

Town of Okotoks Municipal Election Councillor Survey Results

The **Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce** invited all Town of Okotoks Municipal Election council candidates to complete a survey designed to share their priorities and perspectives with the community. Each candidate was given an equal opportunity to respond to the same set of questions.

Responses were provided voluntarily, and candidates chose to answer in the manner they felt best represented their campaign and election platform. Survey Responses are provided alphabetically by candidate first name.

For more information about each candidate and to view their individual campaign platforms, please visit their official websites or social media pages.

| BENJAMIN SHEPHERD CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM | |
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| How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community? | I have lived in Okotoks for several years, where I've helped manage operations at Sheep River Self-Storage and led marketing initiatives for a local service companies. Beyond my professional roles, I've been actively involved in supporting Christian charities, volunteering, and engaging in local and municipal politics, all of which have deepened my commitment to the Okotoks community. |
| How will you balance growth with preserving the town's character and sense of community? | Balancing growth with preserving Okotoks' character means planning responsibly while protecting what makes our town special. Any development must align with our community's vision, not just developer interests. I will ensure residents have a meaningful voice in decisions by listening first to the people who live here. Sustainable practices, community spaces, and recreation opportunities will guide growth so families, businesses, and the environment all thrive together. By focusing on transparency, fiscal responsibility, and preserving our small-town charm, we can welcome growth without losing the sense of community that defines Okotoks. |
| What's the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it? | The biggest challenge facing Okotoks is balancing rapid growth with affordability and quality of life. I would address this by empowering residents by giving them a stronger voice, cutting government waste to lower taxes, and investing in recreation & infrastructure that strengthens our community. By listening to residents and ensuring transparency, we can grow while keeping Okotoks a place where families and businesses thrive. |
| What's one unique idea or initiative you'd like to champion if elected? | I would champion permaculture in public spaces, replacing costly lawns with cover crops and pollinator plants. This creates low-maintenance, eco-friendly areas that cut costs, conserve water, and beautify Okotoks while supporting long-term sustainability. |

| CARRIE PENNER <u>CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM</u> | |
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| How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community? | I have been in Okotoks for 16 years. I was a volunteer in my kids' schools (in classrooms, as an occupational skills volunteer, and on parent council), Director for Female Hockey for OMHA, VP of the Eagles Football Board, I cooked for the Natural High Triathlon for six years, VP of the Fundraising Committee for the Foothills-Okotoks Regional Fieldhouse, and on the Municipal Planning Committee for three years. I served on Council from 2013-2017 where I sat on a variety of Committees (FCSS; Post-Secondary; Library; Intermunicipal Committee; Municipal Planning Committee; Public Safety & Security Committee; Culture, Parks, & Rec Committee; and the Economic Development Committee). I was highly involved in engagement with the community about downtown redevelopment and revitalization, and hosted meetings with community groups about working together to achieve their facility building goals. I have worked for MP John Barlow for 11 years, serving Okotoks and Foothills residents in that capacity. |
| How will you balance growth with preserving the town's character and sense of community? | One of the things that makes Okotoks so special is the people who are here and their commitment to creating and maintaining a sense of community. I don't think that it is tied to numbers as much as it is to ensuring people meet their neighbours and have places to gather. Part of it is also ensuring new communities have parks and amenities that allow people to spend time with their neighbours. In alignment with my position on expanding the non-residential tax base, bringing more employment to Okotoks through attracting new businesses will also provide more local jobs for our residents and help to increase our sense of community by lessening commutes and giving families more time to recreate together. Working and living in the same community supports stronger social connections through passive and active interactions, which also increases community safety. |
| What's the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it? | The single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now is the reliance on the residential tax base. The shortage of industrial and commercial tax base to spread out the municipal expenses is putting a disproportionate burden on families. We need to shift the balance from 88% residential and 12% non-residential to 80/20 percent. I would advocate for policies to ensure our economic development team has the resources they need to actively target and recruit businesses to locate in Okotoks, as well as ensuring we are retaining the businesses who are currently operating here. I would also make myself available to support their efforts when requested and appropriate. I think technology and knowledge-based industries would be a good fit for Okotoks and we have exactly the type of well-rounded, complete community they seek for their employees. |
| What's one unique idea or initiative you'd like to champion if elected? | I would like to expand the conversation I initiated the last time I was on council advocating for the province to cover part of the costs associated with our fire department responding to medical calls. The province took control of ambulances from municipalities in 2009 as part of unifying Alberta Health Services into one entity and assuming the costs of emergency medical care. Since then, they have progressively downloaded these costs back to municipalities by not funding the system appropriately and, therefore, municipalities have filled the gap by cross training |

