

# Okotoks Economic Development STRATEGIC PLAN

*Together*  
**WE CAN**  
2016-2020



## ABSTRACT



**A guide to the next five years of prosperity and economic development in the Town of Okotoks.**

The Strategic Plan is a road map to provide direction and was created in collaboration with the Okotoks Economic Development Committee. The plan must be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure Okotoks is on course with the goals, objectives and actions. This Plan is a living document adapting to the ever changing economic environment, proactively reacting to opportunities as they arise and always keeping the bigger corporate and community vision in mind.

**Prepared by: Okotoks Economic Development Fall 2015**

**Updated June 2016**

# Economic Development Strategy 2016 – 2020

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### **Okotoks Economic Development Committee Members 2014-2015:**

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### **Okotoks Post-Secondary Education Committee**

**Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce**

**Olde Towne Okotoks Marketing Group**

**Town Council**

**Town Administration**

thank you!



## INTRODUCTION

**Economic development is the process of pursuing balanced and diversified growth and business formation in a proactive, collaborative and responsive climate while fostering an integration of economic, social and environmental objectives, thereby increasing the prosperity of the community.**

Okotoks has had a long history of economic development success and progress since the 1980's. The last official economic development plan was approved in 2011, spanning the period 2011-2013 when Okotoks was still largely under a finite growth model. While progress has been made on that plan and its deliverables, it is time to develop a Strategic Plan that will guide Okotoks into the future under a continuous growth model planning framework.

The Town of Okotoks Economic Development Strategy proposes a five year strategic plan that caters to the greater vision of the community of Okotoks, its continued growth and prosperity. The goals, objectives, and action plans will provide a compelling path forward for greater employment opportunities for our residents while increasing our entrepreneurial ecosystem. This Strategic Plan was written based on the approved Town of Okotoks Business Plan 2014-2017 and the Community Visioning process outcomes from 2014. As Economic Development is highly collaborative, the key inputs, goals and drivers to this plan are based on the efforts of the Okotoks Economic Development Committee and Sub Committee whereby local business people and community leaders throughout 2014 and into 2015 engaged to develop four Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAG's)<sup>1</sup> as presented in November 2014.

The ***Together: We Can*** 2016-2020 Strategic Economic Development Plan is focused on:

- Providing a platform to move forward the Big Hairy Audacious Goals;
- Providing a vision for the delivery of economic development services;
- Identifying the core business areas for Okotoks Economic Development;
- Guiding the economic development actions and performance metrics.

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<sup>1</sup> BHAG's are defined as strategic business statements similar to vision statements which are created to focus an organization on corporate wide goals. The term was proposed by James Collins and Jerry Porras in their 1994 book entitled *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*. A BHAG encourages companies to define visionary goals that are more strategic and emotionally compelling. A true BHAG is clear and compelling, serves as a unifying focal point of efforts and acts as a clear catalyst for team spirit and it has a clear finish line.

The role of the Economic Development Business Centre is to enable a business climate that is conducive to business success through leadership, knowledge exchange, referrals, education, research, coaching and providing assistance on various levels.

According to the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), typically economic development can be described in terms of objectives as there is no single definition that incorporates all of the different components of economic development as economic development will be practiced differently from one community to another. The main goal of economic development is improving the economic well-being of a community through efforts that entail partnership creation, job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements, quality of life and creating an environment so economic development can take place.

**Economic development is like an iceberg – success is built upon a very deep base of market intelligence, strategic marketing, community connection, trust and hard work.**

The Plan will be used to inform residents, businesses and elected officials on the challenges and opportunities facing the Town of Okotoks in the years ahead as well as the various actions required to ensure we remain competitive. This includes opportunities to:

- Attract and retain business investment;
- Increase employment;
- Grow the municipal tax base;
- Improve government processes; and
- Enhance capacity for community development

The goal of a more balanced tax base will provide residents with the advantages, improvements and much needed expansion of amenities as well as instilling an increased vibrancy into the community, making it a place to live - a place to work – a place to visit. Sound, long-term economic development ensures that future generations have the community resources to support an enhanced quality of life.

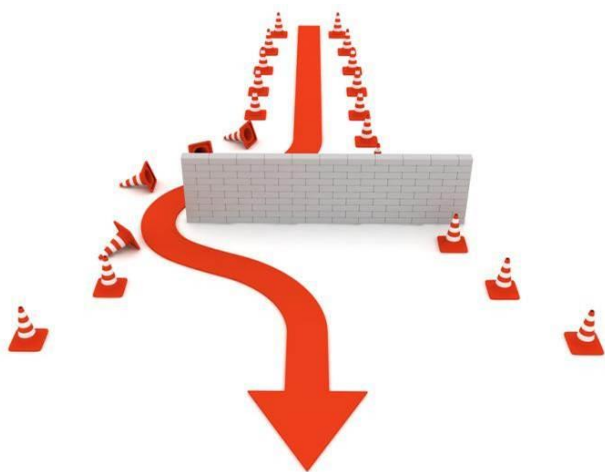
A majority of new investment (around 80%) is generated locally, so this Economic Development Strategy emphasizes business retention, expansion of local sector strengths, and community-building initiatives that serve to make our investment environment more attractive. New jobs arise in part out of a community that is highly desirable to live in. Therefore more than before there must be an emphasis on placemaking. Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to planning, design and management of public spaces to capitalize on the community's assets with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness and well-being.

The wide transition to a knowledge-based economy has balanced pure economic decisions (labour force, transportation access, business costs, land and buildings, existing industry structure) with quality of life locational decisions. For this reason, economic development must be considered in a broader community development context, where the decisions a community makes about services and amenities affect the investment environment.

Key infrastructure such as fibre optics, water, transportation, recreational facilities, comprehensive housing options, cultural offerings including the visual & performing arts, and educational opportunities all contribute to economic development advancements. The Town's ability to be investment ready and fulfil the recommendations of the Economic Development Committee relies heavily on infrastructure. The foundation for growth and diversification requires Okotoks to have the will and the resources to maintain itself economically, environmentally and socially, providing the necessities required to support the community's stakeholders. To improve its economic position it is important to attract new business investment, which in turn will create jobs and will expand the local tax base.

Economic Development will strategically target specific industries, companies and markets that have been identified as a good fit with great growth potential for Okotoks. In addition an ongoing Business Visitation Program as part of economic gardening will provide ways to enhance and retain current business, which will also add to possible expansion opportunities within our business community. Early recognition of necessary succession strategies will help with business retention. Okotoks Economic Development will continue to effectively respond to inquiries, opportunities and issues that impact the community and track progress. Superior customer service at all levels of municipal government is critical to all clients, and stakeholders to ensure Okotoks is a preferred place to conduct business.

The Okotoks Economic Development Committee (EDC) has recommended that the Town of Okotoks make doing business in town “easier” by removing real or perceived roadblocks and barriers to doing business thereby improving the business environment. The EDC recommends focusing on a defined list of industries when it comes to investment attraction to ensure the right type of businesses are in place over the long term to diversify our employment base and create “living wage” employment opportunities. Further, the Economic Development Committee would like



to see a focus on the downtown core, creating a year round “jewel” in the region- a destination. To do this the EDC recommended a downtown that has three anchors: A public plaza, a public market and a performing arts facility all within the vicinity of the downtown area. The “anchors” are similar to shopping mall anchors in that they will draw traffic to businesses and increase property rents, property values and business property taxes. Also, the EDC recommends we focus on ways to support economic development through implementation of actions identified in the Active Transportation Plan.

Moreover, the EDC Committee flagged matters

for review in the Land Use Bylaw and the Municipal Development Plan to improve the walking, pedestrian and cycling experiences in Town. Examples include barrier free design and strategic placement of public parking to encourage walking by employers, employees, customers and visitors to the downtown. Enhancements to the pedestrian infrastructure within the downtown and connectivity to surrounding neighbourhoods are necessary. Please reference the appendices A-D at the back of this report for complete Economic Development Committee recommendations, presentations and input.

Finally, the EDC envisions the community as an intellectual property leveraged business centre servicing local, national and international markets to create jobs for people to live and work in our community. As a community, all stakeholders and organizations can work together collaboratively to achieve various aspects and actions of this plan. Potential stakeholders and organizations to collaborate with include but are not limited to:

- Okotoks Economic Development Committee
- Other Town of Okotoks Committees
- The Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce
- Olde Towne Okotoks Merchants Group
- Community Futures Highwood
- Bow Valley College
- McBride Career Group
- Service Clubs
- Town Administration and Town Council
- The local media

This plan will outline the objectives and specific actions to achieve these realities, because **Together: We Can.**

**Economic development isn't one person's job ...  
it is everyone's job in one way or another.**



## **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK for OKOTOKS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **ROLES & VALUES:**

#### **Okotoks Economic Development's role is to:**

- Communicate
- Educate
- Facilitate
- Initiate
- Lead
- Motivate
- Research
- Connect
- Champion
- Promote

#### **Our Values are:**

- Service Excellence
- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Innovation/Excellence
- Inclusion

#### **Critical Success Factors:**

- Partnerships & Collaboration
- Planning & Coordination
- Relationships (initiate, maintain, seek)
- Open Communication & Teamwork
- Information & Data Provision
- Marketing & Promotion Mind-set

### **SERVICES PROVIDED by OKOTOKS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Okotoks Economic Development is pleased to provide free confidential assistance to all businesses. Okotoks Economic Development provides advice on business start-up, growth, and relocation. This supports local business retention and expansion, and assists new businesses to establish in the area. Our services Include:

#### **Business Investment & Attraction**

- Promote Okotoks as the clear choice for business regionally and provincially
- Entrepreneur assistance and information
- Provide relocation and site selection services
- Orientation services for incoming companies to facilitate business linkages
- Connect with local networks (business referrals)
- Sector-specific marketing to attraction investment into targeted sectors

## Business Retention & Expansion

- Facilitation of real estate and development solutions
- Provide customized solutions for businesses on a wide range of issues from expansion to relocation.
- Facilitate introductions and business linkages
- Collaborate to provide workforce development education
- Collaborate to provide business learning opportunities such as workshops and seminars
- Entrepreneur support and coaching including succession planning assistance
- Assistance with business transitions to ensure effective succession planning

## Research and Information

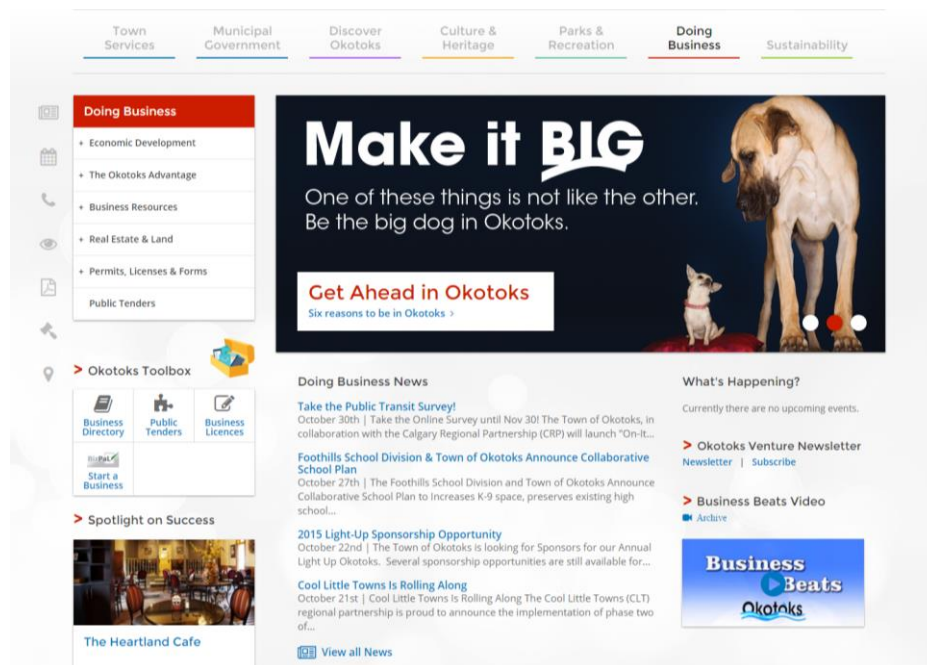
- Provide regional economic and industry information
- Industry sector profiles and statistics
- Provide market research
- Referral Services
- Provide access to a business directory

## Communications & Marketing

- On-line economic development monthly Venture E-newsletter
- Frequent communication methods with businesses including video features
- Regular media and community stakeholders interviews and presentations
- Robust economic development and tourism information websites
- Develop publications such as relocation guide, visitors guide, maps

## Tourism Marketing and Product Development

- Continue to effectively position Okotoks as a favorable destination for visitors
- Leverage and provide assistance for tourism product development opportunities





## TARGETED SECTORS for BUSINESS ATTRACTION and EXPANSION

We are being proactive about our business growth. To ensure long term employment for our residents we are focused on targeting the following sectors:

Both the Independent Entrepreneur and Corporate Businesses are considered as targets for 1, 2, and 4.



