

Lethbridge Votes 2021 survey

A large group of concerned citizens would like to reach out to all candidates for Lethbridge Mayor and City Council asking each of you to please answer these important questions on many Lethbridge Community members minds. There will be a page on Facebook to include all of the answers you provide. Thanking you in advance, Lethbridge Residents.

What is your assessment of the cities crime statistics and what strategies do you have to make Lethbridge a safer community?

I support providing the Lethbridge Police Commission and our police services with the resources necessary to deliver the services we are asking you to provide. I am also committed to holding the Police Commission accountable for their oversight of Lethbridge Police Service and its budget. Supporting policing in our community is core to my platform (www.jennschmidtrempel.ca). We need to invest in services that need investing in.

There are several issues at play when it comes to interpreting our crime statistics. Addressing the issues surrounding the opioid crisis and crimes of opportunity will take an entire community approach.

I would encourage residents and businesses to be working with Lethbridge Police Services regarding programs such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), to learn more about what we as residents can do to prevent crime. We, as residents, need to understand that we bear some responsibility in crime prevention particularly when it comes to crimes of opportunity.

We need to look at community safety holistically and recognize that some calls for service are responses to social, not criminal, matters. I will support the Commission in exploring alternatives to those social calls for service and allow them to allocate police resources to true policing matters.

Are you in favour of an independent police accountability board?

I'm committed to supporting the Lethbridge Police Commission in their work of building and ensuring the safety of our city and exploring where changes and improvements may need to occur. This includes holding the Commission accountable for the oversight of the Lethbridge Police Service and its budget.

Lethbridge City Council does not manage police services in our city; that's the role of the Police Commission. City Council determines how much funding to provide the Lethbridge Police

Commission, and the Commission allocates dollars based on the Service's need. I support providing police services with the resources necessary to deliver the services we are asking them to provide.

I would also like to see a Police Commission built around a skills matrix with input from members of police services, as well as training for new Commission members. Other boards in our community do this, we need to ensure we're doing it with our Police Commission as well. Further to that, I would support regular meetings with members of City Council, the Police Commission, and members of the Lethbridge Police Association so Council can learn directly from officers about challenges going on in our community. I firmly believe in opening lines of communication.

We live in a high crime city, do you specify public safety as a priority?

Yes. Beyond what I stated in the previous question, the Lethbridge Police Service submitted an Action Plan to the Provincial Government. I commit to holding the Lethbridge Police Commission accountable and reporting back on that Action Plan.

I would also encourage each member of the Commission and each member of Council go on a ride along with first responder groups to fully understand the situation in our community.

Do you advocate tax increases or the creation of new revenue streams to balance future budgets?

I would be looking to use economic development to balance future budgets and finding a way to stabilize the mill rate while still maintaining the high level of services we're providing to all residents in our city. To do this we need to focus efforts on economic recovery and development. The more attractive a place we are to do business, the more investment we will see in our area, which in return can help to pay for services and create a vibrant community. It's a long-term commitment on our part, and one we should be working to achieve.

This is also a core part of my platform (www.jennschmidtrempe.ca).

What policies should we pursue in order to make sure our school grounds, sports fields and public green spaces are safe for the children of Lethbridge?

I'm 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. Don't let the name fool you. An Age Friendly Lethbridge is about everyone in our community. An age-friendly community is friendly for all its citizens and addresses many of the concerns we are all

voicing about our community This includes helping our city to move forward in the areas of respect and social inclusion, community support and health services, accessible outdoor spaces and buildings, safety, employment opportunities, transit structure, and parks and pathways. It's an extensive list. If we can focus the limited resources of City Hall on achieving the Age Friendly objectives, we can create a safe, healthy community for everyone, but especially our children and youth.

If this question is specific to needle debris, then we could look at how we might expand the Clean Sweep Program.

Many seniors have residence in the downtown area. Is it a concern of yours to ensure seniors can go about their business and enjoy the park and getting around the downtown area without worry?

Yes, I believe everyone should be able to move around the city without worry. Thinking about the big picture, safety, and security for everyone requires a focus and resources. Beyond working with the Police Commission – to address real and perceived safety concerns – I'm committed to seeing a coordinated and integrated needs-based social services strategy that involves all sectors and service providers in engagement, land use development, and planning. This means all of us working together, not against each other or in siloed groups. It means municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government and residents working together and holding each other accountable.

Our city's success relies on how we support each other through community spaces, services, and businesses. We need to ensure we are offering a space for everyone who lives here to belong and be committed to taking care of everyone who lives here, while finding cost-effective and needs-based ways to do that.

Do you think our downtown is healthy and thriving? If not, why do you think it's not. How would you improve the downtown area?

Yes, I believe its health is improving though – like all of us – it could be healthier. We have so many great spaces to explore in this city including our downtown core. Just as Lethbridge is a hub for our region, our downtown core should be a vibrant hub for our community.

Here's the challenge that I see and hear from downtown organizations, agencies, and businesses. The BRZ and City have been working for 30+ years to “revitalize” the downtown, and we are still facing the same issues 30 years later.

What we need is to step back and take a new, fresh strategic approach to creating the downtown we want. Council needs to support Downtown BRZ and businesses in trying new things, like we did with the parklets, the Farmers Market, the Allied Arts Council's concert series this summer. Even the pilot scooter program is something different, something that will bring people to the core. We should explore what other communities are doing and how can we make those ideas

work for our city. This includes a commitment to supporting strategies to help people who are experiencing homelessness, addictions, and issues around safety.