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| | <p>firefighters to do emergency medical response. Municipalities and firefighters have done this to ensure there is emergency medical support for their residents and, in many ways, having firefighters in this role makes sense. As it is the province's decision and role to provide emergency services, however, I believe they should be providing compensation to municipalities when fire services are dispatched to medical calls.</p> |
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| GLENN STIEBEN CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM | |
| How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community? | <p>My name is Glenn Stieben. I have been a resident of the Town of Okotoks since 2008, relocating from Calgary to be closer to family. I have been in the Real Estate industry since 1975, and a successful small business owner.</p> |
| How will you balance growth with preserving the town's character and sense of community? | <p>We can't stop growth, and change is going to happen regardless of what some may desire. We agreed to the high school being built in Okotoks, and the cap was removed.</p> |
| What's the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it? | <p>I would say traffic is the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and the way to address this would be a perimeter around Okotoks. It's time to stop the town from approving more land development until there is a plan for a roadway in place. When the perimeter is set aside then approve development around the perimeter.</p> |
| What's one unique idea or initiative you'd like to champion if elected? | <p>Simple, solve the traffic issues. This is an ongoing problem, and we all know that this is only going to get worse.</p> |

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| GORD LANG CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM | |
| How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community? | <p>30 plus years resident. I have been on the Okotoks curling board, Westwinds board, Foothills Okotoks Recreation Society, United Way Okotoks.</p> |
| How will you balance growth with preserving the town's character and sense of community? | <p>Growth can be controlled through continuing to use the Water allocation permit process. If we don't have the water supply. You won't be able to build. Also work with the developers to build responsibly. Continue to have green spaces and pathways through new development. The path system is unique to Okotoks.</p> |
| What's the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it? | <p>The single biggest challenge. The presumption that growth is going to happen rapidly once the new water line arrives. We still have to live in our means. We have to have the infrastructure in place to accommodate growth. We need to use the tools that we have to protect and control growth..</p> |
| What's one unique idea or initiative you'd like to champion if elected? | <p>We need to continue to reduce red tape when we are trying to attract new business to town. We also have to protect and work with the existing</p> |

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| | businesses. It would be wonderful if we could attract a company that would create a product that went out to the world. |
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| JOELLE REIMER CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM | |
| How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community? | I have lived in Okotoks for almost 10 years. I have been involved with the community in many ways. I have done 2 radiothons for hospice raising over \$600,000, 2 radiothons for Sheep River health trust raising over \$200,000. My family billets for the Okotoks Oilers (this is our second season and 7th billet) I have emceed 2 Hike for Hospice; I do promo with the Okotoks Dawgs. I used to volunteer as a cook for the hospice. I have helped with light up Okotoks for the last 2 years and I'm proud to say 100% of all my campaign material and signs have been printed by Okotoks businesses. I'm very involved with the community, and I look forward to getting the opportunity to do even more with the community if elected. |
| How will you balance growth with preserving the town's character and sense of community? | Growth is inevitable, the way we can keep the small-town feel is by the events and community involvement. |
| What's the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it? | I plan to address all the issues first and foremost with professionalism and as a team. Working together with the other councilors making sure the community has a say. |
| What's one unique idea or initiative you'd like to champion if elected? | I'd love to be a part of building the sports culture here. Hosting more events and festivals too. |

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| KEN HEEMERYCK CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM | |
| How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community? | I bring 12 years of proven experience as a Town Councillor and have served on many municipal boards and committees that shape Okotoks' future. Highlights include serving as Chair of the Finance & Budget Committee, and current roles on the Okotoks Public Library Board and the Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) Board. I have also contributed to the Okotoks/Foothills Intermunicipal Committee, the Foothills/Okotoks Recreation Society, the Friends of Champion Park Society, and many others over the past 12 years. These experiences have strengthened my skills in governance, fiscal planning, and regional collaboration. With a Bachelor of Commerce degree and background as a small business owner, I bring strong business acumen to Council. I understand the challenges entrepreneurs face and the importance of fostering a thriving business climate. Combined with over 40 years as a resident, raising my family here, I remain committed to building a sustainable and prosperous Okotoks. |