### **Professional, Scientific & Technical Services**

(Information Technology & Management, Innovation, Creative Industry)

Targeted industry: computer and network-based consulting, data centres, software and application development, e-commerce, health care (family physicians and specialists), fulfillment centres, engineering, legal, architectural firms.



### **Manufacturing & Environmental Innovation**

Targeted industry: Building on the business of environment: water, waste, wastewater, recycling, energy efficiency, land remediation, green building products or green businesses, manufacturing, consulting, engineering, research and development.



### **Home-Based Business and Tele-Commuters**

Specific emphasis is placed on technology-oriented enterprises and one to two person professional or technical service oriented firms and home based businesses involving the creative industry.



### **Tourism Industry & Product Development**

Targeted industry: Artists and entertainers, culture related, new festivals and events, green/eco-tourism, boutique and unique related retailers, speciality restaurants, sports tourism, outdoor adventure, convention centres and full service hotels, spas, bed and breakfasts and more campgrounds in region.



## **ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER PLANS**

In preparing the Okotoks Economic Development Strategic Plan, consideration has been given to a variety of other municipal plans that inform and have direct bearing on implementation of the Plan and the Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAG's) and actions over the next five years.

The current Town of Okotoks Corporate Business Plan 2014-2017 provides a framework for municipal priorities and is based on strategic priorities established by Council in January 2014 reflecting the input of citizens through surveys, the electoral process, and many other means. The Business Plan cites the priority actions necessary to move towards the community vision. This Plan reflects Council's commitment to deliver corporate services, which are in the best interest of the citizens of today and the future citizens of tomorrow.

### **Strategic Directions of the Corporate Business Plan 2014-2017**

Strategy 1: Manage Community Growth  
Strategy 2: Foster Economic Vitality  
Strategy 3: Provide Quality Community Infrastructure  
Strategy 4: Promote Environmental Stewardship  
Strategy 5: Provide Strong Governance  
Strategy 6: Healthy and Safe Community  
Strategy 7: Maintain Organizational Excellence

The Corporate Business Plan is implemented through the actions of dedicated staff, volunteers and community members. An annual Progress Report is provided to Council that reports on achievements towards the Business Plan outcomes, prior to the start of the annual operating budget cycle. Additionally, regular progress updates and milestone achievements are reported to Council through various reports to Council. Council meets annually in the fall to review corporate progress, and provide direction on the following year priorities within the context of the Business Plan, direct necessary updates reflecting current community expectations, and set budget guidelines for the coming fiscal cycle.

There are several Key Result Areas identified in the Business Plan for Okotoks that have direct and indirect economic development implications related to both direct and secondary support that must be considered at a larger macro level as identified by Town Council. These include the following excerpts from the Business Plan:

### **MANAGE COMMUNITY GROWTH**

Build a complete community that provides economic, social, and environmental sustainability where people can live, work and play.

- Support the annexation process to secure lands for population growth over the next 60 years;
- Foster partnerships with developers to design new communities that align with our vision;



- Ensure balanced community growth to retain Okotoks' image as a leader in sustainable development and our sense of community with smaller town characteristics.

## **FOSTER ECONOMIC VITALITY**

### **Key Result Areas:**

- 1. Facilitate a healthy economy where quality jobs and business opportunities are abundant. Develop a progressive Economic Development Plan that will attract and retain local businesses including an investment attraction and implementation strategy.**
- 2. Promote Okotoks as a place that is business friendly and open for business and investment and ready to compete on a regional basis:**
  - Develop strategies to increase light industrial and commercial development to further diversify our tax base and provide diverse employment opportunities.
- 3. Develop progressive business attraction and retention solutions to foster a resilient business community:**
  - Facilitate a variety of local Economic Development workshops for Council to increase knowledge on economic development fundamentals, investment strategies and a downtown assessment;
  - Implementation of technology sector attraction strategy;
  - Identify and select targeted industries for business attraction that will provide quality living wage job opportunities;
  - Engage the business community in providing input to develop local strategies and initiatives to help businesses succeed and grow;
  - Regularly visit local businesses to gain input and develop action plans to enhance business and facilitate connections;
  - Review policies and practices to encourage contractors to consider using more local businesses (i.e. public purchasing policies, business listings and promotion etc.);
  - Review current business related processes and create welcoming and friendly business friendly processes that are streamlined and clearly communicated;
  - Support and develop creative responses to economic development issues;
  - Continue to attract and promote events, sports and cultural tourism;
  - Create bold new strategies to attract entrepreneurs and small businesses;
- 4. Plan and prioritize future regional economic development initiatives encouraging partnerships and alliances for a stable economically viable region.**
- 5. Create a long term plan to ensure the downtown area remains attractive as a destination and a place for gathering in the community:**
  - Work with business owners and developers to align new and revitalized buildings with the downtown plan.
- 6. Other Indirect related Corporate Key Result Areas related to Economic Development outcomes:**

- Build a strong community that supports the needs of our residents;
- Facilitate a sense of community by providing and supporting community events;
- Promote and support volunteers as vital contributors to help make our community a better place for all;
- Maintain vibrant arts, culture and heritage that provide a variety of opportunities to inspire and connect;
- Plan for neighbourhood designs and introduce strategies that help connect residents and facilitate a walkable community;
- Continue to promote active transportation as per the approved plan;
- Advocate for post-secondary education opportunities in our community;
- Advocate for increased health access, including extended health service hours, physician attraction and related medical services.

## **COMMUNITY VISIONING 2014**

Please reference Appendix G at the back of this report for more information on the Okotoks Community Visioning 2014.

The following excerpts are from the Community Visioning Exercise.

As one of the fastest growing mid-size urban centres in Canada, the Town of Okotoks will grow to an anticipated 82,000 people over the next 60 years. Okotoks Community Visioning 2014 was a community wide visioning process to set out what the Town should look like in 60 years, and the characteristics that will be important to consider as the community grows.

The process had three overall objectives for the project:

1. Conduct a Town-wide visioning process
2. Define a clear vision for what the Town will look like, and how the Town will get there
3. Gather input from all resident, Town staff, and Council

The vision and planning framework developed out of that process will guide the Town in the preparation of documents, policies, tools and programs that manage community growth, including initiatives such as a new Integrated Community Sustainability Plan currently underway and a revised Municipal Development Plan (MDP). Themes resulting from this work which have importance and significance to this Strategic Economic Development Plan are:

### **Downtown:**

Downtown redevelopment was framed almost exclusively within the context of a presentation given in late August 2014 by Roger Brooks of Roger Brooks International. Many people in the visioning process support downtown redevelopment, and their comments echo Mr. Brooks' suggestion's such as the development of an urban plaza, and creating a more walkable, less car oriented built form.

### **Downtown Themes:**

- Downtown should be more active, vibrant place where there are things to see and do throughout the day and into the evening
- As a central gathering place, downtown requires attention, investment and some re-thinking, as suggested by Roger Brooks
- Design, programming and services should reflect the people who make Okotoks great
- Need to address design and mix of commercial/restaurant uses

**Strong Local Economy:**

Okotoks-based employment and businesses strengthen the economy. Okotoks takes a collaborative approach to economic growth, creating new opportunities that complement the region. Okotoks promotes innovation and attracts green businesses and industries. A thriving downtown supports economic development. Okotoks is a place to live, work and play, where short community times enable residents to actively engage in their community.

**Economy Themes:**

- Locally-based
- Attract a range of professional and “living wage” jobs to improve affordability and reduce number of people who need to commute
- Market attractiveness of living in a complete community to attract small and medium-sized businesses
- Tourism is a component of economic development

**Commercial/Retail Services:**

A full range of commercial and entertainment services reduces commuting to Calgary, and helps “Complete” the community.

**Commercial/Retail Themes:**

- Services such as shopping and restaurants are provided north and south of the river.
- Neighbourhood-level services create vibrant community nodes that can be easily accessed by walking or cycling

**A viable municipality is a community which has the will and the resources to sustain itself economically, environmentally and socially.**

-AUMA



# SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS WEAKNESSES OPPORTUNITIES THREATS

## STRENGTHS

- Diverse population
- Highly educated
- Young population
- Location – near key transport corridors and close to major city
- Progressive and accessible political leadership
- Strong sense of pride in the community
- A great deal of new infrastructure
- Host to a number of sporting events
- Progressive and high quality secondary education system
- Strong non-profit and voluntary sector and programming
- Town has a positive public image
- “Olde Towne Okotoks” unique business district
- Competitive municipal tax rates

## WEAKNESSES

- Lower land inventory for commercial, industrial, and housing development
- Need for more fiber optic infrastructure and high speed internet for businesses
- Lack of existing business location options which are for sale and/or lease
- Cost per square foot vs net revenue is high for some small businesses
- Need for greater diversity of housing options for diverse workforce/income levels
- Need for more convention and/or meeting facilities for small business and hosting larger events

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase the liaison and communications between the planning and economic development business centres, to ensure the needs of the business community are understood regarding land use.
- Recommendation to the planning business centre to explore a downtown plan, Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ), or architectural controls in “Olde Towne Okotoks” area
- Encourage the development of a ‘High Street’ aesthetic in the downtown “Olde Towne Okotoks” among downtown businesses and the Town’s planning business centre
- Cooperate with Municipal District to develop industrial lands and local employment
- Work to increase engagement with the business community, through the use of focus groups or dialogue-focused tools
- Work with community partners to develop an inventory of meeting spaces, kitchen spaces, and small business services in Okotoks, aimed at encouraging use of local space or services to support small business development and entrepreneurship.

## **OPPORTUNITIES** continued

- Continue to focus on targeting a variety of professional service businesses in business development programming, including;
  - Environmental services and research
  - Engineering services
  - Medical services
  - Information and technology services
- Investigate ways to attract less common demographic groups, including retirees, to help diversify the population and economic activity, as the current predominate demographic is young families
- Continue to encourage post-secondary institutional development in Okotoks

## **THREATS**

- Becoming more of a bedroom community
- Rising costs of development and land
- Economic downturn (cycles)
- Losing potential investment due to lack of land or space
- Other communities with readily available land
- Time required to complete the water pipeline connection to Calgary



# Economic Development Strategic Plan

## INTRODUCTION

Vision statements present an image of future success, based on what is attainable and should be built on the strengths, opportunities and capacity of the community.

