



Red Deer's Community Compass:

Our Master Plan for
Service Delivery

What We Heard Report

January 2026





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Executive Summary





The City of Red Deer is developing the Community Compass: Our Master Plan for Service Delivery, an innovative strategic plan that will guide service delivery and investment over the next twelve years. The planning work was initiated in response to a recommendation within the 2021 Value for Money Audit; the Community Compass aims to guide the delivery of services to the community including recreation, parks, arts and culture, transit, licensing and permitting, social supports, emergency services, and more.

Engagement is an essential component of this planning process. The insights gathered through engagement capture community perspectives, values, and priorities, which will be interpreted and balanced with supporting research including demographic analysis, trends, benchmarking, and study of relevant policy and planning frameworks. Together, these inputs create a comprehensive understanding of current needs and future opportunities, ensuring the Master Plan is both community-informed and evidence-based.

This executive summary presents the key findings from the engagement program, conducted between June and October 2025.





Engagement Overview

The Community Compass engagement process was designed to gather diverse perspectives from residents, staff, community organizations, and key community contributors. Developed following the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework at the 'Consult' level, the multi-method approach ensured broad participation across various community segments.

Input was collected through digital platforms, paper-based tools, and facilitated in-person discussions. All qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed using inductive coding, thematic analysis, and synthesis of common themes to identify recurring perspectives, priorities, and concerns across stakeholder groups.

Participation Summary

The engagement program included seven distinct methods, totaling approximately 1,170 touchpoints:



Resident Survey: 575 responses (online and paper)



Staff Survey: 299 responses (online and paper)



Community Organization Survey: 85 responses (online)



Public Open Houses: 20 participants (interactive panels and activities)



Stakeholder Interviews: 10 participants (semi-structured discussions)



Group Meetings: 30 participants (facilitated discussions)



Community Pop-Ups: 150 participants (engagement at high-traffic locations)



Engagement Key Findings



Community Priorities and Values

Residents, staff, and organizations consistently identified the following as top priorities for municipal investment:

- Community safety (50% of residents, 57% of organizations) – including emergency services readiness, public safety, and addressing downtown safety concerns.
- Affordable housing – identified as the top trend impacting service planning by both staff and organizations.
- Maintaining existing infrastructure (47% of residents, 52% of organizations) – rather than building new facilities
- Financial responsibility (78% of residents consider this very important) – with concerns about rising taxes alongside perceived service reductions
- Providing basic services (36% of residents) – emphasis on core service delivery

When asked about desired community outcomes, residents prioritized enhanced safety and security (43%), improved physical health and wellness (39%), and strengthened social connections (34%).

The values that should guide decision-making include informed decision-making (85%), transparency (84%), financial responsibility (78%), and active community involvement (72%).



Resident Perspectives

Current Service Use and Barriers to Access

The most used community services include garbage and recycling (98%), treed and natural areas (90%), fire department and emergency response (87%), police services (87%), and walking and biking trails (85%).

Primary barriers to accessing services:

- Lack of information and public awareness
- Financial constraints/cost – particularly affecting families, seniors, and low-income individuals
- Transportation challenges – limited public transit access, especially to facilities outside the city center
- Accessibility infrastructure – gaps in physical accessibility for persons with disabilities

Community Strengths

When asked about Red Deer's greatest strengths, residents identified:

- People and community spirit – residents, volunteers, families, neighbours
- Parks, green spaces, and natural areas – trails, river valley, walkability
- Location and size – central corridor location, manageable mid-size city
- Recreation facilities and amenities
- Community identity – inclusive, resilient, beautiful, connected
- Community engagement and collaboration – strong network of organizations and partnerships





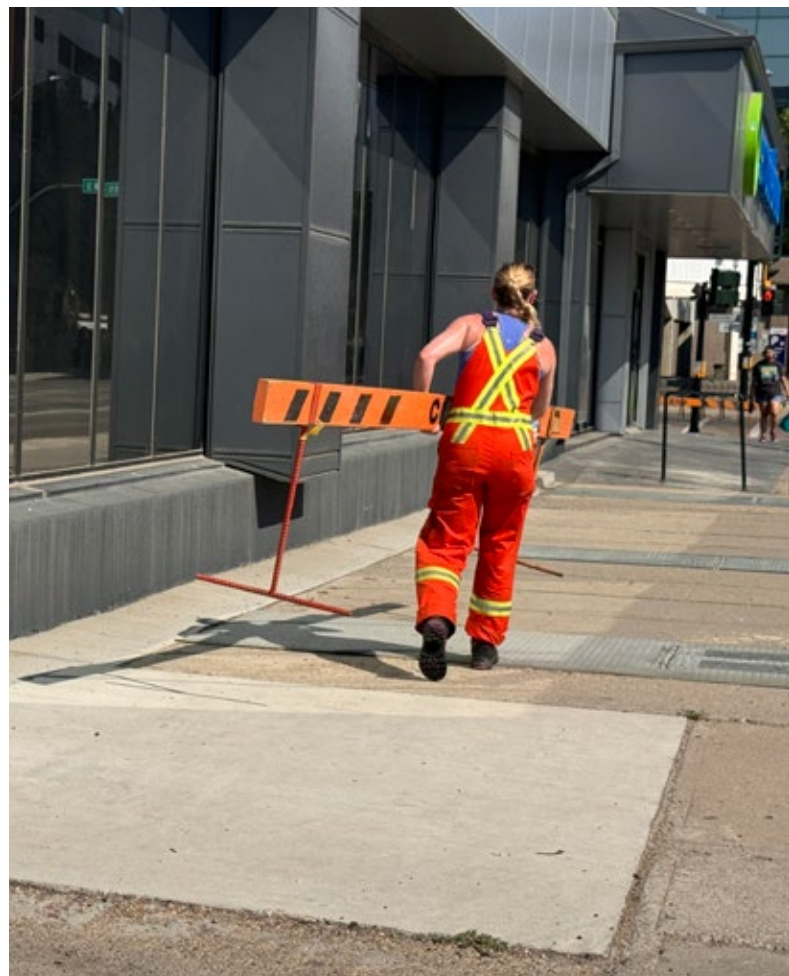
Community Organization Perspectives

The 85 organizations surveyed represent diverse sectors including health/wellbeing, arts and culture, education, newcomer services, and sport and recreation. While 77% rated collaboration with The City positively, organizations identified significant challenges:

- Funding and financial sustainability – insufficient operational funding, reliance on unstable project-based grants, rising costs to organization.
- Staffing and volunteer capacity – difficulty recruiting and retaining staff due to non-competitive wages, volunteer burnout.
- Space and facility limitations – inadequate space for programs, high rental costs, aging facilities requiring maintenance.
- Communication gaps – difficulty reaching appropriate City contacts, inconsistent responsiveness.
- Safety concerns – vandalism, encampments near facilities, perceptions affecting program participation.

To strengthen collaboration, organizations identified needs for:

- More opportunities to jointly deliver services (66%)
- Improved communication and information sharing (62%)
- Involvement in decision-making and strategic planning (55%)
- Access to or partnering on funding initiatives (54%)





Staff Perspectives

The 299 staff respondents provided insights into internal service delivery challenges and opportunities. Staff identified community safety and affordable housing as the top trends impacting City planning. Key internal challenges include:

- Maintaining staffing and morale levels.
- Communication and coordination between departments.
- Gaps in technology and effective use of data.
- Constrained or limited resources to meet public expectations.

Staff emphasized the need for clearer strategic direction, improved cross-departmental collaboration, better tools and technology, and more opportunities for meaningful community engagement. While 75% agreed that City services align with overall municipal goals, many noted concerns about budget effectiveness, service duplication, and gaps between planning documents and actual implementation.





Key Themes

Several themes emerged consistently across all engagement methods and groups:



Balance Between Growth and Core Services

Strong sentiment exists for prioritizing maintenance of existing infrastructure and essential services over new facility development. Residents and staff emphasized the importance of sustainable growth that doesn't outpace The City's capacity to maintain service quality and infrastructure.



Equity and Inclusion

All groups highlighted the need for equitable access to services across all demographics and neighbourhoods. This includes affordable programming, accessibility improvements for persons with disabilities, culturally safe services, support for newcomers, and ensuring equity-deserving communities receive adequate resources.



Transparency and Accountability

Residents, organizations, and staff called for greater transparency in decision-making, clearer communication about budget allocations and spending priorities, and visible follow-through on commitments. There is desire for more opportunities to provide input earlier in planning processes, with clear demonstrations of how community feedback influences decisions.



Collaboration and Partnership

Recognition of the vital role community organizations play in service delivery was widespread. There is strong interest in enhanced partnership opportunities, including co-delivering services, sharing resources, reducing duplication, and building on the substantial volunteer base and organizational expertise already present in the community.



Long-Term Strategic Planning

Both residents and staff emphasized the need for proactive, strategic planning. This includes clear long-term vision, evidence-based decisions supported by appropriate data utilization, and sustainable approaches that balance immediate community needs with future growth and demographic changes.



Looking Ahead: Future Considerations (10 to 20 Years)

When asked about changes needed in the next 10 to 20 years, participants identified:

- Continued support for mental health and social services
- Protection of green spaces and natural areas from development
- Recreation facility expansion based on population growth (additional pools, indoor field complex, multisport spaces)
- Enhanced transportation options including public transit, bike lanes, alternative mobility
- Vibrant arts and culture scene with venues and programming
- Healthcare service improvements to attract doctors and specialists
- Housing development that accommodates growth while maintaining affordability

Conclusion

The engagement program for Red Deer's Community Compass captured diverse perspectives across 1,170 touchpoints from residents, staff, community organizations, and contributors. The findings reveal a community that values its people, green spaces, and collaborative spirit, while identifying clear priorities for the future: community safety, affordable housing, maintaining existing infrastructure, financial responsibility, and improved communication.

The input gathered through this engagement, combined with supporting research and analysis, will inform the development of the Master Plan. The consistent themes across all engagement methods provide a strong foundation for strategic planning that balances immediate community needs with long-term sustainability, ensures equitable access to services, and strengthens partnerships between The City and the organizations that serve Red Deer residents.

As the Community Compass planning process continues, these findings will be integrated with demographic data, trend analysis, benchmarking, and best practices to create a comprehensive roadmap for service delivery that reflects the values and priorities expressed by the Red Deer community.

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Introduction

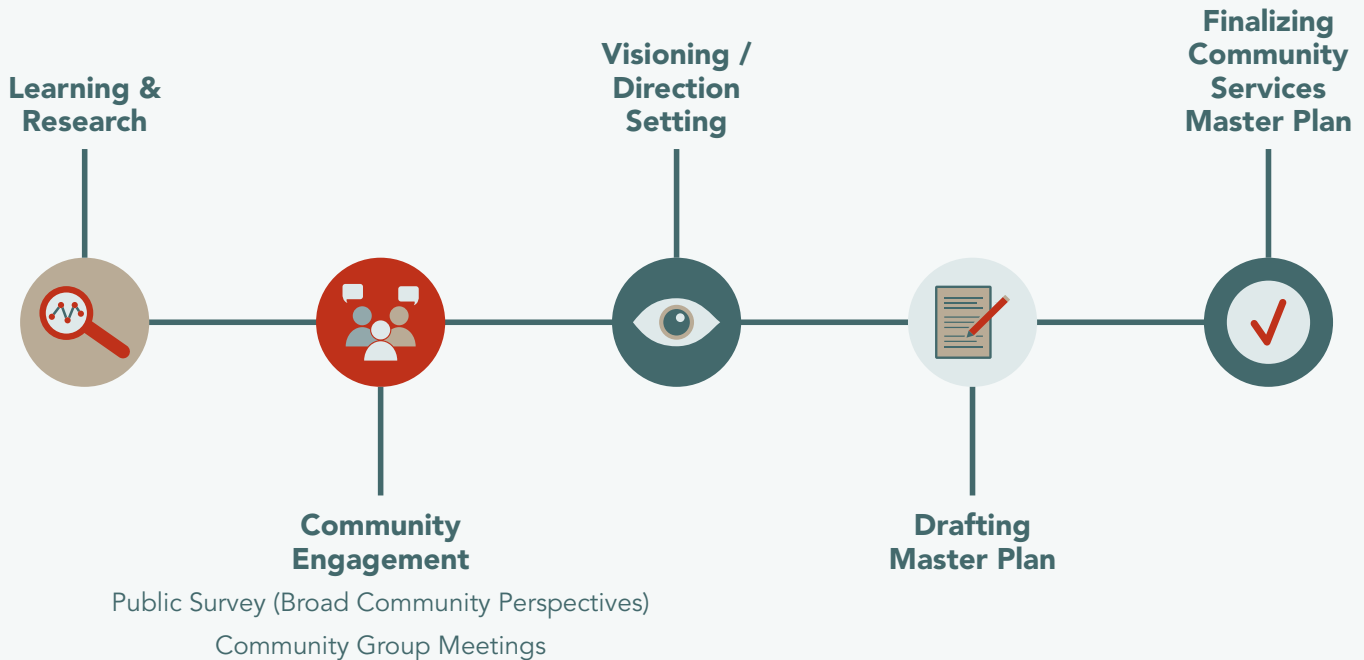




The City of Red Deer is developing *Red Deer’s Community Compass: Our Master Plan for Service Delivery*, a strategic plan that will guide service delivery and investment over the next twelve years. Initiated in response to the 2021 Value for Money Audit, the Plan aims to guide the delivery of community services including recreation, parks, arts and culture, transit, licensing and permitting, social supports, emergency services, and more.

Engagement is an essential part of the Master Plan, but it represents only one piece of the overall planning process. The insights gathered through engagement capture community perspectives, values, and priorities, which are then balanced with supporting research such as demographic analysis, trends, benchmarking, and review of relevant frameworks and planning documents. Together, these inputs create a comprehensive understanding of current needs and future opportunities, ensuring that the Master Plan is both community-informed and evidence-based.

This What We Heard report presents the findings of community engagement.





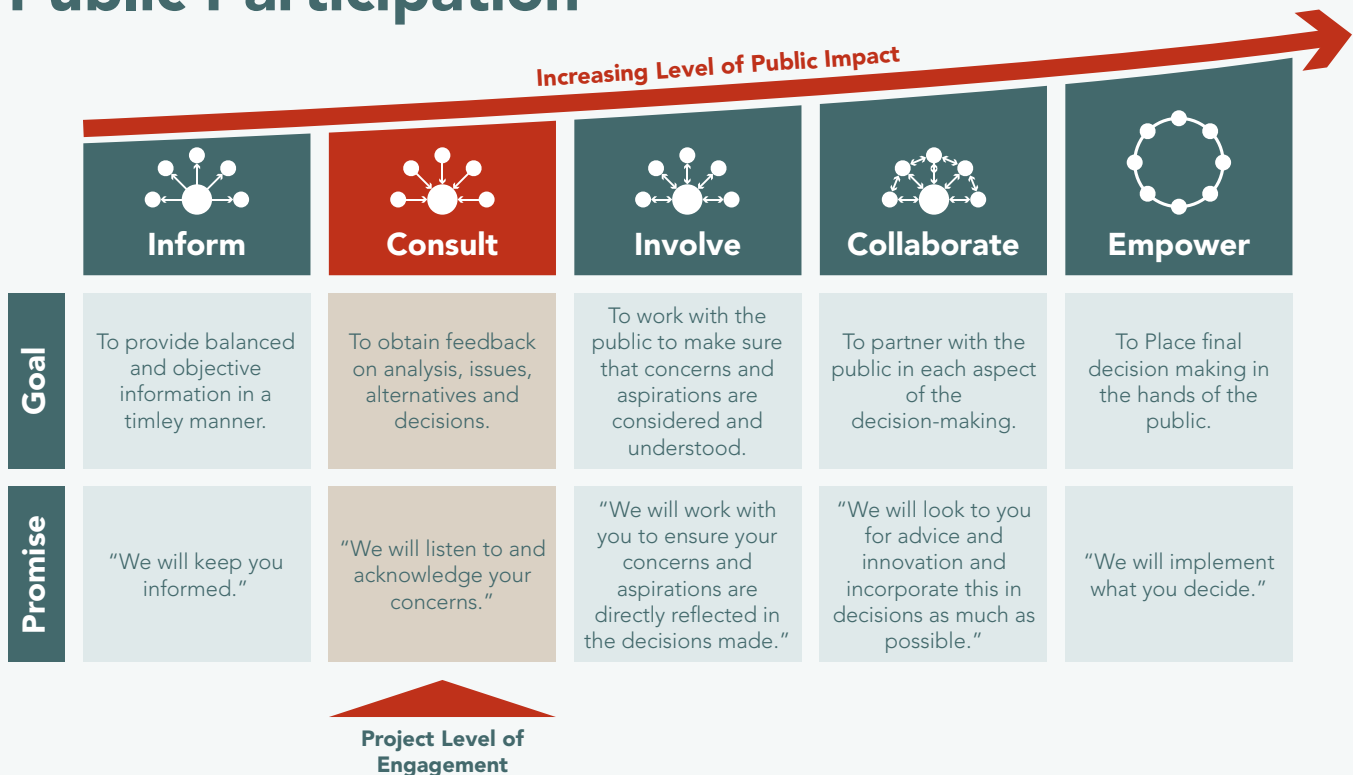
1.1 Engagement Methods Overview

The Community Compass engagement process was designed to gather diverse perspectives from residents, staff, community organizations, and key stakeholders across The City of Red Deer. Engagement methods were developed following guidance from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework at the 'Consult' level, using a multi-method approach to ensure broad participation and capture input from various segments of the community.

