

Tourism Lethbridge is the official Destination Management Organization (DMO) for our city. We work to drive economic impact, celebrate local identity, and build tourism capacity by developing and promoting experiences that reflect the values and aspirations of our community. This includes supporting business events, Agri-tourism, sport tourism, Indigenous Tourism, major events, and regional partnerships through a community and industry led approach.

As we approach the October 2025 municipal election, Tourism Lethbridge is seeking input from candidates on how they see the future of tourism shaping our community.

The City of Lethbridge is currently undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of tourism services. This analysis is meant to help determine the mechanism for how the City of Lethbridge does Fee for Service Agreements. Given this context, we are seeking your views on the future structure of tourism in Lethbridge.

Your responses may be shared publicly on our website, newsletter, and social channels to help inform the public conversation on the future of tourism in Lethbridge.

1. Do you believe tourism should continue to be led by a community and industry-based Destination Management Organization, or should it be brought directly under municipal control? Please explain your perspective.

Tourism works best when it is led by the community and industry it represents. A Destination Management Organization, like Tourism Lethbridge, has the flexibility, expertise, and direct connection to stakeholders that City administration simply cannot replicate. My experience with both Economic Development Lethbridge and Tourism Lethbridge has shown that these organizations thrive when they are industry-led and supported by the City through clearly defined agreements and responsibilities. Bringing tourism fully under municipal control risks politicizing the sector and reducing its ability to respond quickly to industry needs. I believe the right model is the current one: community and industry leadership, with City partnership and oversight through a fee-for-service agreement.

2. In your opinion, what is the appropriate balance of responsibility between the City of Lethbridge and community partners, private businesses, and tourism stakeholders when it comes to funding and promoting Lethbridge as a destination?

The City has a role in ensuring baseline stability, and private businesses and industry stakeholders must also take the opportunity to be active partners in both strategy and funding. Tourism is fundamentally an economic development driver, and like other sectors – agrifood, logistics, creative industries, advanced manufacturing – it requires shared investment and shared responsibility. I believe in investing in the tourism industry, and that the City should invest where there is broad community return (infrastructure, public spaces, marketing support); however, tourism operators and private businesses have the opportunity to work in collaboration with Tourism Lethbridge and take the lead on investing in initiatives that enhance competitiveness and

grow the sector. This balanced model ensures taxpayers see value for their investment, while industry remains responsible for innovation and growth particularly when it comes to visitor experience, competitiveness, and industry-specific goals and initiatives. When it comes to the visitor economy, industry and Tourism Lethbridge is where the expertise lies. This balanced model keeps taxpayers from shouldering the full cost, ensures accountability, grows collaboration, and builds a healthy tourism sector that grows from the ground up. The City should create conditions for growth, but industry-related business also have a part to play when it comes to investing in the tourism sector and its services.

3. How would you balance the needs of visitors with those of residents when shaping tourism policy?

Tourism policy should enhance resident quality of life. Investments in downtown vitality, Festival Square, trails, and parks are all examples of where projects serve both residents and visitors. Residents want vibrant, safe, and connected neighbourhoods, and these same qualities attract visitors. The key is thoughtful planning – ensuring that tourism initiatives support housing, accessibility, safety, and community wellness. I will continue to advocate for policies that see residents as beneficiaries of tourism investments, so that visitors experience the authentic Lethbridge that we, as residents, are proud of.

4. What role should tourism play in shaping Lethbridge's identity and reputation regionally, nationally, and internationally?

Tourism is one of the strongest storytelling tools we have. It's about shaping the narrative of Lethbridge as more than a stopover – it's a hub for culture, sport tourism, agrifood innovation, Indigenous tourism, and business events. Tourism should showcase our city's strengths, highlight our partnerships with the Blackfoot Confederacy, regional communities, and reinforce our role as the economic and cultural hub of southern Alberta. The reputation we build through tourism has ripple effects – it helps attract students, doctors, businesses, and new residents. That's why I see tourism as both an economic development tool and a builder of community pride.