**The Town of Okotoks has a Community Vision developed as part of the Share Your Ideas, Shape Your Community Visioning process in 2014:**

**The Town of Okotoks is resilient, where people, businesses, ideas and sense of community thrive. Grounded by the Sheep River valley and supported by thoughtful planning and design, a strong local economy and a vibrant civic culture, Okotoks offers exceptional quality of life at every stage of life. Respect for each other and the natural environment makes Okotoks home.**

**In addition the Town of Okotoks has the following corporate vision:**

**In the year 2030, Okotoks is a leader in sustainability, driven by an involved, connected and creative community. Through visionary leadership, citizens are engaged in maintaining a safe, caring and vital community that honours our culture, heritage and environment.**

Building on these visions and the larger contributions of the Okotoks Economic Development Committee members into the Strategic Plan and process, the Okotoks Economic Development Strategic Plan advances the following unifying vision statements:

- The Town of Okotoks will continue to enhance a prosperous community by reducing barriers and roadblocks for business while adopting a “Yes We Can” philosophy and corporate culture.
- Okotoks will foster economic diversification efforts that build a strong and vibrant downtown core creating high quality places which will attract both tourists and investment.
- Okotoks will further leverage the lifestyle options and economic vitality to create a vibrant place to live, work, visit, learn, invest and do business.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

In 2014 and 2015, the Town Council appointed Economic Development Committee and Sub Committee members undertook strategic planning sessions or “think tank” brainstorming discussions and engagements. The committee with assistance from Economic Development staff interviewed approximately fifty residents and businesses via a survey to solicit input. The collective input then informed the committee guidance and suggestions for inclusion into this Strategic Plan. The purpose was to understand why residents choose Okotoks over other Calgary Region communities. This guidance informs both economic development initiatives and practices and also correlates directly to other corporate functions with the aim of making Okotoks a better place in which to operate a business and a better place to live. The Economic Development Committee identified home based businesses as an important theme; in particular they expressed concerns for the need to track annual growth and decline in this sector. The Economic Development Sub Committee subsequently identified two key areas for improvement that were holding Okotoks back and presented the below outline in November 2014.

They are:

**1. Systemic Roadblocks.**

**2. Lack of a Unifying Vision. Need Big Hairy Audacious Goals or BHAG’S.**

As a result, the following **four BHAG’s** were identified which can be considered overarching goals that must be aligned and meet the intent of specific initiatives, they are:

1. We are a *Yes We Can* community.
2. We have a vibrant downtown core with three anchors (New Plaza, Performing Arts Centre and Public Market identified as required assets in or near the Downtown).
3. We are an *active transportation* community (*active transportation strategy adopted by Town Council August 2015*).
4. Okotoks is an intellectual property-leveraged business centre with businesses servicing local, national, and international markets creating opportunities and jobs for people to live and work in our community.

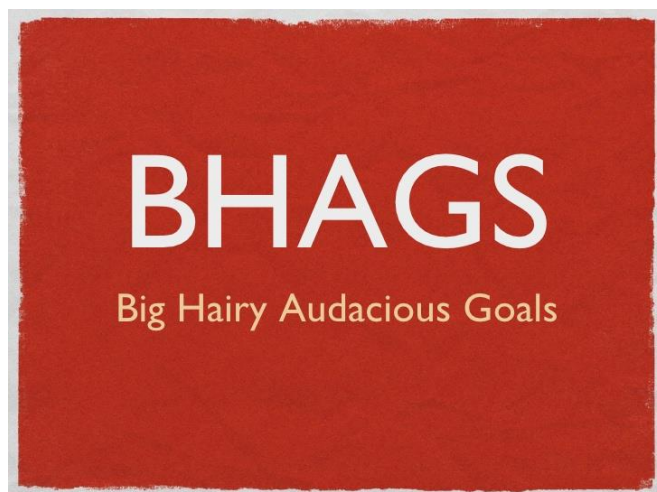
## Goals (BHAG's), Objectives and Actions

The Okotoks “*Together: We Can*” Economic Development Strategic Plan is underpinned by four *Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAG's)*, and are intended to anchor and qualify all objectives and ensuing actions undertaken by the Okotoks Economic Development Business Centre in collaboration with local community partners. The BHAGs work in concert to provide Okotoks with the cumulative benefits of strategic economic development. Each of the objectives represents the building blocks that are essential to the BHAG's and the vision. In order to achieve the overall economic development goals and objectives, timelines need to be attached to the implementation plan along with performance outcomes and metrics and budgetary needs.

The BHAG's (goals), objectives and related actions should be viewed as a starting point resulting from Okotoks Economic Development Committee input and research at a point in time. New actions, ideas and opportunities will emerge throughout the lifespan of this Strategic Plan in an every changing economic climate as well as partnership organizations will emerge or change. Therefore, the Strategic Plan needs to be fluid and ever-changing and reviewed on an annual basis. It is implicit that the Town of Okotoks will need to collaborate and cooperate with its community partners and stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the Strategic Plan.

For the purposes of this plan, BHAG's (goals), objectives and actions are defined as follows:

<b>BHAG's (Goals):</b>	The vision and desired outcomes that emerged from the Okotoks Economic Development Sub Committee leadership sessions and stakeholder interviews.
<b>OBJECTIVES:</b>	How these BHAG's (goals) are to be achieved and what must be accomplished in the next five years.
<b>ACTIONS:</b>	Provide specific direction on those essential issues or opportunities that must be addressed over the next five years- short term, medium term and long term.





## Measuring Return on Investment

It is important when undertaking economic development programs and services to have an understanding on how that work will impact the community. Direct effects on local employment, general quality of life, business starts, business closures and business expansions are some items to be considered. Often programs are easier to measure and establish performance targets for and services on the other hand are less tangible and more difficult to measure because they are demand based and subject to many variables.

To effectively measure the return on investment requires the use of metrics or performance measures that illustrate the relationship between an economic development program or services and the jobs, assessment or economic impact that may result. A best practice review undertaken for the Economic Development Association of Canada (EDAC) provides the following guidelines for the development of metrics to be used by economic development practitioners:

- Measures should reflect activities, but also outputs and most importantly outcomes.
- Some aspect of quality and customer satisfaction should be part of the outcome measures as well.
- Measures should be identified for major activities as opposed to all activities.
- Targets should be specified separately from measures.
- Some measures may make sense to track on a monthly basis, whereas others will only be meaningful on a quarterly, semi-annual or even annual basis. This then will drive the platform for data maintenance.
- All measures must be explicitly defined.
- All measures must have a specified data source.
- All measures should be revisited following a period of data collection (for at least 6 months) to determine their usefulness and value.
- Measures that require client input/feedback will involve the development of data collection instruments. E.g. Exit interview surveys and customer satisfaction surveys.

For some projects Economic Development Administration will “plant the seed”, and outcomes are realized longer term at some point into the future. In some cases 5-10 years’ time is needed to see results as progress is made when the community evolves. Performance indicators/measures and applicable targets for each objective and the associated actions are outlined further within the Recommendations section of this report.

## BIG HAIRY AUDACIOUS GOALS (BHAG's)

#1	We are a "Yes We Can" community
#2	We have a vibrant downtown with three anchors
#3	We are an <i>Active Transportation</i> community
#4	Okotoks Is an intellectual property-leveraged business centre

### THE 4 OBJECTIVES:

Okotoks attracts and retains businesses through business-friendly policies and a corporate culture that demonstrate a "Yes We Can" progressive attitude.	BHAG #1
Downtown Okotoks is a vibrant central gathering place for visitors and locals.	BHAG #2
Increase economic productivity, employment, business activity and investment through <i>Active Transportation</i> .	BHAG #3
Enhance the Town's ability to be recognized as an intellectual property-leveraged business centre and "Entrepreneurial Hothouse" drawing businesses and resilient employment opportunities servicing local, national and international markets.	BHAG #4



## Recommendations

### BHAG #1

#### **We are a ‘Yes We Can’ community**

Continued success with business investment, attraction and retention will rely on a corporate and community reputation that conveys business friendliness and an open for business environment. Collectively we must make doing business in Okotoks easier by removing real or perceived barriers to doing business. Identifying roadblocks and barriers for businesses both new and existing are essential. In addition to policy review, a culture of outstanding customer service will be fostered and the infrastructure to attract business must be in place relative to investment readiness. E.g. Water and land.

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

Okotoks attracts and retains businesses through business friendly policies and a corporate culture that demonstrate a “Yes We Can” progressive attitude.

#### **LINKAGES:**

##### **Corporate Business Plan**

Key Result Area (KRA's): **Foster Economic Vitality**

**KRA 2** Promote Okotoks as a place that is business-friendly, open for business and investment, and ready to compete on a regional basis

**KRA 3** Develop progressive business attraction and retention solutions to foster a resilient business community.

#### **ACTIONS:**

1. Economic Development to take a lead on mobile vending review and policy changes in tandem with other municipal business centres.
2. Organize bi-annual tours for commercial/industrial real estate agencies (local and Calgary) to promote opportunities to do business in Okotoks focusing on target sectors and business friendliness.
  - 2.1 Include information about Okotoks pro-business and development friendly attributes in industry-specific marketing materials and online.
3. Advocate and champion a streamlined approval processes for new industrial and commercial development (planning, building and business license approvals). Review should include comparisons to other communities of similar sizes.

**3.1** Organize annual meetings between local landlords, business property owners and prospective developers with economic development and appropriate Town business centres (i.e. Planning, Safety Codes and Parks) to understand developer and entrepreneur needs, challenges and successes.

**3.2** Implement start up or expansion business workshops for entrepreneurs [review in detail municipal processes and requirements for Planning, Safety Codes (building) and Parks (landscaping) with new and existing businesses].

**4.** Provide input to Planning Services on the re-write of the Okotoks Land Use Bylaw to streamline various zoning and regulatory approvals for non-residential districts in particular.

**5.** Develop comprehensive business visitation program in partnership with the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce to regularly visit business and industry and obtain feedback.

**5.1** Priority will be given to the Town's top employers and growth oriented companies in the downtown and the business parks to establish and nurture closer ties with the Town's business community.

**6.** Contract a third party research company to undertake a Business Satisfaction Survey relative to benchmark metrics on the local business climate, attitudes and opinions (every 2 years).

**7.** Work with local partners to promote and actively expand the resources available to support small business and start-ups, as it relates to the delivery of training, business counselling and financial assistance to small business operators and entrepreneurs.

**7.1** Develop a business mentorship program similar to the "Smart Start" program in other Calgary Region communities, thereby retaining more businesses once they open and providing a springboard for success (assist businesses find mentors).

**8.** Develop an "Aftercare" program for new companies establishing in Okotoks:

**8.1** Establish an "Aftercare" team consisting of Economic Development, Community Stakeholders and other Administration within the Town.

**8.2** Host a meet and greet at company offices for elected officials.

**8.3** Establish regular discussions with companies for the first year of operations to gather feedback and offer additional assistance.

**9.** Enhancing business approval processes and navigation through online platforms.

**9.1** Develop online business license application processes to allow files to be circulated to other Town business centres to expedite communications with customers.

**9.2** Develop an online list of all development permit approvals as well as the status of public applications for the public to view. This initiative will support local businesses looking to procure and sell their products and services within the community.

Performance Indicators/Measures BHAG 1	Benchmark	Target
Third party business satisfaction survey completed by research firm (requires additional budget every two years)	2017 first survey (1 <sup>st</sup> quarter)	80% business satisfaction
Independent ratings of the business climate in the community (Chamber of Commerce surveys and Business Visitation Survey in partnership with Chamber)	Data collection and sector analysis 2016	30% business participation
<p>New business friendly enhancements corporate-wide to reduce business roadblocks. The following are considered “game changers”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review parking approvals for new development or building additions downtown</li> <li>- Land Use Bylaw re-writes</li> <li>- Start Up/Expansion workshops for business implemented</li> <li>- Mentorship and AfterCare program developed</li> <li>- Regular Business Visits and Business Visitation</li> <li>- Mobile vending policies changed or considered</li> </ul>	<p>-Patio's/Blade sign overhaul (2015)</p> <p>-Major Development Permit Process Review (2014/2015)</p>	Complete 5 “big game” changers by 2020 to improve business friendliness and reduce red tape.
<p>Third party independent rankings on business climate and doing business to raise Okotoks profile.</p> <p>e.g./ Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), Money Sense Magazine, Alberta Venture Magazine etc. This metric is an accepted convention utilized by economic development practitioners.</p>	<p>2015 4<sup>th</sup> in Canada for Entrepreneurial Cities Index CFIB (under 150,000 in pop.)</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Best Community in Alberta to Do Business (Nov. 2013 AB Venture Magazine)</p>	Stay on lists and learn from rankings to improve. Rankings are used in promotions.
Awards received for work evaluated from third party independent organizations which provide economic development and tourism industry credibility. Recognitions communicated broadly for promotional purposes to raise the profile of the community thereby attracting more potential investment and tourism. This metric is an accepted convention utilized by economic development practitioners.	Economic Development of Alberta and Canada marketing awards in the past (2012, 2013, 2015) Municipality of the Year for Tourism 2015- Chinook Country Tourist Association	Apply for two awards per year.
<p>Creation of Exit Interview and Customer Service surveys to benchmark and track where possible why storefront businesses close and track progress around customer service related to what is working well and aspects that require improvement. Note: Not all business owners will be available to complete surveys.</p>	2016 data	75% of storefront businesses that close contacted. 75% business satisfaction rating on customer service surveys.
Total number of business networking events and workshops and increase business participation rates and attendance.	5 events conducted in 2015	Conduct 6-10 events/workshops per year and increase participation.
Total number of business mentors and businesses receiving coaching	Baseline established once mentor program going.	TBD <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the performance indicator/measures charts, TBD is defined as “to be determined” at a future date when more information is known on how to best establish specific targets and to track progress.