Engagement Period: June – October 2025

Engagement activities ran concurrently during this five-month period, allowing participants multiple opportunities to provide input through their preferred method.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation





Engagement Methods and Participation

The engagement process included seven distinct methods, totally approximately 1,170 touchpoints:

				
Resident Survey	Staff Survey	Community Group Survey	Community Group Meetings	Pop-Up Events
575 responses	299 responses	85 responses	5 sessions with 35 participating groups	150 participants
Fielded: July - September, 2025	Fielded: June - July, 2025	Fielded: June - July, 2025	Hosted: September - October, 2025	Hosted: July - September, 2025





Data Collection and Analysis

Input was collected through a combination of digital platforms, paper-based tools, and facilitated in-person discussions. The resident survey was available both online via The City of Red Deer's engagement site (engage.reddeer.ca) and in hard copy to maximize accessibility. The staff survey was available through the internal City staff platform and with hard copies available as well. The community organization survey was sent to organizations in Red Deer who were identified by City staff as contributors and partners to serving the community. The survey was distributed using an email invitation through a digital distribution platform, which included a link to the survey.

Public open houses featured informative panels and interactive feedback activities including dotmocracy activities and youth-specific engagement tools, the dates and location were published on The City engagement site and through City social media channels. Stakeholder interviews and group meetings used semi-structured discussion guides to explore key themes identified through the analysis of resident, organization and staff surveys to gain greater insight into the delivery of services to the community. While community pop-ups utilized engagement panels to capture feedback in high-traffic community locations to "meet people where they live, work and play".

All qualitative and quantitative input was analyzed using a combination of inductive coding, thematic analysis, frequency counts, and synthesis of common themes. This approach allowed the project team to identify recurring perspectives, priorities, and concerns across different engagement methods while also capturing unique insights from specific stakeholder groups. Themes emerging from the analysis form the foundation of the findings presented in this report.



Data Analysis

ATLAS.ti was utilized to support the systematic analysis of public engagement data collected during this project. As a qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS.ti enabled the research team to organize, code, and analyze diverse forms of engagement feedback, including survey responses, meeting transcripts, written submissions, and observational notes.

The software facilitated a rigorous and transparent analytical process through several key functions. First, it allowed for the development and application of a comprehensive coding framework to identify recurring themes, concerns, and suggestions across the engagement data. Second, ATLAS.ti's query and visualization tools enabled the team to explore relationships between codes, compare responses across different stakeholder groups, and identify patterns in the data. Third, the software's annotation and memo features supported detailed analytical documentation, ensuring that interpretations were grounded in the original data and that the analytical process remained traceable and auditable.

By using ATLAS.ti, the analysis maintained methodological rigor while managing large volumes of qualitative data efficiently. This approach enhanced the credibility of findings and ensured that diverse voices and perspectives captured during public engagement were systematically represented in the final analysis.

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Engagement Findings





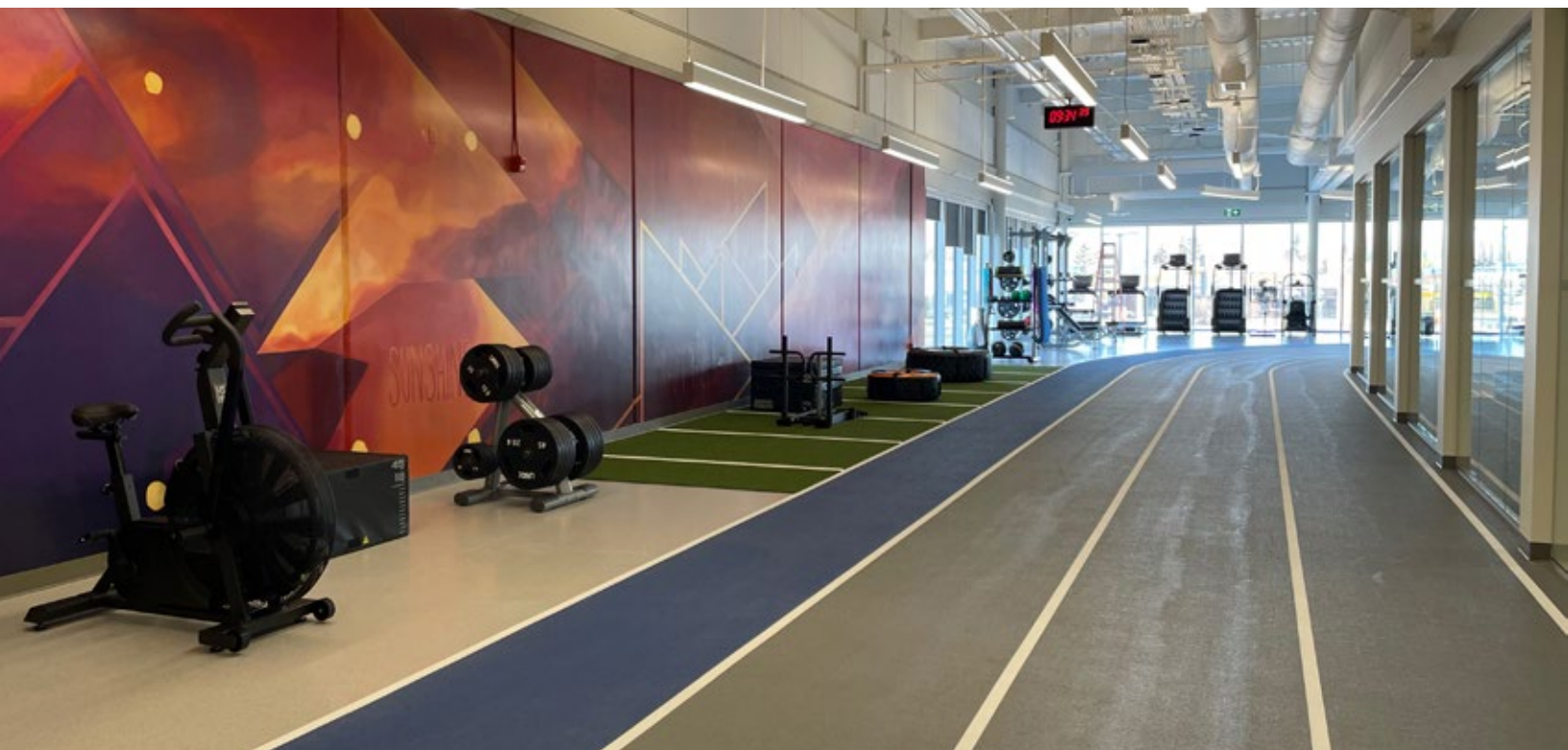
A variety of tactics were employed to gather an array of community input related to community services in The City. The tactics are presented in the following graphics along with the levels of participation.

2.1 Resident Survey

A resident survey was fielded to gain a better understanding of residents' perspectives on services to the community, from early July to early September. The survey was primarily administered online, with paper copies available for residents who preferred a physical format. The survey was promoted through various methods including:

- The City's social media channels
- The City's website/Engage page
- Posters in local facilities and businesses
- Media release

The findings from the survey are presented below. They follow the order that the questions were posed in the survey. Not all respondents answered each question; the percentages shown represent those who answered the question.





2.1.1 Current Use of Community Services

The first section of the survey explored how residents currently use community services, identified which services they believe should be expanded, examined barriers to access, and gathered suggestions for potential improvements. These insights will help The City align with community demand.

Question: What community services and spaces do you currently use yourself and or is used by members of your household?

To begin the survey, respondents were asked to identify the community services that their families use. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, respondents use a variety of community services with garbage and recycling (98%), treed and natural areas (90%), fire department and emergency response (87%), police services (87%), and walking and biking paths and trails (85%) as the most used community services.

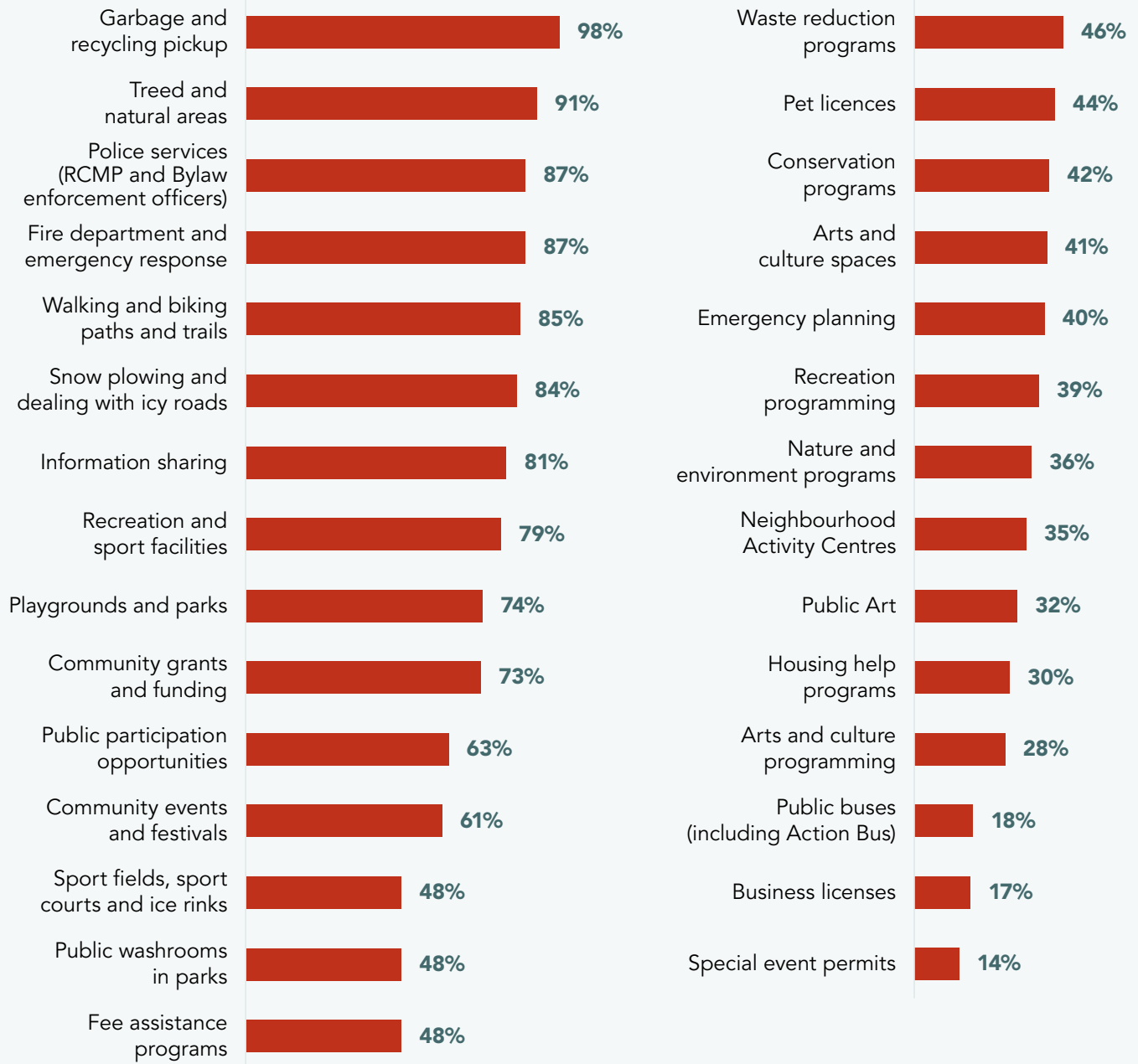
Those aged over 80 years (67%) are more likely to say they use waste reduction programs than those aged 20 to 39 years (35%).

Those aged 20-39 years are more likely to say they use recreation and sport facilities (88%) than those over the age of 80 (40%).

Those who have lived in Red Deer for up to 5 years (79%) are more likely to say they participate in public engagement than those who have lived in Red Deer for 6 to 10 years (47%).



Community Services Used





Respondents suggested other services including better infrastructure maintenance, stronger fire and safety services, enhanced recreation and green spaces, expanded social supports for families, seniors, and newcomers, and more accessible civic engagement and permitting processes.

Those who have lived in Red Deer between 5 to 10 years (71%) are more likely to say that they use fee assistance programs than those who have lived in Red Deer for up to 5 years (46%) and over 10 years (43%).





Question: What additional services, if any, do you think The City should consider providing?

Although some feedback echoed the above graph, each theme also highlighted new details regarding the additional services residents hope The City will consider. The responses (239 comments) were analyzed and presented according to key themes, and not in any specific order:



Housing and Support for Unhoused (43 responses)

- Requests for increased affordable housing options and initiatives to support the unhoused.
- Advocating for shelters that are not faith-based and integrating social services.



Public Safety and Emergency Services (50 responses)

- Calls for better staffing and funding for fire and emergency services.
- Concerns regarding public safety in relation to the unhoused population and drug use in public spaces.



Community Engagement and Input (16 responses)

- Suggestions to improve public consultation efforts, including more accessible ways for citizens to provide feedback.
- Desire for better communication about community services and opportunities.



Transportation and Infrastructure (30 responses)

- Requests for improved public transportation, bike lanes, and overall infrastructure maintenance.
- Concerns about parking management in neighbourhoods.



Recreation and Cultural Services (35 responses)

- Calls for more recreational facilities, including a competitive swimming pool and arts and culture spaces.
- Suggestions for events and programming targeted at specific demographics, such as youth, seniors, and families.



Environmental Initiatives (15 responses)

- Requests for enhanced environmental initiatives, such as community gardens and weed control.
- Suggestions for expanding recycling efforts and promoting sustainability.



Social Services and Mental Health (21 responses)

- Advocacy for increased services for mental health, drug addiction, and integration programs for equity deserving communities.
- Emphasis on the need for comprehensive care for vulnerable populations.



Financial Services (16 responses)

- Concerns about tax increases and suggestions for managing budgets better, including prioritizing essential services.

Overall, the responses highlight a desire for more proactive measures in providing services that are addressing community needs, enhancing safety, fostering inclusivity, and improving communication between The City and its residents.

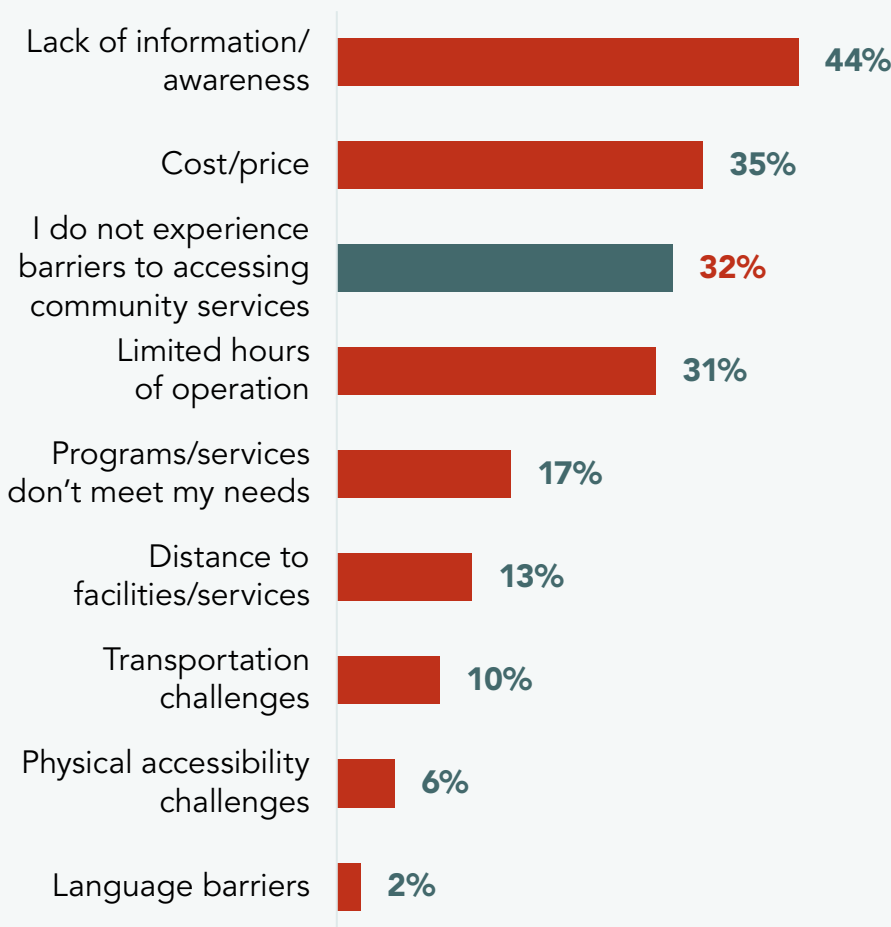




Question: Please identify any barriers that have made it difficult for you to access community services.

A lack of information and public awareness was cited by approximately 44% of participants as a primary obstacle. Additionally, 35% indicated that financial constraints, such as cost or pricing, posed challenges to access. Notably, approximately one-third (32%) of respondents reported that they had not experienced any barriers when seeking community services.

Barriers Experienced When Trying to Access Community Services



Those who have lived in Red Deer for up to 10 years (77%) are more likely to say that lack of awareness is a barrier they face than those who have lived in Red Deer for over 10 years (41%).



Question: Do you have any ideas about how to reduce barriers so that all residents can access the community services they need?

