

**Common Sense Lethbridge** is an independent, non-partisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting practical solutions to the city's most pressing challenges, including fiscal responsibility, accountability at City Hall, and efficient delivery of services to residents.

As part of our mission, we are inviting all candidates in the upcoming municipal election to participate in our candidate survey. Your responses will help more than 5,000 Lethbridge residents understand your priorities, perspectives, and plans if elected.

The survey covers key issues affecting our city, including municipal spending, housing, public safety, and infrastructure. All responses will be published as submitted, giving you a chance to communicate directly with voters.

**What work experience do you have that's relevant to the role and how do you feel the skills and perspective you have gained will help you in your role?**

I've governed, I've built things, and I've had to make payroll. I've served on (and led) multiple boards – Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Lethbridge, Allied Arts Council, Magazines Canada, and the Premier's Advisory Task Force on Ukraine (to name a few) – and sat on quasi-judicial bodies like the Subdivision & Development Appeal Board. I also owned, published, and edited *Lethbridge living* magazine, have been a partner in several quick-serve franchises located in Alberta and BC, and currently co-own a communications/marketing group where I do contract work. This mix of governance, small-business, and community work means I understand fiduciary duty, how to read a balance sheet, and how policies land in the real world.

I've translated my commitments into results over this past term on Council: advancing a Long-Term Financial Sustainability Framework; strengthening economic development; supporting key housing projects across the spectrum; serving on (and helping develop) the Police Commission Strategic Plan; and pushing practical improvements in transit, accessibility, and public engagement. That's the combination – good governance + delivery – and that's what I'll bring to the table.

My record on council speaks for itself. Over the past four years, I've proven that I listen, ask the hard questions, and do the work. I come to meetings prepared, and I'm out in the community, meeting with and hearing what residents and community organizations have to say. That will continue.

**What do you think are the biggest issues affecting Lethbridge are, and how would you approach these issues?**

The top issues I hear from residents are:

- affordability
- transit
- safety and social disorder
- housing and homelessness
- workforce and employment
- healthcare/mental healthcare capacity and access

- fiscal responsibility

My approach is evidence-based and partnership-driven. I am committed to continuing to:

- work on a review of transit services
- align Council decisions with the Municipal Housing Strategy and Encampment Strategy
- ensure front-line responders are resourced and accountable
- support coordinated social efforts and supports
- focus on doctor recruitment and zoning for medical facilities
- strengthen our workforce and support local business while attracting new investment
- run City finances against clear service levels and sustainability principles

**What do you think is the role of a municipal government? Do you think the City does too many things, not enough, or just the right amount?**

Under Alberta's Municipal Government Act, the job of Council is to maintain a safe, viable municipality and deliver core services – reliably, transparently, and at value. The City should continually re-test “what we do and how we do it,” set explicit service levels, and sunset or redesign programs that aren't meeting outcomes. That's my lens: core first, measure what matters, and adjust.

**Do you think property taxes are too high, too low, or just about right?**

Residents need to feel they're getting value for what they pay. We're facing some real pressures (public safety, aging infrastructure, growth demands). My stance: tie taxes to clearly defined service levels and show residents the value chain from dollar to outcome and invest where critical outcomes are at risk (e.g., first responders, water/wastewater infrastructure).

**Over the next four years, should the City spend less in absolute terms, increase spending but by less than the rate of inflation and population growth, increase by the rate of inflation and population growth, or increase faster than the rate of inflation and population growth?**

Within inflation + population growth, with a clear emphasis on critical infrastructure and safety needs. We also require a review against service levels, which means defining what service levels are and communicating that out to the public. That's something I'd like to see the City work on over the next four years.

**The City often claims that they've found savings in various budgets, but instead of actually cutting spending, they just put the savings into a reserve account and then spend that money on other things. If there's money left over at the end of a financial year, do you think that money should be saved up by the City to spend in future years? Or should it be returned automatically to taxpayers the following year through some kind of rebate?**

Both. We need to set transparent reserve targets (lifecycle, risk, capital replacement). Surpluses fund those up to target; any excess over policy goes to tax stabilization. That protects long-term assets and keeps faith with taxpayers. The point is to codify it in the City's financial sustainability framework.

**Everyone says they support affordable housing, but what does that term mean for you? Do you think the City should be subsidizing housing for lower-income residents? Or focused on keeping the cost of all housing from getting out of control? Or perhaps some combination of the two? If so, how?**

"Affordable" means housing costs under 30% of pre-tax income. The City has tools across the continuum: work on approval timelines where needed; modernize zoning/land use to enable gentle density and the missing-middle; target incentives where they unlock units; partner with providers to deliver supportive and attainable supply; and advocate to the Province and federal government to align funding and mortgage rules. It's not either subsidies or supply – it's a smart mix that actually fills needs.

**How do you view the role of public sector unions in City operations, and what steps would you take to ensure union negotiations do not compromise fiscal responsibility?**

I respect collective bargaining. We must understand what our workers need to do their jobs safely and reliably. That said, I believe that we must request transparency of costs over the life of agreements, and bargain within the City's service level and sustainability constraints. We can do this through comparative data, productivity measures, and outcome metrics so residents can see the value they receive, while supporting workers in the jobs we're asking them to do. It's about balance, and being professional, principled, and data-driven.

**The Lethbridge and District Exhibition faced financial mismanagement that required city intervention. How would you ensure proper oversight and accountability for municipally-supported organizations in the future?**

This Council has put policies in place to mitigate future risk. Organizations receiving public support in the future must meet governance and reporting standards.