## BHAG #2

### **We have a vibrant downtown core with three anchors.**

Stemming from the Roger Brooks Downtown Community Assessment in 2014 as well as the Downtown Branding Exercise to date in 2015, there is a need to focus on transforming the downtown into a year round “jewel” in the region- a true destination. To become a “jewel”, three anchors are recommended: A public plaza, a public market and a performing arts facility all within the vicinity of the downtown area. The “anchors” are similar to shopping mall anchors in that they will draw traffic to businesses and increase property rents, property values and business property taxes. Other actions from the downtown implementation plan as well as potential incentives will assist the downtown. Please reference Appendix E in this report for the complete Roger Brooks downtown implementation plan.

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

Downtown Okotoks is a central gathering place for visitors and locals.

#### **LINKAGES:**

##### **Corporate Business Plan**

Key Result Area (KRA's): **Foster Economic Vitality**

**KRA 2** Promote Okotoks as a place that is business-friendly, open for business and investment, and ready to compete on a regional basis.

**KRA 3** Develop progressive business attraction and retention solutions to foster a resilient business community.

**KRA 5** Create a long-term plan to ensure the downtown area remains attractive as a destination and place for gathering in the community.

#### **ACTIONS:**

**1.** Explore with Council and potentially community stakeholders the feasibility of creating three anchors such as: a new public plaza, public market, and performing arts centre in or near the downtown with the goal of having one of these three assets built by 2020 and the others in planning stages. (See January 20, 2015 Economic Development Sub-Committee Report in Appendix)

**2.** Develop architectural guidelines for the downtown and other incentive programs to encourage beautification, redevelopment and new development in the downtown.

**2.1** Research and propose the development of a façade improvement incentive program for commercial building owners to invest in storefront improvements by providing grants to cover a portion of renovation costs.

**2.2** Research and propose the creation of a development incentive program to encourage property owners in downtown to invest in higher density commercial or residential development through financial incentives in order to assist in the revitalization of the

downtown. Includes multi unit residential, retail or commercial interior improvements, and new retail and commercial building development.

**3.** Work with Planning Services to create a long term downtown area enhancement plan to assist the downtown core becomes a year-round “jewel” in the region.

**3.1** Work with business owners and developers to align new and revitalized buildings with the downtown plan.

**3.2** Explore ways to achieve more 2-3 storey redevelopments in the downtown core with residential or offices on second floors and retail and/or restaurants on main floors.

**3.3** Work with Planning Services to explore changes to parking approvals in the downtown core and provide more off street parking lots particularly on the west end of the downtown.

**4.** Develop an Incubator/Accelerator (retail, food, art, small and midsize business). Artisan food, boutique style food processing businesses with community kitchen in the downtown, explore a potential Co-Op model.

**5.** Continue to work towards the key action recommendations and findings from the Roger Brook’s downtown community assessment and downtown branding exercise.

**5.1** Continue to prepare tourism marketing materials and advertisements that highlight activities, festivals and events in the downtown and promote them into the Calgary market and outside of Okotoks.

**5.2** Develop a wayfinding system for major arterial roads and pedestrian scale signage for key assets involving municipal facilities, cultural facilities and tourism.

**5.3** Advocate and champion for enhanced programming downtown with current events and to capitalize on new festivals and event expansion to achieve more frequent activities that draw crowds of up to 500 people on weekends as a starting target.

**5.4** Build and install new 24 hour a day visitor information kiosks/brochure racks to provide 24/7 access to visitor information.

**5.5** Work with downtown business owners and community stakeholders on ways to beautify the downtown including encouraging more planters, public patios and blade signage.

**5.6** Develop strategies to attract more boutique retailers and restaurants to downtown Okotoks developing more critical mass (10/10/10 rule- 10 boutique/unique retailers, 10 restaurants and 10 businesses open after 6pm daily). Work with businesses to be open late Thursday evenings and Sundays to be a true weekend destination.



Performance Indicators/Measures BHAG 2	Benchmark	Target
3 downtown anchors identified, location options planned and stakeholders/partners identified and financial plans developed	TBD	One asset built by 2020 with others in planning stages.
Parking approvals are handled differently in the downtown core (Planning Review)	TBD	Complete review by mid-2017.
Roundtable discussions on downtown planning and next steps related to variety of downtown topics	TBD	2 workshops with community in 2016 & 2017
More building additions, expansions and developments in the downtown core (main street) (Elizabeth St, McRae St, North Railway St. and Elma Street)	8 buildings expanded or developed downtown since 2006	10 new or expanded developments downtown by 2020
Incentive programs researched and implemented for façade and/or development incentive programs	None. Has not been done before.	2016-2017 recommendations made to Council. Increased building permits resulting
Retain and/or attract critical mass: 10 restaurants downtown, 10 boutique retailers and 10 business open after 6pm	14 restaurants downtown currently  15 boutique retailers downtown currently	Attract more of each category (ongoing)  Sunday operating Hours by some stores/restaurants (2017)  Thursday Night operating hours (ongoing)





## BHAG #3

### **We are an *active transportation* community**

Active transportation is a necessary component of a modern culture and community which will enhance attraction of new and young residents and investors. Contributes to economic development and a stronger economy through, local business use, tourism, trails for enhanced commuter and recreational use by residents as well as visitors. Active transportation provides business opportunities for new investment (outfitters, bike repair, tour operators, accommodations, etc.). Integrates and links community and government initiatives such as walking and cycling routes to schools and trail investments while improving recreational and commuter accessibility to people of all ages, abilities and income levels. This concept dovetails with Okotoks established reputation as an environmentally sustainable community and also promote an active and healthy lifestyle which is conducive to the type of type of people we want to attract and the culture we want to nurture.

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

Increase economic productivity, employment, business activity and investment through Active Transportation.

#### **LINKAGES:**

##### **Corporate Business Plan 2014-2017**

Key Result Area (KRA's): **Foster Economic Vitality**

**KRA 3** Develop progressive business attraction and retention solutions to foster a resilient business community.

**KRA 5** Create a long-term plan to ensure the downtown area remains attractive as a destination and place for gathering in the community.

Key Result Area (KRA's): **Healthy & Safe Community**

**KRA 2** Build a strong community that support the needs of our residents.

#### **ACTIONS:**

1. Support partnerships with local stakeholders to enhance and build municipal capacity for active transportation implementation.

**1.1** Advocating for a pedestrian and bicycle friendly downtown, including implementation of bike lanes, bike racks, and bike rental opportunities while ensuring safety during special cycling events.

**1.2** Advocating for connected sidewalks and expand local trails.

**1.3** Support Planning, Engineering and Community Services with the implementation of the local Active Transportation Implementation plan (as led by Planning and Community Services).

**1.4** Develop an active transportation tourism plan while exploring provincial funding opportunities.

**2.** Support consistent, scheduled road closures to motorized traffic for downtown main street (heart of downtown). Explore a Pedestrian Day event concept.

**2.1** Explore Sundays and late shopping evenings in conjunction with farmers markets and new summer programming in consultation with downtown stakeholders.

**3.** Advocate for the longest regional connecting community trail system – catering to regional and local tourism attractions (such as farms) to increase economic activities throughout the region with Okotoks being the hub.

**3.1** Explore a preliminary plan to connect communities within the region with a multipurpose all season trail (winter: cross country snowshoeing and in the summer: walk, rollerblade, skateboard, cycle etc.). Discuss with several Cool Little Towns communities.

**3.2** Establish linkages with local heritage and cultural destinations and potentially a pathway to Calgary.

**4.** Actively pursue investment and business attraction related to Active Transportation and Tourism. E.g./ Bike rental or other active transportation rental companies.

Performance Indicators/Measures BHAG 3	Benchmark	Target
Active Transportation Implementation Plan completed by Community Services/Planning Services with input from Economic Development.	Plan approved 2015, implementation plan in 2016.	TBD
Development of active transportation tourism policy	TBD	Completed
Work with Programs & Events or others to develop a “pedestrian day” or more pedestrian only events	TBD	More events oriented to pedestrians.
Okotoks is recognized as a leading active transportation community in Alberta.	TBD	By year 2020



## BHAG #4

### **Okotoks Is An Intellectual Property Leveraged Business Centre**

The creation and addition of more “living wage” employment opportunities will allow more residents to live and work in Okotoks. By focusing on attracting and retaining innovation, technology and intellectual property oriented businesses with a low environmental impact will result in high value jobs. Okotoks must identify the gaps to investment readiness, track inquiries and customers, and review and enhance strategies for intellectual property business attraction. Long term, we must increase the non-residential tax base by expanding from 13.74% of total assessment (current approximate as of September 2015) to the Municipal Development Plan targets of 22% and importantly measure the increases to municipal tax revenues generated by non-residential assessment increases.

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

**Enhance the Town’s ability to be recognized as an intellectual property leveraged business centre and “Entrepreneurial Hothouse” drawing businesses and resilient employment opportunities servicing local, national and international markets.**

#### **LINKAGES:**

##### **Corporate Business Plan 2014-2017**

Key Result Area (KRA’s): **Foster Economic Vitality**

**KRA 2** Promote Okotoks as a place that is business-friendly, open for business and investment, and ready to compete on a regional basis.

**KRA 3** Develop progressive business attraction and retention solutions to foster a resilient business community.

**KRA 4** Plan and prioritize future regional economic development initiatives, encouraging partnerships and alliances for a stable economically viable region.

#### **ACTIONS:**

1. Continue to explore efficient and cost effective options to enhance the broadband infrastructure as a means for attracting and retaining business investment.
  - 1.1. Determine the broadband capacity of the business parks and the feasibility of increasing capacity.
  - 1.2. Incorporating broadband expansion into road construction projects where appropriate and ensures conduit is in place for the future.
  - 1.3. Advocate to install fibre optics infrastructure with the future Calgary Water Pipeline (Calgary to Okotoks) to connect more Internet Service Providers.
  - 1.4. Work with the Calgary Regional Partnership Broadband Committee to continue research and ways to advance fiber and broadband capacity in Okotoks and region.