The responses (204 comments) are analyzed and presented according to key themes below, and not in any specific order:



Access (34 responses)

- Increase awareness and availability of services, particularly for marginalized communities (e.g., neurodiverse individuals, seniors). Include interpreters and accessible communication.
- Improve physical infrastructure for better access (e.g., wheelchair ramps, accessible bus stops)
- Enhance virtual access to information (e.g., multilingual websites, intuitive navigation).



Infrastructure and Service Provision (37 comments)

- Build more recreation facilities to accommodate community demand, extend operating hours, and offer a wider variety of programs. High costs make access challenging for low-income families and seniors; therefore, subsidized rates or free options are essential.
- Create more community events, free programs for children, and inclusive opportunities that cater specifically to diverse needs (e.g., gender-specific swim times).



Transportation (28 responses)

- Enhance public transportation options such as increasing the number and frequency of bus routes, especially in underserved areas. Consider offering free or reduced transit rates for low-income individuals.
- Invest more in bike lanes and pedestrian facilities, as many feel unsafe while walking or cycling.



Cleanliness and Safety (35 responses)

- Keep parks, streets, and public areas clean and well-maintained to cultivate a respectful community environment. Address issues such as homelessness and substance use in public spaces, ensuring community safety.



Communication and Awareness (40 comments)

- Increase efforts to provide information about community programs, services, and events. Utilize multiple platforms (social media, newsletters, community boards) for broader outreach to ensure that all community members are informed.
- Foster regular engagement with the community to gather feedback and adapt services accordingly.



General Suggestions (18 comments)

- Focus on reducing the costs associated with access to facilities and programs and explore tiered pricing based on individuals' income.
- Concerns over the need for greater investment in public safety services.





Question: What is one thing you would change or improve about community services in Red Deer?

The responses (284 comments) are analyzed and presented according to themes.



Public Spaces Maintenance (44 comments)

- Increased frequency and improved maintenance of parks, recreation facilities and transit services.
- Improved cleanliness of public spaces, including roadways and parks.



Program Accessibility and Enhancement (26 responses)

- Concerns were raised about the timing of drop-in recreation programs.
- There were requests for more youth-focused programming, including structured activities and safe spaces for teenagers.
- Many residents mentioned the need for more affordable programs for families, seniors, and low-income individuals to ensure equitable access to community services.



Public Transit Improvements (28 responses)

- Suggestions for improving public transit include introducing online pass systems, maintaining lower costs for seniors, and improving the reliability and frequency of service.



Public Safety (72 responses)

- There were numerous comments regarding safety on trails and in downtown areas.
- Concerns were raised about emergency services and the need for full staffing to ensure the community's safety.
- Concerns about homelessness in the city. Suggestions include increased mental health support and creating a community approach to address the issue.



Community Engagement (21 responses)

- Suggestions were made for improved communication and transparency from The City to better inform residents about available services and programs.



Access to Art and Culture (21 comments)

- There was a desire for more support for arts and culture, as well as a call to balance funding between recreation / sports initiatives and arts initiatives.



2.1.2 Values and Priorities

The next section of the survey focused on the values residents want to see reflected in decision-making, along with their priorities for future investment. These responses help ensure that planning is guided by what the community cares about most.

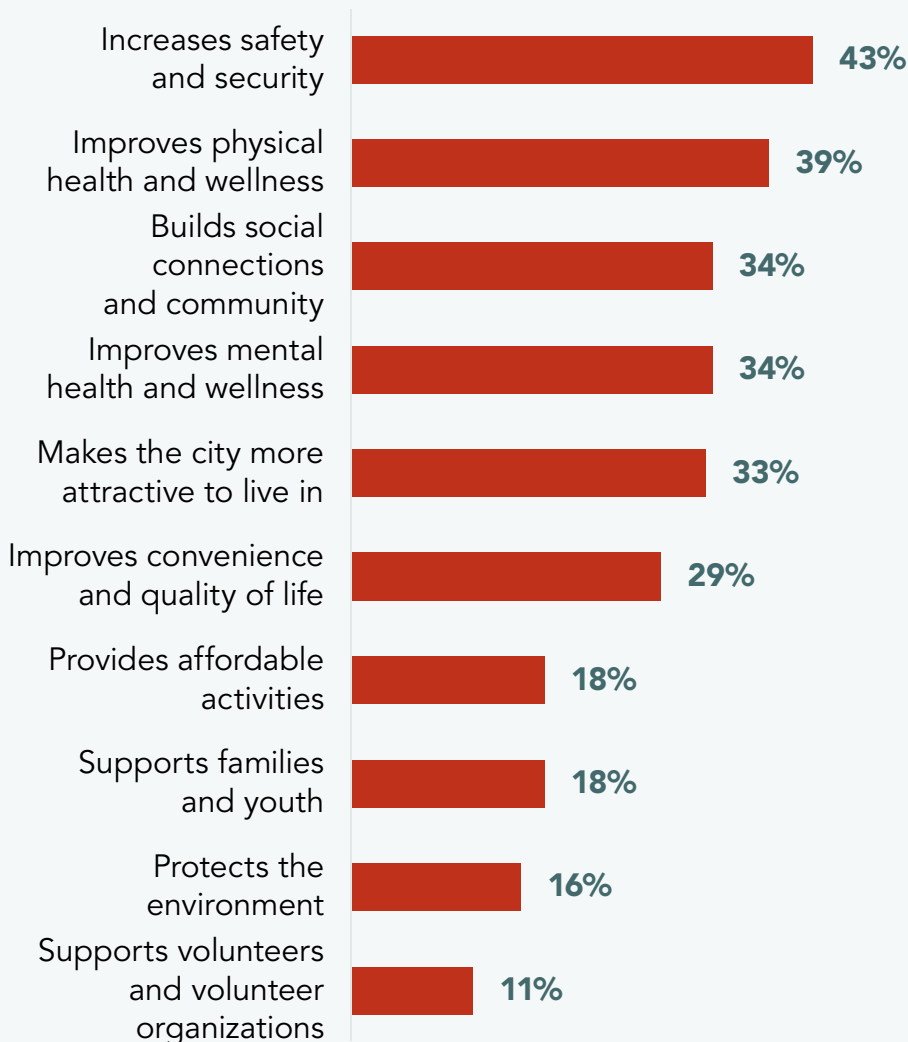




Question: There are many benefits and outcomes that residents can receive when using Red Deer’s community services. From the list below please identify the most important community outcomes that will come from The City’s future investment and delivery of community services.

The most frequently identified benefits included enhanced safety and security (43%), improved physical health and wellness (39%), and strengthened social connections (34%).

Benefits of Community Services



Those who have lived in Red Deer for up to 5 years (44%) are more likely to say that community services improves physical health and wellbeing than those who have lived in Red Deer for 5 to 10 years (18%).

Those aged 80 years and older are more likely to say that community service provides affordable activities (50%) than those aged 20-39 (17%), 40-59 (19%) and 60-79 years (19%).



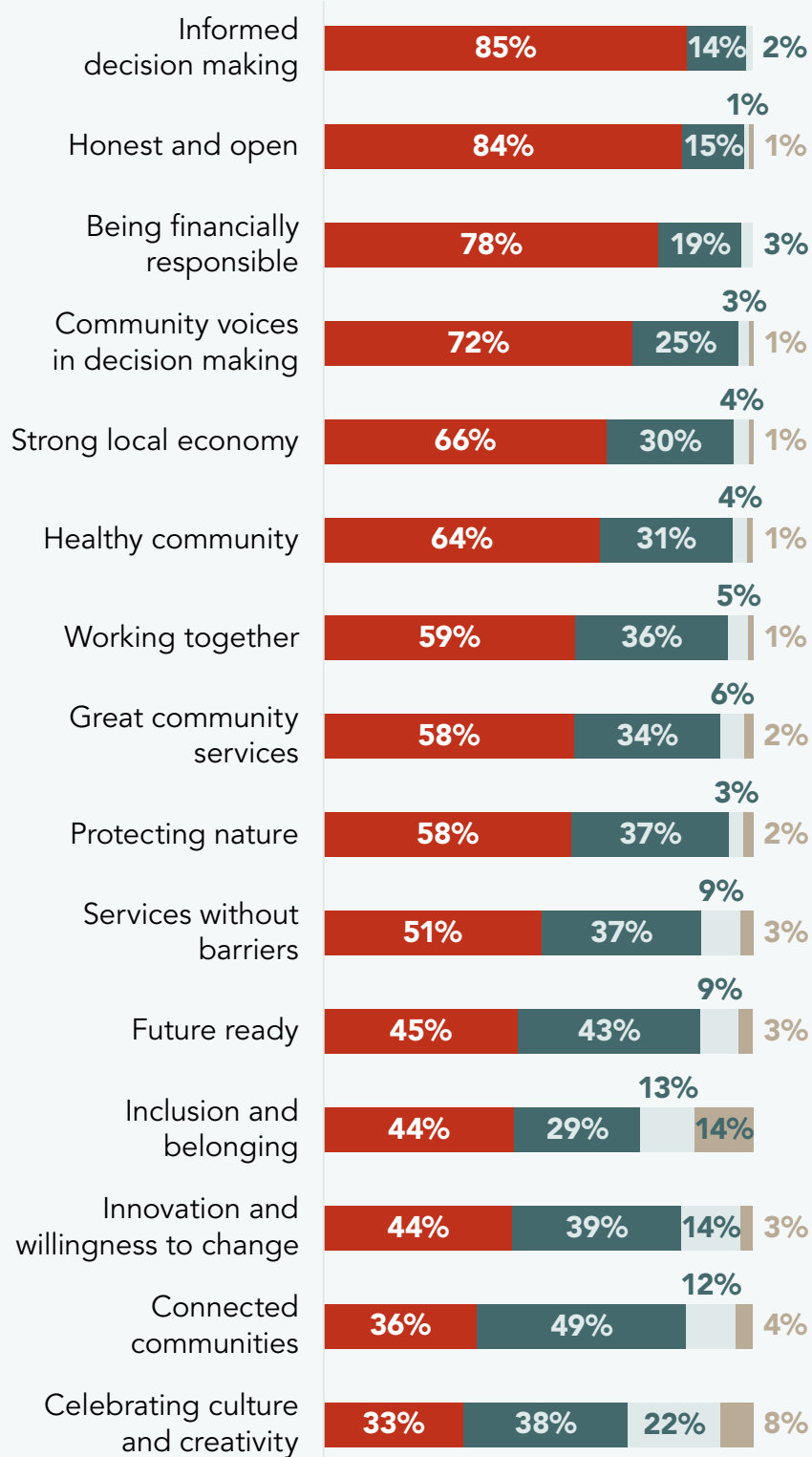
Question: There are different values and perspectives that The City considers when making decisions about providing community services. How important is it that The City use each of the following to guide its decision making about providing services?

Respondents were presented with a list of guiding principles and asked to rate the importance of each in the decision-making process. The top five guiding principles identified as very important for decision-making include informed decision-making (85%), transparency, such as being honest and open (84%), financial responsibility (78%), active community involvement (72%), and a strong local economy (66%). A healthy community (64%) was also recognized by nearly three-quarters of respondents as a very important value to guide municipal decisions.





Importance of Values to Guide Decision Making





Question: Use this space below to list other values and perspectives that The City might consider when making decisions about investing in the provision of community services.

Respondents were then asked to identify other values that The City should consider when making decisions. The responses (190 comments) were analyzed and presented key themes below.

Service Accessibility and Affordability (18 responses)

- Emphasizing the need for easy access to payment options and affordable services for citizens.

Fiscal Responsibility (88 responses)

- Many comments express frustration with rising taxes, emphasizing the need for better financial management and prioritizing essential services over projects perceived as unnecessary.

Public Safety (52 comments)

- There is a strong demand for prioritizing the safety of residents, particularly regarding fire and emergency services, as well as clean and secure public spaces.

Unhoused and Community Support (42 responses)

- Suggestions for addressing unhoused through job creation and support for vulnerable populations while also voicing concerns about the impact of housing insecurity / unhoused on community safety perceptions.

Community Engagement (45 responses)

- Many respondents call for better communication and more meaningful public consultation regarding decisions that affect the community, advocating for transparency and responsiveness from city officials.

Cultural and Diversity Issues (24 responses)

- Some citizens express the need to respect local culture and values while others advocate for genuine inclusivity and support for diverse communities.

Economic Development (20 responses)

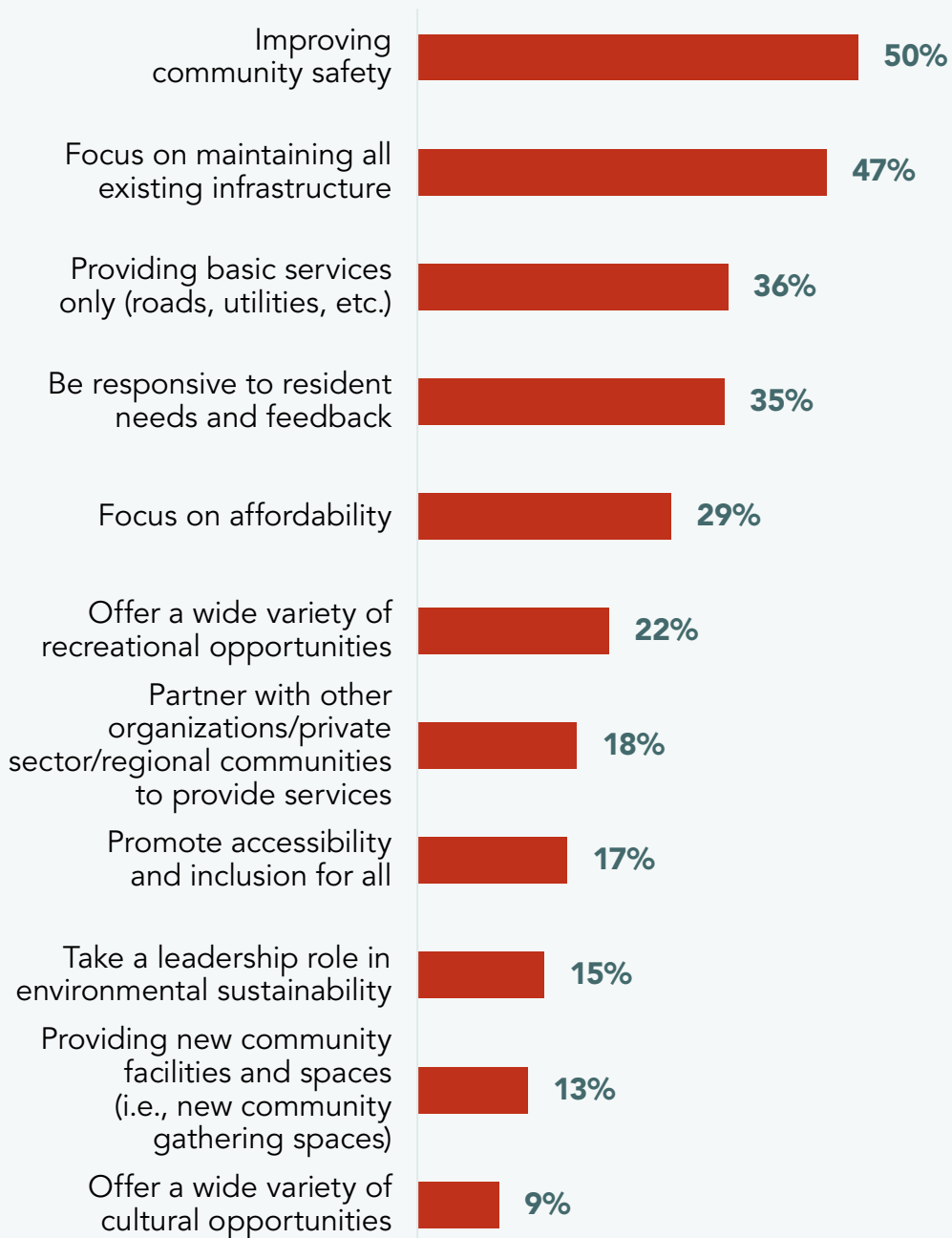
- A focus on investing in small businesses is noted as vital for the future prosperity of the community.



Question: What should be the priorities of The City when funding community services?

When asked to identify The City’s funding priorities for community services, respondents most frequently cited improving community safety (50%), maintaining existing infrastructure (47%), and providing basic services (36%) as top priorities.

Community Services Funding Priorities





Question: Please list other priorities that The City might consider when making decisions about funding the delivery of community services.

Respondents were next asked to identify any other priorities that The City might consider when making decisions about the delivery of community services. The responses (149 comments) were analyzed and the key themes identified are presented below:



Core Services and Infrastructure (54 responses)

- Many respondents emphasized the importance of maintaining and investing in essential services such as public safety, fire and emergency services, and core infrastructure (roads, utilities). There is a call for a fully staffed fire department and better management of emergency services.



Budgeting and Fiscal Responsibility (38 responses)

- There is consensus on the need for more prudent financial management, transparent budgeting, and accountability in spending.



Public Safety and Addressing Homelessness (47 responses)

- Respondents expressed concerns about rising crime rates and homelessness, advocating for increased funding for police and supportive housing services that provide real support rather than punitive measures.



Community Involvement (33 responses)

- There is a strong desire for increased community engagement and responsiveness from City leadership. Residents want their views and concerns to be considered in decision-making processes.



