



# Momentum

Medicine Hat Community  
Well-Being Plan

# Acknowledgements

## Land Acknowledgement

The City of Medicine Hat acknowledges that we live and work on treaty territory. The City pays respect to all Indigenous Peoples and honours their past, present and future. We recognize and respect their cultural heritages and relationships to the land.

Medicine Hat is situated on:

- Treaty 7 and neighbour to Treaty 4 territory
- Traditional lands of the Siksika (Blackfoot), Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), Stoney Nakoda, and Tsuut'ina (Sarcee) as well as the Cree, Sioux, and the Saulteaux bands of the Ojibwa peoples.
- Homelands of the Métis Nation.

## Committee and Participant Acknowledgement

The process of creating *Momentum* would not have been possible without the enthusiasm, involvement, and thoughtfulness of the close to 1,200 interested parties, community organizations, and community members who co-created this plan through their participation in workshops, interviews, open houses, surveys, and collaborative activities.

Well-Being plans are developed with the community, for the community, and we are very grateful to those who have shared their lived/living experience and perspectives.

A Special Thanks to the Advisory Committee for their commitment to the process and all the community organizations and interest groups that informed *Momentum*.

### The Advisory Committee included representation from:

*Medicine Hat Community Housing Society*  
*The Connection Intercultural Association of Medicine Hat*  
*Miywasin Friendship Centre*  
*Recovery Alberta*  
*Alberta Health Services*  
*Sanare Centre*  
*Medicine Hat Public Library*  
*Medicine Hat Public School Division*  
*Community Food Connections Association*  
*Community Foundation of Southeast Alberta*  
*Medicine Hat Police Services*  
*Community member - Youth Representative*  
*Social Work Master's Degree Student*  
*City of Medicine Hat - Parks & Recreation & Community Development*



# Executive Summary

The City of Medicine Hat's Well-Being Plan, *Momentum*, outlines a comprehensive strategy to enhance community well-being over the next ten years. *Momentum* is an essential plan that helps set policies, prioritize tasks, and define expectations both within the City government and for the public, while providing the necessary information and goals to support the well-being of all residents.

Well-Being was left undefined during the initial stages of the project, leaving it to participants to define and interpret the concept without any limits or barriers. Without a set definition, the community took the opportunity to share what well-being means to them. Insights gathered from the Understanding Well-Being in Medicine Hat Background Report and community feedback were synthesized to develop a definition of well-being that is unique to the community.

The findings from the Understanding Well-Being in Medicine Hat Background Report and community engagement also identified several wide-ranging areas that need improvement to enhance both individual and community well-being in Medicine Hat.

## ***Momentum* provides an overview of the current state of well-being in Medicine Hat by:**

- Developing a clear understanding of well-being in Medicine Hat, including the current context and factors/conditions that impact well-being in the community.
- Creating a renewed definition and vision of well-being in Medicine Hat that reflects the diversity of the community.
- Establishing tangible and forward-looking Strategic Objectives based on community needs and inputs, as well as specific actions required to realize the vision of well-being in Medicine Hat.
- Identifying roles, responsibilities, and developing an evaluation and monitoring framework for implementation.

## Strategy Development Process:

*Momentum* was developed through an iterative and multi-phased process involving many members of the public, interested parties, City staff, and members of the advisory committee.

1

### Initiate & Plan

- Project Start-up
- Strategic Advisor Engagement
- Terms of Reference
- Engagement Plan

2

### Discover & Understand

- Environmental Scan
- Advisory Committee Workshop
- Well-Being Data Collection & Analysis
- Understanding Well-Being in Medicine Hat Report

3

### Define & Vision

- Project Framing Presentation
- Advisory Committee Workshop
- Project Introduction and Update to City Council
- Engagement Sessions- Lived/Living Experience, Community, and Interest Holders
- 'What was Learned' Report

4

### Draft & Confirm

- Vision Debrief Session
- Preparation of the Draft Plan
- Project Team Working Session
- Engagement Sessions - Draft Plan Feedback

5

### Finalize & Present

- Refine and Finalize the Well-Being Plan
- Present Final Plan to Advisory Committee, Leadership & Council

6

### Implement

- Debrief Session on Plan Implementation
- Develop Implementation Plan



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Plan Overview

# Introduction

*Momentum*, the City of Medicine Hat's Community Well-Being Plan, is a comprehensive framework designed to guide the City and its partners in enhancing community well-being over the next 10 years.

Grounded in extensive research and community input, the Community Well-Being Plan sets forth a vision for well-being in Medicine Hat, along with guiding principles to foster collaboration, identifies key pillars, and establishes a framework for evaluation and monitoring progress. Well-Being is broadly defined as **the social, economic, health, and political conditions necessary for living fulfilling, enjoyable lives**. However, perceptions of well-being vary depending on factors such as geography, economy, language, and culture.

While the City's Community Development department will lead plan implementation, other City departments and community organizations will play a crucial role in advancing the Strategic Objectives outlined in *Momentum*.

There are many challenges facing the community, including navigating the escalating costs of living and greater complexity of social needs. There are also lingering effects from a major global pandemic despite a lot of great things happening in Medicine Hat. This Community Well-Being Plan seeks to build on the positive and

productive working relationships between the City of Medicine Hat, community organizations, and community members to come together to collectively identify and address issues as they arise. Building on the work of Thrive (2017), the community's strategy to end poverty and increase well-being, this plan seeks to advance and enhance many initiatives underway in Medicine Hat that support well-being. It also identifies and proposes new areas for action based on how much has changed within the community since 2017.

*Momentum* establishes a vision, mission, and foundational principles meant to inspire collective action while also staying focused and realistic about what can be accomplished. Well-Being is a broad and often subjective term that intersects with both individual and community dimensions of life. Put simply, well-being means something different to everyone. However, there are several basic pre-requisites for well-being, whatever it may mean to an individual or community: basic needs, safety, education, employment, health, equity, and connection.

These pillars of well-being are the framework of *Momentum*, with goals and actions articulated centered around strengthening each. The responsibility to act on these goals and actions is not just the City of Medicine Hat's alone. Each pillar is supported by a complex system of programs, supports, organizations, and all levels of government. All of the pillars are inherently interconnected. To ensure the well-being for all residents of Medicine Hat, many organizations need to take ownership and see opportunities for action within this plan. *Momentum* is a plan for the community that must be implemented by the community.



## What Are We Trying to Achieve?

**Momentum seeks to achieve the following:**

**Refresh our Understanding of Well-Being in Medicine Hat:** Review data, plans, and strategies to understand what has changed in Medicine Hat since Thrive, as well as to establish the current context and factors affecting well-being in Medicine Hat today.

**Articulate a Renewed Vision and Definition:** Building off of Thrive, *Momentum* presents a renewed vision, guiding principles, and definition of Well-Being that reflects the community's diverse perspectives and the changes that have occurred in Medicine Hat since 2017.

**Create a Forward-Looking Strategy:** *Momentum* outlines Strategic Objectives for action based on community needs and input, detailing potential actions to achieve the vision of well-being in Medicine Hat while looking forward over the next 10 years.

**Develop an Evaluation and Monitoring Framework:** Strategic Objectives are situated within an evaluation and monitoring framework that defines roles and responsibilities, identifying measures and indicators to help the community evaluate success and monitor the impacts of plan implementation.



## Project Context

Medicine Hat has long been viewed as a “Community of Choice” within southern Alberta: a community where people choose to live, work, and play. Much work has been done within the community on several fronts related to social well-being, quality of life, inclusion, equity and safety. Efforts to improve community well-being have been driven by not only the City of Medicine Hat, but many, many community organizations and dedicated individuals. As the Medicine Hat community continues to grow and change, new opportunities and challenges related to well-being have emerged. Much has

been accomplished within Medicine Hat when it comes to well-being, including Medicine Hat Community Housing Society’s internationally recognized efforts on housing and homelessness, and development of Thrive, a regional initiative to end poverty and increase well-being. As Thrive was adopted seven years ago, the time is right to create a new Community Well-Being Plan that builds off previous efforts and establishes a renewed vision and strategy for well-being in the community.



## Who is this Plan for?

The overarching objective of *Momentum* is to articulate a shared vision and strategy for well-being in Medicine Hat. This document identifies priority areas for action based on community needs, both current and anticipated over the next ten years. *Momentum* is a community plan: this means that anyone in Medicine Hat and beyond should be able to read this document and understand needs and opportunities for action.

### City of Medicine Hat

*Momentum* provides a roadmap for action, decision-making and priority setting. It identifies areas where the City may choose to dedicate efforts and resources to enhance well-being for Medicine Hat residents.

### Community Organizations

*Momentum* illustrates City priorities and areas of alignment with ongoing efforts being made by community organizations. Many Strategic Objectives presented create opportunities for collaboration between community organizations and the City.

### Community Members

*Momentum* reflects what was learned through engagement by identifying priorities that resonate with and respond to community well-being needs. It identifies opportunities for action and communicates what steps may be taken, and when, to enhance well-being in Medicine Hat.

### Other Levels of Government

*Momentum* identifies shared priorities across the community and opportunities for other levels of government to take action that will have wide-ranging benefits in Medicine Hat.





# Where are we now?

## Understanding Well-Being in Medicine Hat

This section summarizes the background research conducted during the development of *Momentum*. It establishes a baseline understanding of well-being, explores the role of governments in supporting well-being, and outlines the current needs in Medicine Hat. Additionally, it provides context on the policy landscape within which this plan operates.


## Defining Well-Being

Well-Being is a broad and subjective term. In its simplest form, community well-being involves supporting each other's health, happiness, sense of belonging, and overall quality of life. The Government of Canada's definition of Well-Being acknowledges that community well-being is multi-dimensional and influenced by numerous factors.

“Well-Being refers to the social, economic, health and political conditions essential to fulfilling enjoyable lives. There is no universally accepted definition of well-being.

In fact, perceptions of well-being vary according to several factors, including geographic location, economy, language, and culture.”

— Government of Canada, Community Well-Being Index



WHERE ARE WE NOW?

In addition to being broad and subjective, the definition of well-being is also dynamic, meaning it will continually shift in response to our changing circumstances, community, and surroundings. Perceptions of well-being vary from person to person, reflecting the unique experiences and perspectives of community members. This diversity is a strength, as it enriches the community's fabric, making Medicine Hat a more vibrant, equitable, inclusive place to live, work, and play.



## What Influences Our Well-Being?

Many factors influence individual and community well-being. Where we live, work, age, and play all affects our overall sense of well-being and physical and mental health. The Government of Canada refers to these factors as social determinants of health.<sup>1</sup> Social determinants of health include income and social status, employment, and working conditions, education and literacy, childhood experiences, physical environments, social supports and coping skills, healthy behaviours, access to health services, biology and genetics, gender, culture, and race/racism. Discrimination, racism, and historical trauma are important social dimensions of health that have disproportionately impacted certain groups in society, including Indigenous people, 2SLGBTQIA+ community members, women, minorities, and newcomers. *Momentum* views well-being through the lens of these determinants of health.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/population-health/what-determines-health.html>

## **What Role Does Government Play in Well-Being? *What Role does the City Play?***

### **All levels of government play a role in community and individual well-being.**

For example, the Federal government plays an important role in setting Canada's overall social policy objectives and collects and redistributes income and other taxes to support programs and services like the Canada Child Benefit, housing supports, employment insurance, and funding for health care. Some other areas include enacting laws that impact all facets of life, including the Federal justice system, environmental regulations, and Indigenous lands and rights.

The Provincial government is responsible for our education system (including post-secondary), delivering health care services, setting labour standards and providing employee/employer supports, transportation and highways, natural resources, housing (including affordable housing), managing public lands, ensuring child welfare, and many other areas that intersect directly with well-being. One of the most direct ways the

Provincial government plays a role in well-being is by funding the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) program, which provides municipalities funding support to assess community needs, set priorities, and support individuals, families, and communities through preventative social programs and services.

On a day-to-day basis, the City of Medicine Hat is directly involved in supporting well-being in myriad ways. The City regulates land uses, delivers utility services, provides parks, trails, playgrounds, arts, culture and recreation facilities and programs, delivers protective services such as police, fire and emergency services, operates public transit and collects waste. It is often the first level of government that individuals and organizations interact with on community matters. Medicine Hat City Council provides direction to City Administration on goals and priorities through various documents, including Council's Strategic Plan. The 2023-2026 Council Strategic Plan identifies six major focus areas connected to well-being: innovation, economic evolution, service orientation, partnerships and governance, community wellness, and resilience and sustainability.

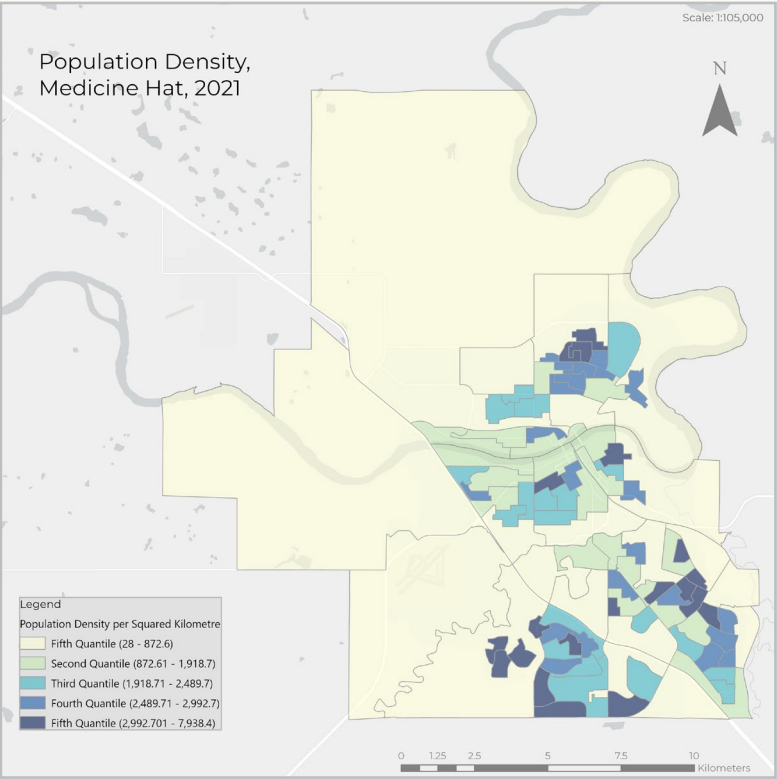
## Medicine Hat Today

Understanding Medicine Hat's population makeup is crucial to understanding the unique needs of residents, as it provides insight into how we can improve well-being for everyone. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a spatial analysis can help us visualize the distribution of people, well-being, and needs, based on the social determinants of health outlined by the Government of Canada.

Unless otherwise noted, all map data and information presented in 'Medicine Hat Today' is sourced from Statistics Canada's 2021 Population Census and reflects census subdivision data for Medicine Hat (represented as CY or City).