- 2.** Develop an environment that fosters innovation and research including attracting targeted industry sectors. The collaboration of industry with Post-Secondary education institutions will enhance training and opportunity for a skilled workforce in Okotoks.
  - 2.1.** Explore the development of an innovation trail that showcases environmental stewardship advancements in the resource and alternative energy industry, which in turn will attract business, investment and tourism through experiential education and industry training while highlighting improvements & innovations in the oil and gas industry.
  - 2.2.** Support the vision of the Okotoks Post-Secondary Education Committee by creating a culture of learning via the areas of arts and culture, business, research and learning thus ensuring a unique cost effective multipurpose concept resulting in a variety of revenue streams. Please see Appendix F for the Okotoks Post-Secondary Committee Vision.
- 3.** Undertake an Investment Readiness Assessment exercise to ensure and demonstrate Okotoks is a leading investment destination with a pro-business environment that has a business and development friendly community (identify gaps to investment readiness).
- 4.** Improve access to capital by establishing and enhancing networks linking angel investors, venture capital, banks and other financing sources to business and research opportunities to support the commercialization of innovation.
  - 4.1** Develop a program for more entrepreneur network opportunities and meetings in collaboration with the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce.
- 5.** Develop and refine an innovation and technology sector strategy that provides clear direction on matters related to the attraction of innovation businesses in Okotoks.
  - 5.1** Assess the impact of the Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) sectors in Okotoks and develop a sector profile.
  - 5.2** Review and enhance strategies proposed by the Economic Development Committee regarding Intellectual Business attraction concepts, international markets and immigrant attraction.
  - 5.3** Attend innovation related events where companies are present such as but not limited to: Tecterra, Innovate Calgary, Innovate Alberta, Oil & Gas Show, Globe Leadership Summit for Sustainable Business (business innovation conferences). Position Okotoks as an attractive location for professional offices establishments.
  - 5.4** In partnership with the business community create a “Hackathon” event over two to three days for technology app developers, IP development and innovators thereby fostering an open data policy within the municipality. Utilize this event to showcase Okotoks as a place to locate for innovation companies.
- 6.** Develop an Ambassador Program in the community to promote Okotoks via business travellers in Town to others internationally and showcase the community as a place to visit and do business.

7. Continue to attract more full service hotel developments and market for a regional convention centre to ensure Okotoks is open for business and assist existing hotels grow their market share.

Performance Indicators/Measures BHAG 4	Benchmark		Target
Number of total business establishments in town (retail, commercial, industrial) (assumes 2% increase per year with annexation and water acquisition complete)	575 (2014)		586 (2015) 597 (2016) 608 (2017) 620 (2018) 632 (2019) 644 (2020)
Increase in the type or industry sectors and track via North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) for Okotoks.	Baseline work required in 2016 once NAICS operational		TBD
Number of jobs declared overall in Okotoks* *note: historically professional employee numbers have not been counted, project underway to obtain.	4,338 jobs (as of Sept. 2015)		5500 jobs by 2020
Number of jobs declared for new business establishments (start-ups) *storefronts are physically located retail, commercial and industrial businesses	150 jobs on 39 New Storefronts (as of Sept. 2015)		150 new jobs per year
Business licenses closed and associated declared jobs.	23 storefronts closed & 115 jobs lost. 109 home based closed & 127 jobs lost (as of Sept 15, 2015)		Meet Canadian Industry averages for closure rates and compare year over year data.
Number of inquiries received and tracked. Categorized as leads, suspects, prospects and customers. Purpose is to track how many inquiries are received and how many businesses expand or establish in Okotoks as well as determine anything missing in town, challenges or barriers to entry and determine potential return on time invested.	85 inquiries in 2014.		Annual data review.
Building Permit values for Commercial, Industrial, Institutional additions and renovations	Three year average values = \$30.1 million (2012-2014) <u>2014</u> 16 industrial permits 47 commercial permits 5 institutional permits		Difficult to ascertain until annexation completed and water secured.
Increase in non-residential tax revenues	<u>2014</u> (\$000's) Res \$16 M Non-Res \$3,490 M <sup>3</sup>	<u>%Diff.</u>  80.6% 19.4%	TBD

<sup>3</sup> Data provided by Town of Okotoks Assessment Services, November 2015

Performance Indicators/Measures Cont.d BHAG 4	Benchmark	Target
Increase in tax assessment values (based on declared assessment). <i>To be reviewed with municipal development plan re-write.</i>	2015 as of Nov. 15 86.26% residential 13.18% non-residential	78% residential 22% non-residential
Okotoks Venture website analytics and social media analytics: compare increases, page visits, length of time spent, cities/countries, engagement, likes, shares etc. This is important as these tools bring in leads, visitors and new business to Town. This metric is an accepted convention utilized by economic development practitioners. Corporate executives using the Internet for site location searches jumped by 8% since 2011. Both location advisors and corporate executives use the Internet in the site selection process with 71% of location advisors and 62% of corporate executives. <sup>4</sup> 74% of businesses and executive decision makers use LinkedIn as a social media channel. <sup>5</sup>	All Business related pages overall <a href="http://www.okotoksventure.ca">www.okotoksventure.ca</a> Total # of page views 2015: 35,540 Total # of unique page views 2015: 27,343 Avg. time spent on business pages: 1:41 As of Nov. 12, 2015 <sup>6</sup>	50,000 page views per year and 38,000 unique page views per year. Increase Avg. time spent on pages. Establish an economic development LinkedIn presence.



<sup>4</sup> Development Counsellors International Study 2014: A View from Corporate America “Winning Strategies in Economic Development Marketing” - Business Marketing Techniques from the Customer’s Perspective

<sup>5</sup> Development Counsellors International Study 2014: A View from Corporate America “Winning Strategies in Economic Development Marketing” - Social Media and Executive Decision Makers

<sup>6</sup> Data provided by Corporate Communications Website Analytics, Town of Okotoks November 2015

## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX 2016-2020

The following implementation matrix will provide guidance as to the potential timing of actions, the role of the Town of Okotoks, who the potential partners are for various collaborations and what the incremental resources may look like, all key considerations. Throughout the next five years a series of annual tactical plans (work plans) will be critical to the execution of the recommendations in this Strategic Plan. In terms of timing, each recommendation will be identified as:

- Short-term (12 - 24 months)
- Medium-term (2 - 3.5 years)
- Long-term (3.5 - 5 years)

Performance metrics/measures and targets outlined in this plan will assist in measuring the progress toward each Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) and the accompanying objectives and actions. Resource requirements are presented as estimates for the purposes of long range planning. Confirmation of expenses is expected before undertaking actions.

Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
	S	M	L			
BHAG 1: We are a Yes We Can community						
Objective: Okotoks attracts and retains businesses through business friendly policies and a corporate culture that demonstrate a “yes we can” progressive attitude						
1. Economic Development to take a lead on mobile vending review and policy changes in tandem with other municipal business centres.	✓			Lead and Champion	Planning, Municipal Enforcement, business community, EDC, Chamber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
2. Organize bi-annual tours for commercial & industrial real estate agencies (local and Calgary) to promote opportunities to do business in Okotoks focusing on target sectors and business friendliness.	✓	✓	✓	Lead and Partner	Calgary Real Estate Board, Chamber of Commerce, Real Estate Investment Network, local real estate offices, EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$1500 per year for associated costs (2016)</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
2.1 Include information about Okotoks pro-business and development friendly attributes in industry-specific marketing materials and online.	✓	✓	✓	Promote	Chamber, real estate agents, developers, CRP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>



Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
	S	M	L			
BHAG 1: We are a Yes We Can community						
Objective: Okotoks attracts and retains businesses through business friendly policies and a corporate culture that demonstrate a “yes we can” progressive attitude						
3. Advocate and champion a streamlined approval processes for new industrial and commercial developments (planning, building and business license approvals). Review should include comparisons to other communities of similar sizes.	✓	✓		Advocate	Planning, Safety Codes, developers, businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Staff Time</li><li>▪ TBD</li></ul>
3.1 Organize annual meetings between local landlords, business property owners and prospective developers with economic development and appropriate Town business centres (i.e. Planning, Safety Codes and Parks) to understand developer and entrepreneur needs, challenges and successes.	✓	✓	✓	Lead and Partner	Planning, Safety Codes, Parks, EDC, Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$1000 per year</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
3.2 Implement start up or expansion business workshops for entrepreneurs [review in detail municipal processes and requirements for Planning, Safety Codes (building) and Parks (landscaping) with new and existing businesses].	✓			Lead and Partner	Planning, Safety Codes, Parks, Chamber of Commerce, CF Highwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$3000 per year for marketing etc.</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
4. Provide input to Planning Services on the re-write of the Okotoks Land Use Bylaw to streamline various zoning and regulatory approvals for non-residential districts in particular.	✓			Support	Planning, EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
5. Develop comprehensive business visitation program in partnership with the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce to regularly visit business and industry and obtain feedback.	✓	✓	✓	Champion and Support	Chamber of Commerce and EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$2000 per year</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
5.1 Priority will be given to the Town's top employers and growth oriented companies in the downtown and the business parks to establish and nurture closer ties with the Town's business community.	✓			Champion and Support	EDC and Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Same cost as #5</li></ul>



Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
	S	M	L			
BHAG 1: We are a Yes We Can community						
Objective: Okotoks attracts and retains businesses through business friendly policies and a corporate culture that demonstrate a “yes we can” progressive attitude						
6. Contract a third party research company to undertake a Business Satisfaction Survey relative to benchmark metrics on the local business climate, attitudes and opinions (every 2 years starting 2017)	✓	✓		Lead	Local partners help get word out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$15,000 every two years.</li><li>▪ Staff Time to project manage</li></ul>
7. Work with local partners to promote and actively expand the resources available to support small business and start-ups, as it relates to the delivery of training, business counselling and financial assistance to small business operators and entrepreneurs	✓	✓	✓	Champion and Promote	Chamber of Commerce, CF Highwood, McBride Career Group, Bow Valley College, CRP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$5,000 per year</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
7.1 Develop a business mentorship program similar to the “Smart Start” program in other Calgary Region communities, thereby retaining more businesses once they open and providing a springboard for success (assist businesses find mentors).	✓	✓		Lead and Partner	Chamber of Commerce, CF Highwood, McBride Career Group, Bow Valley College, lawyers, accountant, banks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$15,000 approx. initial cost with external assistance.</li><li>▪ Similar model in Airdrie.</li><li>▪ Annual costs TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
8. Develop an "Aftercare" program for new companies establishing in Okotoks		✓		Champion and Partner	See below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$2000 per year</li><li>▪ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
8.1 Establish an "Aftercare" team consisting of Economic Development, Community Stakeholders and other Administration within the Town.		✓		Champion and Partner	EDC, Planning, CF Highwood, Chamber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>

Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
	S	M	L			
BHAG 1: We are a Yes We Can community						
Objective: Okotoks attracts and retains businesses through business friendly policies and a corporate culture that demonstrate a “yes we can” progressive attitude						
8.2 Host a meet and greet at company offices for elected officials.		✓		Lead and Partner	Mayor, Council, EDC, CF Highwood, Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff Time</li><li>\$\$ TBD</li></ul>
8.3 Establish regular discussions with companies for the first year of operations to gather feedback and offer additional assistance.		✓		Lead and Partner	Mayor, Council, EDC, CF Highwood, Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff Time</li></ul>
9. Enhancing business approval processes and navigation through online platforms.	✓			Lead and Advocate	Information & Business Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff Time</li><li>\$\$ TBD</li></ul>
9.1 Develop online business license application processes to allow files to be circulated to other Town business centres to expedite communications with customers.	✓			Lead and Advocate	Information & Business Solutions, Safety Codes, Fire Services, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff Time</li><li>\$\$ TBD</li></ul>
9.2 Develop an online list of all development permit approvals as well as the status of public applications for the public to view. This initiative will support local businesses looking to procure and sell their products and services within the community.	✓	✓		Lead and Promote	Corporate Communications, Information & Business Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff Time</li><li>\$\$ TBD</li></ul>

Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
	S	M	L			
BHAG 2: We Have a Vibrant Downtown Core With Three Anchors						
Objective: Downtown Okotoks is a central gathering place for visitors and locals						
1. Explore with Council and potentially community stakeholders the feasibility of creating three anchors such as: a new public plaza, public market, and performing arts centre in or near the downtown with the goal of having one of these three assets built by 2020 and the others in planning stages. (See January 20, 2015 Economic Development Sub-Committee Report in Appendix)	✓	✓	✓	Champion and Partner	Olde Towne, BRZ, EDC, Chamber, Bow Valley, private industry, Okotoks Network, Planning, Eng., Programs & Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li><li>▪ Public Plaza estimated @ \$3 - \$5 Million</li></ul>
2. Develop architectural guidelines for the downtown and other incentive programs to encourage beautification, redevelopment and new development in the downtown.	✓	✓		Advocate and Support	Planning, Parks, Chamber, Olde Towne, BRZ, CF Highwood, Council, EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
2.1 Research and propose the development of a façade improvement incentive program for commercial building owners to invest in storefront improvements by providing grants to cover a portion of renovation costs.	✓	✓		Lead and Support	Planning, Sustainability Coord, Safety Codes, Council, EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
2.2 Research and propose the creation of a development incentive program to encourage property owners in downtown to invest in higher density commercial or residential development through financial incentives in order to assist in the revitalization of the downtown. Includes multi unit residential, retail or commercial interior improvements, and new retail and commercial building development.	✓	✓		Lead and Support	Planning, Sustainability Coordinator, Safety Codes, Council, EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>

Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
	S	M	L			
BHAG 2: We Have a Vibrant Downtown Core With Three Anchors						
Objective: Downtown Okotoks is a central gathering place for visitors and locals						
3. Work with Planning Services to create a long term downtown area enhancement plan to assist the downtown core becomes a year-round “jewel” in the region.	✓	✓		Support and Facilitate	EDC, Council, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Study Required</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
3.1 Work with business owners and developers to align new and revitalized buildings with the downtown plan.	✓	✓		Support and Facilitate	Downtown property owners, developers, EDC, Chamber, Olde Towne, BRZ, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
3.2 Explore ways to achieve more 2-3 storey redevelopments in the downtown core with residential or offices on second floors and retail and/or restaurants on main floors.	✓	✓	✓	Support and Facilitate	Downtown property owners, developers, EDC, Chamber, Olde Towne, BRZ, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li><li>▪ Research Required</li></ul>
3.3 Work with Planning Services to explore changes to parking approvals in the downtown core and provide more off street parking lots particularly on the west end of the downtown.	✓	✓		Support and Advocate	Council, Planning, Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li><li>▪ Research Required</li></ul>
4. Develop an Incubator/Accelerator (retail, food, art, small and midsize business). Artisan food, boutique style food processing businesses with community kitchen in the downtown, explore a potential Co-Op model.		✓	✓	Lead and Partner	Potential Co-op model, CF Highwood, BRZ, Olde Towne, private sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Study required</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>

Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
	S	M	L			
BHAG 2: We Have a Vibrant Downtown Core With Three Anchors						
Objective: Downtown Okotoks is a central gathering place for visitors and locals						
5. Continue to work towards the key action recommendations and findings from the Roger Brook's downtown community assessment and downtown branding exercise.	✓	✓	✓	Lead, Champion, Partner and Promote	Downtown Committee, EDC, Chamber, Olde Towne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD for various action items</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
5.1 Continue to prepare tourism marketing materials and advertisements that highlight activities, festivals and events in the downtown and promote them into the Calgary market and outside of Okotoks	✓	✓	✓	Lead and Support	Cool Little Towns, Travel AB, Tourism Calgary, Chinook Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
5.2 Develop a wayfinding system for major arterial roads and pedestrian scale signage for key assets involving municipal facilities, cultural facilities and tourism.		✓		Lead	Corporate Comm, Culture & Heritage, Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Up to \$350,000 cost estimate.</li></ul>
5.3 Advocate and champion for enhanced programming downtown with current events and to capitalize on new festivals and event expansion to achieve more frequent activities that draw crowds of up to 500 people on weekends as a starting target.	✓	✓	✓	Support, Champion and Advocate	Private Event Organizers, Programs & Events, Olde Towne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
5.4 Build and install new 24 hour a day visitor information kiosks/brochure racks to provide 24/7 access to visitor info.	✓			Lead	Culture & Heritage, Programs & Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$5000 in 2016 budget.</li></ul>

Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
	S	M	L			
BHAG 2: We Have a Vibrant Downtown Core With Three Anchors						
Objective: Downtown Okotoks is a central gathering place for visitors and locals						
5.5 Work with downtown business owners and community stakeholders on ways to beautify the downtown including encouraging more planters, public patios and blade signage.	✓	✓	✓	Lead, Champion and Promote	BRZ, Olde Towne business, landlords, Chamber.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
5.6 Develop strategies to attract more boutique retailers and restaurants to downtown Okotoks developing more critical mass (10/10/10 rule- 10 boutique/unique retailers, 10 restaurants and 10 businesses open after 6pm daily). Work with businesses to be open late Thursday evenings and Sundays to be a true weekend destination.	✓	✓	✓	Lead and Champion	Olde Towne, landlords, business, Chamber, local media, real estate agents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
BHAG 3: We Are An Active Transportation Community						
Objective: Increase economic productivity, employment, business activity and investment through Active Transportation.						
1. Support partnerships with local stakeholders to enhance and build municipal capacity for active transportation implementation.	✓	✓	✓	Support and Advocate	Various committees CRP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li></ul>
1.1 Advocating for a pedestrian and bicycle friendly downtown, including implementation of bike lanes, bike racks, and bike rental opportunities while ensuring safety during special cycling events.		✓		Support and Advocate	Olde Towne, BRZ, EDC, private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li></ul>
1.2 Advocating for connected sidewalks and expand local trails.	✓	✓	✓	Support and Advocate	Engineering, Parks, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li></ul>
1.3 Support Planning, Engineering and Community Services with the implementation of the local Active Transportation Implementation plan (as led by Planning and Community Services).	✓	✓	✓	Support and Advocate	CRP, town committees such as CPR, EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li></ul>

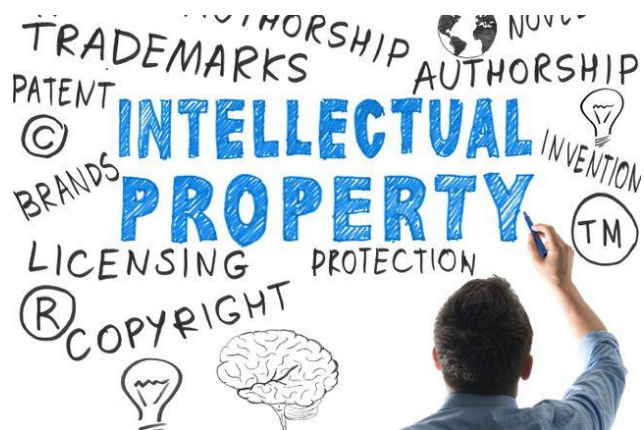
Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
	S	M	L			
BHAG 3: We Are An Active Transportation Community						
Objective: Increase economic productivity, employment, business activity and investment through Active Transportation.						
1.4 Develop an active transportation tourism plan while exploring provincial funding opportunities.		✓		Lead	Travel Alberta, Alberta Tourism & Culture, CRP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>\$\$\$ TBD</li><li>Staff Time</li></ul>
2. Support consistent, scheduled road closures to motorized traffic for downtown main street (heart of downtown). Explore a Pedestrian Day event concept.	✓	✓		Support and Champion	Programs and Events, Culture & Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>\$\$\$ TBD</li><li>Staff Time</li></ul>
2.1 Explore Sundays and late shopping evenings in conjunction with farmers markets and new summer programming in consultation with downtown stakeholders.	✓	✓		Lead, Champion and Partner	Olde Towne, BRZ, Chamber, CLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>\$\$\$ TBD</li><li>Staff Time</li></ul>
3. Advocate for the longest regional connecting community trail system – catering to regional and local tourism attractions (such as farms) to increase economic activities throughout the region with Okotoks being the hub.		✓	✓	Advocate and Support	Cool Little towns, regional municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>\$\$\$ TBD</li><li>Staff Time</li></ul>
3.1 Explore a preliminary plan to connect communities within the region with a multipurpose all season trail (winter: cross country snowshoeing and in the summer: walk, rollerblade, skateboard, cycle etc.). Discuss with several Cool Little Towns communities.		✓	✓	Advocate and Support	Cool Little towns, regional municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>\$\$\$ TBD</li><li>Staff Time</li></ul>
4. Actively pursue investment and business attraction related to Active Transportation and Tourism. E.g. Bike rental or other active transportation rental companies.	✓	✓	✓	Lead and Facilitate	Planning, private sector, Chamber, real estate agents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>\$\$\$ TBD</li><li>Staff Time</li></ul>



Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
	S	M	L			
BHAG 4: : Okotoks Is An Intellectual Property Leveraged Business Centre						
Objective: Enhance the Town’s ability to be recognized as an intellectual property leveraged business centre and “Entrepreneurial Hothouse” drawing businesses and resilient employment opportunities servicing local, national and international markets.						
1. Continue to explore efficient and cost effective options to enhance the broadband infrastructure as a means for attracting and retaining business investment.	✓	✓	✓	Champion, Lead and Support	CRP, Engineering, telecoms,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
1.1. Determine the broadband capacity of the business parks and the feasibility of increasing capacity.	✓			Champion, Lead and Support	Engineering, Information & Business Systems, CRP	
1.2. Incorporating broadband expansion into road construction projects where appropriate and ensures conduit is in place for the future.	✓	✓	✓	Support	Engineering Services, Telecoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
1.3. Advocate to install fibre optics infrastructure with the future Calgary Water Pipeline (Calgary to Okotoks) to connect more Internet Service Providers.	✓	✓	✓	Advocate and Support	Planning and Engineering Services, Council, Corporate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
1.4. Work with the Calgary Regional Partnership Broadband Committee to continue research and ways to advance fiber and broadband capacity in Okotoks and region.	✓	✓	✓	Lead and Support	CRP, Bow Valley College, Olds Institute, consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$5,000 (2016) to support regional study</li></ul>
2. Develop an environment that fosters innovation and research including attracting targeted industry sectors. The collaboration of industry with Post-Secondary education institutions will enhance training and opportunity for a skilled workforce in Okotoks.	✓	✓	✓	Lead and Partner	Post-Secondary Committee, Bow Valley College, EDC, Chamber, McBride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>

Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
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Objective: Enhance the Town’s ability to be recognized as an intellectual property leveraged business centre and “Entrepreneurial Hothouse” drawing businesses and resilient employment opportunities servicing local, national and international markets.						
2.1. Explore the development of an innovation trail that showcases environmental stewardship advancements in the resource and alternative energy industry, which in turn will attract business, investment and tourism through experiential education and industry training while highlighting improvements & innovations in the oil and gas industry.		✓	✓	Champion and Partner	Post-Secondary Committee, Bow Valley College, EDC, industry and business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
2.2. Support the vision of the Okotoks Post-Secondary Education Committee by creating a culture of learning via the areas of arts and culture, business, research and learning thus ensuring a unique cost effective multipurpose concept resulting in a variety of revenue streams. Please see Appendix F for the Okotoks Post-Secondary Education Committee Vision.	✓	✓	✓	Champion and Partner	Post-Secondary Committee, Bow Valley College, EDC, industry and business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
3. Undertake an Investment Readiness Assessment exercise to ensure and demonstrate Okotoks is a leading investment destination with a pro-business environment that has a business and development friendly community (identify gaps to investment readiness).	✓			Lead and Partner	Chamber, EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
4. Improve access to capital by establishing and enhancing networks linking angel investors, venture capital, banks and other financing sources to business and research opportunities to support the commercialization of innovation.	✓	✓		Advocate, Champion and Support	Banks, CF Highwood, Chamber, Agri. Financial Services Corp, BDC, Futurpreneur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>

Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
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Objective: Enhance the Town's ability to be recognized as an intellectual property leveraged business centre and “Entrepreneurial Hothouse” drawing businesses and resilient employment opportunities servicing local, national and international markets.						
4.1 Develop a program for more entrepreneur network opportunities and meetings in collaboration with the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce.	✓			Lead and Partner	Chamber, CF Highwood, Bow Valley, McBride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
5. Develop and refine an innovation and technology sector strategy that provides clear direction on matters related to the attraction of innovation businesses in Okotoks.	✓	✓		Lead and Partner	AB Ec.Dev, EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
5.1 Assess the impact of the Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) sectors in Okotoks and develop a sector profile.	✓			Lead	AB Ec.Dev, EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
5.2 Review and enhance strategies proposed by the Economic Development Committee regarding Intellectual Business attraction concepts, international markets and immigrant attraction.	✓			Lead and Partner	AB Ec.Dev, EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
5.3 Attend innovation related events where companies are present such as but not limited to: Tecterra, Innovate Calgary, Innovate Alberta, Oil & Gas Show, Globe Leadership Summit for Sustainable Business (business innovation conferences). Position Okotoks as an attractive location for professional offices establishments.	✓	✓	✓	Lead and Partner	Calgary Economic Development Calgary Regional Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>