Access to Services (28 responses)

- Suggestions were made regarding the need for equitable access to services across all neighbourhoods, particularly ensuring that equity deserving populations receive adequate support and resources.



Balancing Development (20 responses)

- There is a need for a balance between urban development and preserving community spaces, ensuring that infrastructure and services keep pace with growth, while also catering to diverse community interests.



Environmental and Sustainable Practices (14 responses)

- Some residents mention the importance of sustainable practices and responsible environmental stewardship in new development projects.



Traffic and Safety Concerns (11 responses)

- Residents are calling for better traffic management and enforcement of traffic laws to improve public safety.





Question: What do you think is the greatest strength of our community?

Respondents were able to share the greatest strength of Red Deer. The responses (274 comments) are summarized below.



People & Community:

people, citizens, residents, volunteers, community, neighbours, families, newcomers



Parks, Green Space & Nature:

parks, trails, green spaces, natural areas, river, pathways, outdoors, nature, walkable, bike paths



Location & Size:

location, corridor, between Calgary and Edmonton, central, small size, mid-size, accessibility



Recreation & Facilities:

recreation, facilities, sports, culture, arts, events, amenities



Pride & Identity:

beautiful, inclusive, resilient, charitable, belonging, diversity, connected



Engagement & Collaboration:

organizations, partnership, engagement, consultation, groups, voices



Affordability & Opportunity:

affordable, growth, investment, opportunity, development, economy, workforce



2.1.3 Other Thoughts

Question: Please share any additional thoughts you have regarding community services in Red Deer.

The final section of the survey provided the opportunity for respondents to share any final comments they have regarding the project or community services in Red Deer. The responses (158 comments) are presented below according to key themes, and in no particular order.



Service Level Standards

- Many residents have expressed frustration over the decline in services such as road maintenance, garbage collection frequency, and emergency services. There is a strong call for The City to improve staffing levels, particularly in critical services like fire and emergency medical services.



Housing and Homelessness

- There’s a noticeable concern about housing and homelessness, with calls for The City to take more proactive steps to address these issues, including the urgent need for a purpose-built homeless shelter.



Fiscal Responsibility

- Citizens are dissatisfied with rising taxes while noting a reduction in service quality. There’s a demand for The City to demonstrate fiscal responsibility by reevaluating budget allocations and reducing unnecessary expenditures.



Community Engagement

- Concerns around a lack of communication from The City about available services and programs. They advocate for better outreach and transparency regarding how taxpayer dollars are being spent.



Safety and Crime

- Safety, especially in the downtown area, is a major concern. Many residents have expressed dissatisfaction with perceived increases in crime and drug-related issues, calling for more police presence and community safety initiatives.



Need for Facilities and Activities

- Residents desire more recreational opportunities and facilities, particularly for families and youth, as well as better-maintained public spaces.



Cultural and Social Services

- There are requests for a more balanced approach to funding arts, culture, and recreation, stressing the importance of these services alongside basic community needs.



Addressing Diverse Needs

- Citizens are calling for more consideration of varying community demographics, including special programs for seniors, newcomers, and those facing economic hardships, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity.



Criticism of Leadership

- Some respondents note frustration with the current City Council and Leadership, with calls for accountability and a reassessment of priorities that better align with the residents' needs.



Sustainability and Environmental Concerns

- Some feedback highlights the importance of planning with an eye toward environmental sustainability and maintaining the city's natural beauty.





2.1.3 About You

Respondents were asked a variety of questions about themselves. The findings are presented in the accompanying chart. Figures in parenthesis are representative of the 2021 census population where applicable / possible.

	Percentage (calculated using # of survey responses)	Count
Do you live in the city of Red Deer?		
Yes	74%	424
No	1%	7
How long have you lived in Red Deer?		
1–5 years	8%	47
6–10 years	4%	22
More than 10 years	61%	352
Which of the following categories best describes your age?		
20–29 years	4% (12%)	25
30–39 years	13% (15%)	74
40–49 years	20% (14%)	113
50–59 years	13% (12%)	72
60–69 years	14% (12%)	82
70–79 years	8% (6%)	45
80 years and older	1% (3%)	6
Prefer not to answer	3%	16



	Percentage (calculated using # of survey responses)	Count
Which best describes your household composition?		
One-person household	10%	56
Couple with children	25%	146
Couple without children	23%	131
Lone parent family	3%	19
Multigenerational household (at least 3 generations)	3%	16
Two or more adults not a couple (e.g., roommates, siblings living together)	3%	19
Something else/not listed	3%	19
Prefer not to answer	5%	27
Which of the following categories best describes your total household annual income, before taxes, in 2024?		
Less than \$30,000	3%	18
\$30,000 to just under \$60,000	9%	49
\$60,000 to just under \$90,000	13%	74
\$90,000 to just under \$120,000	15%	88
\$120,000 and over	19%	109
Prefer not to answer	17%	96



	Percentage (calculated using # of survey responses)	Count
Please select all that apply:		
I or someone in my household identify as Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, or Inuk (Inuit)	8%	45
I or someone in my household identify as a racialized person	3%	20
I or someone in my household identify as LGBTQ2S+	10%	56
I or someone in my household has a disability	17%	98
I or someone in my household has moved to Canada in the last 5 years	2%	9





2.2 Group Survey

A survey was fielded with a variety of organizations in Red Deer. An email was sent to more than 400 organizations and community contacts, introducing the project and inviting participation in the survey was sent to a representative from each organization. Each group was provided a link to the survey and asked to provide one response.

Responses were gathered from early August to mid-September. In total, 85 responses were gathered. These findings are not representative of all groups in Red Deer; however, they do provide insight into the perspectives of the organizations responding. Refer to Appendix E for a list of groups who participated in the survey.





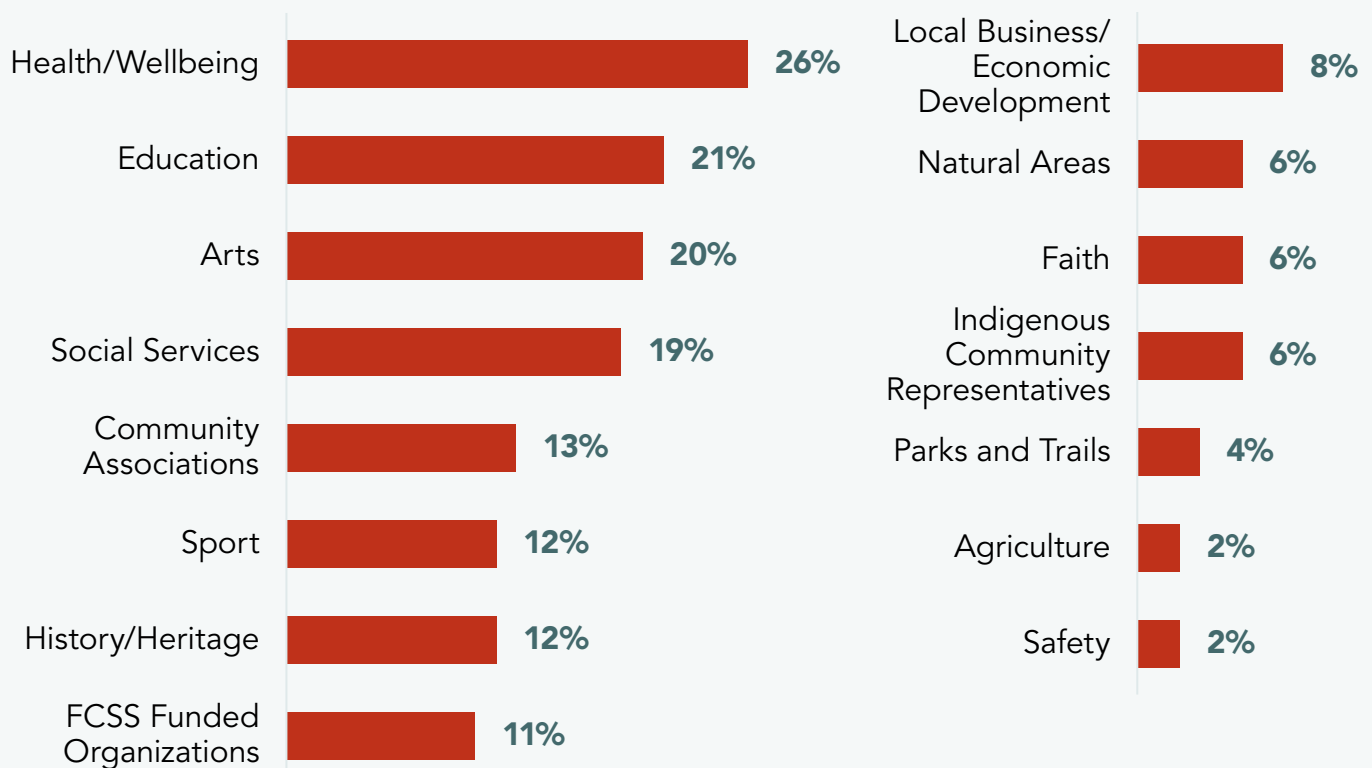
2.2.1 About Your Organization

The survey commenced by collecting baseline information about local organizations, offering valuable insight into their structure, role within the community, and overall sustainability.

Question: Please indicate the type of organization (select all that apply).

Survey respondents represent a variety of organizations and facility users including health/wellbeing, arts and culture, education, social services and other community organizations who provide a diverse range of services and opportunities in Red Deer.

Types of Organizations





If a group did not feel represented in the provided list of “types of organizations,” they were invited to select “other” and identify their organization type, which includes the following:

- **Community Support:** Accessibility services, cancer support, childcare, disability services, housing and shelter, newcomer settlement and integration
- **Community Development:** citizenship, community engagement, charitable organizations, public library
- **Advocacy & Consulting:** Equity/diversity/inclusion consulting.
- **Environmental:** biodiversity protection.
- **Cultural & Events:** Ethno-cultural organizations, event venues, trade shows.

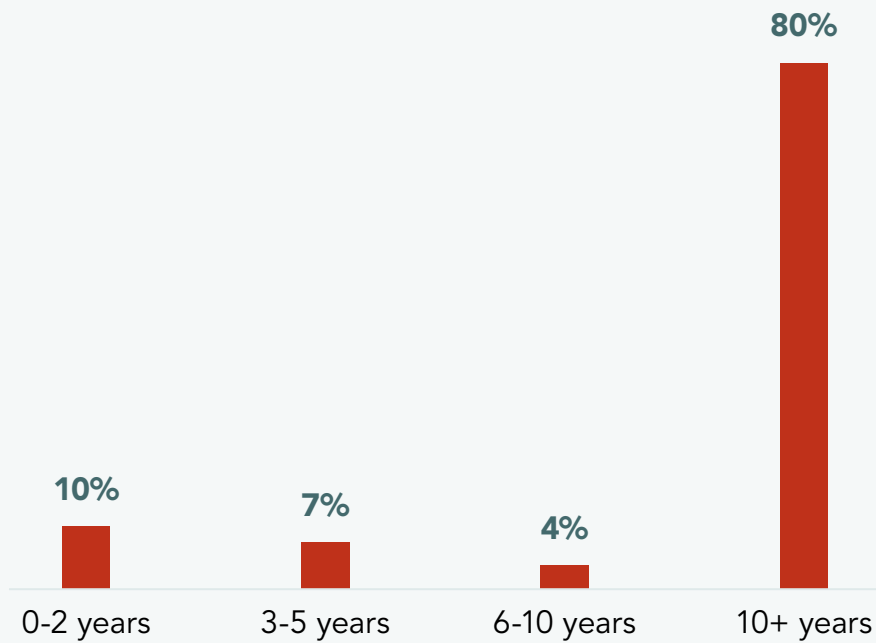




Question: How long has your organization served Red Deer and surrounding communities?

When asked about the length of time their organization has served Red Deer and the surrounding communities, a majority of respondents (80%) reported having operated for more than 10 years.

Tenure Providing Services





Question: What successes has your organization experienced in the past 3 years?

Organizational successes include (but are not limited to):



Program Expansion & Service Growth

Organizations expanded service offerings, launched new programs across all age groups, grew client numbers, increased registration/participation/attendance, added new locations or days of operation, broadened geographic service areas from regional to province-wide, and introduced innovative initiatives addressing identified community gaps.



Facility & Infrastructure Development

Organizations completed major facility upgrades, secured long-term venue partnerships, completed storage renovations, modernized technology systems, expanded physical capacity, and successfully advocated for capital projects and new building construction.



Event Success & Community Engagement

Organizations hosted successful festivals and events with growing attendance (some doubling participants), delivered an array of events annually, launched new signature events, and increased volunteer participation and community involvement.



Financial & Organizational Sustainability

Organizations achieved their first profitable season, secured multi-year funding partnerships, grew monthly donor programs, established financial stability post-COVID, reorganized staffing structures, completed strategic planning, and modernized operational processes.



Partnerships & Collaboration

Organizations formed partnerships with educational institutions, collaborated with multiple community organizations, secured in-kind donations and sponsorships, participated in coalitions and research initiatives, and built relationships with businesses and media outlets.



Athletic & Competitive Achievement

Organizations produced athletes competing at provincial, national, international, and Olympic levels; hosted successful national and provincial events; achieved league championships; won provincial titles; and joined international leagues.



COVID-19 Recovery

Organizations rebounded from pandemic closures, returned to pre-pandemic or exceeded previous attendance levels, restructured successfully after COVID impacts, and rebuilt volunteer bases and participant numbers.



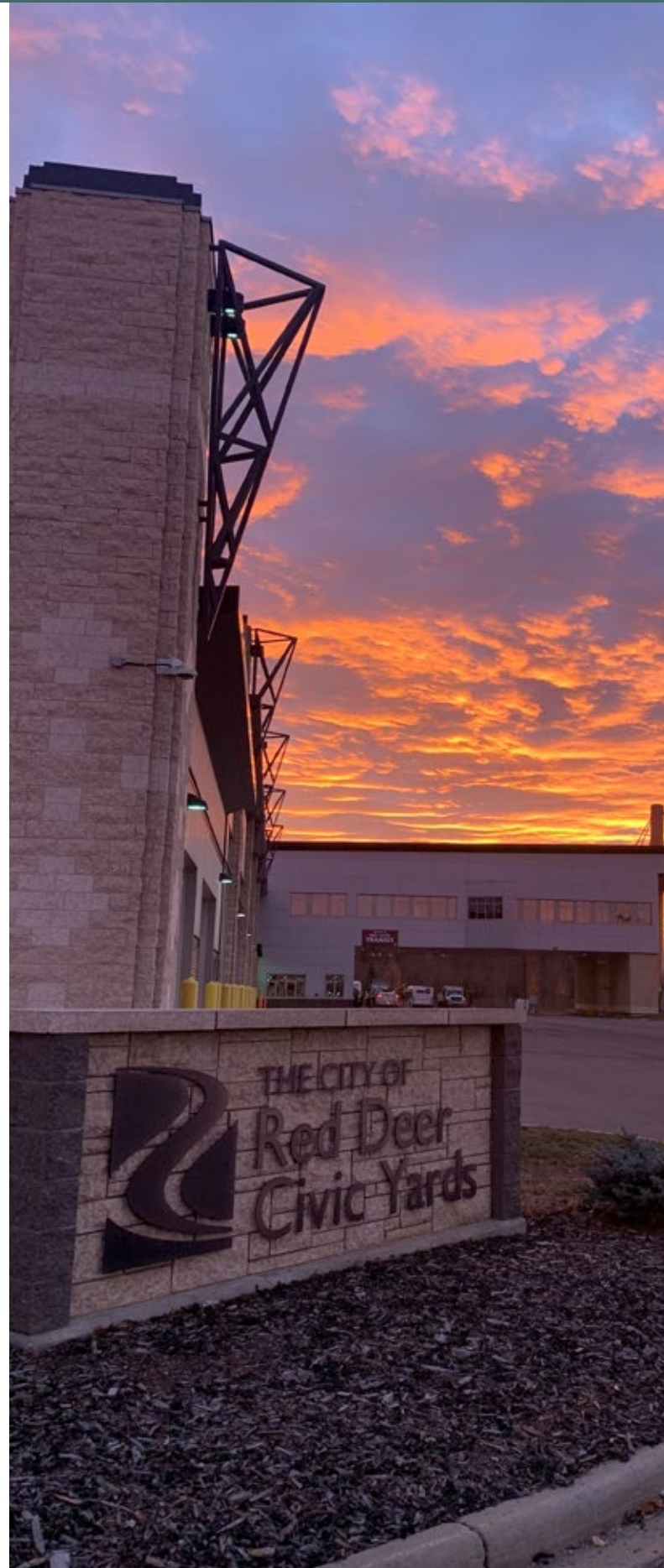
Housing & Basic Needs Support

Organizations provided emergency food, achieved program completion success rates, housed numerous individuals through Housing First programs, created emergency studio suites for veterans/seniors, and expanded shelter bed capacity



Cultural & Heritage Programming

Organizations grew cultural events, launched youth cultural programs and camps, expanded Indigenous programming, delivered ceremonies and traditional teachings year-round, and doubled cultural festival attendance.





Question: What are the current challenges or barriers your organization is experiencing in delivering services to the community?

Challenges organizations are facing include:



Funding & Financial Sustainability

Organizations face insufficient operational funding, decreased or eliminated grants, reliance on unstable project-based funding, rising operational costs (utilities, rent, insurance, maintenance), inability to pay competitive wages, difficulty covering basic expenses while meeting growing demand, and challenges diversifying revenue streams beyond grants.



