



Questions to the 2021 Municipal Election Candidates

Thank you for taking the time and showing your interest in the Lethbridge Sport Council and our Members.

Lethbridge Sport Council was incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act March 28, 2008. With a growing membership base, currently 188 members representing over 25,000 citizens, we are a voice for sport in Lethbridge and we believe everyone should experience quality sport, physical activity and active recreation. To find out more about our City of Lethbridge Fee for Service Agreement mandate and how we serve and support the community of Lethbridge check out our website at <https://lethbridgesportcouncil.ca>

We will post all responses received in the News section of our website, Thursday, October 7th. Please have your responses submitted by Noon, Wednesday, October 6th to have them included in our post.

We asked our membership to tell us what questions they wanted us to ask our municipal election candidates. These first three questions are based on themes that arose from multiple member responses.

1. The Lethbridge Sport Council membership is concerned about the growing cost to families and accessibility to participate in BASIC sport, physical activity, and active recreation programs. The City of Lethbridge Recreation and Master Plan released in February 2021 highlights a key goal area as Inclusion and Access. During an era when the benefit of formal sport and recreation to social, emotional, mental and physical well-being for both the individual and community is more apparent than ever, what ways can City Council better support sport and active recreation in our city?

We can continue supporting the work of the Lethbridge Sport Council and ensure that we're making it a priority in planning and emphasizing its importance to residents. Council needs to remain focused on creating informal play opportunities and promoting healthy living. Informal

play supports body, mind and skill development which can lead to greater organized sport activities. We also need to recognize the diversity of our population and ensure we're identifying barriers and gaps, and providing barrier-free access recognizing age, skill, and physical ability. In my platform (www.jenschmidtrempe.ca) I identify that I am committed to working on the tasks outlined by Age Friendly Lethbridge, a designation that recognizes age-friendly cities and communities that promote healthy and active aging. As part of that Council must support life-long activity. That includes helping our city to move forward in the areas of community support and health services, social inclusion, and accessibility to outdoor spaces (among others).

2. The City of Lethbridge Recreation and Culture Plan released in February 2021 identifies a need within the next three years for more indoor gymnasium (dry floor space) and indoor fieldhouse type spaces. Our membership agrees with this assessment. Knowing that the YMCA does not rent their gymnasium to local sport organizations, what is your position on the need for more indoor sport and active recreation amenities within our city?

With any major facilities, Council must undertake an out-of-the box approach.

One of the things I would do would be to strengthen our partnership with the two school boards, and audit current gymnasium space for data on usage, availability and accessibility. The City funds increased gymnasium space in new schools but there seems to be a lack of data about actual access and usage to these facilities. We need to examine the current inventory of space and understand where the opportunities and challenges lie. Beyond that, perhaps it is worth exploring the City's partnership with schools further by possibly creating sport-specific gyms or gym floors for greater sport development and community use.

We should be making long-term plans for all facilities, including future sports facilities. If a partnership can be found, if other-source funding becomes available, or if a creative opportunity arises, this planning and preparation makes us "opportunity ready." Good business practice and governance is to be prepared for these opportunities.

3. This year City Council adopted the new Municipal Development Plan (Bylaw 6265). How will you ensure that the City is providing diverse opportunities for sport, active recreation, and other quality of life activities?

As in my first answer, the City must ensure that opportunities for informal play and active living remain prevalent in the planning and development of new and existing neighbourhoods. Policies 42 and 43 in the MDP are focused on "ensuring" that the City explores opportunities for "organized and unstructured recreation and sports" in our community. Ensuring these opportunities means that the City must partner with organizations, like the Sport Council, to engage in a way that we all participate in providing a gambit of wellness, from passive recreation to competitive sport. All of this needs to be accomplished through barrier-free design recognizing age, skill and physical ability.

It's also about accountability. The MDP an organic document. It should be reviewed annually and is an opportunity for us to be consulting and communicating with the community about these plans on an annual basis. Projects may change as our community changes.

For decades research has shown that citizens overwhelmingly believe in the power of active recreation and sport to individuals and communities.

The *City of Lethbridge Recreation and Culture Master Plan*, page 10 indicates that

- 93% of households agree that recreation and culture are important to the wellbeing of my community,
- 93% of households agree that it is important to ensure that rec/culture opportunities are accessible for all,
- 94% of households agree that recreation and culture services can contribute to the local economy, and
- 87% of households agree that recreation and culture are very important to their household.

These next few questions are more sport specific questions. As you read through them, it is clear that 'yes' is the desired answer.

4. Please answer each question individually beyond a simple yes or no OR describe your approach to sport, physical activity, and active recreation requests with these questions in mind.

4.a. Lethbridge has two junior sport teams, the Lethbridge Hurricanes and the Lethbridge Bulls. Do you support the addition of other junior sport teams (ie football) to impact local player development and attract more student-athletes to Lethbridge? CORRECTION: Lethbridge has a third junior sport team, the Lethbridge (lacrosse) Junior B Tier One Barracudas.

Yes. I would support additional junior sport teams in the city. Developing our community talents in football, basketball and volleyball, to name a few, would advance youth sport and brings visitors and guests to our community. It also creates economic development benefits as Lethbridge has clearly demonstrated that we can successfully host tournaments and sporting events. Moving forward with such plans, though, ought to be done strategically, in consort with partners, local organizations and businesses, and the City to ensure that the community is able to properly support such a venture.

4.b. The Calgary Flames Sport Bank (CFSB), a KidSport Calgary Program, gathers, recycles and redistributes used sports equipment at no cost to kids in southern Alberta who would otherwise be denied the opportunity to participate. Would you support housing a CFSB equipment distribution centre in Lethbridge to better serve Lethbridge citizens?

Yes. I would definitely support an equipment distribution centre in Lethbridge, although I cannot comment as to whether the City should host such a centre without seeing the proposal, data and

greater community involvement. This is part of building accessibility to sport, and anywhere we can do that is a good thing. I also believe we could involve private business and community groups in partnerships around this.

4.c. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted youth sports throughout the country. Many local sports organizations are struggling with decreased enrollment. The City of Lethbridge charges significantly more per hour to use its arenas than other cities in Southern Alberta. Would you request the City consider reducing fees for City arenas while we recover from this pandemic?

Yes. I believe our user fees are something we need to examine, as well as facility access. We have a partnership with local school boards for gymnasiums, and we also need to be discussing how access to these spaces can also be included.

4.d. The Lethbridge River Valley Master Plan speaks to a weir by-pass and the “excellent opportunity for the City of Lethbridge, in coordination with stakeholder groups, to develop a river white water park”. From page 147 of the LRVMP, “The Oldman River is the dominant feature of the River Valley and is an important asset that residents would like easier access to. It is paramount that the river is accessible to everyone from a variety of locations, regardless of their physical ability.” Do you support the proposed white-water park to replace the weir and a river trail with access and amenities so that citizens can enjoy the river more safely?

Yes. Direction on the City’s new Municipal Development Plan outlines assisting Tourism Lethbridge in its efforts to develop nature-based, adventure, and eco-tourism activities for Lethbridge’s open spaces, particularly the river valley. I believe this would fall under this category. While I’ve not yet done this, I’d like to see someone explore paddleboarding opportunities on the river. Additionally, if it could be done safely, river surfing would also be a great sport on our river.