I'm committed to helping support and create a vibrant downtown that becomes a hub for business and increased employment, safe, secure, and diverse housing opportunities, entertainment, arts and culture, and community-focused events.

To achieve these things, council needs to support current and new strategies for investment and ways to attract businesses, residences and people to our downtown. This also includes a commitment to supporting strategies for those experiencing homelessness, those experiencing addictions, and safety in our community.

Are you in favour of allowing another safe consumption site or any Harm Reduction as opposed to treatment in the city?

The previous SCS was not properly managed. However, when properly operated, and supported with prevention, treatment, and surrounding services, these facilities can save and change lives. I would support a permanent SCS provided it was based on a medical model of care and treatment, professionally staffed, integrated with support services, and extensive engagement was undertaken with our community. I'm committed to a strategy involving all sectors and service providers in engagement, land use development, and planning. The Community Wellness & Safety Strategy has started some of this work, but I see gaps in employment skills, workforce development, and open communication with our community (more at www.jenschmidtrempe.ca). Dealing with the opioid crisis means all of us – residents, businesses, healthcare providers, and governments – working together and holding each other accountable.

A properly managed and operated SCS must be accessible. Specifying a location, in the absence of data, planning, and community conversation is irresponsible. Ultimately, a Good Neighbour Plan must be submitted with any land rezoning or permitting applications. Applicants must also provide communication from proximate businesses and residents, proof of engagement sessions, meeting schedules, and other communications with area neighbours.

What could be done to secure the safety of residents in high crime neighbourhoods of Lethbridge.

As I stated above, I support providing the Lethbridge Police Commission and our police services with the resources necessary to deliver the services we are asking you to provide. I am also committed to holding the Police Commission accountable for their oversight of Lethbridge Police Service and its budget. Supporting policing in our community is core to my platform (www.jenschmidtrempe.ca).

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How do you plan to involve Lethbridge residents in decision making?

One of the largest areas of concerns I hear from residents is that they don't feel like they're getting enough information from the City of Lethbridge, and I cannot emphasize enough the need for meaningful engagement and communication with the community. I see a huge gap in communication with the residents of our city, which is why I would commit to looking at communication strategies.

We need to consider that not everyone has access to the Internet, not everyone is on social media during the day, that posts get lost, and not everyone sees or listens to our local media every day. We need to ensure we're making use of all outlets available to us to offer clear and concise, and as wide-reaching and broadly appealing communications as possible.

If we as a city are going to implement plans to provide for the needs of people in our community, no matter the service, communication and engagement are key. We all need to know and understand what's going on, so that we can build better services for everyone in our community.

We all need to know what our community is planning to do, and you will have the opportunity for input and feedback.

How would you improve public transportation in Lethbridge?

Given the City has recently transitioned to CityLINK, we do need to be collecting data on how the system is working and making evidence-based decisions on what needs to be changed. Some of that feedback does need to be implemented over the next month before we get too much snow.

Again, this is addressed in the tasks outlined by Age Friendly Lethbridge, which includes helping our city to move forward in the areas of transportation, social inclusion, and accessibility

(among other areas). Integrating multimodal transportation is a great way of meeting carbon reduction targets and promoting health. I would be looking to support changes that are aimed at improving the physical, economic, and social mobility of our community.

Do you think setting up tents in city parks giving unsanctioned medical advice and equipment to the homeless and drug addicts is a positive for thing for Lethbridge and its residents?

I support working with community organizations to assist them in securing funding and support from provincial and federal governments. This includes ensuring local organizations are able to provide the appropriate services necessary, so people don't fall into crisis provided that these groups are following City of Lethbridge regulations and bylaws, as well as provincial and federal regulations, and are approved by all required levels of government.

I'm committed to advocating for health care and mental health care services and supports for our city. This includes holding our provincial and federal governments accountable and ensuring that our city and region are getting appropriate and necessary funding and supports for all health care services. Our residents shouldn't have to drive to Calgary or Edmonton for services. Our residents shouldn't fall into crisis because they can't get the services needed here or because there's a delay in receiving/accessing service that's not available in the immediate area. Lethbridge is a regional hub and should be seeing the funding and supports of a regional hub.

Are you in favour of Mandatory Vaccinations or health passes?

Ultimately the choice to vaccinate is yours. They've been mandated by the province, and if we want to participate in some activities we need be vaccinated. As an aside, I have all my vaccinations updated regularly because I volunteer for AHS and that work is important to me.

Do you support The Canadian Bill of Rights?

Our (municipal) relationship is with the province and the Bill of Rights applies only to the federal government. However, The Charter – much of which stems from the Bill of Rights – makes provincial governments more accountable to us, the citizens of Alberta. As a municipal councillor, I would have a responsibility to ensure that the provincial government was not infringing on our Rights as Albertans.

What is your vision of Lethbridge in 5 years?

I would like to see a Lethbridge that is coming together on our issues. That residents are less divided, and that our municipal government is providing solid leadership.

I would like to see our city have solid strategies in place to assist those experiencing homelessness and those experiencing addictions, as well as safety in our community.

I would like to see that our residents feel that they are being engaged in meaningful conversation with the City, and that they have a part to play in shaping the future of Lethbridge. That conversation is flowing back and forth between our community and the City.

I would also like to see a Lethbridge that is well on its way to becoming the economic hub for our region. That we have moved forward in becoming the western trade corridor in Canada, Canada's agricultural and agri-food corridor, a logistics corridor, and a regional tourism hub. This includes working with our neighbouring municipalities to unite provincially and federally as a region. This is a core part of my platform (www.jenschmidtrempe.ca).