Staffing & Volunteer Capacity

Organizations struggle to recruit and retain qualified staff due to non-competitive wages, volunteer burnout, aging volunteer base, difficulty finding volunteers with technical skills, high staff turnover from funding uncertainty, compassion fatigue, high caseloads leading to burnout, and inability to hire adequate personnel to meet demand.



Space & Facility Limitations

Organizations report inadequate space for programs and growing membership, lack of affordable performance/event venues, aging facilities requiring expensive maintenance, absence of suitable meeting/gathering spaces, high rental costs, limited kitchen capacity, inability to expand services due to physical constraints, and outgrowing current locations.



Safety & Homelessness Impact

Organizations note safety concerns affecting facility usage, vandalism and break-ins, encampments near facilities, families not feeling safe attending programs, and negative perceptions deterring public participation.



Transportation & Accessibility Barriers

Organizations identify lack of public transit to facilities (particularly those outside city center), transportation challenges for low-income and newcomer populations, barriers for rural residents, and inadequate accessible design/infrastructure for persons with disabilities.



Demand Exceeding Capacity

Organizations report waitlists for services, growing need outpacing resources, increased service demand from population growth, inability to serve all who need support, and having to prioritize urgent over preventative care.



Communication & Visibility Challenges

Organizations struggle with community awareness of available services, ineffective traditional marketing, difficulty reaching those who need services most, fragmented information systems, lack of centralized event/service directory, and poor city communication affecting member engagement.



Systemic & Structural Barriers

Organizations face socioeconomic inequities, lack of institutional recognition of newcomer contributions, housing discrimination, limited culturally safe healthcare/education access, disability rights disregarded in municipal standards, and policies favoring established/politically connected groups over grassroots initiatives





2.2.2 About Your Community

The next section explored emerging trends and the types of influence organizations are observing within the community. This helped identify shifting priorities, external pressures, and evolving needs that may shape future service delivery.

Question: Which of the following broad community trends and influences do you think will most impact The City’s service planning over the next 5 to 10 years? (Please rank the following as most important to least important).

As shown in the accompanying graphic, affordable housing, community health, and community safety emerged as the top trends expected to have the greatest impact.





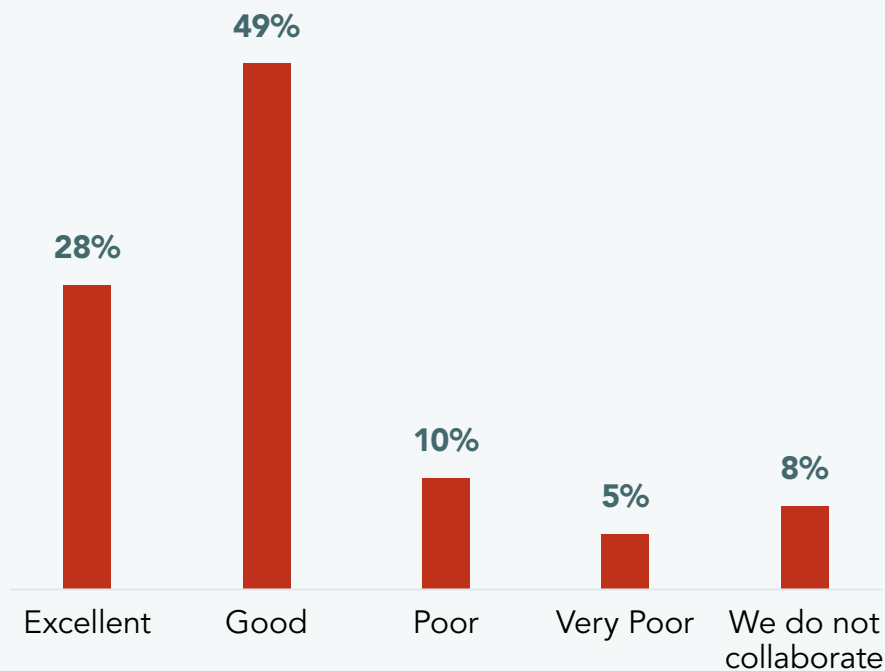
2.2.3 Collaboration

The following section explored how organizations are collaborating with The City and identified opportunities to strengthen those partnerships moving forward.

Question: How would you rate your organization’s experience collaborating with The City of Red Deer?

Respondents were asked how they would rate their experience collaborating with The City of Red Deer. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately three-quarters (77%) reported positive collaboration experiences with The City of Red Deer, with 28% rating the experience as “Excellent” and 49% as “Good.”

How Would you Rate Your Organization’s Experience Collaborating with The City of Red Deer?





Question: What would help improve or encourage your organization to collaborate with The City? (Select all that apply).

When asked what would enhance collaboration with The City, respondents most frequently identified the need for more opportunities to jointly deliver services (66%) and improved communication and information sharing (62%). Additionally, over half of respondents indicated that being involved in decision-making and strategic planning processes (55%), as well as gaining access to or partnering on funding initiatives (54%), would strengthen collaboration.

What Would Help Improve or Encourage Collaboration with The City?





Question: Please explain your answer or share any additional ideas on how your organization and The City could collaborate more effectively or begin collaborating if no partnership currently exists.



Communication & Relationship Processes

Organizations noted a need for clearer points of contact, regular updates, and consistent responsiveness. Some described current collaboration as positive, while others identified gaps in acknowledgment and follow-through.



Access to Information and Data

Organizations indicated that access to facility data, usage patterns, planning information, and growth trends would support better coordination, planning, and service delivery.



Funding and Financial Collaboration

Comments referenced interest in operating support, access to grants, joint funding applications, and clarity around compensation when community groups contribute to City-led or City-adjacent services.



Space, Facilities & Infrastructure

Comments reflected interest in facility access, relocation opportunities, exhibition space, coordinated scheduling, and planning considerations for aging or shared infrastructure.



Formalized Partnerships & Strategic Alignment

Respondents identified opportunities to strengthen collaboration through formal agreements, advisory participation, co-developed initiatives, and alignment with shared priorities.



Inclusion, Representation & Acknowledgment

Some groups expressed the need for broader inclusion in planning and decision-making, particularly among arts, Indigenous, and disability-focused organizations.



2.2.4 Future Values and Priorities

The final section focused on future priorities, and the values organizations believe should guide planning, offering insight into shared goals.

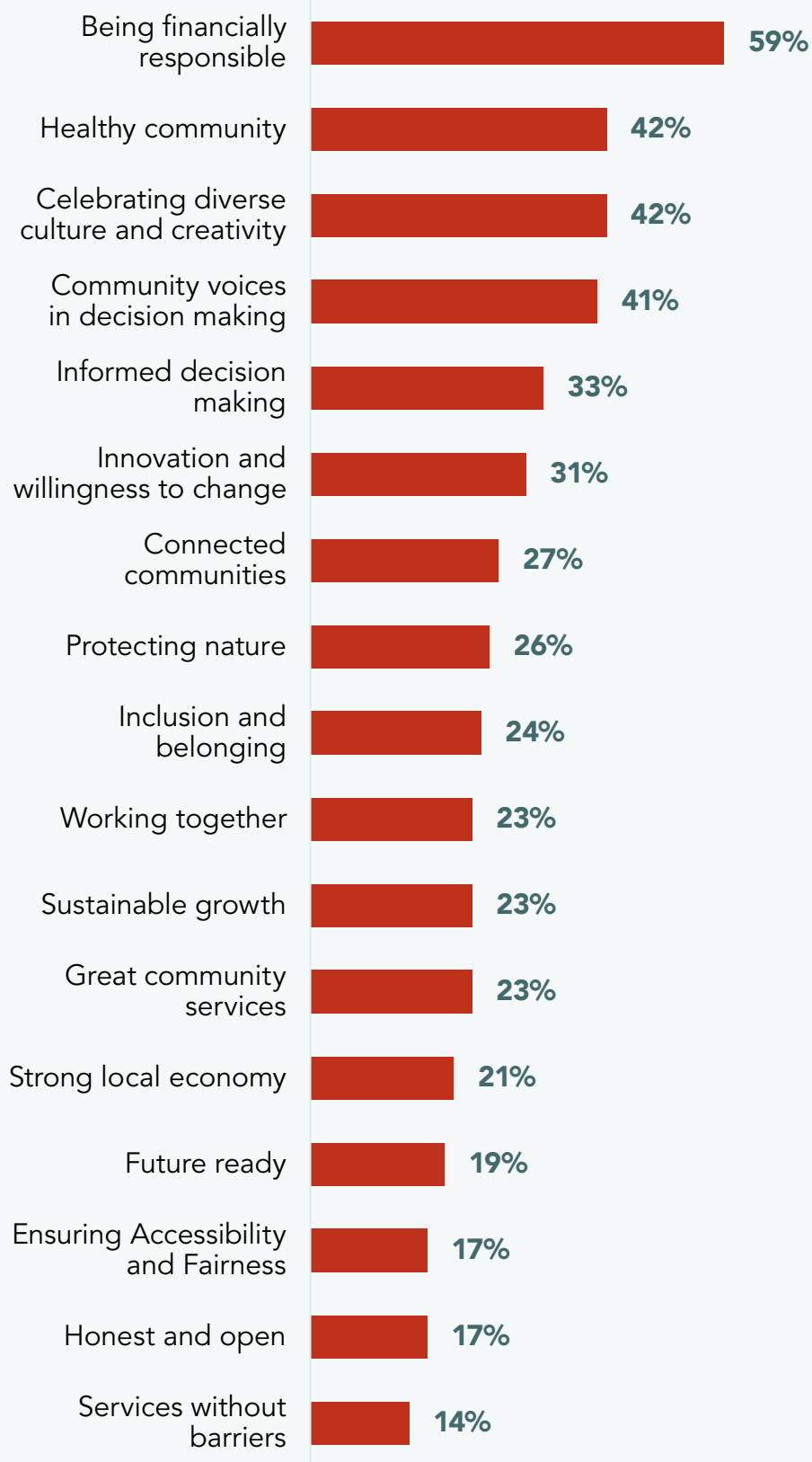
Question: Which of the following values and perspectives do you believe should guide decision-making in the planning and delivery of community services? (Please select up to 5).

Respondents were presented with a list of values and priorities and asked to identify which should guide decision-making in the planning and delivery of community services. The most frequently cited priorities included financial responsibility (59%), fostering a healthy community (42%), celebrating diverse cultures and creativity (42%), and incorporating community voices into decision-making processes (41%).





Values and Perspectives that Should Guide Decision Making





Question: Please use the space to provide any other potential values that should be considered in this planning exercise or to provide comment on the values listed above.

Other values and perspectives respondents identified that should guide decision-making include:



Equity & Inclusion: cultural safety, linguistic access, reconciliation, accessibility, newcomers.



Local Investment & Fiscal Responsibility: funding local organizations, reducing reliance on other governments, responsible spending.



Collaboration: partnerships across sectors, lived experience involvement, municipal coordination.



Adaptability & Future Planning: neighbourhood-specific approaches, infrastructure readiness, demographic responsiveness.



Environmental Responsibility: sustainable growth, environmental protection.



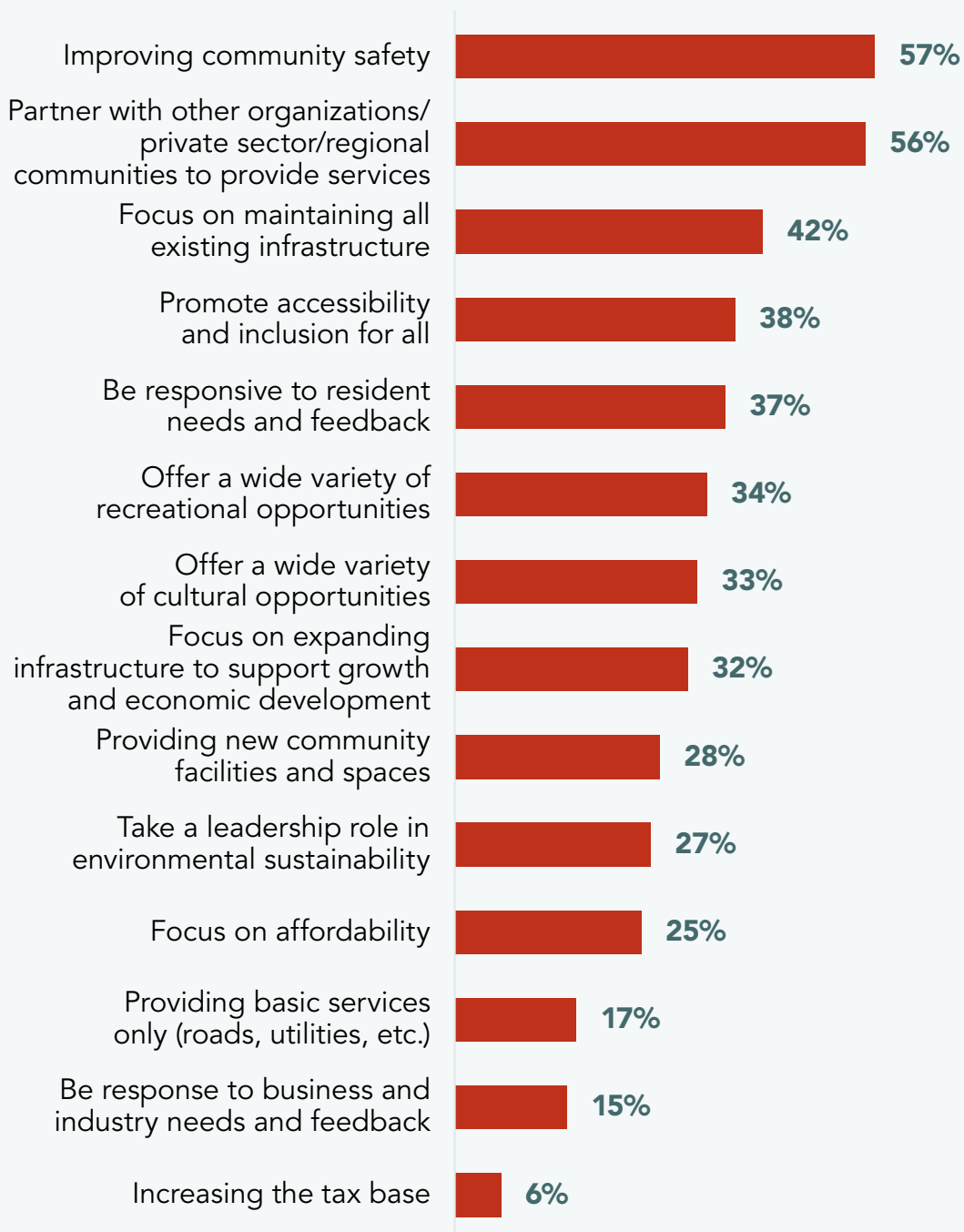
Community Belonging & Pride: affordability, youth engagement, vibrant neighbourhoods, shared identity.



Question: What should be the priorities of The City in the delivery of services to the community? (Select up to 5).

Respondents most frequently cited improving community safety (57%), partnering with other organizations to enhance service delivery (56%), and focusing on the maintenance of existing infrastructure.

Community Service Priorities





2.2.5 Other Comments

The final section offered an opportunity for groups to share any final thoughts regarding the project and the future of community services in Red Deer.

Question: Please share any additional thoughts you have regarding Red Deer's Community Compass: Our Master Plan for Service Delivery.

The responses (25 comments) are presented according to themes:



Equity, Inclusion & Cultural Safety:

Prioritize strategic implementation of equity and inclusion, support grassroots and cultural initiatives, and ensure diverse voices are represented in all planning and decision-making processes.



Arts, Culture & Community

Spaces: Support arts, culture, youth programs, and accessible community spaces that foster pride, belonging, and meaningful intergenerational engagement.



Collaboration & Resource

Sharing: Value partnerships with local organizations through co-designing programs, sharing resources, and reducing service duplication to maximize community impact.



Transparency & Accountability:

Ensure clear communication, actionable follow-up on plans, and transparent processes that demonstrate how community input shapes city priorities and decisions.



Environmental Stewardship & Sustainable Growth:

Invest in active transportation, environmental protection, and sustainable development practices that balance growth with ecological responsibility.



Preventative & Supportive

Services: Allocate resources to community services that address root causes and relieve pressure on health and social systems, focusing on areas of greatest community need.



2.3 Staff Survey

As part of the engagement process The City of Red Deer sought input from its staff, the individuals who deliver these services and hold firsthand knowledge of strengths, challenges, and evolving needs of community services. Staff were invited to share their feedback through an online survey, with hard copies made available upon request. A total of 299 responses were received.

The findings from the survey are presented below. Not all respondents answered each question. The percentages show represents the number of responses to each question, not the total number of survey responses.