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| <p>How will you balance growth with preserving the town's character and sense of community?</p> | <p>Balancing growth with preserving our town's character starts with disciplined planning and respect for what makes Okotoks special. Our Municipal Development Plan, built with strong community input, is the roadmap that guides how we grow responsibly. That means protecting our small-town charm, ensuring amenities and infrastructure keep pace with development, and creating spaces where people connect. Growth should strengthen our economy while maintaining Okotoks' unique character. We need to invest in amenities that attract families and businesses, while protecting the small-town atmosphere that sets us apart. With disciplined financial planning through grants, partnerships, and cost-sharing, we can keep costs fair for taxpayers. By balancing growth with community values, we will ensure Okotoks remains one of the best towns in Canada for generations to come.</p> |
| <p>What's the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it?</p> | <p>Okotoks is more than houses and roads; it's the spaces where people connect. When my kids were growing up, they spent countless hours in our recreation facilities. Those experiences build friendships and community, and we need to ensure future generations have the same opportunities. The challenge is meeting these needs without overburdening taxpayers. Through disciplined planning, grants, and partnerships, we can deliver new recreation facilities that meet demand, attract national events, and boost our local economy. At the same time, affordable housing is critical to keeping families, seniors, and young people in our community. By balancing investment in both housing and recreation, we can make Okotoks a place where residents of all ages and incomes feel at home. I'm proud to call Okotoks home for over 40 years, and I'll keep working to ensure it remains one of the best towns in Canada.</p> |
| <p>What's one unique idea or initiative you'd like to champion if elected?</p> | <p>Downtown revitalization is essential. As a Councillor, my role is to listen, advocate, and work with Town staff and the Chamber to ensure businesses have the right support during construction. By keeping the lines of communication open and ensuring administration delivers practical solutions, we can help businesses thrive through the construction period and emerge with a more vibrant, attractive, and economically strong downtown that showcases the best of Okotoks. When our downtown thrives, our whole community thrives.</p> |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">KERRI ANN COLBY CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM</p> | |
| <p>How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community?</p> | <p>I have been a member of the Okotoks community for 16 years, bringing both entrepreneurial and non-profit experience to my council campaign. As the founder of Rebel Bean Roasters and currently the Business Manager at Kindred Roots Therapy, I have a deep understanding of the small business environment, our local economy, and the community's social needs. My community involvement includes serving as an active executive member of the Okotoks Rotary Club and previously serving on the boards of Community Futures Highwood and the Okotoks Youth Justice Committee, among other volunteer commitments. I'm focusing my campaign on responsible growth that preserves our unique character. My</p> |

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| | <p>priorities are fiscal sustainability, growing industrial revenue to ease tax burdens on residents, strengthening social supports, and advocating for the Arts. I promise open communication and a balanced approach to ensure a place for everyone in Okotoks.</p> |
| <p>How will you balance growth with preserving the town's character and sense of community?</p> | <p>The challenge is not stopping growth but managing it thoughtfully. By ensuring diverse and affordable housing, we make Okotoks an inclusive community where residents at any stage of life can thrive and strengthen our connections, regardless of population. Ultimately, I don't believe the small-town vibe of Okotoks rests solely on the shoulders of the municipal government. Instead, it's about people creating connections and community with one another and the job of the council is to facilitate these opportunities.</p> |
| <p>What's the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it?</p> | <p>The single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now is achieving financial sustainability in the face of accelerated growth. Our population is growing and as long as people continue to move to Alberta, Okotoks will continue to grow, putting pressure on town services and infrastructure. If we fail to manage this, the cost will be passed directly to current homeowners through rising property taxes. If elected, I'd advocate for Council's fiscal priorities to include a shift to attracting non-residential development to grow revenue. I'd also encourage developers to contribute more to the capital and operational costs they create, ensuring that growth pays for itself.</p> |
| <p>What's one unique idea or initiative you'd like to champion if elected?</p> | <p>My unique initiative would be to build a business case for major arts and culture investment in Okotoks. For too long, the arts community has relied on limited resources, despite having incredibly talented artists and advocates. We need to shift the mindset on investment. I believe that strategic funding for arts and culture, just like the investment previously made in sports and recreation, is essential for our economic future. I would champion a study to quantify how investment in a truly vibrant art scene can boost our Town's reputation, attract visitors, diversify our tax base, and bring new dollars to Okotoks. Additionally, this initiative is an investment in community wellness, providing healthy and creative outlets, as well as critical support for the mental health of our youth and other residents.</p> |

