

## **Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce Questions to Candidates:**

### **1. What is your plan to improve tax competitiveness, reduce municipal franchise fees, and streamline permitting and regulatory processes to help businesses grow and invest in our community?**

Lethbridge needs to stay competitive with other Alberta municipalities – not just on tax rates, but also on predictability and efficiency. Tax competitiveness is about the total cost of doing business in Lethbridge. Franchise fees on electricity and natural gas can hit energy-intensive businesses, such as manufacturers and agri-food processors, the hardest. If our fees are higher than other cities, we weaken our ability to attract and retain investment and put ourselves at a competitive disadvantage. I would be in favour of regularly reviewing and, where and when possible, reducing these fees to ensure we remain competitive.

I also co-sponsored the motion to create a Long-Term Financial Sustainability Framework. The intent of that motion is to formalize the City's longstanding financial principles into a clear, transparent system, so future Councils can make sustainable decisions while still retaining flexibility to achieve their strategic visions. This ensures our community gets the financial stability it needs while businesses get the predictability they deserve, and the confidence to invest.

We also need to make it easier and faster to do business here. That means:

- Where necessary, streamlining permitting and zoning processes to shorten timelines and reduce uncertainty.
- Invest in a robust business concierge service to provide single-window support for entrepreneurs and investors.
- Push for an open data portal with real-time information on permitting timelines, land inventory, and tax guidance.
- Support fixed timelines for zoning and bylaw reviews so businesses can plan with certainty.

As a current Chamber member and former Chamber Board member, I understand firsthand the importance of creating a predictable, responsive, and partnership-driven business environment. That's why I've consistently supported efforts to reduce red tape and make Lethbridge more competitive for investment and entrepreneurship.

### **2. How should public consultation factor into major decision making? If the wants of residents and businesses, and advice given or needs identified by subject matter experts employed or contracted by The City of Lethbridge are at odds, how should both be weighed?**

The Chamber emphasizes clear communication, predictability, and accountability in government decision-making, and public consultation only works if it's meaningful, transparent, and tied directly to evidence and fiscal responsibility.

My time serving on the Chamber Board taught me the importance of bringing diverse voices to the table and grounding decisions in both evidence and real-world experience. Consultation only works when those voices are heard and acted upon.

When residents, businesses, and experts disagree, I do my own research and reach out to organizations and experts for information. My approach is to weigh:

- Evidence-based expertise – ensuring regulatory, legal, and financial compliance. Are we making a sound, data-driven decision?
- Public and business priorities – recognizing lived impacts and maintaining legitimacy. Are we listening to residents and businesses who live the outcomes?
- Fiscal sustainability – What are the long and short-term implications?

I've consistently supported strong engagement processes – from supporting the maintaining of Committees of Council to ensuring community groups are aware of and invited to meetings that involve them to encouraging consultation on the Community Wellness & Safety Strategy, and downtown activation. Consultation shouldn't be a rubber stamp. It should inform real decisions that businesses and residents can trust.

**3. What steps will you take to engage business leaders, strengthen communication with the private sector, and foster collaboration with economic development agencies to attract and retain investment?**

Lethbridge thrives when business, government, and partners pull together in the same direction, and the Chamber's priorities stress that businesses connected with officials are more likely to invest locally. As both a Chamber member and former Board member, I've worked directly with local business leaders and organizations to build stronger communication between Council and the private sector. For example, I brought forward the childcare needs assessment motion to Council because access to childcare is an economic issue that directly affects workforce retention and business growth. This is something the Chamber identified as a critical factor in Lethbridge's competitiveness.

I've also supported the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Lethbridge, and Tourism Lethbridge in initiatives ranging from agri-food cluster growth to tourism marketing and talent attraction

Going forward, I would support:

- Regular dialogue with the Chamber and business leaders.

- Encourage the creation and publication of an annual KPI scorecard to guide course corrections and maintain economic development momentum.
- Support the development of a concierge-type service to help investors, entrepreneurs, and new residents navigate Lethbridge's housing, education, childcare, education, employment, and business opportunities.
- Using investor, business owner, and local partner feedback loops, to find ways to boost competitiveness and retention.
- Represent Lethbridge at the provincial and national level to attract new capital and partnerships.

**4. How will you address housing shortages, improve public safety, and invest in transportation infrastructure while ensuring municipal budgets remain focused on core responsibilities?**

Housing, safety, and infrastructure are core and essential to business growth, and the Chamber stresses that building healthy communities is foundational for business success. That means increasing housing supply, across the housing continuum, creating healthy and neighbourhoods, and ensuring strong infrastructure.

Over the past term, I've supported housing projects (YWCA Hope Program, Indigenous housing initiatives, Lethbridge Housing Authority's Nokoowaayhi project), advanced the City's Encampment Strategy, and supported Lethbridge Police Service, including funding for body-worn cameras.

My Chamber involvement has given me a clear understanding of how interconnected housing, workforce attraction, and infrastructure are to business success. These aren't isolated issues, they're economic enablers.

My commitments are:

- Housing: Continue to support both affordable and market housing.
- Public Safety: Support Lethbridge Police Service and bylaw services in the work that we are asking them to do, and ensure accountability.
- Infrastructure: Prioritize investment in critical infrastructure and service and ensure we are working towards an industrial-ready land bank.

All of this must remain grounded in the Long-Term Financial Sustainability Framework so that budgets focus on core municipal responsibilities while cutting duplication and avoiding unnecessary costs.

**5. What actions will you take to increase budget transparency, reduce the impact of taxes and fees, and improve clarity and consistency in municipal regulations and tax guidance?**

Businesses and residents deserve clarity and consistency, and the Chamber emphasizes the need for clear reporting, consistent regulation, and simplified tax guidance.

I will:

- Champion plain-language budget communications that show exactly where tax dollars go, so businesses and residents understand spending priorities.
- Work towards establishing a central open data portal for real-time demographics, tax information, land inventory, and permitting information.
- Work towards regulatory consistency across departments, ending contradictory or unclear requirements.
- Commit to assessing the impact of fees and charges on business growth and reducing or eliminating those that act as barriers.

Transparency creates confidence. Predictability builds stability. Together, they create the certainty businesses need to invest. As a Chamber member, I believe transparency and collaboration are the foundation of trust between the business community and municipal government.