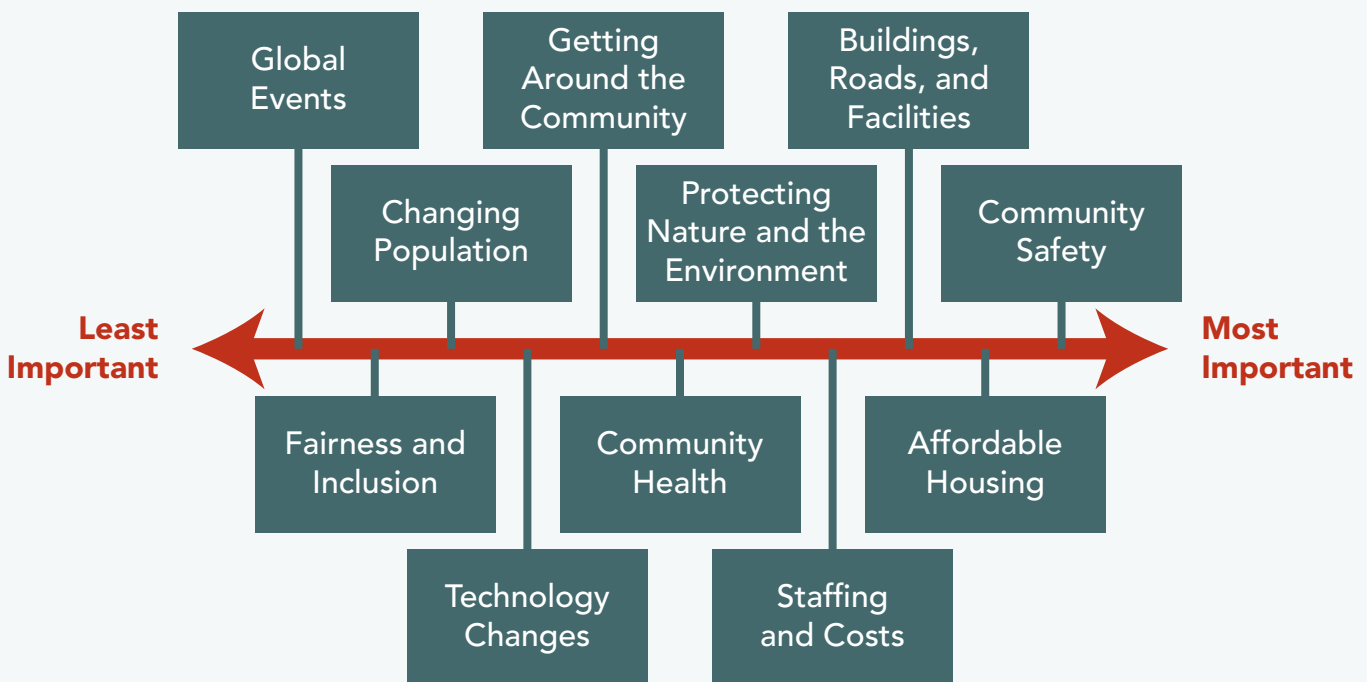


2.3.1 Community Trends and Influences

The first section of the staff survey explored emerging trends, and the types of influences staff are observing within the community. This helped identify shifting priorities, external pressures, and evolving needs that may shape future service delivery.

Question: Which of the following broad community trends and influences will most impact The City’s planning and operations over the next 5 to 10 years? (Please rank the following as most important to least important)

The survey began by asking respondents to rank community trends and influences that they think will most impact The City’s planning and operations over the next 5 to 10 years. As illustrated in the accompanying graphic, community safety such as being ready for emergencies and affordable housing were identified as the top trends or influences that will impact The City over the next 5 to 10 years.





Question: Please use the space to provide any other community trends and influences that should be considered in this planning exercise or to provide comment on them.

Based on this input, the following are the key themes that were identified from the responses received (77 responses):



Development

- There is a strong demand for making land available for development to address the housing crisis. Concerns were also raised about the impact of new multi-family homes on existing communities and the need for more thoughtful urban planning.



Infrastructure and Services

- Many respondents emphasized the need to maintain and improve existing infrastructure rather than build new facilities. This includes better road maintenance, public transportation, and recreational facilities that enhance quality of life.



Unhoused and Addiction

- There is significant concern over the unhoused and drug addiction, with opinions split on the best approach to manage these issues. Some believe that support services are insufficient and encourage a transient population, while others advocate for humane treatment and rehabilitation.



Economic Development

- Many community members stressed the importance of fostering a business-friendly environment to drive economic growth. This includes focusing on local industry, supporting businesses, and seeking sustainable revenue sources.



Collaboration and Communication

- Better communication and collaboration between city departments and with the community were repeatedly mentioned as critical for fostering a cohesive approach to governance and service delivery.



Cultural Sensitivity and Sustainability

- There's a call for The City to embrace cultural diversity and promote inclusivity while ensuring sustainability through thoughtful planning and conservation efforts.



Trust and Accountability

- There's a feeling that The City needs to rebuild trust with its residents, focusing on transparency, accountability, and community engagement in decision-making processes.



Vision for the Future

- Ideas around transitioning from a mid-sized city to larger growth, lessons from larger cities, and maintaining unique local character were also discussed, as staff shared their concerns about losing what makes Red Deer special.





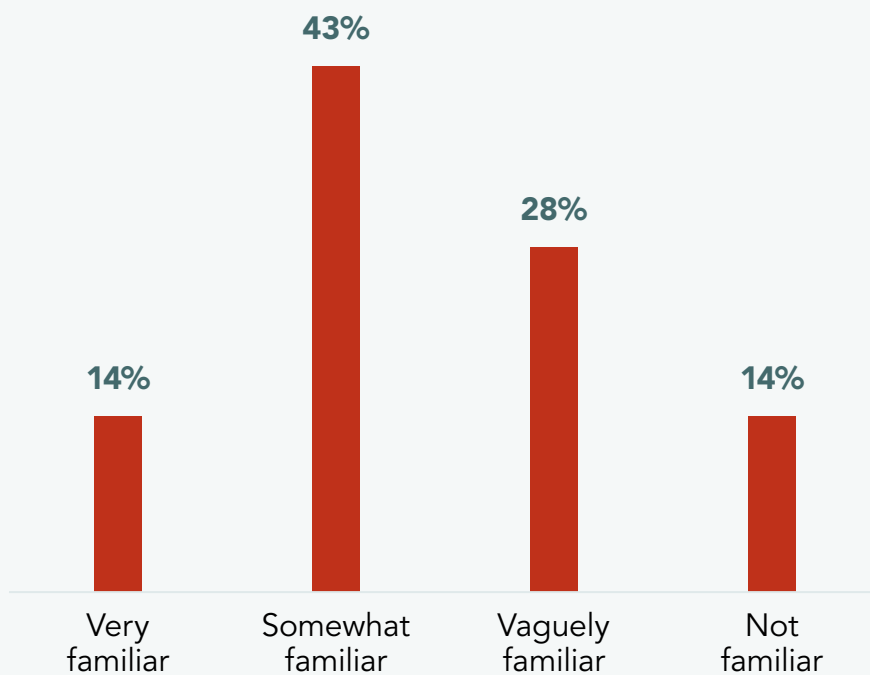
2.3.1 Strategic Planning and Service Delivery

The second section of the survey examined staff awareness of The City’s current strategic planning, as well explored potential values that might guide planning and challenges their department is facing in delivering services.

Question: How familiar are you with the vision statements and value / guiding principles defined in the existing strategic plans (i.e., Council Strategic Plan and Vision 2050)?

Approximately half (43%) of respondents were somewhat familiar, while 28% were vaguely familiar.

Familiarity with Current Values and Guiding Principles in Existing Strategic Plans

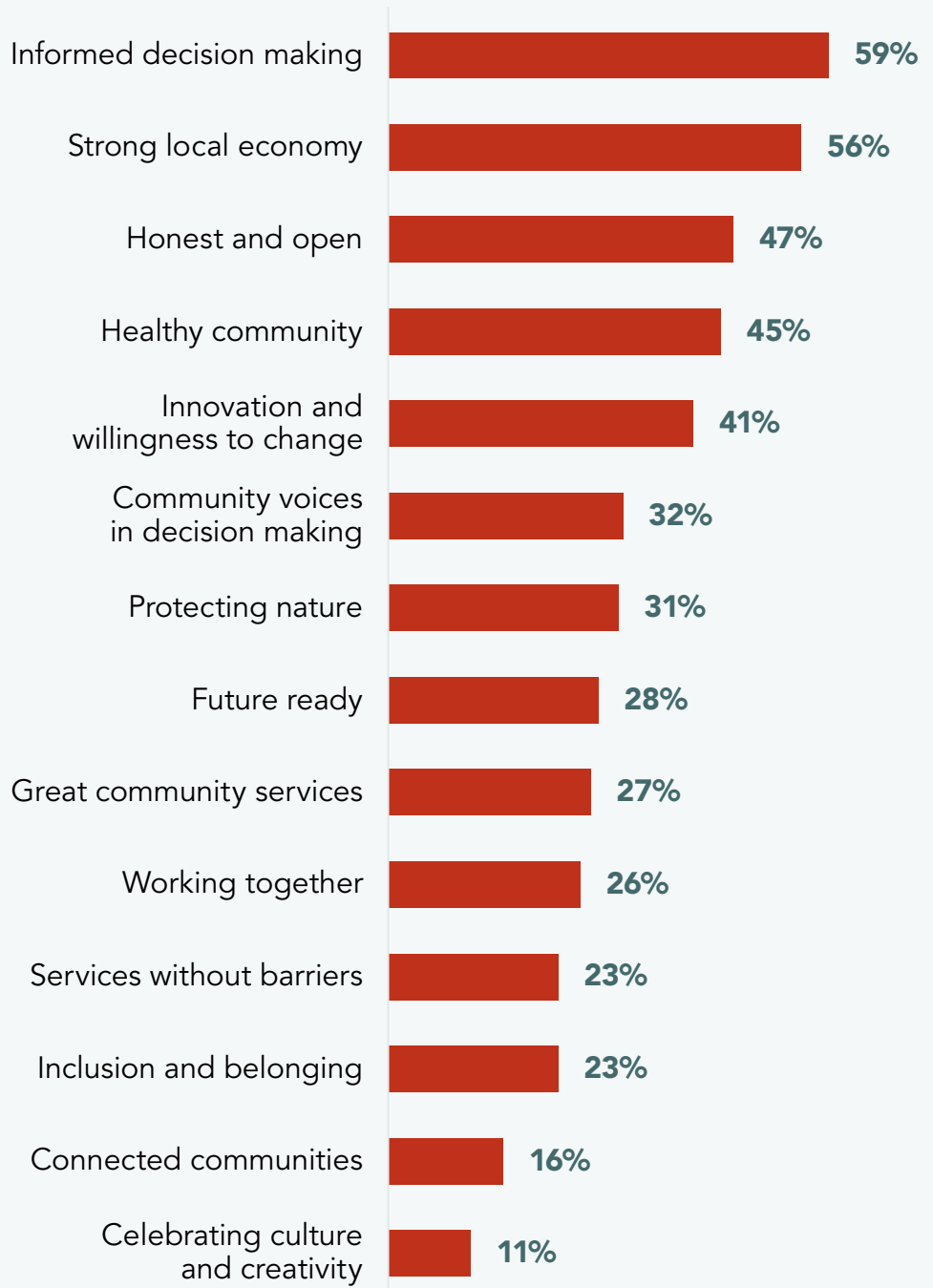




Question: Which of the following values and perspectives do you believe should guide decision-making in the planning and delivery of community services? (Please select up to 5)

When asked which values should guide decision making in the planning of community services, respondents identified informed decision-making (59%), a strong local economy (56%), honesty and openness (47%), and community health (45%) as top values and perspectives.

Values that Should Guide Decision-Making in the Planning of Community Services





Question: Please use the space to provide any other potential values that should be considered in this planning exercise or to provide comment on the values listed above.

Respondents were able to share additional values that should guide decision making. The key themes from the responses included:



Financial Responsibility: Staff caution against tax increases without corresponding economic growth, advocating for fiscal responsibility and affordability to prevent financial strain on residents.



Sustainability and Growth: The need for long-term sustainability, innovative local economic development, and a balanced approach to community needs, with a focus on essential services, is also made.



Fairness: The importance of ensuring that tax contributions equate to adequate public services.



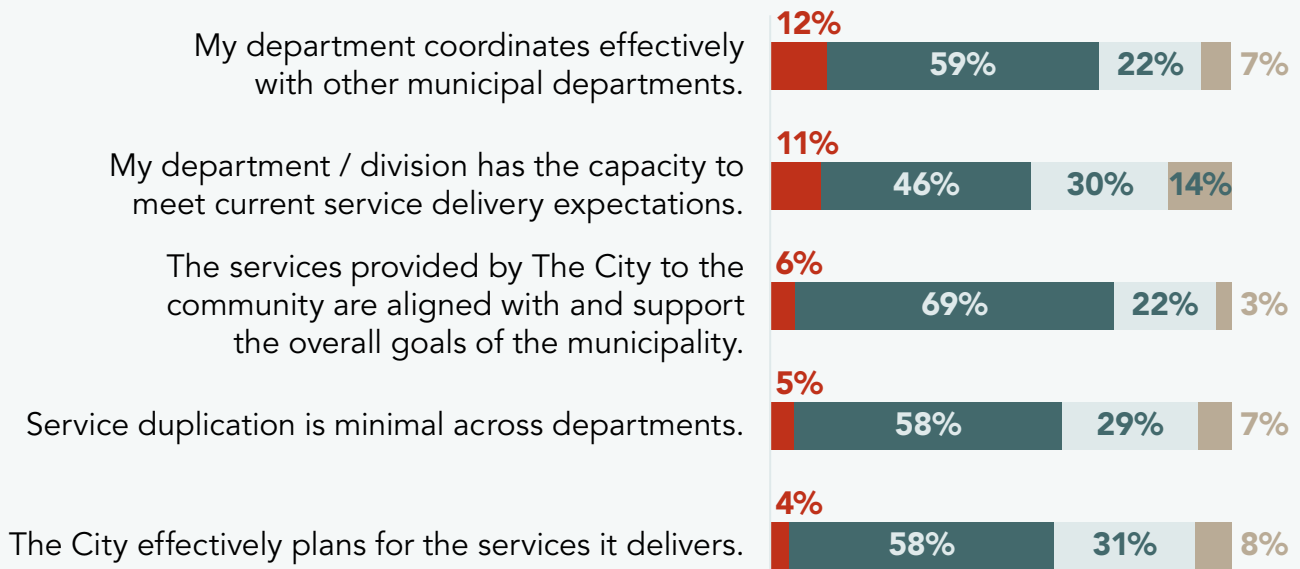


Question: Consider the **current planning approaches and delivery of all services to the community by The City (including but not limited to recreation, parks, community development, emergency services, utilities, transit). Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements based on your current awareness and knowledge.**

Respondents were next presented with a list of statements and were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, three-quarters of respondents (75%) indicated that they agree (strongly agree and agree) that the services provided by The City to the community are aligned with and support the overall goals of the municipality. Slightly lower proportions (71%), agree that their department effectively coordinates with other municipal departments. Refer to the graph for additional findings.

Level of Agreement That ...

■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree





Question: Please use the space to below to provide any other comments to explain your responses.

Respondents were asked to explain their answers. The responses are presented according to key themes:



Service Delivery and Effectiveness:

Responses noted concerns with the approach of The City with the effectiveness in the delivery the planned services. There are complaints about reduced service levels, particularly in areas like parks and emergency services, alongside rising taxes.



Budget Management:

A significant concern is the perception that The City does not budget effectively. Staff have expressed frustration with how funding is allocated, with some departments feeling overfunded while others lack necessary resources.



Coordination and Collaboration:

Several respondents mentioned inadequate collaboration across departments. There is a sentiment that siloed working practices hinder effective service delivery and more interdepartmental communication is necessary.



Trust in Planning:

Some feel decision-making is often reactionary or arbitrary, leading to a loss of trust in planning documents and a belief that The City does not always adhere to strategic goals.



Staffing and Resources:

Many comments highlight staffing shortages as a barrier to delivering quality services. There is a call for better investment in staff and tools, particularly in emergency services.



Duplication of Services:

There are multiple mentions of redundant roles and tasks across departments, leading to inefficiencies. Some suggest that roles and responsibilities overlap unnecessarily, making it difficult to provide coordinated services.



Community Engagement:

There's a need for better engagement with the community, emphasizing that informing the public is not enough; genuine input and participation in decision-making are critical for achievable long term outcomes.




Technological Challenges:


Outdated technology is noted as a significant barrier to effective service delivery. There are calls for modernization to improve efficiency.





Question: What challenges is your department / division currently facing in delivering services to the community?


The responses were analyzed and the key themes are presented below:


 **Staffing and Morale:** Experiencing some staffing constraints, which have contributed to increased overtime and challenges in maintaining morale. Some report working with limited resources.


 **Communication Issues:** There is a call for better inter-departmental collaboration and coordination.

 **Community Expectations:** Increasing public demands are not matched by available resources, creating a gap in perceived service quality. This situation leads to public dissatisfaction and trust issues.

 **Management Practices:** Corporate reorganizations have lead to confusion or may be misunderstood by some staff.

 **Technological Needs:** There is a lack of modern technology and systems necessary for efficient operation, making it harder to complete tasks effectively.

 **Public Engagement:** There is a desire for deeper community engagement, however current teams are not adequately resourced for meaningful engagement.

 **Long-term Planning:** Short-term decision-making and a lack of clear guiding principles hinder The City's ability to plan effectively for the future.



2.3.3 Community Needs, Communication and Collaboration

The third section of the staff survey focused on how The City collects and uses data, and explores collaboration levels with different sectors of the community.

Question: Considering how The City (Council and Administration) currently gathers and utilizes data (including internal and external engagement processes). Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements based on your current knowledge.