Action	Timing			Role of Ec Dev	Potential Partners	Resource Requirements
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Objective: Enhance the Town’s ability to be recognized as an intellectual property leveraged business centre and “Entrepreneurial Hothouse” drawing businesses and resilient employment opportunities servicing local, national and international markets.						
5.4 In partnership with the business community create a “Hackathon” event over two to three days for technology app developers, IP development and innovators thereby fostering an open data policy within the municipality. Utilize this event to showcase Okotoks as a place to locate for innovation companies.		✓	✓	Champion, Support and Promote	Private sector, Chamber, CF Highwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
6. Develop an Ambassador Program in the community to promote Okotoks via business travellers in Town to others internationally and showcase the community as a place to visit and do business.		✓	✓	Lead, Champion and Promote	Chamber, entire community, CF Highwood, real estate agents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$\$ TBD</li><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>
7. Continue to attract more full service hotel developments and market for a regional convention centre to ensure Okotoks is open for business and assist existing hotels grow their market share.	✓	✓	✓	Lead and Promote	Developers Real estate agents, AB Tourism & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Staff Time</li></ul>

active transportation business-friendly policies investment  
broadband **Yes We Can** three anchors  
**intellectual** innovation  
economic productivity **property**  
entrepreneurial hothouse **vibrant downtown core**

## ABOUT OKOTOKS

### Introduction

The Town of Okotoks is surrounded by magnificent Rocky Mountain views, bountiful rolling hills and the splendid Sheep River Valley. Okotoks is committed to maintaining its enviable lifestyle and it shows! Community efforts are a reflection of the residents' desire to build a community that preserves all things great about small town living while generating unparalleled recreation, education, and employment opportunities. Okotoks is strategically located 10 minutes south of Calgary and has a population in 2015 of 28,016 people. A place where sophisticated business and high environmental standards meet resulting in a highly desirable location.

The Town has taken a unique approach to community development through its recognition of sustainability and supporting natural environment in implementing world-leading solutions to today's environmental challenges. In the beginning, this specifically meant the carrying capacity of the Sheep River watershed. Over time, the definition of sustainability has evolved to be an even more holistic practice, incorporating a diversity of environmental, economic and social initiatives. Okotoks combined, notable efforts aimed at leaving the world a better place for the children, continues to inspire on the global stage – forging a new path that others seek to follow.



Okotoks offers unique shopping and exceptional dining opportunities that everyone is encouraged to indulge in. The storefronts of downtown all add up to quality service, boutique & specialty shopping, and art galleries that have become a magnet for locals, day-trippers and overnight guest alike. There are also many new commercial developments, such as Walmart, Costco, Winners and many more to the southeast of Okotoks that have helped to solidify Okotoks as a regional service centre.

In 2014, Okotoks was ranked by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) as one of the top places to start and grow business and in October 2015 Okotoks was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in Canada on that same Entrepreneurial City Index for centres under 150,000 people in population and ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in Canada overall. The Town of Okotoks was chosen as one of Alberta's Top Ten Investment Towns by the Real Estate Investment Network Ltd in 2012 and in 2013 and Money Sense magazine also ranked Okotoks as both the 36th best city overall to live and the 18th best small city to live in Canada. In 2013, Alberta Venture Magazine named Okotoks the fourth Best Place to Do Business in Alberta and prior to that ranked Okotoks as one of Alberta's 10 Best Communities for Business in 2008, Fastest Growth Area for 2009 and Top 5 Communities to Watch for Future Growth in 2010.

### The Okotoks Business Advantage:

Okotoks offers a cost competitive environment in which to operate with no business tax for the majority of businesses, allowing businesses an affordable environment while being located in a sustainable community. In addition the community has one of the lowest business property tax



rates in the entire Calgary Region. Non-residential tax differential rates are among the lowest of any Calgary region community. Alberta's favourable tax environment allows Okotoks to be a competitive option for business or head office relocations, branch offices or new facilities. Okotoks is in close proximity to Calgary and the international airport is located 50 minutes from Okotoks. The City of Calgary is home of the Stampede, the headquarter hub for corporate business.

The industrial focus is on attracting and encouraging industries that are appropriate for the local business and community environment in terms of land requirements, goods and services provided, required skills and the draw on community resources (water, sewer, energy). Key industries that are a very good fit for the community are IT, innovation, light industrial, general professional service offices, greening and environmentally focused companies, boutique style retail, sports related retail and services, boutique style restaurants.

### **Recreation and Outdoors**

Located in one of Alberta's finest recreation areas, Okotoks is an outdoor place. Rivers, meadows, rolling foothills, and mountains inspire an active lifestyle. Okotoks is a sports hub for baseball, with an indoor and outdoor training facility as well as a baseball school; in addition to lacrosse, soccer, swimming, hockey, curling, biking, running, badminton, hiking, fishing, and three local golf courses, plus an 18 hole miniature golf course. For the horseback riding enthusiast there is plenty available

in the region, various trails in addition to over 800kms of equestrian use trails throughout Kananaskis Country. The famous Spruce Meadows equestrian centre home for international horse competition is just 10 minutes north of Okotoks.



The Big Rock, is the largest glacial erratic in North America, located 7 km west of Okotoks. The name Okotoks is actually Blackfoot for “rock.” Furthermore, Okotoks is in close proximity to winter sports, downhill and cross country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and more in the region and Kananaskis Country. Banff and Lake Louise are within a two hour drive.

## Arts, Culture and Social Scene



Olde Towne Okotoks is the heart of the historic downtown for unique shopping and dining experiences. Indulge in fine-dining or more casual fare at one of the eating establishments and revel in discovering one-of-a-kind treasures that can be found in Okotoks splendid boutique shopping locales. In Town, enjoy the Rotary Performing Arts Centre, Okotoks Museum and Archives at Heritage House, the Okotoks Public Library, the Okotoks Art Gallery at the Station, the Sheep River valley, and farmers markets in Okotoks and the region. Also available are exceptional home, health, beauty & wellness shops. Take a stroll along the Sheep River and enjoy a walk on the extensive 60KM+ pathway system.

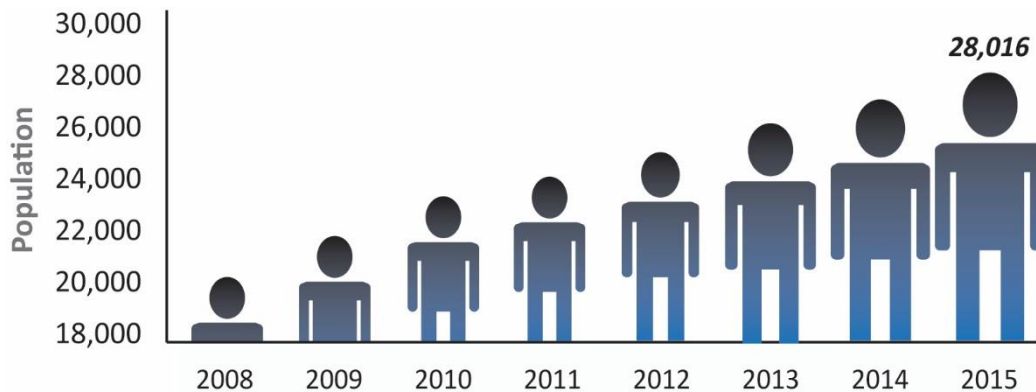
Okotoks is a progressive town with a vibrant arts community. The Okotoks Art Gallery reflects this wealth of creativity and dynamic energy. The gallery engages diverse communities and inspires a greater quality of life through meaningful visual art exhibitions and educational programming. Okotoks is a town with a rich heritage. The Okotoks Museum and Archives reflects the history of a community rooted in three centuries. The Museum promises to share the stories of Okotoks, inspiring people to connect to the community and the environment. More information on Okotoks is found at [www.okotokstourism.ca](http://www.okotokstourism.ca) and [www.okotoksventure.ca](http://www.okotoksventure.ca)

The screenshot displays the Okotoks Town website interface. At the top, navigation tabs include Town Services, Municipal Government, Discover Okotoks (highlighted), Culture & Heritage, Parks & Recreation, Doing Business, and Sustainability. A sidebar on the left under 'Discover Okotoks' lists categories like Things To Do, Places of Interest, Places to Stay & Eat, Visitor Information, Community Resources, Schools, Moving to Okotoks, Community Initiatives, Get Involved, and Social Well-Being. The main content area features a large banner for 'Your Weekend Destination' with the text 'Immerse yourself in all Okotoks has to offer!'. Below the banner, there are sections for 'Discover Okotoks News' and 'What's Happening'. The news section includes updates on a public transit survey, a collaborative school plan, and a cool little towns event. The 'What's Happening' section lists events such as TLC Parenting for Toddlers drop-in, a small stuff art sale, and a light up Okotoks event, with a 'View all Events' link.



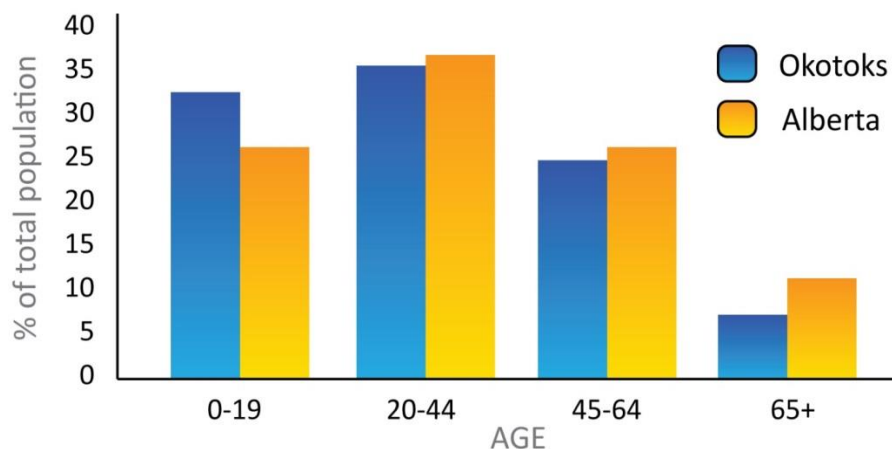
## OKOTOKS FACTS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

### Population



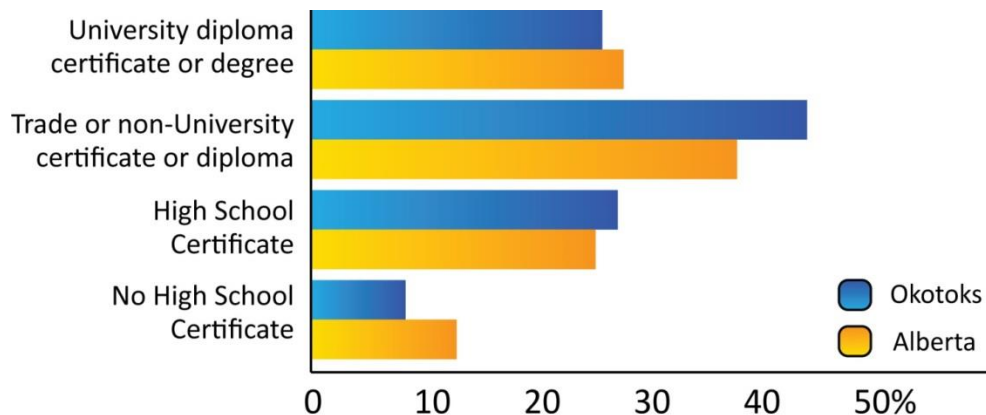
- Strong population growth over the last decade;
- One of Canada's fastest growing communities 2006-2011 at 42.9%
- Population 28,016 (Census 2015);
- A September 2012 Council resolution adopted a continuous growth model and the pursuit of a sub-regional water supply.