POPULATION



**8th**  
largest population  
in Alberta

**5.2%**  
Population of  
Indigenous Peoples,  
totaling 3,225 people

**63,271**  
people live in  
Medicine Hat

**1%**  
annual growth anticipated from  
2024 to 2051, largely driven by  
in-migration from other regions  
of Canada and other countries

**31.5%** First Nations

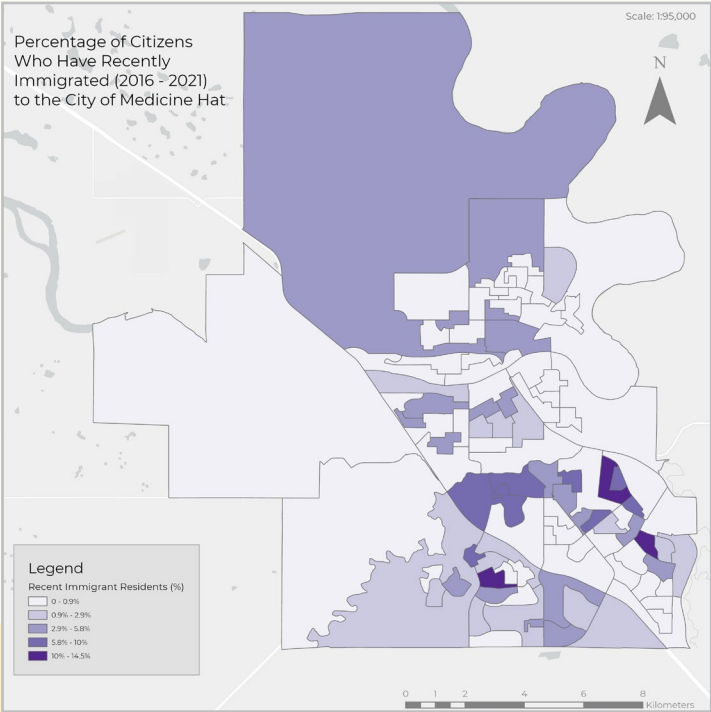
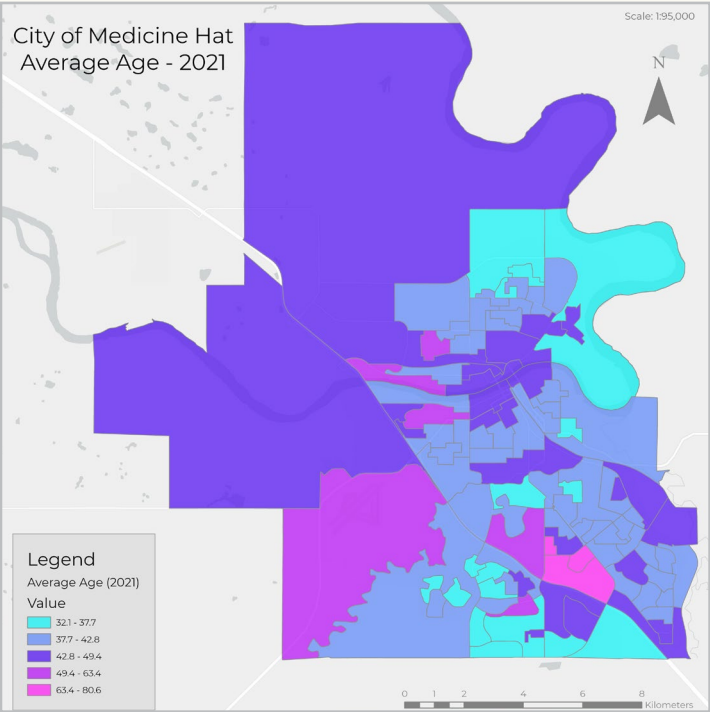
**64%** Métis

**1.2%** Inuk

***Have you heard?***

The City's population density is around 565 people per square kilometer, with higher densities in areas such as the City Centre Sector, North Residential Sector near downtown, and South Residential Sector.

DEMOGRAPHICS



*Have you heard?*

By 2050, the Municipal Development Plan projects that people aged 65 and over could make up around 33% of the City's population.

**43**  
average age

**62%**  
of the City's residents  
are between the ages  
of 15 and 64

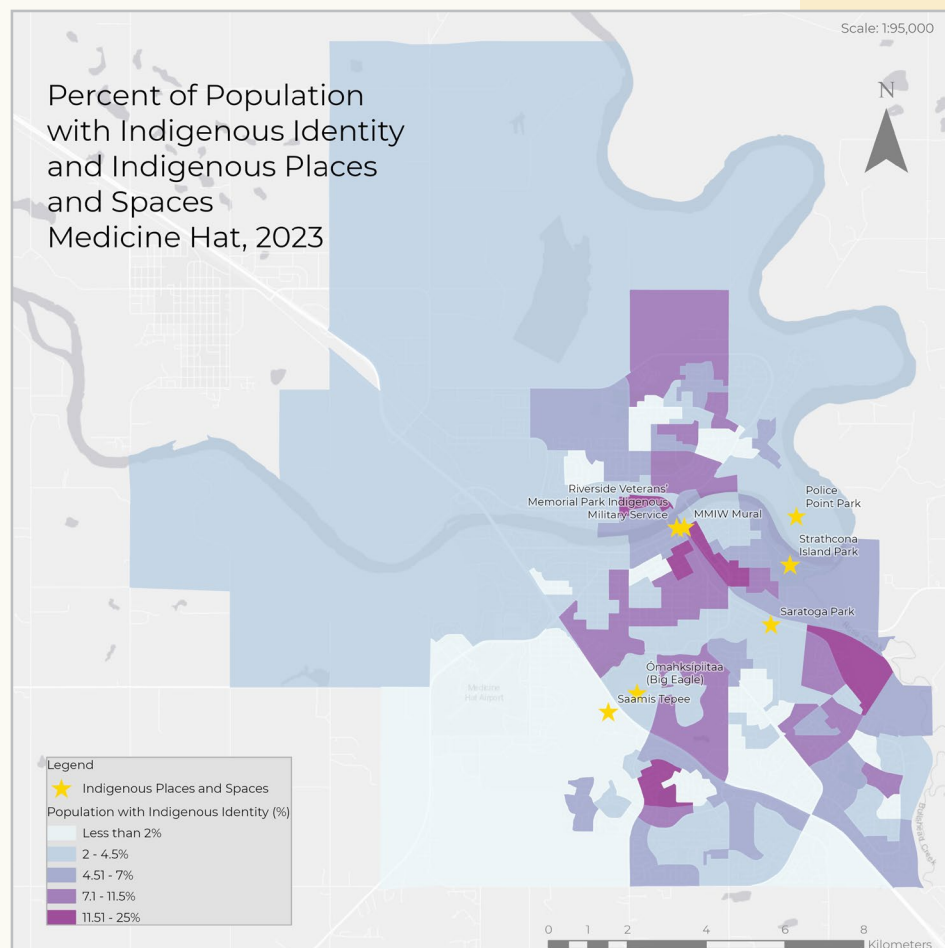
**16.8%**  
are under 14  
years old

**21.0%**  
are 65 or older

**6,110**  
immigrants  
recorded in  
Medicine Hat

**9%**  
Percentage of  
Medicine Hat's  
population identified  
as a visible minority

## INDIGENOUS IDENTITY



- In 2021, Indigenous peoples made up 5.2% of Medicine Hat's population, totaling 3,225 people. Most identified as either First Nations (31.5%), Métis (64.0%), or Inuk (1.2%). Among First Nations people, 25.6% (825 individuals) had Registered or Treaty Indian status. Since 2016, Medicine Hat's Indigenous population has increased from 3,120 to 3,225 people.
- The Indigenous population in Medicine Hat is generally younger than the non-Indigenous population. The average age of an Indigenous person in the City was 32.1 years, compared to 42.7 years for non-Indigenous residents. Children aged 14 and under made up 25.6% of the Indigenous population.
- In March 2021, the City of Medicine Hat adopted a Statement of Acknowledgement, Recognition, and Respect. This statement acknowledges that the City is located on Treaty 7 territory and near Treaty 4 territory, which are the traditional lands of various Indigenous groups, including the Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, Stoney Nakoda, Tsuut'ina, Cree, Sioux, and Saulteaux bands, as well as the homeland of the Métis Nation. The City observes the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, hosts events at the Saamis Teepee, and celebrates Indigenous culture and history.
- The Medicine Hat Police Service also has an Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan with initiatives like an Indigenous Advisory Committee and a Police Indigenous Liaison Officer. The City has and continues to make meaningful efforts towards advancing reconciliation in Medicine Hat.

EDUCATION & LITERACY

**7,927**

K-9 students

**2,927**

high school  
students

**2,581**

post-  
secondary students

**235**

apprentices  
registered in 2022

**36.9%**

of young adults aged 18 to  
24 from Medicine Hat were  
enrolled in post-  
secondary education

**18.6%**

of adults aged 25-  
64 have a bachelor's  
degree or higher

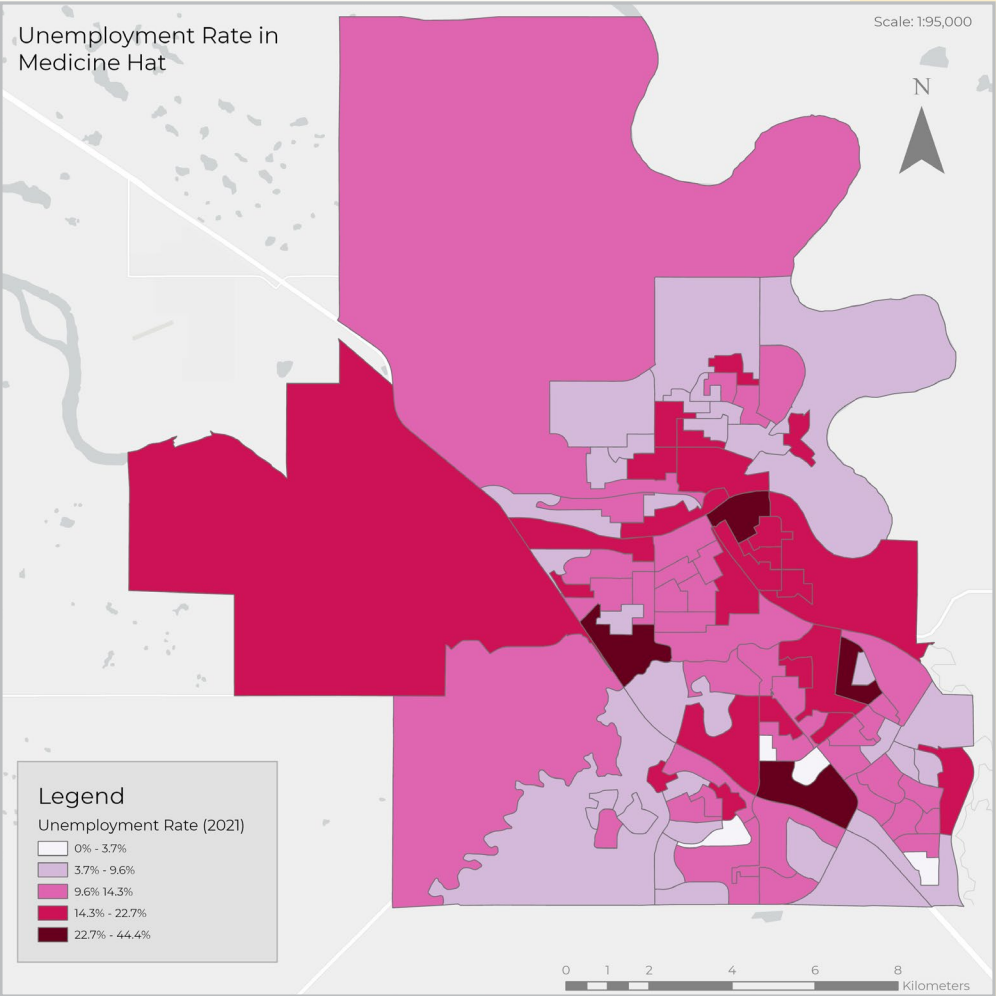
**49%**

of Medicine Hat residents  
over 15 years of age  
have a post-secondary  
certificate, diploma, or  
degree, compared to 56%  
across Alberta

***Have you heard?***

The most common fields of study in Medicine Hat are engineering and technology, health, business and management, education, and protective and transportation services.

EMPLOYMENT



*Have you heard?*

In 2021, the top jobs in Medicine Hat were in health care and social assistance (17.2%), retail trade (15.1%), and construction (8.7%). Other significant sectors include agriculture, oil and gas, engineering, and rail.

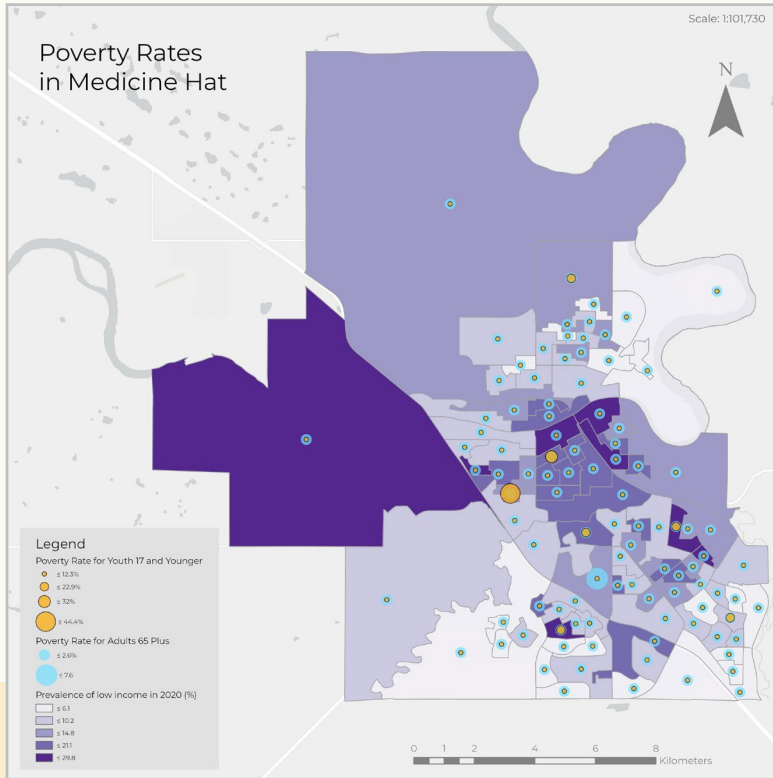
**6.2%**  
unemployment rate  
in Medicine Hat-  
Lethbridge region in  
2024, which is up 1.9  
points from 2023

**70.6%**  
of the working-  
age residents hold  
permanent jobs

**2,785**  
residents  
working from home



BASIC NEEDS



**\$78,000**

median household  
income in Medicine Hat  
(before taxes)

**0%**

increase in median  
after-tax income  
since 2015

**\$99,000**

median income for two  
person households

**8%**

of households make  
less than \$24,999 a  
year which qualifies  
them for the City's Fair  
Entry program.