Data and the utilization of data is becoming increasingly more critical in municipal settings. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately three-quarters (72%) agree (strongly agree and agree) that their department collaborates effectively with other City departments to deliver services to the community. Slightly lower proportions (67%) agree (strongly agree and agree) that their department has the appropriate and relevant data to support community services planning.

Level of Agreement of How The City Gathers and Utilizes Data

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree





Question: Please use the space to below to provide any other comments to explain your responses regarding data collection and utilization.

The responses are presented according to key themes:



Reactive vs. Proactive Planning:

Many employees feel that The City is overly reactive, often responding to vocal minorities rather than strategic planning or community needs. There's a strong desire for structured, long-term planning and clear strategic direction.



Data Utilization: Although there is ample data available, its effective use in decision-making is lacking. Employees noted that data collection is not always effectively tied to actionable outcomes.



Community Engagement: The current methods of gathering community feedback may only be reaching a limited and repetitive segment of the population. There's a call for broader outreach to ensure inclusive engagement.



Resource Limitations:

Many comments highlight constraints related to budget and staffing that hinder departments' ability to effectively incorporate data into their work.



Feedback Mechanisms: There's a consensus that feedback systems are not well-structured, often resulting in data overload without useful insights. Gathering and acting on constructive feedback from diverse community voices is seen as crucial.

Overall, employees seek a more cohesive, responsive, and data-driven approach from City management while emphasizing the importance of proactive engagement with both the community and internal staff.



Question: What would help improve collaboration between departments / divisions within The City?

The following are the key themes from the responses (132 comments):



Clear Vision and Accountability:

There's a strong desire for a unified vision across departments, alongside more accountability to principles such as RISE (Respect, Integrity, Service, Excellence). Many feel the current reliance on vague principles and political talk does not translate into actionable outcomes.



Improved Communication:

A significant number of responses emphasize the need for better communication. This includes keeping departments informed about staffing changes, project statuses, and ensuring insights from frontline employees are considered in decision-making.



Collaboration Barriers:

Many respondents noted that existing silos prevent effective collaboration. There's a call for upper management to provide more opportunities for departments to communicate directly and work together, rather than relying on hierarchical structures that slow collaboration.



Interdepartmental Initiatives:

Suggestions include establishing regular meetings to discuss shared goals and upcoming projects, creating task forces or committees for joint initiatives, and opportunities for employees to shadow colleagues in other departments.



Cultural and Relationship Building:

Several comments pointed towards the importance of fostering a culture of teamwork, respect, and understanding across departments. Team-building events and informal gatherings were suggested as ways to strengthen relationships.



Openness and Transparency:

There is a recognition that while building relationships is vital, tough conversations often need to occur without fear of repercussions. An open culture that embraces this will facilitate better communication and problem-solving.

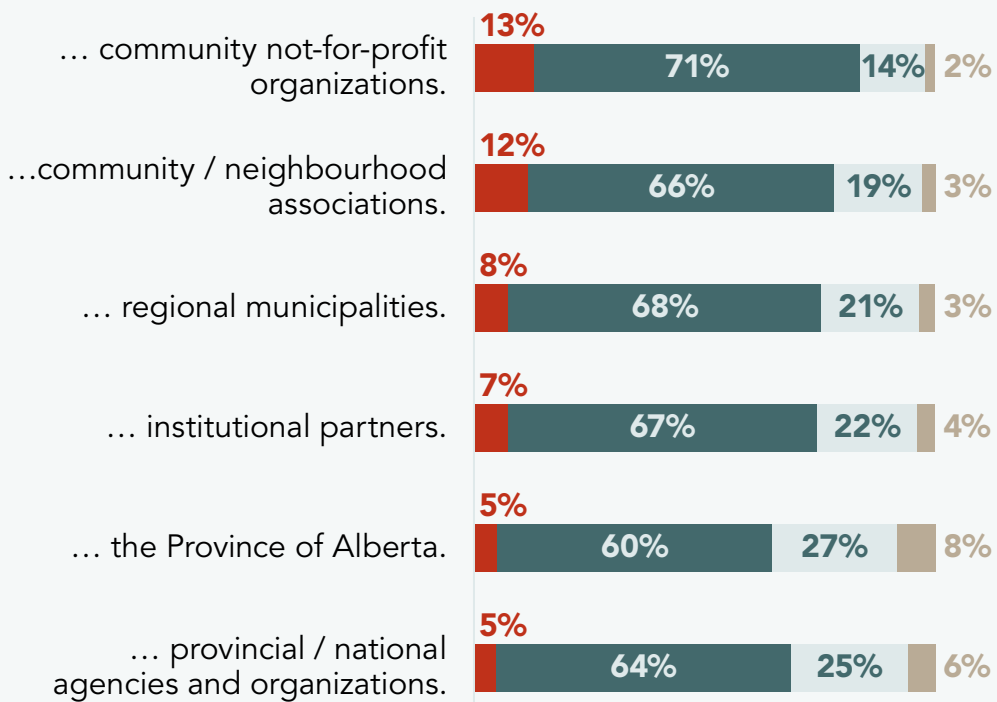


Question: How would you rate the level of collaboration between The City and...

When considering collaboration, about 71% of respondents feel The City collaborates good with community non-profit organizations. Notably, about one-third felt there is poor collaboration between The City and the province (27%), as well as with provincial and national agencies and organizations (25%). Around two-thirds believed there is good collaboration across the various listed partners.

How Would You Rate the Level of Collaboration between The City and ...

■ Excellent
 ■ Good
 ■ Poor
 ■ Very Poor





Question: Please use the space to below provide any other comments to explain your responses regarding external collaboration.

The responses (72 comments) are presented according to key themes:



Limited Awareness: Many individuals indicated they do not have enough visibility into The City’s interactions with sports, education, municipal, provincial, and national organizations, leading to their hesitancy to provide detailed feedback.



Need for Transparency: There appears to be a call for clearer communication from The City regarding its collaborations and efforts, particularly to better engage residents and stakeholders.



Integration Issues: Some responses pointed out difficulties within and between departments and external entities, suggesting a need for improved coordination and relationship-building initiatives.



Concerns About Community Engagement: Several comments highlight challenges in community engagement and collaboration, particularly with public and institutional partners, indicating that volunteers and participants often have competing priorities for their time and resources.



Political Climate Impact: There are concerns regarding how the political environment and the lack of support from the provincial government affect The City’s ability to collaborate and serve its community effectively.



Question: What would help improve collaboration with the community partners listed above within and / or beyond Red Deer?

Please note, community partners are listed in the graphic on page 62.

Respondents (73 comments) shared the following key themes:



Standardization and Education:

Develop a framework for relationship building that includes best practices, types of relationships, and strategic methods. This can help in ensuring meetings are productive with clear agendas and outcomes.



Focus on Accountability: Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

that align with city objectives, such as economic growth measures. This could drive accountability and ensure that strategies are not just reactive but also proactive towards long-term goals.



Proactive Collaboration: Assess the alignment of current collaborations

with strategic plans. Enhance capacity for proactive collaboration rather than reactive crisis management by allocating more resources or prioritizing areas where influence is possible.



Intentional Relationship Building:

Create intentional opportunities for collaboration, this could include regular check-ins or forums where stakeholders discuss shared goals and challenges.



Celebrate Successes: Actively recognize and share successes

in partnerships to build morale and demonstrate the value of collaboration. This acknowledgment can help highlight efficiencies gained from collaborative efforts.



Inclusivity and Representation:

Ensure collaboration efforts include marginalized voices and organizations, prioritizing support for those in need rather than just established entities. This aligns with community values of inclusivity and equity.



Open Channels for Feedback:

Foster open and honest communication with community members. Implement structured feedback mechanisms to ensure that concerns and suggestions are heard and addressed.



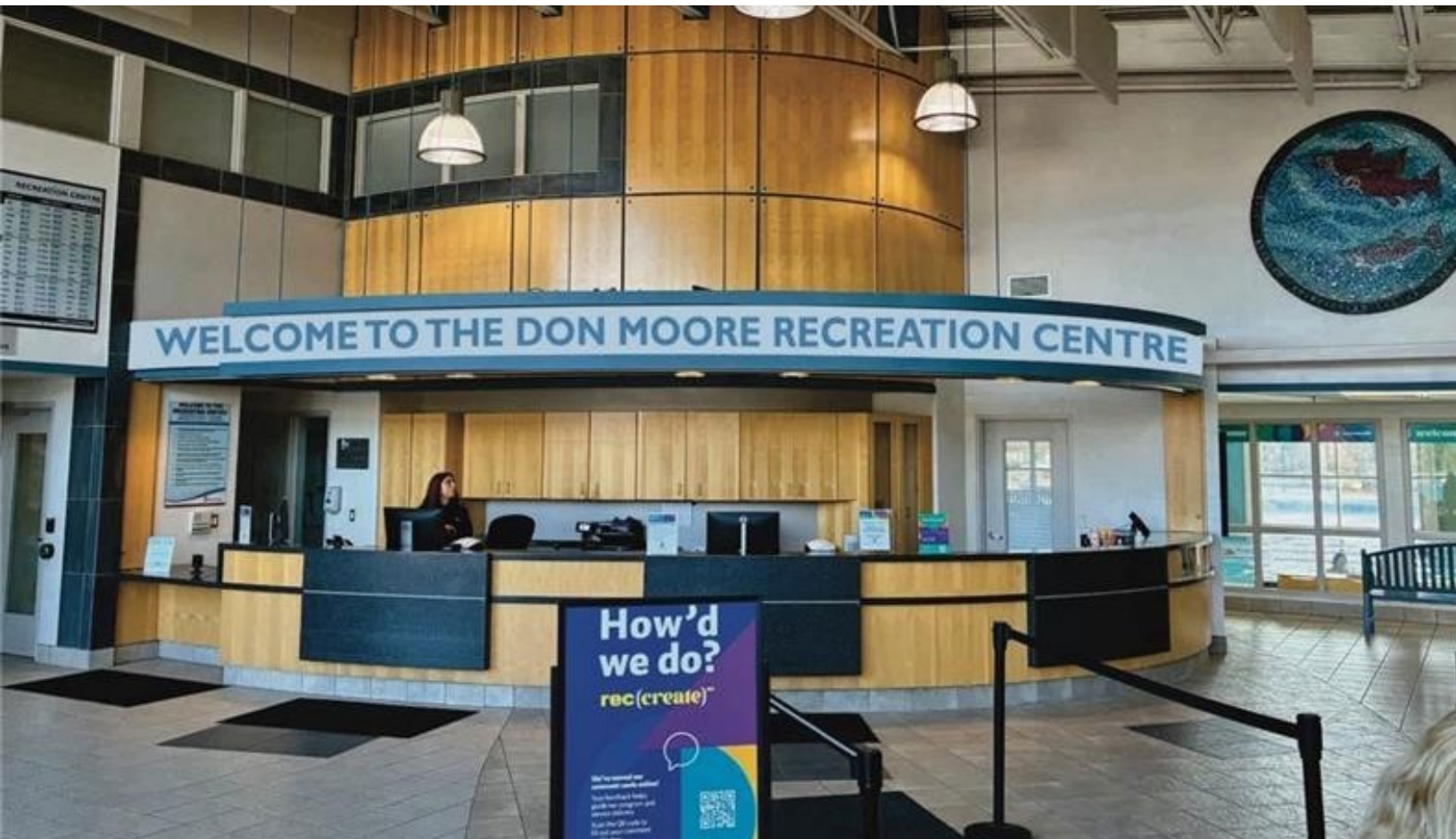
Regular Engagement Opportunities:

Schedule regular meetings or community events for open dialogue. Engage citizens in discussions about city projects and initiatives to gather feedback and build a sense of community ownership.



Build Trust and Reduce Red Tape:

Simplify processes and paperwork to encourage collaboration and innovation. Build trust through transparency and ongoing communication with community stakeholders.





2.3.4 Equity and Inclusion

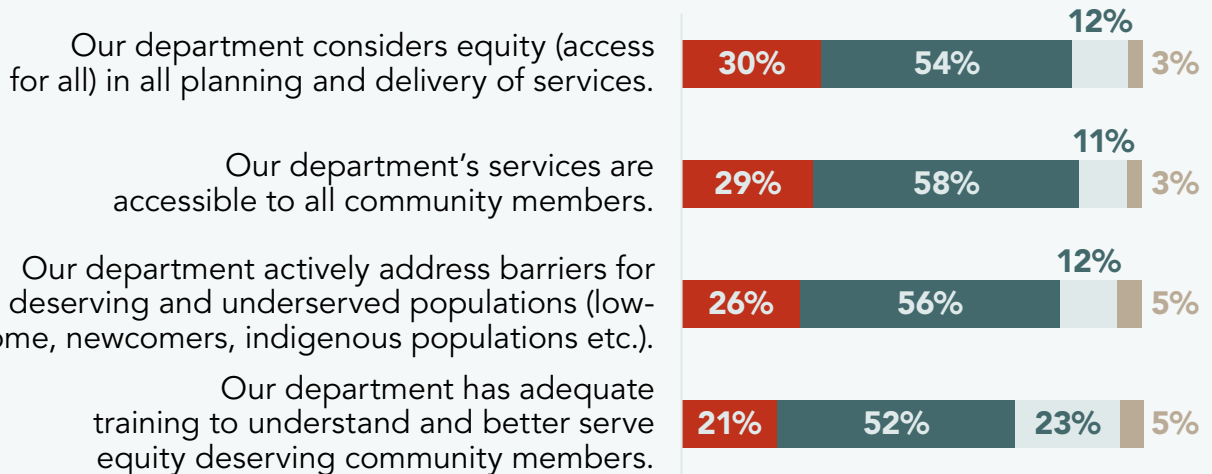
Section four of the staff survey examines equity and inclusion, with a focus on service accessibility and identifying ways to bridge barriers to better serve the community

Question: It is important to understand how different departments approach and contribute to furthering equity and access to services for our residents. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Almost all agree (strongly agree and agree) that their departments services are accessible to all community members (87%) and that their department considers equity in all planning and delivery of services (84%).

Staff Agreement Levels Regarding Equity and Access

■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree





Question: Please use the space below to provide any other comments to explain your responses regarding furthering equity and access to services.

Responses are presented according to themes:



Service Delivery

- Staff highlighted both strengths and gaps in how services are delivered across different populations.
- Concerns included imbalance in service access based on geography or income, and the need for more inclusive programming.



Suggestions for Improvement

- Recommendations included more proactive planning, better communication, and increased support for underserved groups.
- Staff mentioned the need for practical tools, clearer expectations, and more consistent follow-through.



Accessibility

- Barriers identified included language, culture, physical access, and economic limitations.
- Staff called for more inclusive infrastructure, better outreach, and tools to support diverse needs.



Training Needs

- Staff expressed a desire for more training, especially around equity, cultural awareness, and inclusive service delivery.
- Some noted that training is inconsistent or not followed by actionable expectations.



Leadership

- A few responses pointed to a disconnect between leadership and frontline realities.
- Staff want more visible, supportive, and equity-informed leadership.



Question: Some populations in the community may not currently be accessing community services to the fullest extent due to some sort of barriers. Please share any ideas you have on how we could reduce or eliminate barriers to help all members of the community better access our services.

The following are the key themes and suggestions from the responses:



Engagement with Barrier-Affected Communities: It is crucial to reach out directly to those who are experiencing barriers rather than relying solely on assumptions from City officials. Community conversations can provide insights into the specific challenges faced by various populations.



Inclusive Communication: Considerations for multi-language support and diverse modes of communication (like social media, flyers, and promotions at community events) can help ensure information about available services reaches all demographics. Many individuals may not have access to traditional communication channels or may prefer different formats.



Employee Training and Knowledge Sharing: Frontline staff should be trained to understand the full range of city services, enabling them to guide citizens more effectively. Tools like cheat-sheets can help them navigate this information easily. Staff training should include cultural competency to better understand and serve diverse populations.



Enhanced Trust through Transparency: The City needs to emphasize data-informed decision-making and integrity in operations to build trust. Open channels for feedback and transparency in how services are provided can enhance community relationships.



Accessibility and Location Considerations: Accessibility issues need to be addressed, particularly for those who lack transportation. Initiatives like improving public transport routes, providing mobile service units, and ensuring facilities are physically accessible are vital.



Targeted Outreach for Underrepresented Groups: Understanding which populations underutilize services can lead to targeted outreach efforts to ensure these groups are informed about available support options.



Community Partnerships: Collaborating with existing community organizations can be an effective way to reach marginalized groups. Utilizing the expertise of these organizations can enhance the effectiveness of outreach efforts.



Question: Briefly describe the impact of our community services on our residents and the community itself?

The following are the key themes within the responses provided.



Community Impact: Community services are essential for improving quality of life, supporting mental and physical well-being, and fostering connections among residents.



Communication and Transparency: Improved communication regarding the value and costs of city services is needed to address misconceptions and enhance public understanding.



Budget Constraints: There is a struggle to provide adequate services with limited funding, leading to a decrease in support for community programs.



Varying Opinions: The presence of vocal online criticism should not overshadow the more subdued perspectives of residents who value community services but may feel hesitant to voice differing opinions.



Youth Programs: There's a need for stronger support for youth programs, with City staff playing a crucial role in assisting volunteer-based sports and other activities.



Core Services Priority: While it's important to maintain diverse programs, the focus should also remain on core services such as utilities and public safety.



