "Innovation Fund" and partnerships; Accenture. *Innovation Unleashed: Building a culture that drives sustained growth*. 2021. <https://insuranceblog.accenture.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Innovation-Unleashed-Final-Accenture.pdf>

^{iv} "'Single Window' is a philosophy of governance in which traditional structures of government are transformed into new arrangements that best serve the needs of citizens and businesses. Under the 'Single Window' approach, citizens and businesses would receive government services through a single interface to government. The complex, multi-agency organizational arrangements that go into the service delivery will be transparent to the consumers of the services, leading to increased efficiencies and reduction in the transaction costs of regulation." How to Build a Single Window Environment, World Customs Organization Compendium, 2011. World Customs Organization. *How to Build a Single Window Environment*. 2011. https://www.icao.int/Meetings/AirCargoDevelopmentForum-Togo/Documents/SingleWindow_Compendium_Vol_1_E.pdf

^v "Issues management is an [anticipatory, strategic management](#) process that helps organizations detect and respond appropriately to emerging trends or changes in the socio-political environment. These trends or changes may then crystallize into an "issue," which is a situation that evokes the attention and concern of influential organizational publics and stakeholders. At its best, issues management is stewardship for building, maintaining and repairing relationships with stakeholders and stakeholders (Heath, 2002). ...Organizations engage in issues management if decision-makers are actively looking for, anticipating, and responding to shifting stakeholder expectations and perceptions likely to have important consequences for the organization. Such responses may be operational and immediately visible, such as McDonald's anticipatory move from plastic to paper packaging in 1990. Other common strategic responses are direct, behind-the-scenes negotiations with lawmakers and bureaucrats, and proactive campaigns using paid and earned media to influence how issues are framed." Institute for Public Relations. *Issues Management*. 2008. <https://instituteforpr.org/issues-management/>

^{vi} Kim, Daniel. *Introduction to Systems Thinking*. Pegasus Communications, Inc. 1999. <https://thesystemsthinker.com/introduction-to-systems-thinking/>

^{vii} Classical economics relies on the erroneously assumption that people are generally "rational" decision makers. Instead, human reasoning is often driven by innate heuristics, biases, and emotions that lead to irrational choices. Drawing upon psychology, sociology and neuroscience, behavioural economics seeks to better predict human behaviour. Rather than regulate undesired behaviour, behavioural economics policy focuses on choice architecture to increase the likelihood of desired behaviour in a manner that is often indiscernible to the public.

^{viii} Marohn, Charles. *Build Community Wealth with Incremental Investment*. Strong Towns. 2021. <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2021/5/26/rbc2021-build-community-wealth-with-incremental-investment#rbcseries6>



WE HAVE
ENERGY

MEDICINE HAT CITY COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2026