**10.7%**

of the total population  
are considered  
low-income

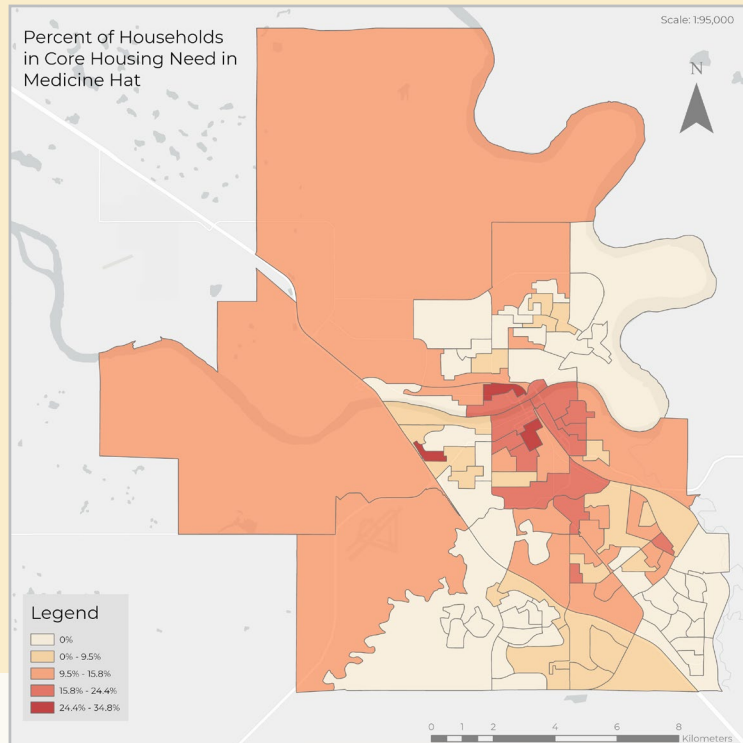
**\$17.55/hr**

average living wage in  
Medicine Hat

## Have you heard?

The Living Wage Network provides a picture of what people need to earn to cover essential living costs like food, housing, and transportation. In 2024, the average living wage in Medicine Hat is \$17.55 per hour for a 35-hour workweek. This varies by household type: \$21.47 for a single person, \$18.79 for a lone parent, and \$15.00 for a family of four. For a single adult, this equals about \$39,075 annually, close to the median income of \$37,600 (2023) for individuals living alone. While these factors may suggest that Medicine Hat is generally affordable, costs can fluctuate widely throughout the year.

## HOUSING



**27,216** occupied private homes, marking a 2.1% increase from 2016.

**70.9%** were owned

**29.1%** were rented

**34.9%** had four or more bedrooms

**31.1%** had three bedrooms

**25.1%** had two bedrooms

**8.9%** had one or no bedroom

**63.4%** of homes are single detached

**18.7%** are smaller apartments

**6.4%** are row houses

**5.7%** are semi-detached

**Half** of Medicine Hat's homes were built before 1980

**One-fifth** of households spend more than 30% of their income on shelter costs

**8.9%** of households face severe housing issues (major repairs, insufficient bedrooms, and high costs)

**54.2%** of the homes in Medicine Hat are maintained by one person, with the largest group of these maintainers being aged 55-64 (19.1%).

## Have you heard?

Almost 30% of home maintainers are over 65, including about 3,500 homes (12.8% of all households) maintained by those over 75. This is higher than the Alberta average of 8.7% for the same age group. This reliance on older, single maintainers means many households could face challenges if these individuals can no longer care for their homes due to age, health issues, or income loss.

## Did you know?

In December 2020, the average price of a single-detached home in Medicine Hat was \$303,868, rising to \$321,854 by December 2023. As of July 2024, the average home value exceeds \$340,000, which is \$150,000 less than Alberta's average. Additionally the average time a house remained on the market dropped from 2.63 to 1.68 months between January and July 2024, signaling strong demand and limited supply in a seller's market. Prices have increased across property types, with row and apartment-style homes seeing the fastest growth, driven mainly by market tightness.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

**In 2024, Medicine Hat residents were surveyed to understand local concerns and priorities. Approximately 905 people participated through phone and online surveys.**

**45%**

of people felt the city's quality of life had worsened

**7%**

mentioning crime or public safety as a reason

**29%**

of respondents listed social challenges as a top priority<sup>2</sup>

**6%**

chose crime as a major concern

**10.7%**

city's crime severity index

## ***Have you heard?***

The Medicine Hat Police Service (MHPS) tracks detailed safety stats, including service calls, crime levels, and bylaw enforcement. Their data shows that the downtown area gets the most service calls, mostly related to mental health, addiction, and housing issues, rather than violent crime. To better address these challenges, the MHPS created the Downtown Patrol Unit, which works with local groups to tackle social issues and has seen more complaints about unwanted guests and encampments in recent years.

<sup>2</sup> City of Medicine Hat, 2024 - Final Report - Medicine Hat 2024 Community Survey

# Medicine Hat's Policy Landscape

*Momentum* aims to enhance community well-being across Medicine Hat, building on the City's longstanding commitment to improving the well-being of all Hatters. Many key documents emphasize well-being, and therefore understanding the broader policy landscape and how various policy documents interrelate is crucial for contextualizing *Momentum*.

## myMH Master Plan

The myMH Master Plan is Medicine Hat's primary city-building policy document, outlining the long-term vision for the community. Acting as the City's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) myMH Master Plan serves as a framework for municipal planning and land use management, aligning with the Municipal Government Act. It provides a comprehensive set of objectives and policies that guide decisions on land use, infrastructure, housing and community development.

The plan includes key elements such as current and future land uses, housing strategies, targets for improving water management practices, and policies related to public facilities and infrastructure. It also addresses the planning and phasing of essential services, including transportation, sewer, and water systems, while identifying areas subject to environmental sensitivity or hazardous conditions.



## **The myMH Master Plan aligns with *Momentum* by guiding the City towards improved community Well-Being:**

### **Quality of Life**

Encourage diverse housing and vibrant neighbourhoods improve overall living conditions.

### **Sustainability**

Drive green practices and environmental stewardship to promote ecological and individual health.

### **Economic Opportunities**

Strengthen economic development to support financial sustainability and job creation.

### **Transportation and Connectivity**

Infrastructure to facilitate access to services and reduce stress.

### **Community Engagement**

Involve residents in the planning process to foster a sense of belonging and satisfaction.

### **Recreational Spaces**

Improve outdoor and recreational facilities to support physical and mental health.

## Relevant City and Provincial-Led Policies

Beyond myMH, there are several existing and evolving municipal and provincial led policy and regulatory approaches that have and will continue to influence *Momentum*.

By examining how these policy documents interconnect, we gain valuable context for *Momentum*. Reviewing existing Medicine Hat policies through an equity and well-being lens allows us to identify strategies and initiatives that aim to improve well-being and assess opportunities for a more comprehensive approach to enhancing community well-being.

### The following resources were reviewed to develop an understanding of the policy context in Medicine Hat:

- myMH: Medicine Hat Master Plan (MDP) (2020)
- City of Medicine Hat Plans Hierarchy Outline (2023)
- We Have Energy: Medicine Hat City Council Strategic Plan 2023-2026
- Tri-Area Intermunicipal Development Plan (2020)
- City of Medicine Hat Annual Report (2023)
- Thrive (2017)
- City of Medicine Hat Growth Management Strategy Final Report (2019)
- Medicine Hat Community Survey – Final Report (2024)
- Medicine Hat Housing Strategy Final Report (2020)
- Emergency Social Services Plan (2017)
- The Hat - Downtown Redevelopment Plan (2009)
- Strategic Economic Development Priorities and Implementation Considerations (2014)
- Community Support in Medicine Hat: Research and Insights Report (2021)
- parks+recMH: Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2022)
- Medicine Hat Facilities for the Future (2023)
- Medicine Hat – Leisure Trails Future Development Plan (2010)
- Government of Alberta FCSS Accountability Framework (2022)
- Government of Alberta (2021): Stronger Foundations, Affordable Housing Strategy
- Government of Alberta (2020) – Towards an Alberta Model of Wellness

# What is *important* to Hatters?

Key Themes from Engagement & Research



## Barriers To Well-Being

**Housing:** Limited rental stock, unsuitable housing, and insufficient housing options.

**Financial Challenges:** Increasing cost of living, inadequate financial literacy, and insufficient support and subsidies affected financial stability.

**Resource Limitations:** Limited facilities for the houseless population and barriers to accessing mental health and addiction services.

**Health care Access:** Shortages of health care providers, long wait times, and inadequate mental health resources.

**Social Connection:** Isolation and lack of community acceptance impacted social well-being.

**Transportation:** Limited public transportation locations, lack of options on Statutory holidays, and lack of alternative modes of transportation.

**Support for Vulnerable Populations:** Lack of programs for seniors, youth, single parents, and individuals with disabilities.



## Hopes For The Future

### **Enhanced Accessibility and Inclusion:**

Programs to hire people with disabilities, removal of barriers, and increased opportunities for community involvement. Promote inclusivity and reduce stigma through awareness campaigns and inclusive policies.

### **Community Engagement and Connection:**

Foster social connections through community events, social and cultural activities, and support groups.

**Stewardship and Access to Nature:** Improved transit to parks and green spaces, promoting outdoor activities, more trees and greenery, and wider trails and pathways to improve accessibility.

**Transportation:** Promotion of electric vehicles, e-scooters, and bike share programs to reduce cars on the road.

**Collaborative Efforts:** Greater collaboration between provincial and municipal bodies, increased awareness of social issues, and community-based initiatives.

## Community Specific Needs

**Indigenous Representation:** Increased platforms for Indigenous voices, cultural events, and land-based learning opportunities. Culturally relevant programs and activities for Indigenous youth.

**Youth Engagement:** Investing in programming for youth of all ages, providing employment and skills training for youth, and creating opportunities for connection to establish a sense of belonging.

**Cultural Connection:** Opportunities for newcomers and residents of Medicine Hat to share culture through programming, events, and services.

# What We Heard Through Community Engagement

Community engagement was an important when developing the Community Well-Being Plan and was used to understand what well-being truly means to community members within the context of living in Medicine Hat. Engagement was conducted with the understanding that the Community Well-Being Plan should be developed through the diverse voices and perspectives of the community. Engagement was facilitated with the general public, community leaders, youth, seniors, and social service representatives including Indigenous organizations, seniors services, newcomer organizations, poverty reduction services, disability support organizations, and supportive housing providers. Additional engagement was conducted with individuals who have lived and living experience with well-being challenges. In total, over 1,200 Medicine Hat residents contributed their input on well-being opportunities to inform the development of *Momentum*.

Tactic	Description	Participation
Community Survey	An online survey was conducted to understand well-being themes in the larger community.	274 Responses
Open Houses & Engagement Booths	3 open houses were held through the City of Medicine Hat's Municipal Mingle events, where attendees could learn more about City initiatives and contribute feedback.	300 Attendees
Well-Being Workshops	<p>16 Workshops were conducted with key interest groups including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery Organizations</li> <li>• Youth and School Groups</li> <li>• Seniors</li> <li>• Newcomer Service Organizations</li> <li>• Indigenous persons</li> <li>• 2SLGBTQIA+ Community Members</li> <li>• Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>• People with Lived and Living Experiences</li> </ul>	550 Participants

Early in the project, community members were engaged about the definition of Well-Being in Medicine Hat, where community members collectively established the following definition of Well-Being.

Well-Being in Medicine Hat is connected to mental and physical health, safety and stability, financial security, social connections, accessibility, inclusivity, and support for vulnerable populations.

An inclusive community was described as one that offers equitable access to services, promotes social unity, and ensures safety and stability for all residents.

—Medicine Hat Community Members

# What We Learned From Other Municipalities

To inform the development of *Momentum*, an environmental scan was undertaken. The scan included examples and learnings from community wellness strategies and other relevant initiatives in Alberta as well as other jurisdictions in Canada.

## Common Guiding Principles:

### Respect + Collaboration

Valuing everyone's unique contributions and working together with various stakeholders, including community organizations, to achieve common goals.

### Belonging

Promoting fairness and justice, providing equal opportunities, and ensuring all voices are heard and represented, fostering a sense of belonging for everyone.

### Participation

Building strong connections within the community through meaningful interactions and encouraging active involvement from community members in decision-making processes.

### Evidence-Based Approaches

Utilizing data and research to inform decisions and actions, ensuring they are effective and impactful.



The environmental scan revealed several **Emerging Themes** that provide insights into how communities address elements of well-being:

**Sense of Belonging and Social Connectedness:**

Promoting a strong sense of community and social bonds.

**Health Improvement:** Enhancing physical activity, healthy eating, and mental health services.

**Access:** Decreasing barriers to amenities, services, and programs.

**Supportive Environments:** Creating healthy built and natural environments.

**Awareness and Education:** Increasing promotion and educational efforts.

**Resilient Neighbourhoods:** Building neighbourhoods that can withstand and adapt to challenges.

**Inclusive Housing:** Ensuring housing is available for all.

**Financial Strategies:** Participating in grants and strategic community investments.

**Community Partnerships:** Collaborating with community organizations.

**Policy Integration:** Aligning with existing policies, initiatives, and strategies.





**A list of common municipal Roles and Responsibilities for developing, implementing, and overseeing well-being plans vary widely. Common roles identified include:**

**Convener:** Brings together community organizations and other levels of government to coordinate action and to achieve common objectives

**Advocate:** Recommends and supports positions or outcomes to other levels of government

**Educator:** Builds awareness and understanding of community challenges

**Capacity Builder:** Provides supports to organizations to anticipate and adapt to change and expand capabilities

**Coordinator:** Oversees implementation of initiatives and responses to challenges and opportunities

**Funder:** Provides financial support to initiatives that align with municipal priorities

**Planner/Regulator:** Develops plans and strategies in response to challenges and opportunities and regulates approval processes

**Service Provider:** Directly delivers services and programs to the community and community organizations



Depending on the topic or area of responsibility, municipalities have varying degrees of control, power, and influence. For example, health care is a Provincial and Federal jurisdiction, yet municipalities influence dimensions of health care through land use planning and zoning, as well as through direct and indirect advocacy (e.g. through Alberta Municipalities). Generally, municipal roles change depending on the level of oversight or influence they have over the issue or topic, as well as based on the capacity of local service providers and other organizations. *Momentum* utilizes these roles and responsibilities to help understand and identify where and how the City of Medicine Hat can best show up and influence change in the community.

Strong partnerships, realistic goals, and a commitment to monitor indicators and adjust tactics over the long term is essential for plan success. Across municipalities examined, strong partnerships with service providers and local organizations are critical for successful implementation. Generally, a dedicated and capable 'backbone' organization is in place that provides leadership, research and advocacy support, funding, and capacity building at the community-level. In some cases, the municipality may serve as this backbone, and in others, particularly in communities with high-capacity service delivery organizations, other partners may take on this role.

**Key Implementation actions focus on strong strategic partnerships and collective efforts to promote community Well-Being. Additional implementation tactics include:**

- **Advocacy**
- **Evidence-based actions**
- **Consistent communication**
- **Local community engagement**
- **Addressing social determinants of well-being**

The findings underscore the importance of an inclusive, interconnected approach to well-being initiatives. By incorporating diverse perspectives, fostering community engagement, and addressing the needs of marginalized groups, communities can develop holistic well-being strategies that resonate with and benefit all members.

# Where do we want to go?

Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles





*Momentum* has been developed to support well-being in Medicine Hat by identifying Strategic Objectives that address basic needs, improve social inclusion, and create a more inclusive community over the next 10 years. This plan brings together the City, other levels of government, community organizations, businesses, and residents to collaborate, learn, and share in successes.

The City of Medicine Hat is the lead organization overseeing *Momentum*, but all organizations have a role to play in implementation and monitoring progress. The vision expresses the future we hope to achieve in Medicine Hat. The mission speaks to what we want to accomplish through implementing this plan. Finally, the foundational principles are what we keep in mind when acting.

## VISION

Medicine Hat is an active, caring, connected, healthy, and vibrant community.

## MISSION

Working together, we strive to ensure that everyone feels safe, economically secure, and has a deep sense of belonging. By embracing change and looking out for each other, all Hatters can meet their basic needs and are supported, empowered, and free to participate fully in the community.