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| <p>MARK WALKER CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM</p> | |
| <p>How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community?</p> | <p>I have lived in Okotoks for just about 10 years, and it's been a wonderful place to raise my family. Coming from a large family myself, I value connection, community, and helping others. Over the years, I've coached youth basketball teams, volunteered with local youth programs, and served on committees such as the United Way and condo boards. I also enjoy sports, the arts, and connecting with neighbors at community events or just around town. My wife, our two kids, and our dog, Luke Sky Walker, keep life busy and fun, and remind me daily why a strong, welcoming community matters. Being part of Okotoks has given my family a safe, supportive place to grow, and I'm passionate about giving back and helping our town continue to thrive.</p> |

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| <p>How will you balance growth with preserving the town’s character and sense of community?</p> | <p>Balancing growth with preserving Okotoks’ character means planning thoughtfully and staying connected to the community. I believe it starts with listening-hearing what residents value about our town, from green spaces and trails to local businesses and community events. Growth should enhance, not replace, these qualities. Supporting responsible development, investing in infrastructure that keeps pace with population increases, and encouraging local engagement ensures that new projects benefit everyone. At the same time, I want to maintain our small-town feel by promoting community programs, volunteer opportunities, and spaces where neighbors can connect. By blending careful planning with active involvement, we can welcome new families and businesses while keeping the unique spirit of Okotoks intact. Growth and community are not opposites—they can strengthen each other when guided with care, respect, and vision.</p> |
| <p>What’s the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it?</p> | <p>I believe the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now is managing growth while maintaining the quality-of-life residents expect. Our town is attracting new families and businesses, which is positive, but it also puts pressure on infrastructure, roads, and community services. To address this, I would focus on proactive planning and open communication with residents. Ensuring that development aligns with our long-term vision, investing in roads, utilities, and recreational spaces, and supporting programs that strengthen community connections are all key. I would also prioritize transparency, keeping residents informed and involved in decisions that impact their neighborhoods. By combining thoughtful planning with active engagement, we can ensure Okotoks grows responsibly, preserving the character, safety, and sense of community that make our town such a great place to live.</p> |
| <p>What’s one unique idea or initiative you’d like to champion if elected?</p> | <p>If elected, I’d like to champion an initiative that gives youth more opportunities to express their talents and abilities. I envision creating a “Youth Street,” a space where young people can showcase their creativity through murals, art installations, or projects in drawing, painting, sewing, or other mediums. This street would celebrate the energy, innovation, and voice of the next generation in Okotoks, giving them a meaningful, visible way to contribute to the community. By providing a dedicated space for youth expression, we encourage creativity, engagement, and pride, while strengthening the connections between residents of all ages. It’s a way to highlight the talents of today’s youth, foster community involvement, and create a lasting, inclusive place that reflects the spirit and future of our town.</p> |

MICHELLE WALTHER [CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM](#)

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| <p>How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community?</p> | <p>I have lived in Okotoks for 14 years. I have worked at the Okotoks Public Library for 13 years doing programs for families, children and seniors. I love to volunteer! I have volunteered at my kids schools, Okotoks soccer Association, Town of Okotoks and other special events, such as Simpورا Duck race.</p> |
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| <p>How will you balance growth with preserving the town’s character and sense of community?</p> | <p>Growth and sense of community can be balanced by continuing to focus on robust community events and downtown preservation and enhancement of gathering spaces such as plaza, library, pathways, and parks. An increase in bussing would help to connect the neighborhoods so that everyone can get where they want safely.</p> |
| <p>What’s the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it?</p> | <p>Housing affordability is definitely a challenge right now. House prices are high, so this is discouraging to young families. The building of condos and multifamily complexes will help with this. This will give more choices and diversity in housing options</p> |
| <p>What’s one unique idea or initiative you’d like to champion if elected?</p> | <p>Outdoor swimming pool oasis! Designated dog swim area by the river.</p> |

