

Inclusion Lethbridge, is a pan-disability organization that supports individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and the broader community.

As part of our work, we are reaching out to all candidates for **Mayor, City Council, Public School Trustee, and Separate School Trustee** in the upcoming **2025 Lethbridge Municipal Election**. We are asking each candidate to respond to **three open-ended questions** that focus on disability inclusion, accessibility, poverty, and community belonging.

These questions reflect issues that directly impact thousands of people with disabilities and their families in Lethbridge and across Southern Alberta. By gathering your responses, we hope to:

- Give our community the opportunity to understand your platform as it relates to disability rights and inclusion.
- Encourage meaningful dialogue between candidates and citizens with disabilities.
- Provide a clear and accessible resource for voters who want to make informed choices at the ballot box.

For City Council Candidates

1. **Transportation Barriers: Accessible and affordable transportation remains a major challenge in Lethbridge. What actions will you take to improve the availability of cityLink and Access-A-Ride for residents with disabilities?**

Accessible and affordable transportation is vital for inclusion. Over this past term, I've advocated for enhanced and accessible transit service. This work included ensuring that our system is responsive to residents with diverse needs and improving options. I supported a review of the cityLink transit system, which will establish a Transit Advisory Committee so riders – including people with disabilities – have direct input into ongoing improvements.

I remain committed to:

- A review of cityLink and Access-A-Ride services, hours, and coverage, so that people can get to work, appointments, and community events without barriers – this includes community consultation through the Transit Advisory Committee. We've heard loud and clear what's currently in place isn't working and we need users and front-line staff to help direct our next steps – I will be listening to ensure we hear that feedback.
- Ensuring universal design and accessibility standards are considered in transit planning, fleet replacement, as well as other City planning.
- Ensuring that issues with accessibility are flagged and addressed quickly.

Transportation is not just a service – it's the foundation for participation in community life.

2. Poverty, AISH & ADAP Impact: People with disabilities in Alberta are facing increased poverty due to the transition from AISH to the Alberta Disability Affordability Program (ADAP). The clawback of the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) means that individuals living on AISH will lose up to \$200/month in supports (Inclusion Alberta, 2024). How will you as a councillor address the impacts of this loss—particularly in housing and homelessness—and ensure municipal programs respond to these challenges?

I recognize that people with disabilities are facing even greater financial pressure due to changes to AISH and ADAP and federal benefits. While these are primarily provincial and federal decisions, municipalities like Lethbridge must step up to mitigate the impacts locally.

Over this past term, on Council, I have:

- Approved and advocated for supportive housing projects across the city, including those completed by Lethbridge Housing Authority, Aboriginal Housing Society, Blackfoot Family Lodge Society, and the YWCA Hope transitional housing program.
- Supported integrated social services planning through updating our Community Wellbeing & Safety Strategy, helping to develop our Encampment Response Strategy, and ensuring housing, social supports, and health services are coordinated.
- Introduced the childcare needs assessment, recognizing affordability challenges for families throughout our city.

Going forward, I will continue to:

- Work to keep municipal programs responsive to the lived realities of poverty, especially in housing, homelessness prevention, and access to childcare.
- Strengthen partnerships with disability organizations so that housing and social programs are designed with inclusion at the forefront.
- Advocate to other orders of government that income supports must be supported.

I am committed to maintaining a focus on integrated, needs-based social services planning and advancing the next phases of the City's Encampment Strategy. These efforts directly connect to poverty reduction, housing stability, and supporting vulnerable residents.

3. Accessibility in City Planning: What will you do to ensure that city planning—including housing developments, public spaces, and municipal services—meets universal design standards and creates an inclusive city where people with all types of disabilities can fully participate?

Accessibility needs to become standard in all planning, housing, and public space decisions. My record shows I take this seriously: I have participated in Land Use Bylaw renewal workshops, supported barrier-free playgrounds and public spaces downtown, and consistently asked questions at public hearings to ensure social service and housing projects were responsibly

planned. I also support the vision of 2020 City of Lethbridge Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan, as well as ensuring accessibility is an on-going focus and function of planning.

My continued commitments include:

- Continuing to advocate for universal design standards in municipal planning, housing, and public facilities.
- Ensuring new developments, parks, and public spaces are barrier-free and inclusive, with year-round access and interconnectivity across trails, pathways, and recreation areas
- Strengthening consultation with organizations such as Inclusion Lethbridge to ensure people with lived experience of disability guide planning decisions.

An inclusive city is a stronger city. Accessibility is not optional – it's essential.

My platform is built on People, Service, Business, and Community. Within that, I have made inclusion, accessibility, housing stability, and affordability part of my work. From accessible transit and expanded fee assistance, to integrated housing, social services, and childcare – these are the tools I will keep using to build a stronger, more inclusive Lethbridge.