# Foundational Principles:

## Complexity

Well-Being, as a concept and as an outcome of various system interactions, is complex. We acknowledge the interdependency of systems, experiences, and responses to challenges. Changing one element of the system will affect others and we strive to understand well-being from a holistic, systems-wide perspective.

## Prevention

Prevention is at the core of our work. Addressing challenges at their root instead of responding and reacting to crises is key to long-term prevention. Our prevention efforts are guided by Alberta's FCSS Accountability Framework, informed by the social determinants of health, and focuses on upstream solutions to downstream challenges.

## Alignment

Many organizations are involved in supporting individual and community well-being. Where possible, we seek to align our work with that of others to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure we maximize our investment of time and resources into initiatives that have wide-ranging benefits.

## Collaboration

By working together, sharing resources and knowledge, we can accomplish a great deal more than by working independently. We are all equal contributors to supporting well-being in our community.

## Resilience

We cannot anticipate every challenge that we may face, but by building capacity and sharing resources, we can better respond to unknowns and work proactively to address challenges before they emerge. The systems in place to serve our community will change over time and we will change with them so that they are more responsive and dynamic.

# Pillars of Well-Being in Medicine Hat

Pillars of well-being contribute to an individual's overall quality of life. These pillars encompass various dimensions, each addressing different aspects of a person's physical, mental, emotional, and social health. The seven pillars of well-being in Medicine Hat based on community engagement are: basic needs, safety, education, employment, health, equity, and connection. Each of the seven pillars presented are important, as they work together to support well-being in the community. These pillars and topics/themes illustrate the depth, breadth, and complexity of individual and community well-being and seek to increase awareness how interconnected well-being is.



**Connection**



**Equity**



**Health**



**Employment**



**Basic Needs**



**Education**



**Safety**

## Pillar 1:

# Basic Needs



Without being able to meet one's basic needs, other elements of well-being become a distant – if not impossible – goal. Basic needs refer to food, shelter, transportation, and access to essential services like utilities. Accessibility and affordability are important dimensions to consider when it comes to meeting basic needs. While it is possible to meet all of one's basic needs in Medicine Hat, not everyone can afford the costs associated (e.g. shelter, transportation, food costs) and some of those needs may be harder to meet based on where one lives in the community (e.g. access to fresh produce, public transit). The City of Medicine Hat is directly and indirectly involved in supporting the community to meet its basic needs.

Theme	Description
<b>Food</b>	Access to healthy, fresh, and affordable food options is fundamental to well-being. Community food security is about advancing and expanding efforts to increase access and affordability of food by increasing local food production, combining innovative food recovery and redistribution strategies, encouraging sustainable farming practices and social enterprise models, and increasing food and nutritional literacy.
<b>Housing</b>	Everyone in Medicine Hat requires and deserves stable, safe, affordable housing. For many, shelter costs are the single largest monthly expense that they have. Well-Being and health are shaped by the places we live and spend our time. Increasing the supply of affordable, appropriate housing options across the housing continuum (e.g. emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing, non-market housing, market housing) is a priority for the City.
<b>Transportation</b>	An equitable transportation system means that everyone can get to and from where they need to meet their basic needs, be employed, and connect with their community. Ensuring a wide range of transportation options are available to residents, including active transportation, public transit, transportation for seniors, volunteer-led transportation programs, and shared-ride services is important for reducing reliance on private automobiles, which can be highly cost prohibitive for many.
<b>Utilities</b>	The City of Medicine Hat provides electric, gas, water, sewer, and waste collection services to residents. While the distribution of utility services is complex and involves many layers and levels of government, ensuring residents have access to and can afford utility service costs is another important element of well-being.

Pillar 1:

# Basic Needs



Theme	Description
Income Security	Income security is about the level of income one needs to meet one’s basic needs, regardless of participation in the labour force. Income security is a major factor in reducing poverty, increasing economic security, reducing economic inequalities, supporting vulnerable groups, and overall well-being. Examples of income security programs include Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) and Alberta Income Support. Many individuals receiving income support are vulnerable to price increases, including food, housing, health care, and other costs. Universal Basic Income (UBI) is an emerging area of interest within the field of income security, in which governments would provide every adult citizen a minimum income without a means test or need to work to qualify.

## Pillar 2:

# Safety



Community safety requires a balanced approach involving crime reduction based on prevention, intervention, and enforcement to increase overall personal and public safety as well as to prevent or reduce violence in homes, workplaces, and schools. This can be achieved through partnerships with law enforcement agencies, advanced interventions to mitigate danger, access to legal supports, improved restorative justice programs and helping to decriminalize poverty through advocacy and public education.

Theme	Description
<b>Perception of Safety</b>	When residents feel that areas of the city are unsafe, they will be less likely to spend time in those areas, reducing vibrancy and 'eyes on the street'. In Medicine Hat, the city's downtown has received significant attention when it comes to community safety. While data can present a very different story when it comes to actual safety of areas in the community, perception of safety is of equal importance and efforts are needed to dispel myths and respond in meaningful ways to real safety concerns residents have.
<b>Crime Prevention</b>	Crime prevention is about taking preventive measures and actions to reduce the likelihood and conditions for crimes to occur at all. Many crime prevention initiatives strive to address risk factors that increase likelihood of criminal behaviour, including unemployment and low incomes, substance use, family conflict and dissolution, and low educational achievement levels.
<b>Family Violence</b>	Family violence occurs when there is an abuse of power in a family or other trusting relationships that result in harm to family members, including domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual abuse, child abuse, pet cruelty and others. There are many types of abusive behaviours that happen in private or others when it comes to family violence, including physical, verbal, emotional, financial, sexual, spiritual/cultural, and digital abuse. Incidences of family violence have increased in Medicine Hat since the COVID-19 pandemic and many incidences go unreported. Increasing awareness of family violence, ability to identify and navigate away from abusive situations, and supporting survivors of family violence are important focus areas for the City of Medicine Hat, Medicine Hat Police Service, and their partners.
<b>Elder Abuse</b>	Elder abuse is harm done to someone 65 years of age and older within a relationship of family, trust, or dependency and includes financial, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect and failure to provide the necessities of life. As of 2021, Medicine Hat was home to more than 13,250 residents 65 years of age and older and this cohort is growing over time. Working to prevent and respond to incidences of elder abuse in Medicine Hat will be important to supporting the well-being of seniors in the community and ensuring successful, healthy aging in place.



**Pillar 3:**

# Education



Education refers to all levels of education from early childhood development, school-aged learning, post-secondary, and life-long learning. Education access is an important element of well-being because it can inform skillsets related to diet, health, social connections, and employment. Childcare is also an important element of education, as it provides children and families with additional opportunities for learning and development and allows parents to maintain employment.

Theme	Description
<b>Primary, Secondary &amp; Post-Secondary Education</b>	Quality education at the primary and secondary levels, as well as at the post-secondary level, is fundamental to individual and community well-being. Accessibility and affordability of educational opportunities are paramount to skill development, confidence, resiliency, employment, and long-term health. With more than 13,250 registered students between K-9, high-school, and post-secondary as of 2021, close to 18% of the City's total population is being directly served by the City's educators.
<b>Early &amp; Childhood Learning</b>	Early and childhood learning refers to programming for children before they enter Grade 1. Early childhood educators engage with children and families daily, often over several years, to support child development, well-being, healthy nutrition, and physical activity. Ensuring access and affordability of early and childhood learning is important for increasing resilience of young children and families in Medicine Hat.
<b>Lifelong Learning</b>	Lifelong learning, sometimes referred to as adult learning, refers to programs and educational opportunities tailored to adult literacy, language, parenting, employment, and life skill development. These educational opportunities are important for individual development and are provided by many organizations in Medicine Hat.
<b>Childcare</b>	Quality, affordable, and accessible childcare provides myriad supports and benefits to families and children. Parents and families across Medicine Hat rely on childcare providers to support the growth and development of their children, playing a crucial role in helping children build skills needed to thrive. Partnerships between all levels of government, schools, and childcare providers are key to ensuring that childcare services can be accessed when and where needed, at an affordable rate.

## Pillar 4:

# Employment



Without adequate incomes, the resiliency of individuals and households is severely impacted. People who are able to work need access to a basic level of employment to meet their needs and handle unexpected expenses. Having access to employment opportunities and opportunities to build skills and gain experience supports individual and family well-being and supports Medicine Hat's economy by providing employers with access to a skilled workforce.

Theme	Description
<b>Procurement &amp; Hiring Practices</b>	Procurement is about how businesses acquire goods and services, including the City of Medicine Hat and the various contracts it has with vendors. Sustainable procurement practices integrate environmental, social, and economic factors and help to support community well-being by sourcing locally where possible, including from businesses led and staffed by equity seeking groups. Hiring practices guide how organizations recruit employees, with many companies putting efforts towards hiring more diverse candidates, supporting inclusion and equity within workforces, specifically for equity seeking or historically disadvantaged or underemployed groups.
<b>Community Economic Development &amp; Innovation</b>	Community Economic Development (CED) is a strategic approach to growing the economy by supporting active involvement and participation of individuals in local economic decision-making. It is an inclusive and participatory process where communities initiate and generate their own solutions to economic problems and opportunities. CED is a community-centred process that blends social and economic development to enhance economic, social, ecological, and cultural well-being of communities. Innovation is viewed as a key driver of future economic growth. Through new ideas and technologies, innovation is about solving critical problems in new ways to enhance well-being.
<b>Opportunities for Everyone</b>	Within the economy, many groups have been historically underemployed or underpaid for various reasons (e.g. racism, discrimination, gender bias, uneven educational opportunities, developmental and genetic differences, etc.). An inclusive economy is one where there are economic opportunities for everyone, including youth, seniors, students, newcomers, individuals with disabilities, minorities, and all genders. Creating economic and employment opportunities for everyone means examining all dimensions of the economy to identify potential barriers limiting participation and working to address them.

## Pillar 5: Health



Health is a multi-faceted concept that includes physical, mental, and social health. Health is more than just the absence of disease or infirmity, it encompasses overall wellness and well-being. Individuals often rely on a range of health supports, including mental health services, chronic disease management, and addiction support, among others. The City plays a direct role in supporting community health by providing recreational opportunities and regulating aspects of the natural environment to promote public health and conservation of natural areas. Other levels of governments are also involved in the health system in Medicine Hat, including funding physicians, regulating the environment, and tackling larger social challenges related to mental health, addiction, and healthy aging. There are many other service providers that provide myriad supports for individuals and communities to maintain good health.

Theme	Description
<b>Primary Care</b>	Primary care is often one's first point of contact with the health care system. It includes all services in the community that support day-to-day health needs, including primary care providers (physicians, nurses), maternal health and emergency services, and preventative care and disease management supports. Access to primary care health services is integral to community well-being by addressing health needs before and during challenging periods. Availability of family doctors, nurses, and other primary health care supports has been a challenge in Medicine Hat in recent years and Alberta Health is undertaking major system-wide reforms in response to broader health system issues.
<b>Recreation</b>	Recreation, as defined by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community well-being. Recreational activities are wide-ranging and can include physical exercise, creative arts classes, spiritual retreats, going for coffee with friends, and even playing video games. The City of Medicine Hat directly provides recreation, arts, and culture programs and activities, develops and maintains parks, recreation, and community facilities, and works with many organizations to provide access to recreational opportunities for all residents.
<b>Environment</b>	A healthy environment provides communities with the resources and spaces they need to thrive. Being exposed to natural, green environments supports well-being, reduces stress, and provides important places to socialize and recreate. Parks, urban forests, water bodies, and other natural areas connect to quality of life. Environmental sustainability is about maintaining these critical natural assets for future generations. Environmental hazards, such as extreme heat or cold, pose potential health risks to vulnerable populations that are exposed to the elements.

Pillar 5:  
**Health**



<b>Healthy Aging</b>	Healthy aging is defined by the World Health Organization as being the process of developing and maintaining functional abilities that enables well-being in older age. Healthy aging involves all aspects of health, but also intersects with built environments. Being able to age in place, navigate around the community, socialize across generations, and being welcomed to participate in the community are important elements of healthy aging. As the proportion of seniors living in Medicine Hat grows over time, understanding and providing what supports are needed to age in place becomes more important.
<b>Mental Health</b>	Mental health is a state of well-being where people can cope with stresses of life, realize their goals, learn and work well, and contribute to the community. It includes emotional, psychological, and social health. Strong social connections are integral to mental health and community participation. Mental health and what is needed to support it varies from person to person. However, it is important that resources to support mental health be available within the community, including various psychological services, support groups, and primary health care. Mental health is a significant concern of Medicine Hat residents and service providers, with many impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic still lingering within the community.
<b>Addiction</b>	Addiction is a chronic dysfunction of the brain system that involves reward, motivation, and memory. It can affect anyone and is characterized by impulsive, chronic, physiological, or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behaviour, or harmful activity. Individuals develop addictions for many reasons, including physical pain resulting from workplace or other injuries, coping with stress, violence, or traumatic events. Addiction can have severe physical and mental health consequences, often co-occurring with mental health disorders. Treating addiction and supporting individuals to recover is a complex process that requires multiple levels of governments and agencies to work closely together to provide help when and where it is needed. Alberta's approach to addiction support is focused on recovery and with systemic changes, it will be important for the City of Medicine Hat and other organizations to be actively involved in decision-making related to addictions supports in the community.

Pillar 6:

# Equity



Individuals may have different access to systems and resources for many reasons, including race, gender, sexuality, cultural background, and lived experiences. Equity recognizes that all individuals have different circumstances and may have unequal access to resources and opportunities to reach an equal outcome with others. Equity is about ensuring that everyone can access resources based on need, rather than ensuring equality of resource distribution. Efforts often seek to correct historical or social imbalances by creating more opportunities for individuals that have had less access to opportunities and resources. Equity is often mentioned along with diversity and inclusion, with equity always as the long-term goal. Diversity is about ensuring that individuals of different backgrounds, identities, and experiences are represented and appreciated in communities and organizations. Inclusion is about putting diversity into practice through acts of welcoming, support, respect, reconciliation, and celebration that make everyone feel included and valued in the community.

Theme	Description
Race/Ethnicity	The relationship between race and well-being is complex. Racial and ethnic disparities exist in access to education, employment, health care, housing, and health outcomes more generally. Experiences of racism can lead to adverse mental outcomes, feelings of exclusion, and in some cases fear of violence or oppression. Awareness, education, and concerted efforts to address racism and historical injustices by all levels of government, businesses, and community organizations is required to minimize the potentially negative impact that racism can have on well-being.
Gender	Gender refers to socially constructed characteristics of individuals, including norms, roles, relations, behaviours, culture, and psychological traits typically associated with one sex. Gender can influence well-being in many ways, including through access to health care, feelings of safety, wealth disparities, and mental health. Many governments and organizations are considering how decisions and services support inclusiveness through Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+). GBA+ is an analytical tool that involves taking a gender and diversity sensitive approach to policies, programs, and other initiatives.
Sexuality	Sexuality refers to how people experience and express themselves sexually, involving biological, psychological, physical, emotional, social, or spiritual feelings and emotions. It often intersects with a person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are attracted. Many members of diverse sexual backgrounds (e.g. 2SLGBTQI+ community members) face higher rates of discrimination, abuse, and mental health challenges. Initiatives to increase awareness and inclusion of sexually diverse members of the community are important for well-being.