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| <p>OLIVER HALLMARK CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM</p> | |
| <p>How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community?</p> | <p>I have proudly called Okotoks home for 15 years. This community has shaped who I am, and in return I have served on a number of committees and boards that impact every part of our town, including FCSS, the Okotoks public library board, the finance & audit committee, the Foothills/Okotoks recreation society, and the United Way/Okotoks partnership. I've also been involved with the healthy Okotoks coalition, the age friendly community sub-committee, and the community futures board. These roles have given me a deep appreciation for the power of collaboration, volunteerism and community spirit.</p> |
| <p>How will you balance growth with preserving the town’s character and sense of community?</p> | <p>I will continue to support balanced growth while preserving our small town charm by following the framework council approved in the Okotoks growth strategy. It sets clear principles like staying socially connected, nurturing a strong local economy, being environmental stewards, creating complete and integrated communities, and remaining strategic and adaptive as we grow. I will also continue to support the current council's decision to set a growth target of 3%-4% annually, which allows us to welcome new families and businesses while ensuring services, infrastructure, and amenities keep pace.</p> |
| <p>What’s the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it?</p> | <p>The biggest challenge facing Okotoks (besides growth) is the lack of capacity in our recreation facilities, especially pool space. Our aquatic centre is already at or near full utilization, limiting swimming lessons, competitive training, and public use. With growing population, this shortage is only becoming more urgent. The solution is to move forward with consultations that evaluate the costs, options and priorities for the recreation expansion, particularly in aquatic spaces. Engaging residents through consultation will identify what amenities are most needed and most wanted by the community. A thorough study ensures we make an informed investment that reflects local values and long-term demand.</p> |
| <p>What’s one unique idea or initiative you’d like to champion if elected?</p> | <p>I would like to continue looking at options for a shaded off leash dog park. During this term I supported Councillor Swendseid in trying to find a solution, but despite efforts we weren't able to make it work.</p> |

| ROBERT PUNKO CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM | |
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| <p>How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community?</p> | <p>I'm a resident of Okotoks since early 2011, my family selected the beautiful community of Crystal Shores as our home. We chose Okotoks because of its unique balance: the benefit of affordability, the small-town feel, and the ability to manage a modest budget while enjoying a small-town hometown with the added convenience of metropolitan advantages with nearby Calgary. I'm an active member of the local Highwood Cycling Club; however, not nearly as active as I would like to be. I'm a nature lover and truly recognize the past development considerations towards interconnected pathways in community developments and most of the river valley for an overall harmonious development with nature. My volunteering is mostly direct by preference; avoiding the unnecessary burden or cost of middle management or unnecessary administration, by directing various donation types or service to neighbours, seniors, youth, strangers, and even other political candidates, etc.</p> |
| <p>How will you balance growth with preserving the town's character and sense of community?</p> | <p>My approach to balancing growth includes first and foremost, consideration of the core community strengths to protect and enhance. These include affordable living, safe and vibrant neighbourhoods, the small-town charm, adequate recreational infrastructure, mindful development that supports both business and citizens, harmony with the environment and nature, a healthy and connected social environment, planning responsibly for the future, and acting in the best interests of the citizens. Citizen engagement and the ability to sift for the concerns, utilizing novel and creative methods with sufficient information disclosure to the citizens to gain an educated and informed discourse. Incorporate milestones of communication that are visible to the citizens, to allow for sufficient time and opportunities for both groups to comprehend information shared, and opportunities for further clarification to address concerns.</p> |
| <p>What's the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it?</p> | <p>Erosion of integrity, the symptoms being an overwhelmed transportation infrastructure, insufficient recreational facilities, continuous high taxation with a budget plan to continue extracting more funding from the tax pool, poor fiscal restraint and management, recruitment and retention problems, misaligned priorities to citizen concerns, failures of communication of citizens to governing bodies, poor collaboration with provincial ministers, a top heavy organization that exceeds a lean and efficient management structure. I would advocate for finding creative cost savings and proactive solutions within the organization from all levels of employees, defining essential versus non-essential services and/or facilities, utilizing in-house subject matter experts versus costly external consultants and contractors. Improve communication and correct protocols that are bureaucratic with low returns of citizen confidence.</p> |
| <p>What's one unique idea or initiative you'd like to champion if elected?</p> | <p>Fiscal laser focus and continuous improvement to reduce the budget without negative impacts to essential core services and facilities. Mirroring larger industry successful practices to find operational and capital cost savings, finding novel and creative cost savings, improving engagement and recognition of all employees, engaging citizen and employee subject matter experts in the process, collaborating with various</p> |