Proactive Community Engagement: Encouraging citizen participation in decision-making about community services can enhance investment and satisfaction among residents.



Community Development Approach: Engaging residents in a collaborative manner fosters a sense of ownership and belonging, which is crucial for community cohesion.



2.3.5 General Comments

The last section provided staff the opportunity to share any last insight they had regarding the Community Compass and planning at The City.

Question: Use the space to below to provide any other comments to consider in the development of a new Community Services Master Plan.

The following are the key themes within the responses provided.



Safety and Maintenance:

Enhancing safety in public spaces should be a top priority, with a focus on addressing issues such as homelessness, theft, and public health risks. Regular maintenance is essential to keep parks and public areas clean and welcoming.



Sustainability and Environmental Considerations:

Emphasize the importance of environmental sustainability with a holistic approach that values ecological services alongside economic factors.



Financial Constraints:

There is a need to understand The City's financial limitations. The Plan should prioritize essential services and consider budgetary constraints.



Planning for the Future:

Develop a Master Plan that provides a long-term strategy for community facility development and equitable service distribution, avoiding reactive decision-making.



Community Involvement:

Engage with City employees and residents to gather insight and foster collaboration. Community groups and nonprofits should be viewed as partners in service delivery.



Accessible Services:

Services should cater to all demographics, reflecting shifting population needs and ensuring fair access.



Interdepartmental Cooperation:

Address information silos within City departments to provide seamless service to citizens.



Quality Over Quantity: Focus on efficiently managing existing services rather than expanding without adequate funding and maintenance plans.



Feedback Mechanisms: Establish ongoing channels for resident feedback to encourage engagement and transparency.



Core Values and Services: Return to core community services, ensuring they are funded adequately before introducing new initiatives.



Cultural and Community Enrichment: Support arts and culture to promote empathy and community connection, alongside recreational services.



Long-term Goals with Immediate Benefits: Balance short-term actions with long-term planning to retain residents and improve community satisfaction.

The response seems to underscore the need for a strategic, inclusive, and financially responsible approach to community development, rooted in collaboration and sustainability.





2.3.6 About You

Respondents were asked a variety of questions about themselves. The findings are presented in the accompanying chart.

	Percentage (calculated using # of survey responses)	Count
How long have you been employed by The City of Red Deer?		
0 – 2 years	24%	57
3 – 6 years	19%	45
7 – 10 years	11%	26
10 + years	47%	115
Which of the following best describes your current position with The City?		
Administrative and Support Staff	17%	40
Frontline and Operational Staff	31%	73
Professional and Technical Staff	29%	69
Managers and Supervisors	23%	54
Senior Leadership	1%	2



	Percentage (calculated using # of survey responses)	Count
Which department do you work with?		
CSV Business Excellence	6%	13
Parks & Public Works	13%	27
Safe & Healthy Communities	36%	75
Transit and Fleet	2%	5
Utilities	12%	25
City Planning and Growth	1%	2
Engineering Services	2%	4
Financial Services	3%	7
Inspections and Licensing	0%	1
Land and Economic Development	0%	1
Community and Public Relations	3%	6
Human Resources	1%	2
Information and Technology Services	3%	7
Legal and Legislative Services	1%	3
Revenue and Assessment Services	4%	8
Emergency Services	7%	15
Municipal Policing Services	3%	6



2.4 Group Meetings

Throughout September and October, collaborative meetings were hosted virtually and in-person, bringing together an array of organizations and perspectives. Participants were encouraged to share ideas and thoughts with each other and the consultants through a facilitated, semi-structured discussion. The participants included social services, health organizations, community associations, Indigenous Elders, and more. For a comprehensive list of participating organizations, see Appendix A.

The discussions covered a broad spectrum of topics, but several key themes emerged across multiple sessions. The following themes provide a summary of the key insights shared during the meetings.



Communications

Community organizations experience challenges in reaching city staff and leadership, citing delays in responses, unclear points of contact, and limited feedback mechanisms that affect transparency and collaboration. Groups also expressed a desire for clearer communication around city budgets, decision-making, and follow-through on commitments, as well as greater recognition of community contributions.



Financial and Bureaucratic Barriers

Permit fees, shifting priorities, and administrative processes present financial and operational challenges for organizations, impacting their ability to plan and deliver community initiatives.



Understanding of Community Assets and Volunteerism

There is perceived lack of recognition of the role and value of local organizations and volunteers, with gaps in asset mapping, promotion, and integration of community-driven efforts into City services.



Planning and Engagement Process

Community input is often sought late in the planning cycle, with limited opportunities for early involvement. This affects the ability to align City initiatives with local needs and can lead to disengagement. Frequent consultations without visible follow-up have led to reduced confidence in engagement processes, with groups expressing concern about the effectiveness and outcomes of participation.



Representation and Advocacy

There is a perception that the City is not engaged in broader national and provincial policy conversations. The current approach to community engagement on policy matters does not reflect the lived experiences of equity deserving residents in Red Deer



Service Delivery and Coordination

Service delivery across departments and with external partners lacks coordination, with some duplication of efforts and missed opportunities to align funding with shared goals.



Innovation and Opportunity

Available resources and opportunities such as vacant buildings and cultural engagement are not always fully leveraged. There is interest in more innovative approaches to tackling community issues.



Structural and Governance

Organizations felt the City had limited capacity to respond to their requests and provide support. They also perceived the City as siloed, with limited cross-departmental collaboration and a lack of continuity of information across the organization, hindering its ability to advance strategic planning objectives and implementation.





2.5 Pop-Up Events

Community pop-ups were hosted in various community spaces throughout July and August (2025). The purpose of the pop-ups were to engage directly with Red Deer residents and gather real-time feedback on community services, ensuring diverse voices were heard in the planning process. The pop-ups also served to promote the project and other ongoing engagement opportunities. Pop-ups locations are listed in Appendix B.

Respondents were presented with three questions at the pop-up events that explored the accessibility of community services, priorities for service delivery, and recommended changes for The City.

Question: What do you think The City should prioritize when it comes to community services?

Responses have been compiled and organized into common themes.



Homelessness & Related Services:

Comments addressed housing-first approaches, expanded shelter services with wrap-around supports, harm reduction programs, and resources for the unhoused population. Participants noted concerns about homelessness and its various impacts.



Recreation Facilities & Programming:

Responses addressed facility expansion including 50m indoor pool, indoor field complex, recreation center in North Red Deer, and facility funding. Participants commented on programming affordability and facility pass costs.



Parks, Trails & Green Spaces:

Input covered maintaining and protecting green spaces, trail safety and accessibility, trail etiquette and signage, and preserving natural spaces. Comments included feedback on the existing trail system.



Downtown Area:

Feedback included downtown safety, cleanliness, free parking implementation, and foot traffic patterns. Respondents referenced changes in downtown activity levels.



Seniors Programs & Services:

There were mentions of programs for seniors, outreach methods to older residents, accessibility improvements, and affordable activity options for seniors.



Transportation & Transit:

Comments included public transit costs, Action Bus services, and traffic light coordination.



Snow Removal & Road Maintenance:

Participants raised snow removal frequency, road maintenance, and winter cleaning of streets and sidewalks.



Disability Services & Accessibility:

Participants mentioned services for people with disabilities, inclusive programming and sports, and accessibility considerations.



Youth Services & Employment:

Feedback covered youth programming, job opportunities for young people, and after-school programs including swimming.



Arts & Culture:

Responses included arts and culture support, symphony funding, and community arts centers.



Fiscal Management & Maintenance:

Input addressed infrastructure maintenance, fiscal responsibility, cost-effectiveness, evidence-based decision making, and budget transparency.



Affordable Housing:

Feedback addressed affordable housing and multifamily housing development.



Emergency Services & Staffing:

Comments referenced firefighter staffing and emergency service priorities.





Question: What changes to community services do you think Red Deer will need in the next 10 to 20 years?

Responses have been compiled and organized into common themes.



Recreation Facilities & Spaces (18)

Calls for facility expansion based on population growth, additional pools due to current crowding, indoor track and field space, more soccer pitches and fields, multisport spaces, trampoline facilities, skating parks, and upgraded facilities for aging populations. Respondents also emphasized the importance of Collicutt and existing facilities.



Parks & Green Spaces Protection (12)

Input covered protecting natural spaces, views and lookouts, wildlife sanctuaries, preventing development on green spaces, and maintaining Red Deer's natural identity. Feedback included concerns about building on existing green areas and the importance of preserving what already exists.



Transportation & Mobility (11)

Comments included increased public transportation services, bike lanes, alternative modes of transportation beyond cars, flexible and affordable transit options, road widening, paved back alleys, and one mention of a bullet train.



Homelessness & Social Support (10)

Participants raised homeless needs, mental health support for those on the streets, and mental health services.



Arts, Culture & Entertainment (9)

Feedback addressed creating an alive arts and culture scene, music and concert venues, dining options, business support, maintaining the symphony, and events like Hootenanny.



Parks Maintenance & Safety (8)

Responses covered park cleanup with containers on trails, garbage removal, animal waste management, safer playground surfaces with rubber, and pop-up play parks.



Healthcare Services (7)

Input included attracting doctors and medical specialists, supporting healthcare, and improving medical services availability.



Housing Development (6)

Comments addressed affordable housing, more housing for inevitable growth, and starter homes to accommodate population expansion.



Education & Learning (6)

Participants mentioned improving education, school supports especially for neurodivergent learners, financial struggles for schools, educational supports through voluntary local involvement, and opportunities to learn about indigenous land stewardship.



Business & Economic Development (5)

Feedback covered making it easier for downtown businesses to prosper, improving the economy, and supporting local businesses.





Question: Do you feel that community services are easy for everyone to access?

Responses have been compiled and organized into common themes.

For the 41 respondents who indicated “Yes”, that community services are accessible for everyone, they noted the following:



Parks & Trails (25) Participants praised the trail system, parks, green spaces, and their cleanliness and beauty. Feedback emphasized accessibility for families, trails being for everyone, spray parks, walking paths, and nature access. Comments included suggestions for more benches, picnic tables, and shaded areas, with some concerns about safety and cleanliness related to homelessness.



Recreation Facilities (15) Responses expressed satisfaction with facilities, particularly Collicutt, pools, and spray parks. Input highlighted that facilities are accessible to all people, including those with disabilities, and noted the fun events offered at various locations.



Affordability & Financial Accessibility (8) Feedback addressed services being cheap or free, options for financial aid, affordable library programs especially for families with kids, and free outdoor amenities. One comment suggested making admission fees the same for those 18 and under.



Public Transportation (7) Participants noted the transit system is great and on time, buses are accessible, and Action Bus serves people with disabilities well. Comments indicated most places are accessible by driving or bus.



Infrastructure & Navigation (5) Input covered good infrastructure for getting around, The City website being easy to navigate, and the ability to access information online through the website, Facebook, and social media.



Libraries (3) Responses highlighted libraries being great and accessible, with affordable programs particularly beneficial for families with kids. One participant mentioned appreciation for mock city council meetings with schools and homeschools.



Community Services & Programs (3) Feedback praised Family Resource Network with options across different ages and areas of The City for easy access, and noted services working well for community bonding.



For the 44 respondents who indicated “No”, that community services are not accessible for everyone, they noted the following:



Accessibility for People with Disabilities (12)

Participants raised concerns about services not being easily accessible for persons with physical and other disabilities, noting feeling forgotten. Feedback addressed accessible infrastructure, activities, facilities, curbs, pathways, how blind individuals access facilities, and handicap parking stalls being far from stores.



Cost & Affordability (11)

Input covered expensive city facilities, prohibitive costs, general affordability getting harder, sports being too expensive with exclusive subsidy access, facility passes being unaffordable, and economic barriers to childcare.



Awareness & Communication (10)

Responses addressed poor advertising of events, lack of general awareness about what’s happening, people not knowing what services are available or how to access them, difficulty finding information without online access, website being clumsy, information and event sharing needing improvement, and advertising being too online-focused.



Parking Issues (9)

Comments included lack of parking at downtown facilities, new parking metres being problematic especially for businesses serving seniors, requests for better and free parking downtown.



Safety & Cleanliness Concerns (8)

Feedback covered concerns about debris and security, garbage in various locations, fear related to homelessness downtown including at the library, safety concerns with changes to bathrooms and bike access on certain roads being treacherous.



Public Transportation Limitations (7)

Participants noted difficulty understanding Sunday buses, need for better transit access, more frequent smaller buses, transit cleanliness, challenges getting around without a vehicle, and Red Deer being hard to access by bus with no train to Calgary/Edmonton.



Snow Removal & Road Maintenance (6)

Input addressed snow clearing with requests to take snow away and road repairs taking too long with small crew.



Youth & Teen Programming (5)

Responses indicated nothing available for teenagers, lack of events for young adults to keep out of trouble, and need for park features for bigger kids.



Website & Registration Challenges (4)

Feedback covered difficulty navigating The City website and registration process, website being clumsy, and permits being confusing and slow with difficulty connecting to help.

A



Appendices



Appendix A: Participating Organizations

Group Survey

- 24 Squadron Red Deer Air Cadets
- Abyssinia Village Market
- ACCESS 4 DISABILITIES
- Alberta Armenians Cultural Council
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Red Deer and District
- Bower Community Association
- Bridges Community Living
- Care for Newcomers Society
- Central Alberta Chamber Orchestra
- Central Alberta Chinese Culture Centre
- Central Alberta Islamic Cultural Association
- Central Alberta Outreach Society
- Central Alberta Photographic Society ("CAPS")
- Central Alberta Pregnancy Care Centre
- Central Alberta Theatre
- Central Park Neighbourhood Association community association
- Cross Roads Church
- Dress for Success Central Alberta
- Ellis Nature Centre
- Endless Spirit Foundation Ltd
- Escuela Vista Grande Association
- Family Services of Central Alberta
- Flux Studio
- Fostering Diverse Communities Canada
- Francophonie Canadienne Plurielle (FRAP)
- HOMES
- hr outlook
- Lettering Arts Guild of Red Deer
- Lifelong Learning Council of Red Deer
- Michener Hill Curling Club
- Norwegian Laft Hus Society
- Nuclear Free Roller Derby League
- Oriole Park Community Association
- Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Society
- Parkland Airshed Management Zone Association
- Parkland CLASS
- Poplar Ridge Community Association

- RCMP Red Deer
- Red Deer & District Museum Society
- Red Deer Arts Council
- Red Deer Association for Bicycle Commuting
- Red Deer BMX Club
- Red Deer Child Care
- Red Deer Cultural Heritage Society
- Red Deer Curling Centre
- Red Deer Downtown Business Association
- Red Deer Dream Centre Society
- Red Deer Festival of the Performing Arts Society
- Red Deer Food Bank Society
- Red deer Lacrosse Association
- Red Deer Meals on Wheels
- Red Deer Minor Football
- Red Deer Native Friendship Society
- Red Deer Nordic- Great Chief Park and Heritage Ranch Cross Country Ski Tracksetting
- Red Deer Polytechnic
- Red Deer Pottery Club
- Red Deer Public Schools Family School Liaison
- Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre
- Red Deer River Naturalists
- Red Deer River Watershed Alliance Society
- Red Deer Skating Club
- Red Deer Summer Centrefest Society
- Red Deer Symphony Orchestra
- Red Deer Urban Aboriginal Voices Society
- Riverside Meadows Community Association
- Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing
- Sendero Centre
- Shining Mountains Living Community Services
- Special Olympics Red Deer
- Sunnybrook Farm Museum
- Sustainable Red Deer Society (o/a ReThink Red Deer)
- The Baha'i Community of Red Deer
- The City of Red Deer Library Board operating as Red Deer Public Library
- The Dream Centre
- The Golden Circle Resource Centre
- The Lending Cupboard Society of Alberta
- The Young Men's Christian Association of Edmonton o/a YMCA of Northern Alberta

- Tree House Youth Theatre
- Ubuntu-Mobilizing Central Alberta
- Waskasoo Community Association of Red Deer
- Waskasoo Environmental Education Society
- Westerner Exposition Association
- Woodlea Community Association
- Youth HQ

Group Meetings and Interviews

- Access for Disabilities
- Alberta Armenians Cultural Council
- BILD Central Alberta
- Boys and Girls Club of Red Deer and District
- Care for Newcomers
- Central Alberta Theatre
- Endless Spirit Foundation Ltd
- Home Opportunity Mobilization Society
- Michener Hill Curling Club
- Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Society
- Parkvale Community Association
- Red Deer Association for Bicycle Commuting
- Red Deer Construction Association
- Red Deer Cultural Heritage Society
- Red Deer District Chamber
- Red Deer Local Immigration Partnership
- Red Deer Masters Swim Club - Silver Sharks
- Red Deer Memorial Centre
- Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery
- Red Deer Pottery Club
- Red Deer River Naturalists
- Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing
- Spinal Cord Injury Alberta
- The City of Red Deer Library Board (aka Red Deer Public Library)
- The Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre
- Tourism Red Deer
- United Way Central Alberta
- Waskasoo Community Association
- Westerner Exposition Association
- Woodlea Community Association

Appendix B: Pop-Up Locations

- Red Deer Farmers Market
- Centre Fest
- Pines
- Colicutt Centre
- Explore Sport Day
- City Hall Park
- 3 Mile Bend
- Glendale Spray Park
- Discovery Canyon
- Mackenzie Trails
- Glendale Skate Park
- Kin Canyon
- Bower Ponds
- Kerry Wood Nature Centre