Pillar 6:

# Equity



Newcomers	Newcomers to Canada often experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges compared to non-newcomers, as well as greater rates of housing insecurity, and are more likely to face discrimination and racism than non-newcomers. Access to services and supports for newcomers, including language training, education and credential equivalency recognition, cultural groups, opportunities for and acceptance of cultural expression, and access to meaningful employment are critical factors for newcomer well-being.
Stigma & Discrimination	Stigma is a social process characterized by labeling, stereotyping, and separation/isolation, leading to status loss and contributing to discrimination. Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of people on several grounds, including age, ethnicity, sexuality, or disability. Fear of judgement and discrimination can prevent people from accessing needed supports or talking with others about challenges, perpetuating health, social, and economic inequalities. Challenging stigma and discrimination and working towards shared understandings of challenges and diverse lived experiences can increase overall empathy within communities.
Reconciliation	Reconciliation is an ongoing process of building and restoring relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, grounded in truth, respect, and mutual understanding. It involves acknowledging historical and ongoing injustices, addressing systemic inequities, and taking meaningful action toward healing and justice. Reconciliation requires listening, learning, and engaging in open dialogue while supporting Indigenous self-determination and cultural revitalization. By embracing reconciliation, communities can foster stronger, more inclusive relationships that honour Indigenous rights, histories, and contributions, ultimately working toward a more just and equitable society

**Pillar 7:**

# Connection



Connection is about the relationships and interactions that individuals and groups have within their communities and social networks, including with family, friends, coworkers, community members, businesses, and government staff. Connections usually exist in informal networks between people, groups, and organizations. Creating opportunities for people to come together can help to build trust and resilience among community members. Public spaces, parks, schools, libraries, recreation and cultural centres, and other civic buildings are important sites for connections to emerge and be sustained over time. Opportunities to connect can range from formal programs, for example community celebrations organized and delivered by the municipality, or informal such as someone meeting another parent as their children play together in the park. Connection supports trust in local governments and institutions, between neighbours, and overall community well-being through creating environments where everyone feels valued and included.

Theme	Description
<b>Transparent &amp; Participatory Local Governance</b>	Transparency in local governance provides individuals and groups impacted by administrative decisions with access to information to understand processes leading to these decisions and opportunities to shape decision-making processes. Transparency helps to build strong relationships and trust between local governments and communities, driven by collaboration, engagement, and participation. Participatory governance actively involves citizens in decision-making in budgeting, public policies, programs, and initiatives. Participatory governance aims to connect public institutions and community members in a way that increases effectiveness, responsiveness, and understanding of public policy making and program delivery. Transparency and participatory governance contribute to community well-being by fostering trust and engagement in important decisions affecting the whole community.
<b>Creating Great Neighbourhoods</b>	Great neighbourhoods have many common elements, including, but not limited to areas for community connection like parks and public spaces and amenities, a mixture of land uses and periods of development, diversity in built form and residents, good schools, quality transportation including roads, sidewalks, public transit, and active transportation infrastructure, and neighbours that know and look out for one another. Creating great neighbourhoods does not happen overnight. Sustaining them requires maintenance and deliberate choices to foster positive change and evolution over time. Municipalities support great neighbourhoods by regulating land uses, building and maintaining infrastructure, and creating long term plans and policies to guide decision-making.
<b>Fostering Community Connections</b>	Beyond providing and maintaining the infrastructure needed for community connections, municipalities can play a large role in creating opportunities for people to come together. Community-wide events and celebrations, pop up parks, pilot projects, public art, block parties, supporting volunteering and volunteer-based organizations, and providing land to create community gardens are just some of the ways that municipalities can foster strong connections. Municipalities can also have professional staff focused on building and supporting connections between individuals, organizations and community.

# How do we *get there?*

## Strategic Objectives

This section of *Momentum* presents Strategic Objectives that the City of Medicine Hat, community organizations and individuals can work towards achieving over the next ten years. These Strategic Objectives reflect what we heard from the community, what we learned through research, and our many strengths as a community. Some of these Strategic Objectives are more related to the City's internal capacity and processes whereas others will be contingent upon community organizations efforts and ambitions. The intention behind these Strategic Objectives is to establish a clear direction and inspire action, but also to leave space and opportunity for other organizations to be creative in their interpretation and respond with actions that make the most sense to them.

**Each Strategic Objective is presented with context as to why the objective is important and connections to what we heard from the community when it comes to well-being needs.**

Potential actions are presented for each Strategic Objective to help illustrate the many opportunities that the City may explore over the coming years to enhance well-being for Hatters. The City will work to implement these actions through annual business planning, and by supporting community organizations working to achieve these Strategic Objectives. There are likely many other actions that can be taken beyond what is identified and the City welcomes all ideas and will seek community input on a continuous basis.

**OBJECTIVE 1:**

# Reduce Poverty in Medicine Hat

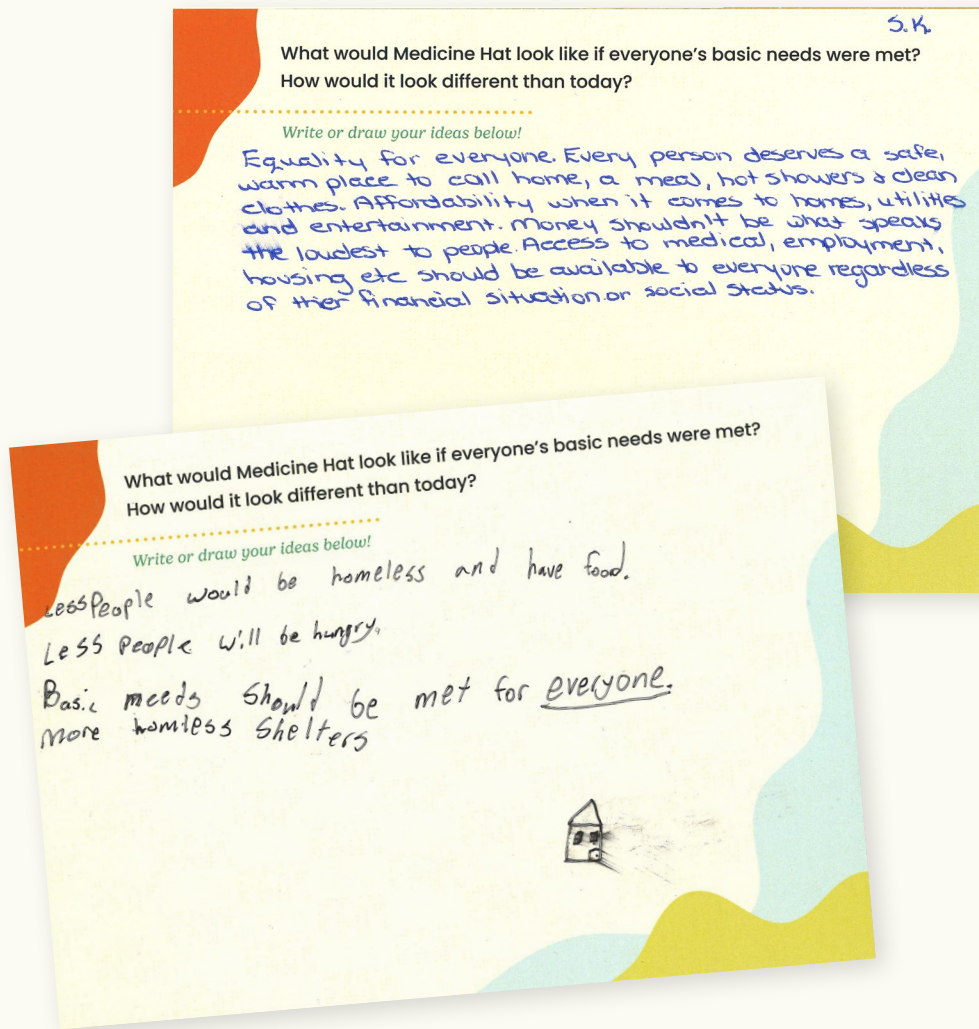
## Context

Poverty is the absence of resources and opportunities needed for full participation in society, spanning economic, social, cultural, educational, and political spheres. Rooted in complex factors like education, health, safety, and social norms, it extends beyond income levels. Many residents face rising living costs, with community organizations reporting unprecedented demand for support. Addressing poverty requires both immediate aid and long-term solutions, such as expanding affordable housing, strengthening food security, and challenging stigmas that hinder access to essential resources.



## Objective 1: Reduce Poverty in Medicine Hat

### What We Learned & Heard...



*"It is difficult to engage in a healthy balance of self care and/or well-being if there is no money to be spent on extra curricular activities or events due to the current cost of living."*

—Community Resident

*"I think the current cost of living has changed lifestyle and well-being significantly for all Hatters. Groceries, fuel, utilities and virtually everything else is causing much stress and strain on the majority of us especially those who are retired, on fixed incomes and or marginally or part-time employed. Albertans should never have to make decisions about transportation costs or feeding their families."*

—Community Resident

## Objective 1: Reduce Poverty in Medicine Hat

### Potential Actions

- 1a. **Modernize Housing Policies to Promote Affordable Options:** Revise city bylaws and policies to incorporate innovative strategies—such as streamlined fees, reduced regulatory barriers, and flexible zoning—and actively engage stakeholders and affected communities to create sustainable, inclusive housing solutions for all.
- 1b. **Be Engaged in the Medicine Hat Housing Strategy:** Actively support and partner with community organizations and businesses to continuously update and implement the Medicine Hat Housing Strategy—ensuring inclusive stakeholder participation to meet evolving community needs
- 1c. **Transform Underutilized Land into Affordable and Accessible Housing:** Identify and reallocate underutilized city land in partnership with community organizations and developers. Streamline decision-making and acquisition processes—including environmental and financial assessments—to support phased development of supportive, transitional, and below-market rate housing, with an initial focus on the downtown/city centre node.
- 1d. **Promote Fair Rental Practices:** Collaborate with property owners, industry associations, and community organizations to advocate for inclusive and equitable rental policies.
- 1e. **Advocate for Income Supports:** Support service organizations and community stakeholders in lobbying for flexible, responsive income support policies that reflect living costs, restore local service capacity, and address affordability through collaborative efforts.
- 1f. **Promote Living Wage Employers:** Collaborate with the Alberta Living Wage Network, community champions, and the business sector to recognize and incentivize Medicine Hat employers paying a living wage through funding and other supports.
- 1g. **Enhance Food Security Through Collaboration:** Partner with community organizations, businesses, and local agencies to repurpose underutilized land for community gardens and local food markets. Explore opportunities to eliminate rental fees on City properties where feasible—ensuring fairness and cost recovery.

1h. **Empower Residents with Food Knowledge:**

Partner with local organizations, neighbourhood associations, grocers, and food producers to promote educational programs that highlight the link between nutrition, wellness, and sustainability, promote home and community gardening, and continue to support existing community initiatives.

1i. **Enhance Access to Public Services:**

Regularly review and refine the Fair Entry Program to ensure City services are inclusive and accessible for all equity-deserving groups. Collaborate with community partners to enhance awareness of services, clarify eligibility, expand low-cost recreation and mobility supports, and secure external funding for long-term sustainability.

1j. **Expand the Range of Transportation**

**Solutions:** Pursue innovative, multimodal transit initiatives—including active transportation network expansion, flexible and accessible private market options, to ensure safe, affordable, and accessible mobility for all. Collaborate with public, private, and community partners to identify and remove barriers, streamline access processes, and extend services to vulnerable populations and surrounding areas.

1k. **Promote Energy Conservation and**

**Awareness:** Develop and support campaigns like HAT Smart to educate residents on energy efficiency and provide actionable steps for reducing costs and conserving resources, including incentives.

## Policy Alignment

- myMH Master Plan (2020)
- Thrive (2017)
- Medicine Hat Housing Strategy (2020)
- We Have Energy (2023)
- Government of Alberta – Stronger Foundations: Affordable Housing Strategy (2021)

## Objective 1: Reduce Poverty in Medicine Hat

### Role(s) of the City

- Convener
- Advocate
- Educator
- Coordinator
- Planner/Regulator

### Pillars Supported

**Pillar 1:** Basic Needs

*(Food, Housing, Transportation, Utilities and Income Security)*

**Pillar 4:** Employment

*(Opportunities for Everyone)*

**Pillar 5:** Health

*(Primary Care, Recreation, Healthy Aging, Mental Health, and Addiction)*

**Pillar 6:** Equity

*(Race, Gender, Sexuality, Reconciliation, Newcomers, and Stigma and Discrimination)*

**Pillar 7:** Connection

*(Creating Great Neighbourhoods and Fostering Community Connections)*

**OBJECTIVE 2:**

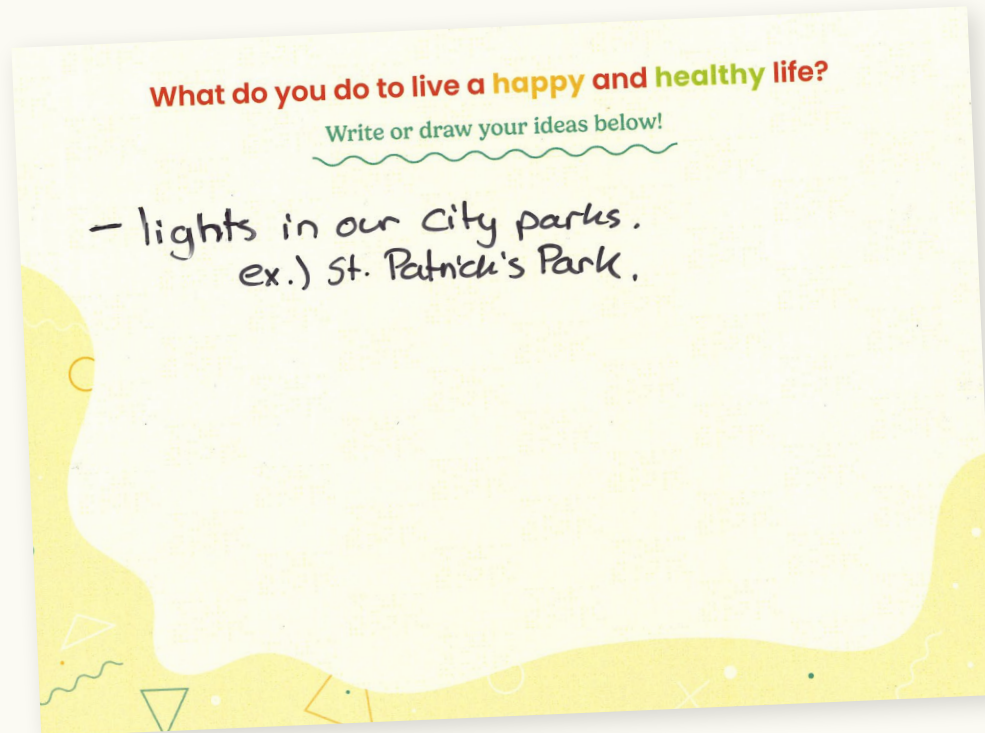
# Enhance Community Safety

## Context

Criminal and disruptive activities threaten the safety and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Rooted in factors like social inequity, economic stress, mental health challenges, and systemic discrimination, harmful behaviour affects everyone regardless of background, age, gender, and sexual orientation. In Medicine Hat, fostering safety requires addressing immediate threats while creating environments that prevent harm before it occurs. This involves a balanced approach of prevention, intervention, and enforcement, alongside efforts to tackle root causes like trauma, mental health, addiction, social cohesion, access to safe spaces, and the stigmas that fuel crime and disruptive behaviour. Ensuring everyone feels safe in their homes, neighbourhoods, and public spaces is vital for a resilient and thriving Medicine Hat.