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| | groups including other Alberta municipalities, the provincial government, and neighbouring county of Foothills. Ensuring our citizens are aware of the process and accomplishments, lessons learned, trials proposed and tested, defining quantifiable milestones of achievement and communicating with candor and sincerity. |
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| RYAN NIX CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM | |
| How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community? | Ryan was born and raised in Alberta, has a degree with distinction in Management, and his family has lived in Okotoks for nearly 10 years. Ryan's community involvement includes the Local Assessment Review board, Rotary Soap Box Derby, Kiwanis club, Okotoks Ratepayers community group, Highwood UCP, foster home for AARCS, hockey and cheerleading parent, and more. Ryan has owned and operated his own business in Calgary for 16 years. |
| How will you balance growth with preserving the town's character and sense of community? | Okotoks has always stood out as a family-friendly alternative to big city living. Growth should respect that tradition. We need thoughtful planning that balances housing needs with maintaining the small-town feel that drew so many people here in the first place. I believe this requires bringing the focus back towards single-family middle-class development and being cautious not to overload our infrastructure with multiple high density housing projects. Okotoks deserves growth that strengthens our community, not overwhelms it. |
| What's the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it? | I believe the current rate of increase in our property taxes is much too high and is putting too much pressure on families. The last 4 years have seen a property tax increase of nearly 17% along with franchise fee increases of 75%, whereas Alberta average salaries have only increased 11%. I believe we need to refocus our municipal government on core services like roads, water, waste, protective services, and recreation in order to contain property tax increases going forward. We need to understand that residents are under a lot of economic strain and not add undue additional pressure. |
| What's one unique idea or initiative you'd like to champion if elected? | To help accelerate our ability to increase recreation and arts infrastructure, I would like to see the Town forge partnerships with our local service clubs and businesses to engage in local fundraising, similar to how the pickleball center was funded. I think we can generate a lot of community spirit and buy-in as well as realize the benefits of these facilities faster with more community involvement. |

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| STEFAN DYKEMA CLICK HERE FOR FULL CAMPAIGN PLATFORM | |
| How long have you lived in Okotoks, and what roles or activities have connected you to the community? | I am deeply involved in the Okotoks community as a husband, father of three, and active volunteer who believes in giving back. Since moving here in 2018, I've coached sports, supported school and youth initiatives, and worked alongside families and community members to make our town stronger. I am a school Principal and hold a Master's in Public Administration. My professional background also includes work as a Management Consultant and Treasurer/Board Member of a \$27 million |

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| | <p>nonprofit that supports people with disabilities. These experiences have reinforced my belief in leadership that is responsible, balanced, and people focused. I believe Town Council must remain about people—not politics—by listening carefully, building trust, and making thoughtful decisions. Growth in Okotoks must be managed responsibly, with strong planning for infrastructure, schools, and recreation. My goal is to ensure our town remains vibrant, supportive, and family-centered.</p> |
| <p>How will you balance growth with preserving the town’s character and sense of community?</p> | <p>Balancing growth with preserving the character and sense of community in Okotoks is one of the most important responsibilities of council. Growth is inevitable, but it must be smart, manageable, and aligned with the needs of families. That means investing in infrastructure, traffic planning, recreation facilities, and school sites so that growth enhances, rather than strains, our town. Equally important is making sure that every new neighborhood is thoughtfully designed. Area structure and neighborhood plans must ensure each community is amazing, family-friendly, and true to the character of Okotoks. This requires sound planning and getting it done right the first time—so growth builds trust, prevents costly mistakes, and creates communities we can all be proud of. Through sound planning and smart, balanced decisions, we can build the future of Okotoks while preserving the character that makes this town so special.</p> |
| <p>What’s the single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now, and how would you address it?</p> | <p>The single biggest challenge facing Okotoks right now is managing growth in a way that protects our small-town character while ensuring families have the services, infrastructure, and amenities they need. Growth is coming—it’s not a question of if, but of how. If we don’t get it right, we risk repeating past mistakes where development outpaced traffic planning, school capacity, or recreation opportunities. To address this, I would focus on sound, long-term planning that ties housing, traffic patterns, recreation, and schools together in a coordinated way. That means strengthening our area structure and neighborhood plans so every new community reflects the character of Okotoks and avoids problems like the traffic challenges we now face on 32 Street. It also means engaging openly with residents, listening to concerns, and making balanced decisions that put people before politics. Done right, growth can enhance our town rather than strain it.</p> |
| <p>What’s one unique idea or initiative you’d like to champion if elected?</p> | <p>One unique initiative I’d like to champion is creating a Community Growth and Livability Framework for Okotoks. This would be more than just area structure plans—it would bring together residents, schools, businesses, and recreation partners to map out what each new neighborhood needs to be truly successful. The idea is to set clear standards up front so that new communities are not only functional but also vibrant, family-friendly, and aligned with the character of our town. This framework would include things like traffic flow that actually makes sense, accessible green spaces, and amenities that encourage connection—so families don’t just live in Okotoks, they thrive here. By getting it right the first time, we avoid costly mistakes and can ensure Okotoks remains the amazing place that it is.</p> |