**Do you think splitting LDE into separate entities - including a municipally controlled non-profit - was the right approach? Why or why not?**

Splitting the Lethbridge and Exhibition into two entities brings clear benefits. The municipally owned corporation provides direct accountability to Council for major assets and financial oversight, while returning the ag society to a community-led board allows it to focus on its core mandate of agriculture and local programming. This separation reduces risk, creates sharper focus, and ensures both organizations can succeed on their own terms.

That said, splitting entities may also result in some issues. Coordination and communication must be strong, or we risk gaps in oversight or duplication of effort. Clear reporting frameworks and transparent public communication are key to maintaining trust. Just as we expect transparency and reporting from our fee-for-service organizations, we must expect the same transparency and reporting here.

Some unexpected benefits may include renewed grassroots connections for the ag society and stronger financial transparency through the municipally owned corporation's reporting obligations. Potential drawbacks include inter-entity tension or the City assuming greater exposure if governance discipline slips. The opportunity is to test this structure, build accountability, restore public confidence, and ensure both sides deliver on their intended purpose.

**What changes, if any, would you make to the Encampment Strategy? What is your preferred approach to homelessness in Lethbridge?**

The unhoused and encampments are some of the most complex and visible challenges in our city. Lethbridge needs to continue with an approach that is coordinated, compassionate, and accountable. I'm proud of the Encampment Strategy that has been built over the past 4 years, because in 2021 we didn't have one. However, moving into the next 4 years, this can be built upon and strengthened so that the needs of our most vulnerable are being met.

My priorities are:

- Continuing to build partnerships with accountability – City, police, Indigenous organizations, housing providers, and outreach workers must be aligned with clearly defined roles and measurable outcomes.
- Faster transitions – People need to move from encampments into safe shelter and then into appropriate housing more quickly, with the supports they need.
- Balanced enforcement – Police should be focussed on police work: e.g. weapons offences, trafficking, and violent crime, and supported by specialized positions that can assist with mental health and addictions calls, ensuring that our most vulnerable can be connected to the services they need.
- Transparency for residents – The City and Lethbridge Police Service need to continue reporting publicly on timelines, outcomes, and neighbourhood impacts so people can see progress.

Ultimately, encampments are a symptom of a gap in support services and appropriate housing. That's why I continue to advocate for housing across the spectrum, from transitional and supportive housing to attainable homeownership, combined with the right social supports.

**In a 2021 referendum, 60% of Lethbridgians voted in favour of a third Oldman River crossing. Are you in favour of a third river crossing? Why or why not?**

In 2021, residents were asked in a non-binding ballot if building a third bridge should become a municipal capital project priority, and 60% voted yes. That direction matters, and I take it seriously, but we also need to be honest about the realities.

The City's most recent review (by Stantec, 2022) reaffirmed Chinook Trail as the preferred alignment and pegged the cost in the range of \$190 – 300 million. That scale of investment could increase the average residential property tax bill by 14.5% to 22.1% for the municipal portion. Even if we secure provincial and federal cost-sharing, Lethbridge taxpayers would still shoulder a significant portion.

Preliminary traffic modeling suggests a third bridge may be required between 2030 and 2040, with the Chinook Trail alignment offering the best value relative to other options. The Preliminary Design work is scheduled for 2027 in the City's Capital Improvement Program (item C-21). Until then, any cost figures remain estimates.

From my platform, I've been clear: we must make evidence-based decisions, protect fiscal sustainability, and focus first on maintaining and investing in the core services and infrastructure that keep our city safe and viable. I support advancing the planning work and pursuing external partnerships so that when the time comes, we have the numbers and cost-sharing agreements in place. But I will not commit Lethbridge taxpayers in the hundreds of millions of dollars without a transparent business case, clear timelines, and provincial/federal partners at the table.

In short: yes, I respect the referendum result and support advancing the work – but only with updated studies, seeing the 2027 preliminary design work, strong financial partnerships, and a firm eye on long-term sustainability.

**In a 2021 referendum, 55% of Lethbridgians voted in favour of implementing a ward system for municipal elections. Do you support implementing a ward system, keeping the current at-large system, or something else? Please explain your reasoning.**

In 2021, 55% of voters voted in favour of "Do you support using a Ward System to elect City Councillors (other than the Mayor) starting with the 2025 municipal election?" While the question was non-binding, I believe we need to respect that direction and at least fully explore what a ward system would mean for Lethbridge. To me, this is about strengthening trust in local democracy, not rushing to redraw maps for their own sake.

Council originally struck a Ward Commission to review options but later rescinded it due to costs and uncertainty. That created real frustration amongst residents, because they were left feeling their vote had been disregarded. I think we can do better. If we are going to revisit the ward system, it must be through a transparent, resident-led process that lays out the costs, boundaries, and impacts clearly before Council makes a final decision.

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) requires councillors to "consider the welfare and interests of the municipality as a whole and bring to council's attention anything that would promote the welfare or interests of the municipality." So, even in a ward system, councillors are still legally

bound to represent the interests of the entire city of Lethbridge, not just residents in their ward. The ward structure only changes how Councillors are elected, it doesn't change the scope of their responsibility under provincial law.

From my perspective, wards could improve accountability and representation, and I would commit to re-examining this issue through meaningful public engagement, cost-benefit analysis, and a clear transition plan. Whether we stay at-large, move to wards, the decision should be rooted in evidence and community input not politics of the day.

For me, the principle is simple: residents asked the question, gave us a direction, and they deserve a fair, transparent process to see it through.

**Municipal elections have historically been contested by independents, but many of our supporters have told us that they'd like to know the political alignment of the candidates as it helps them get a better feel for a candidate's beliefs. So, are you affiliated with any provincial or federal political parties and, if so, which ones and why?**

I am very happily politically agnostic, and I intend to stay that way. Municipal work is non-partisan in law and in practice. I work effectively across the spectrum and with every order of government and all political parties. I understand that I need to collaborate with whoever voters elect.