## Objective 2: Enhance Community Safety

### What We Learned & Heard...



*"To me well-being means feeling secure in my surroundings, feeling safe in my community."*

—Community Resident

*"Well-Being means feeling safe in my city and having a community I belong to."*

—Community Resident



## Objective 2: Enhance Community Safety

### Potential Actions

- 2a. **Educate and Empower Residents:** Collaborate with community organizations to deliver clear, consistent information on crime prevention, managing disruptive behaviours, and trauma-informed care via targeted communication channels and community programming.
- 2b. **Explore Alternative Models to Traditional Police Response:** Collaborate with interested parties—including housing, justice, mental health, social services, and Indigenous and lived-experience communities—to implement community-led, prevention-focused responses and a continuum of services to complex social issues.
- 2c. **Design Physical Environments with Safety in Mind:** Collaborate with partners and community members with lived experience to apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines, secure funding for safety measures and implement inclusive, dignity-preserving improvements to public spaces and buildings.
- 2d. **Work to Promote Inclusion and Address Stigma:** Lead by example by convening diverse community organizations and individuals with lived experience to develop a positive, inclusive framework and action plan that enhances physical and psychological safety.

### Policy Alignment

- We Have Energy (2023)
- myMH Master Plan (2020)
- Parks+RecMH (2022)
- Medicine Hat Leisure Trails Future Development Plan (2010)
- Thrive (2017)
- The Hat Downtown Redevelopment Plan (2009)
- Government of Alberta – Stronger Foundations: Affordable Housing Strategy (2021)

Objective 2: Enhance Community Safety

Role(s) of the City

- Convener
- Advocate
- Educator
- Coordinator
- Funder
- Planner/Regulator
- Service Provider

Pillars Supported

- Pillar 1:** Basic Needs  
*(Housing and Transportation)*
- Pillar 2:** Safety  
*(Perception of Safety, Crime Prevention, Family Violence, and Elder Abuse)*
- Pillar 5:** Health  
*(Primary Care, Recreation, Environment, Healthy Aging, Mental Health, and Addiction)*
- Pillar 6:** Equity  
*(Race, Gender, Sexuality, Newcomers, Stigma and Discrimination, and Reconciliation)*
- Pillar 7:** Connection  
*(Creating Great Neighbourhoods and Fostering Community Connections)*

OBJECTIVE 3:

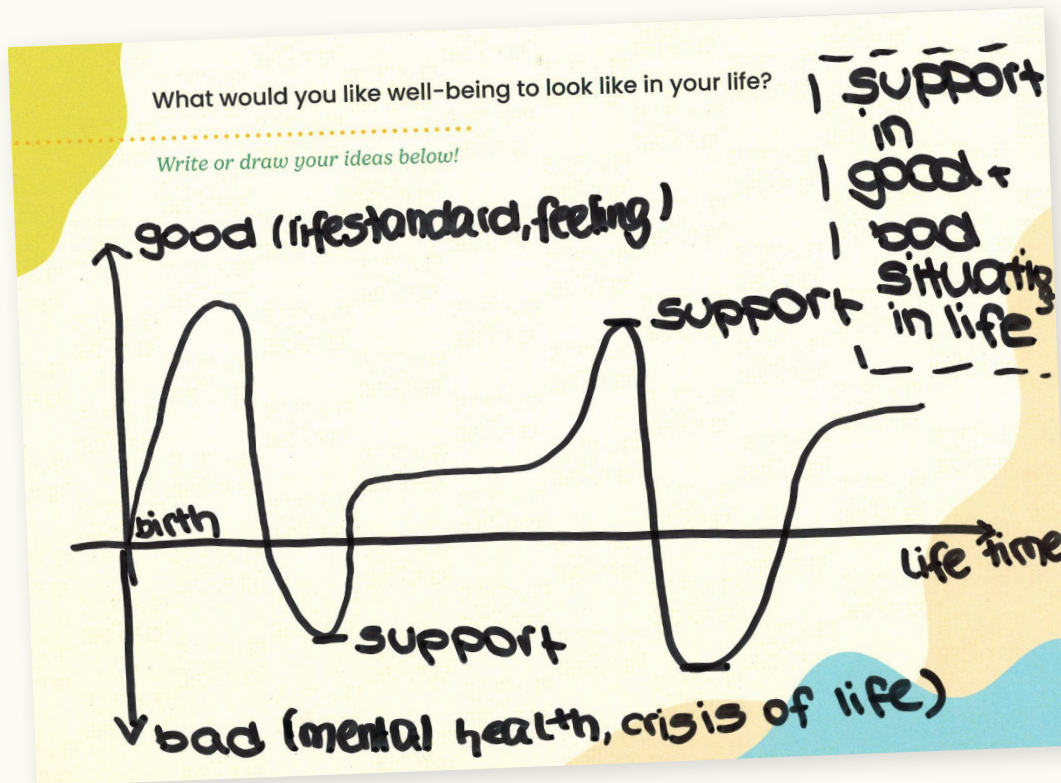
# Promote Health and Wellness

## Context

Health and wellness contribute to both individual quality of life and community well-being. For individuals, it means maintaining physical health, mental resilience, and independence. For communities, it enables ongoing contributions to social and economic activities. Medicine Hat can promote health and wellness by creating environments that prioritize healthy development, physical activity, and mobility. By improving health care access, expanding recreation opportunities, and developing transportation options, the City can ensure residents can be active and engaged at any age.

### Objective 3: Promote Health and Wellness

#### What We Learned & Heard...



*"Well-Being to me means personal needs for physical and mental health are not just met but methods to meet needs are available and accessed and contribute substantially to a person's enjoyment of life and ability to live with vitality."*

—Community Resident

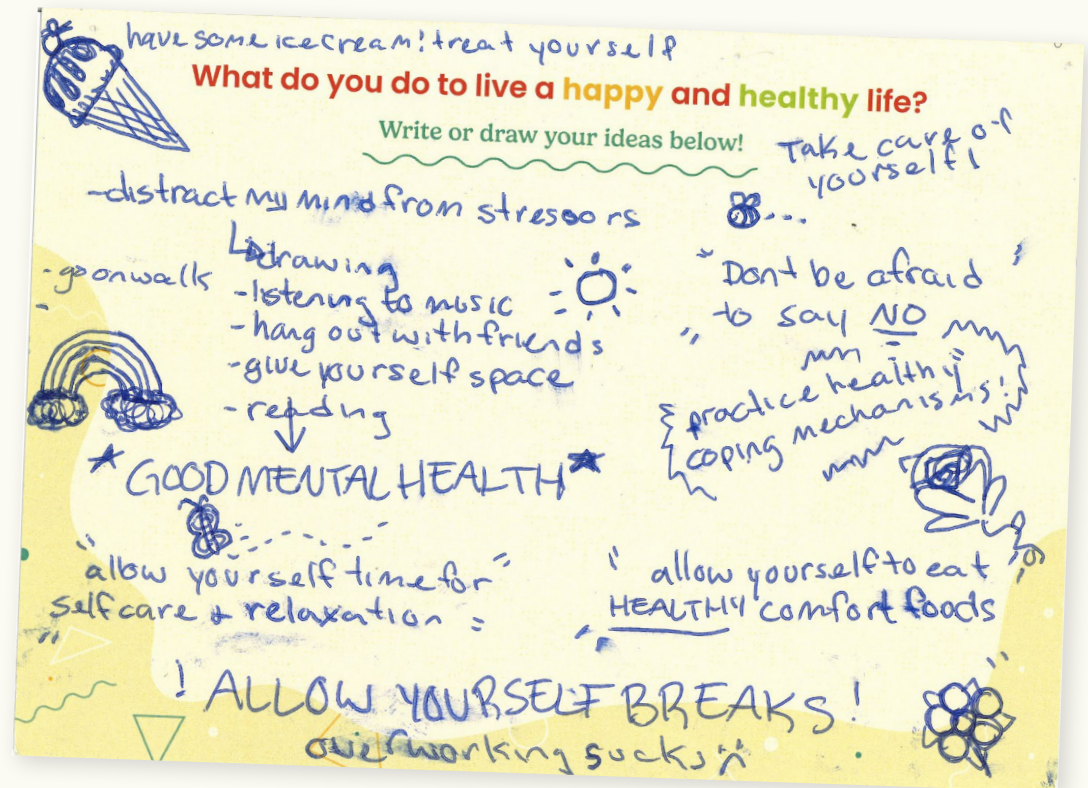
### Objective 3: Promote Health and Wellness

For some, the needs are acute (addiction, mental health, financial). For others, the needs are less immediate but can have a significant impact over time (isolation, access to supports)

—Summary of Stakeholder Input

Coordinate services and promote clear navigation of the mental health system of care.

—Summary of Stakeholder Input



## Objective 3: Promote Health and Wellness

### Potential Actions

- 3a. **Foster Physical Literacy for All:** Collaborate with schools, recreation facilities, and community partners to support and expand access to accessible, adaptive, and coordinated physical activity programs for all residents to maintain good health and active lifestyles.
- 3b. **Improve Active Transportation Networks:** Collaborate with cycling organizations, walking clubs, and local advocacy groups to remove network friction points and enhance inclusivity—incorporating adaptive options and closing identified gaps. Leverage capital projects to expand and refine Medicine Hat's trail system while maintaining fiscal responsibility.
- 3c. **Support Mental Health and Addiction Programs and Resources:** Champion accessible, community-based, and culturally safe services by partnering with grassroots organizations, educational institutions, and service providers who deliver proactive, holistic supports while working to ensure long-term funding and dedicated community spaces.
- 3d. **Support Recruitment of Health care Professionals:** Explore municipal strategies and opportunities to promote recruitment and retention of health care professionals.
- 3e. **Foster Innovation in Health care:** Partner with health care providers, educators, and social service agencies to plan and promote comprehensive wrap-around support initiatives to improve health care outcomes.
- 3f. **Advocate for Senior Support Programs:** Partner with public, private, and nonprofit organizations to expand tailored services, including enhanced social programs and reliable transportation for Medicine Hat's aging population.
- 3g. **Protect and Maintain a Healthy Environment:** Collaborate with residents, organizations, and other stakeholders to respect and safeguard local ecosystems, contributing to well-being and a healthy community.

### Policy Alignment

- We Have Energy (2023)
- myMH Master Plan (2020)
- Thrive (2017)
- Medicine Hat Housing Strategy (2020)
- Parks+recMH (2022)
- Medicine Hat Leisure Trails Future Development Plan (2010)
- Government of Alberta – Stronger Foundations: Affordable Housing Strategy (2021)



Objective 3: Promote Health and Wellness

Role(s) of the City

- Convener
- Advocate
- Educator
- Coordinator
- Funder
- Planner/Regulator

Pillars Supported

- Pillar 1:** Basic Needs  
*(Housing, Transportation, and Income Security)*
- Pillar 2:** Safety  
*(Perception of Safety and Crime Prevention)*
- Pillar 5:** Health  
*(Primary Care, Recreation, Environment, Mental Health, and Addiction)*

**OBJECTIVE 4:**

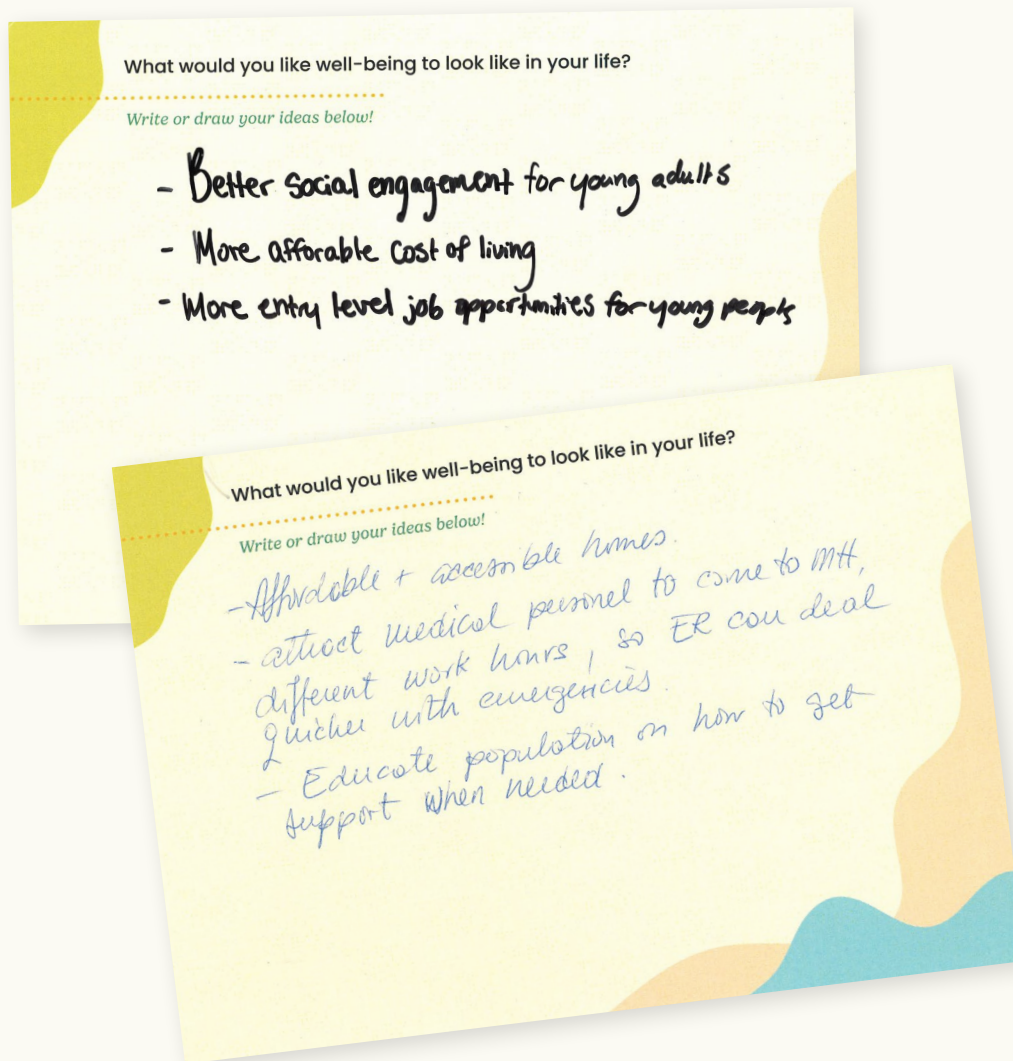
# Lifelong Learning of All Residents

## Context

Lifelong learning is the continuous pursuit of knowledge through formal education and informal methods like workshops, reading, and practical experiences. This ongoing process helps individuals adapt to change, build resilience, and enhance their skills in a dynamic world. To support lifelong learning, Medicine Hat must collaborate with community partners to expand opportunities for personal growth across all ages and backgrounds. By improving access to diverse resources offered by libraries, educational centres, and community organizations, we can empower residents to navigate challenges, refine their skills, and pursue their passions. Expanding these opportunities ensures Hatters can thrive, contribute to their communities, and reach their full potential.

## Objective 4: Lifelong Learning of All Residents

### What We Learned & Heard...



Answering, what is the biggest challenge in meeting basic needs, a community respondent said:

*"health and education services being inaccessible due to lack of resources and funds."*

—Community Resident

*"Activities, special events, learning opportunities, social activities, hobbies and crafts."*

—Community Resident

## Objective 4: Lifelong Learning of All Residents

### Potential Actions

- 4a. **Build Connections with Educational Institutions:** Partner with primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions and the public library to reduce barriers to higher education and lifelong learning. Collaborate with educators to support inclusive activities to enhance educational engagement through community events.
- 4b. **Identify and Address Youth Support Needs:** Partner with schools, youth groups, and community networks to identify gaps and enhance programming. Leverage existing resources to support intergenerational learning, workforce development, and culturally safe mentorship for all youth.
- 4c. **Promote Individual/Family Capacity Building:** Partner with organizations to build on programs that deliver accessible, culturally safe wellness and resiliency resources that will promote quality of life and build capacity to prevent and deal with crises should they arise.
- 4d. **Support Development and Delivery of Learning Opportunities:** Advocate for and partner with organizations to expand diverse lifelong learning opportunities—including employable skills, community connection, health, financial, and digital literacy, and cultural understanding.
- 4e. **Promote Inter-Generational Learning:** Collaborate with youth and senior organizations to expand shared learning programs. Build on existing community initiatives by partnering with Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, and community organizations to develop mentorship opportunities for young adults facing challenges and to support inclusive senior events.

### Policy Alignment

- Thrive (2017)
- Parks+recMH (2022)

Objective 4: Lifelong Learning of All Residents

Role(s) of the City

- Convener
- Educator
- Capacity Builder
- Coordinator
- Planner/Regulator

Pillars Supported

- Pillar 3:** Education  
*(Primary, Secondary, and Post-Secondary Education, Early and Childhood Learning, Lifelong Learning, and Childcare)*
- Pillar 4:** Employment  
*(Procurement and Hiring Practices, Community Economic Development and Innovation, and Opportunities for Everyone)*
- Pillar 6:** Equity  
*(Race, Gender, Sexuality, Reconciliation, and Newcomers)*

**OBJECTIVE 5:**

# Create & Enhance Economic Opportunities in Medicine Hat

## Context

Economic opportunities create pathways for individuals, businesses, and communities to enhance financial well-being and security. Access to employment, entrepreneurship, and business development strengthens financial stability, reduces poverty, and improves quality of life. Communities with diverse economic prospects attract investment and talent, driving improvements in education, health care, and housing while fostering growth and cohesion. Medicine Hat can achieve this by developing strategies that stimulate job creation, support entrepreneurship, and attract investment. By investing in infrastructure, education, and skills training, the community can build a workforce ready to meet current and future demands. Collaborating with educational institutions ensures alignment with industry needs, positioning Medicine Hat as a thriving economic hub, where innovation and collaboration fuel sustainable growth.



## Objective 5: Create & Enhance Economic Opportunities in Medicine Hat

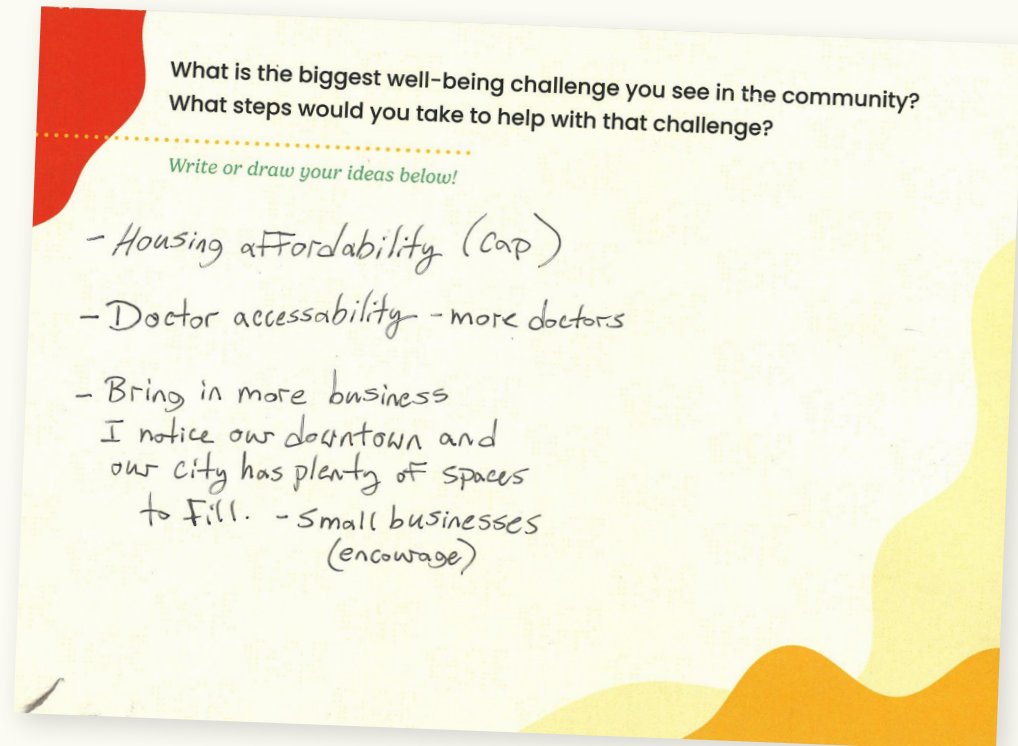
### What We Learned & Heard...

*"Access physically, emotionally, economically to services, places and experiences in my community that are stimulating and knowledge increasing."*

—Community Resident

*"The City should be focused on economic growth with our small businesses."*

—Community Resident



## Objective 5: Create & Enhance Economic Opportunities in Medicine Hat

### What We Learned & Heard...



*"It is hard for businesses to sustain healthy employment for employees and hard for employees to live a happy satisfying life."*

—Community Resident

*"Attract better businesses to the City. Any new construction is usually another bank, car wash, or dollar store. Small businesses don't survive here for more than a year or two."*

—Community Resident

## Objective 5: Create & Enhance Economic Opportunities in Medicine Hat

### Potential Actions

- 5a. **Develop Local Business and Industry:** Partner with business organizations and associations to identify local needs, reduce regulatory barriers, and implement policies and incentives to help businesses be cost effective. Leverage targeted programming to drive actionable support for local enterprises.
- 5b. **Grow and Support the Workforce:** Partner with businesses, employers, and support organizations to develop inclusive strategies that attract specialized skills, youth, and newcomers while retaining talent. Implement supportive policies, reduce regulatory barriers, and enhance intercultural competency and protections for equity-deserving groups.
- 5c. **Attract Investment:** Collaborate with partners to diversify the local economy by proactively targeting industries aligned with our community's resources and needs.
- 5d. **Be Ready for Investment and Growth:** Strengthen community readiness by aligning city infrastructure, policies, and processes to support business growth and comprehensive community development. Enhance amenities, including housing, recreation, schools, childcare, and health and wellness, through partnerships that identify improvements and boost resource awareness.
- 5e. **Support Social Enterprise Development:** Collaborate with schools, nonprofits, and economic developers to implement targeted social enterprise models that drive economic growth, ensuring intentional, actionable partnerships aligned with Medicine Hat's economic goals.
- 5f. **Support Equity-Deserving Entrepreneurs:** Partner with organizations and individuals to understand and address employment and other needs of businesses led by women, Indigenous, minorities, people with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. Develop targeted strategies, including mentorship and resource-sharing initiatives.

### Policy Alignment

- myMH Master Plan (2020)
- Thrive (2017)
- Medicine Hat Housing Strategy (2020)
- We Have Energy (2023)
- Government of Alberta – Stronger Foundations: Affordable Housing Strategy (2021)

## Objective 5: Create & Enhance Economic Opportunities in Medicine Hat

### Role(s) of the City

- Convener
- Educator
- Capacity Builder
- Planner/Regulator
- Service Provider

### Pillars Supported

#### **Pillar 4:** Employment

*(Procurement and Hiring Practices, Community Economic Development and Innovation, and Opportunities for Everyone)*

#### **Pillar 6:** Equity

*(Race, Gender, Sexuality, Newcomers, Stigma and Discrimination, and Reconciliation)*

#### **Pillar 7:** Connection

*(Transparent and Participatory Local Governance, Creating Great Neighbourhoods, and Fostering Community Connections)*

**OBJECTIVE 6:**

# Embrace and Celebrate the Diversity of Medicine Hat

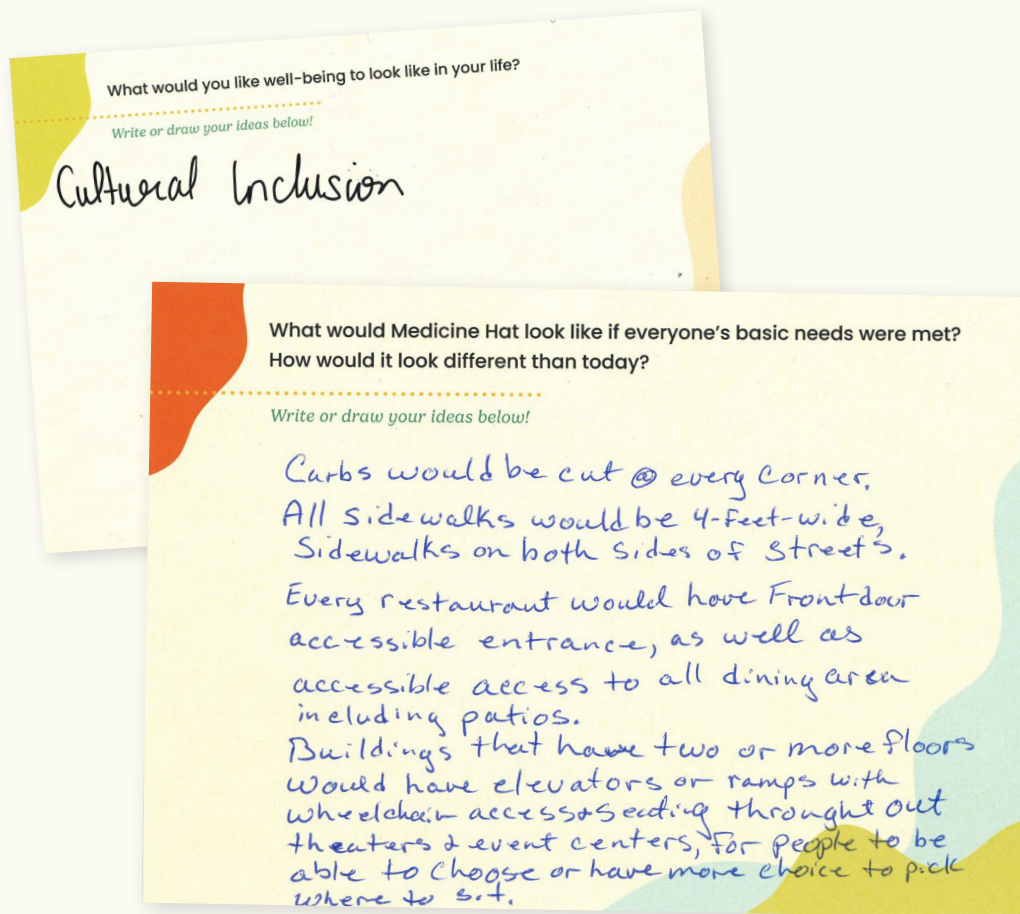
## Context

Diversity reflects the unique differences among individuals and groups, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and cultural background. Embracing diversity means valuing these differences as vital to the community's richness, driving innovation, creativity, and equity. Achieving this vision requires collaboration between the City, interested parties, and community organizations, alongside ongoing engagement, and dialogue with residents to ensure everyone has the opportunity to contribute and thrive.



## Objective 6: Embrace and Celebrate The Diversity of Medicine Hat

### What We Learned & Heard...



*"The need to increase awareness and opportunities for inclusive activities. It emphasizes the need to ensure accessibility to such activities and not just limit them to one-time free events. For instance, free swims in summers and free skating in winters can be made more accessible by providing bussing services to these activities and resources for skate rentals for those who cannot afford them."*

—Community Resident

*"Well-Being means creating space for everyone, building equality and inclusion."*

—Community Resident

*"Well-Being in a community means lots of interconnection between and amongst humans of different ages, income levels, ethnicities, and events and locations that encourage this."*

—Community Resident

## Objective 6: Embrace and Celebrate The Diversity of Medicine Hat

### Potential Actions

- 6a. **Design Inclusive City Spaces Alongside Equity-Deserving Groups:** Broaden consultations during planning for city-owned and operated spaces to include input from equity-deserving groups, and organizations that support equity-deserving and under-represented groups, ensuring spaces reflect diverse community needs and prioritize inclusivity and safety.
- 6b. **Address Existing Accessibility Barriers in City Spaces:** Conduct audits of city-owned and operated spaces and create strategies to address accessibility challenges, ensuring inclusivity for everyone.
- 6c. **Develop a City of Medicine Hat Inclusive Policy and Framework:** Develop and implement a systematic approach to workforce inclusion to meet the needs of all diverse backgrounds.
- 6d. **Pursue Inclusive Community Designations:** Work toward achieving designations that help all people feel included and valued in the community, including newcomers, youth, Indigenous peoples, seniors, and other community members that may be underrepresented.

### Policy Alignment

- myMH Master Plan (2020)
- We Have Energy (2023)
- Medicine Hat Housing Strategy (2020)
- Parks+recMH (2022)

## Objective 6: Embrace and Celebrate The Diversity of Medicine Hat

### Role(s) of the City

- Convener
- Advocate
- Educator
- Capacity Builder
- Coordinator
- Planner/Regulator

### Pillars Supported

**Pillar 1:** Basic Needs

*(Housing and Transportation)*

**Pillar 2:** Safety

*(Perception of Safety and Crime Prevention)*

**Pillar 4:** Employment

*(Procurement and Hiring Practices, Community Economic Development and Innovation, and Opportunities for Everyone)*

**Pillar 5:** Health

*(Recreation and Mental Health)*

**Pillar 6:** Equity

*(Race, Gender, Sexuality, Reconciliation, Newcomers, and Stigma and Discrimination)*

**Pillar 7:** Connection

*(Transparent and Participatory Local Governance, Creating Great Neighbourhoods, and Fostering Community Connections)*

**OBJECTIVE 7:**

# Take Meaningful Action Towards Reconciliation

## Context

Reconciliation is a shared commitment to address the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism by rebuilding relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples with respect and equity. It requires collective action from governments, organizations, individuals, and communities to engage in meaningful dialogue, support Indigenous-led initiatives, and implement strategies that promote equity and redress injustices. The City of Medicine Hat is committed to advancing reconciliation by fostering active participation from community partners and residents, challenging racism, and dismantling systemic discrimination. Through these efforts, Medicine Hat strives to create a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

## Objective 7: Take Meaningful Action Towards Reconciliation

### What We Learned & Heard...

Answering, what is well-being to you a respondent said *“Connection to Elders for community and more importantly youth.”*

Answering, what is a barrier to well-being in our community, a respondent said *“Neighbouring reserves are further away from Medicine Hat so bringing dancers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers here is more expensive and challenging.”*

*“Every space should be safe and have opportunities for people to belong regardless of their gender, ethnicity, background, religion, sexuality, etc. Everyone should have spaces where they can go to feel connected and like they belong. Hate should not be tolerated.”*

—Community Respondent

*I love that we have the biggest teepee because tourists love to see it, I also like the fact we have lots of local event in Medicine Hat*

## Objective 7: Take Meaningful Action Towards Reconciliation

### Potential Actions

- 7a. **Support Truth and Reconciliation**  
**Efforts:** Advance the City's reconciliation commitments by establishing an advisory group with Indigenous elders and survivors and partner with Indigenous-led organizations to enhance public engagement and community education.
- 7b. **Provide Education and Training for City Staff:** Provide Indigenous developed and delivered education for City Council and City staff related to Call 57 of the Truth & Reconciliation, including providing skills-based training for City staff in anti-racism and general intercultural awareness and competency.
- 7c. **Build Respectful Relationships with Indigenous Peoples:** Partner with Indigenous organizations and engage Elders and community members using traditional protocols. Ensure inclusive, accountable planning to foster sustained trust and achieve long-term positive social impacts.
- 7d. **Engage with Indigenous Peoples on Matters of Importance to Them:** Ensure Indigenous voices and perspectives are heard and considered in relation to municipal policies, planning, and programs and services.
- 7e. **Celebrate Indigenous Histories and Culture:** Partner with Indigenous communities and organizations to document and share local history and cultural practices. Integrate traditional knowledge into City programs and reconciliation initiatives through inclusive planning and collecting community feedback.

### Policy Alignment

- myMH Master Plan (2020)
- We Have Energy (2023)
- Medicine Hat Housing Strategy (2020)
- Parks+recMH (2022)



Objective 7: Take Meaningful Action Towards Reconciliation

Role(s) of the City

- Convener
- Advocate
- Educator
- Capacity Builder
- Coordinator

Pillars Supported

- Pillar 6:** Equity  
*(Race, Gender, Sexuality, Reconciliation, and Stigma and Discrimination)*
- Pillar 7:** Connection  
*(Transparent and Participatory Local Government, Creating Great Neighbourhoods, and Fostering Community Connections)*

**OBJECTIVE 8:**

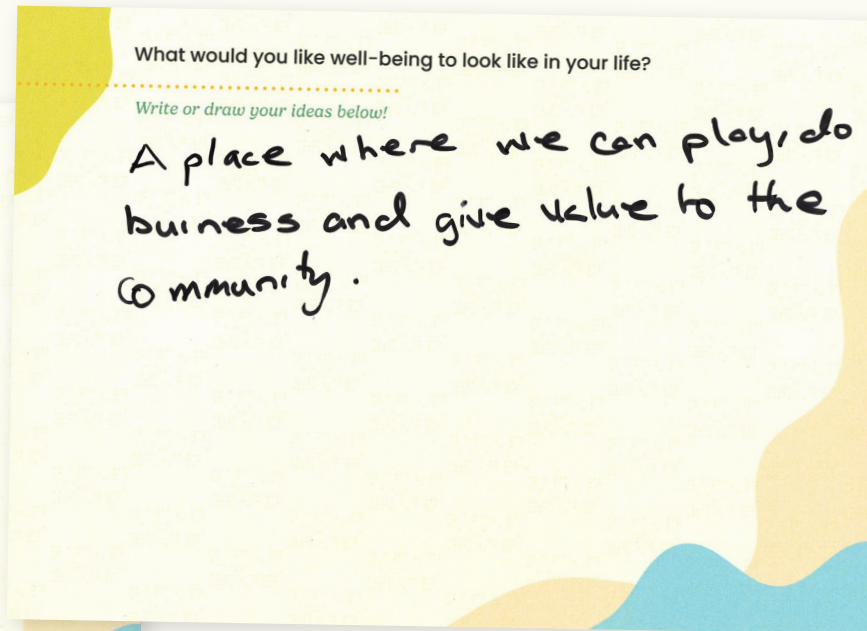
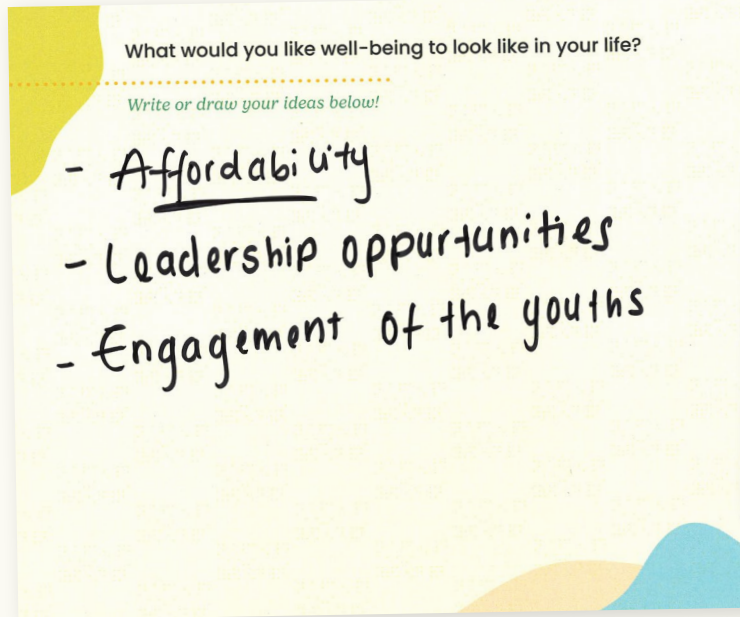
# **Empower Residents to be Engaged Participants in the Community**

## **Context**

Engaged community members actively contribute to the social, cultural, and economic life of their community, fostering a strong sense of belonging and shared responsibility. High engagement builds social cohesion, resilience, and a vibrant, supportive environment, while low engagement can lead to disconnection and reduced community strength. Medicine Hat can enhance engagement by creating inclusive opportunities for civic participation, encouraging volunteerism, and supporting local initiatives. By providing platforms for residents to voice their opinions, share their skills, and influence decision-making, the City can cultivate a dynamic, resilient community that improves quality of life and well-being for all.

## Objective 8: Empower Residents to be Engaged Participants in the Community

### What We Learned & Heard...



*"I hope the well-being plan will focus on transparency and accountability including "Meaningful public engagement and engagement with community groups"*

—Community Respondent

## Objective 8: Empower Residents to be Engaged Participants in the Community

### Potential Actions

- 8a. **Encourage Civic Participation and Engagement:** Promote opportunities to make it easier for residents to understand and be engaged in civic matters that affect them. Encourage participation in democratic processes and awareness of City operations by collaborating with community organizations.
- 8b. **Incorporate Inclusive Input in Policy and Program Development:** Regularly consult with not-for-profits, service sectors, and affected communities to create platforms for dialogue that ensure marginalized voices shape policies and programs.
- 8c. **Strengthen Volunteerism Across the City:** Collaborate with local, provincial, and federal volunteer organizations to expand opportunities, address barriers like burnout and economic pressures, and promote resources to support recruitment and recognition strategies.
- 8d. **Expand Opportunities for Neighbourhood Engagement:** Regularly review and refine neighbourhood capacity building programs, including micro-grants. Engage with individuals and community partners to find new opportunities to bolster neighbourhood connections.

### Policy Alignment

- myMH Master Plan (2020)
- We Have Energy (2023)
- Thrive (2017)
- The Hat-Downtown Redevelopment Plan (2009)

## Objective 8: Empower Residents to be Engaged Participants in the Community

### Role(s) of the City

- Convener
- Educator
- Capacity Builder
- Coordinator
- Funder
- Planner/Regulator
- Service Provider

### Pillars Supported

**Pillar 3:** Education

*(Lifelong Learning)*

**Pillar 7:** Connection

*(Transparent and Participatory Local Governance,  
Creating Great Neighbourhoods, and Fostering  
Community Connections)*

**OBJECTIVE 9:**

# Enhance Organizational Efforts to Support Well-Being

## Context

Strengthening the City of Medicine Hat's capacity to promote community well-being means clearly defining roles, adopting preventive and systemic approaches, championing necessary change, and modernizing policies. This involves leveraging data, community input, and best practices in decision-making while aligning resources effectively. Meaningful outcomes must be measured to ensure sustained improvement in the well-being of individuals and families.



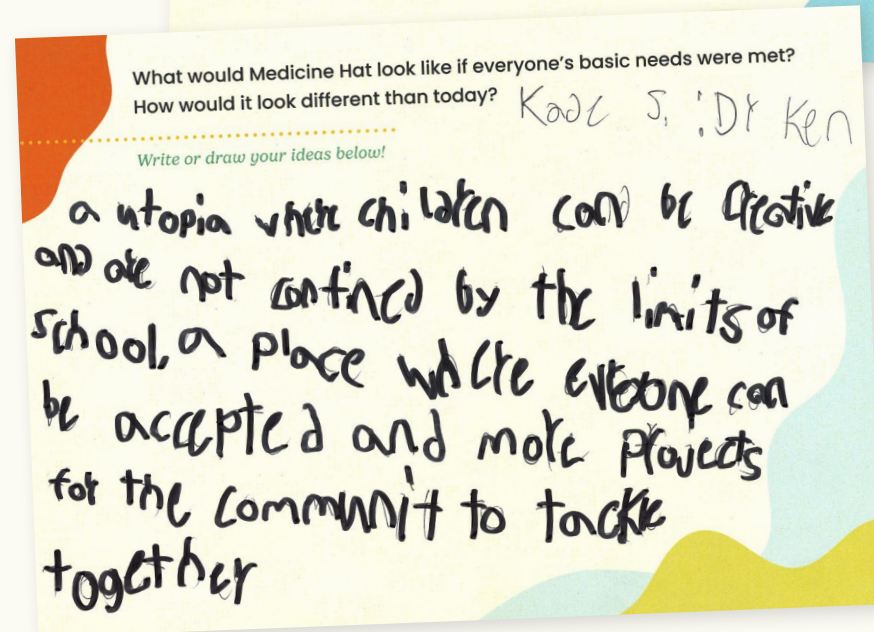
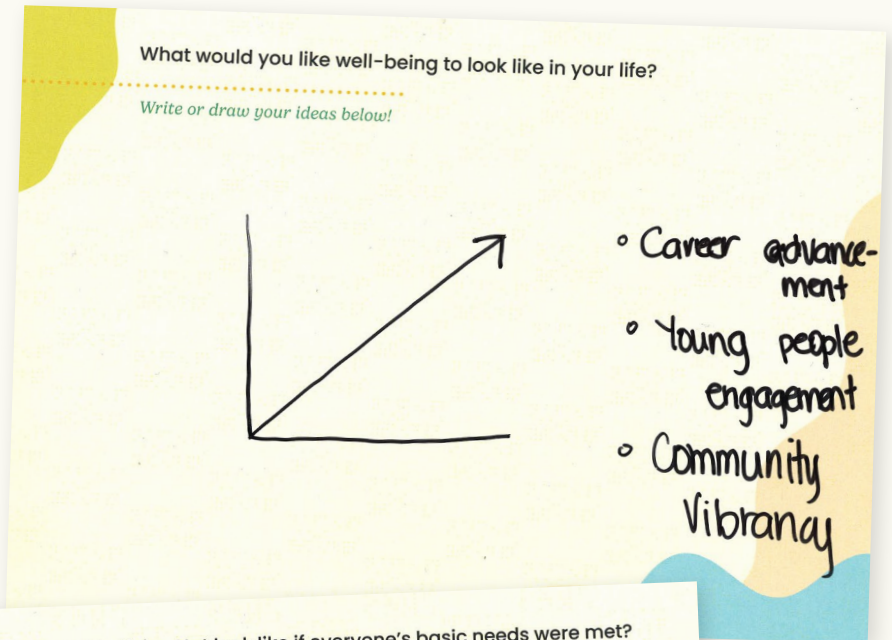
## Objective 9: Enhance Organizational Efforts to Support Well-Being

### What We Learned & Heard...

*A community resident shared hopes that the Strategy will create a “centralized agency to direct people to supports they need and help them familiarize them about the services that are available in MH; the southern zone; and/or elsewhere in Alberta”*

*“Coordinate services and promote clear navigation”*

*Community well-being means “identifying ways that the city can grow and continue to be vibrant, offering services and resources that attract people and help to make them happy and healthy.”*



## Objective 9: Enhance Organizational Efforts to Support Well-Being

### Potential Actions

- 9a. **Clarify and Communicate the Municipality's Purpose, Role, and Responsibilities:** Communicate the roles and responsibilities of the City and its departments related to community well-being. The City may serve as a convener, advocate, educator, capacity builder, coordinator, funder, planner/regulator and/or service provider.
- 9b. **Support a Community Systems Approach:** Leverage proven approaches in other jurisdictions and work with partners to improve system performance and drive positive systemic change to achieve collective social impact.
- 9c. **Adopt a Prevention-Focused Lens:** Advocate for system-wide upstream changes and partner with organizations to implement primary or secondary prevention strategies that build compassion, enhance well-being, and reduce crises.
- 9d. **Be a Bold Advocate and Community Partner:** Champion practical, systemic change by promoting initiatives that support community members and empower groups and be an ally to drive effective change.
- 9e. **Modernize Policies to Promote Well-Being:** Review and update city policies that impact resident well-being, ensuring they align with best practices tailored to the Medicine Hat context.
- 9f. **Utilize Multiple Inputs in Decision Making:** Consider data and evidence, best practices, and diverse perspectives when making decisions. Employ a risk approach when considering short and long-term impacts.
- 9g. **Align Resources with Community Well-Being Needs:** Capitalize on both City and community resources to maximize output and optimize efficiency and information sharing, while working toward achieving the goals and strategies of community well-being.
- 9h. **Measure What Matters to Track Progress:** Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the progress and success of the Community Well-Being Plan.

### Policy Alignment

- myMH Master Plan (2020)
- We Have Energy (2023)
- Thrive (2017)
- Parks+recMH (2022)

Objective 9: Enhance Organizational Efforts to Support Well-Being

Role(s) of the City

- Convener
- Advocate
- Capacity Builder
- Coordinator
- Funder
- Planner/Regulator

Pillars Supported

- Pillar 1:** Basic Needs

*(Food, Housing, Transportation, Utilities, Income Security)*
- Pillar 2:** Safety

*(Perception of Safety, Crime Prevention, Family Violence, Elder Abuse)*
- Pillar 3:** Education

*(Primary, Secondary & Post-Secondary Education, Early & Childhood Learning, Lifelong Learning, Childcare)*
- Pillar 4:** Employment

*(Procurement and Hiring Practices, Community Economic Development and Innovation, and Opportunities for Everyone)*
- Pillar 5:** Health

*(Primary Care, Recreation, Environment, Healthy Aging, Mental Health, and Addiction)*
- Pillar 6:** Equity

*(Race, Gender, Sexuality, Newcomers, Stigma and Discrimination, and Reconciliation)*
- Pillar 7:** Connection

*(Transparent and Participatory Local Governance, Creating Great Neighbourhoods, and Fostering Community Connections)*

# Conclusion

Acknowledging complexity, *Momentum's* Pillars of well-being outline many dimensions of life that interconnect to enable individuals and families to thrive in Medicine Hat. No single entity or organization is or can be responsible for every aspect of well-being. Community needs are dynamic and can change quickly. By focusing on prevention, *Momentum* seeks to identify opportunities to make positive impacts in the community to address root causes of social challenges, while also striving to build in flexibility to respond to community needs as they emerge.

All City departments deliver services and programs that relate to well-being. The same can be said for the numerous community organizations working diligently every day to support individuals and families to live well in the community. It is important for all organizations working within the well-being space to be aligned and work together to achieve collective impact.