### Population Age Structure



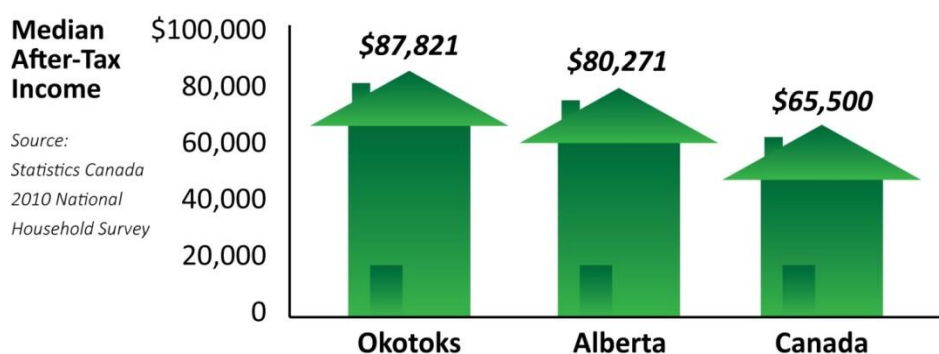
- Lifestyle edge or strong quality of life- One of Alberta's family friendly communities and Okotoks has one of the youngest average population ages in the Province of Alberta at 34 years of age; 72% of the population is under the age of 45.

## Education

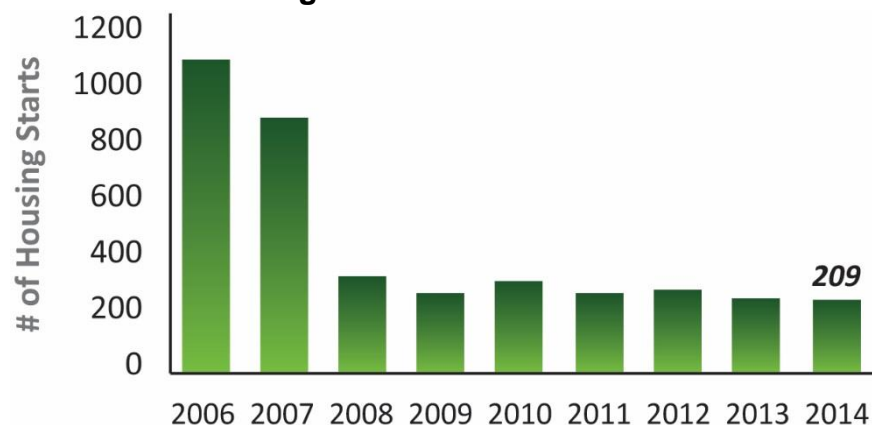


- Highly educated and above average education and income levels.

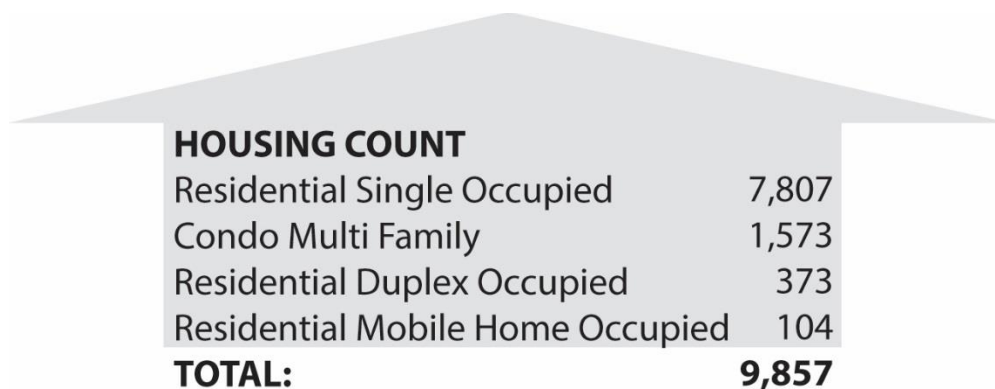
## Family Income



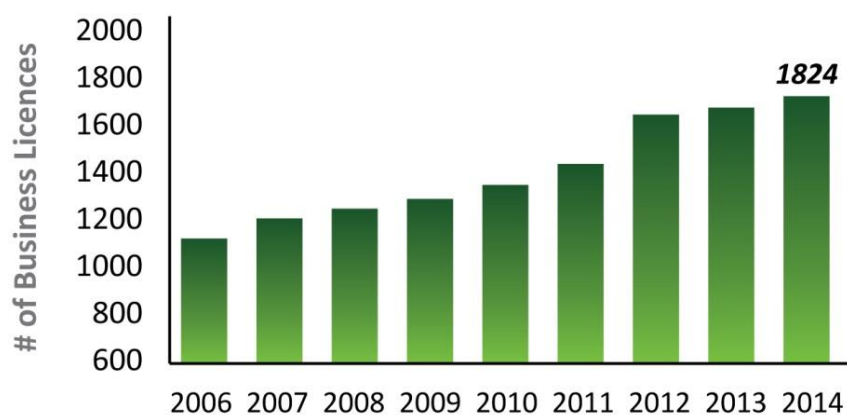
## Residential Housing Starts



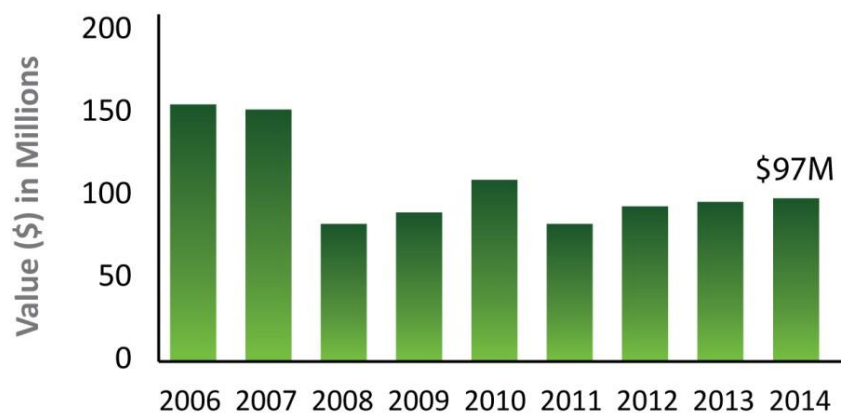
## Housing Count as of October 2015



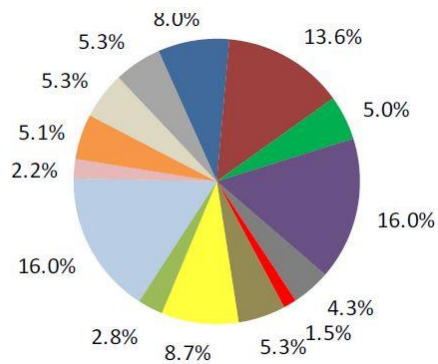
## Business Development Chart



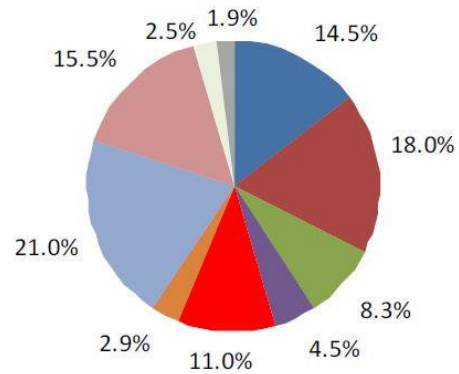
## Construction Values



## Labour Force by Industry



## Labour Force by Occupation



### Legend

- |                                                     |                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| ■ Resources (Agriculture, Mining, Oil and Gas, etc) | ■ Professional, Scientific, Technical Services  |
| ■ Construction/Utilities                            | ■ Administration, Waste Management, Remediation |
| ■ Manufacturing                                     | ■ Education, Health Care, Social Assistance     |
| ■ Retail/Wholesale Trade                            | ■ Arts, Entertainment, Recreation               |
| ■ Transportation/Warehousing                        | ■ Accommodation/Food Services                   |
| ■ Information/Cultural Industries                   | ■ Other Services                                |
| ■ Finance, Insurance, Real Estate                   | ■ Public Administration                         |



## CONCLUSION

While the Business Plan is the overarching Corporate Strategy, the Economic Development Strategic Plan **Together: We Can 2016 – 2020** serves as a springboard to achieve the goals, objectives and actions. The Town of Okotoks Economic Development Strategic Plan proposes a five year plan that caters to the greater vision of the community of Okotoks, its continued growth and prosperity. A sound, long-term economic development plan ensures that future generations have the community resources in place to support an increased quality of life, a place with living wage employment opportunities, a business friendly community and a robust downtown.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan is the road map that provides direction towards achieving the four Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAG's) outlined in this plan, provides a vision for the delivery of economic development services, identifies the core business areas of Okotoks Economic Development and provides the specific actions and performance metrics to be considered for evaluation. At the heart of this Plan the outcomes will strive to:

- Attract and retain business investment;
- Increase employment;
- Grow the municipal tax base;
- Improve government processes; and
- Enhance capacity for community development

Community building is both an art and a science, requiring dexterity and balance. Fostering a vibrant business community is essential to balance the current reliance on the residential tax base to meet the quality of life needs. It requires dexterity to encourage future economic development that enhances, and in fact, adds to the overall quality of life and quality of place.

New businesses and industries attracted to Okotoks will be attracted by the entire package of offerings – the high standard of living and environmental values, the availability of a well-educated workforce, competitive, business friendly policies, access to training and education, a mature cultural and leisure sector and a vibrant town with all amenities for visitors and residents alike. The implementation of this economic development strategic plan requires an integrated partnership between various municipal business centres, public institutions and the private sector.

Collaboration is a key factor to achieve the actions of this plan and numerous stakeholders such as the Economic Development Committee, Town Council, the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures Highwood, Bow Valley College and many others are essential contributing partners to build and deliver an enhanced community with long term economic prosperity. **Together, We Can.**

# Appendix A: Economic Development Sub Committee Notes June and July 2014

- World leading community for entrepreneur business that focus on.
  - IP – Post Secondary Program down tails.
  - IP – speciality – legal, security, training, mktg.
- Strong Arts/Culture programs/clubs as this enhances business attractiveness.
- Professional walk to coffee shops and as you sip on your coffee you hear people selling their innovative ideas/products around the world. Almost an open-office concept: bring people together.
- People can pop out of their office to play – with their kids, with their friends, then back to work.
- Work/live/play/balance – eliminate commute time and create valuable interactions in the time savings.
- Central hub for community gathering.
- Keep existing green, sustainable, values.
- Entrepreneurial business – 5-50 people focus.
- Expansion of River Valley corridor/pathways.
- Walking/cycling/to work.
- 50% can live and work in Okotoks.
- See dog run for 2 years, beauty of mountains, protect it.
- Connected community – people know neighbours, people know business, prefer to shop local.
- World recognized successful businesses in their niche markets.
- New manufacture where everything is custom to user
- High education
- High economies
- Innovative – high IP (intellectual property) user component
- High value add – connected, innovation, yes we can, belonging to place, use innovation

## A Community by Design

### Okotoks 2030

- Vibrant.
- Active night live – restaurants, cafes, pub.
- Street life – fun to walk to the downtown core.
- Progressive - a 'yes' can do attitude.
- Cultural destination for South Calgary and Southern Alberta.
- Concerts, plays, dance tours.
- Cultural destination beyond Calgary: conferences, concerts (Big Valley) festivals.
- We need an outdoor stage for "summer in the park" concerts.
- Entrepreneurial Hot House – market diversification co-managed at high level.
- Caterers to complete (connected) Family (birth – death) – offers programs for all ages – recreation, social, cultural.
- Sport Event Mecca of Alberta – how to connect town and field house.
- Environmental/Sustainability Leader – H2O, building standards, recycling, energy.
- Silicon Valley for environmental innovation. Draw the companies, researchers, scientists, designers.....(HQ? conference).
- Dynamic workforce (Prof.) based in Okotoks – 60% of community works locally, Amen!, Preach it, Sista!
- Caring and giving community – strong non-profit sector, 30% of community actively volunteering in community.
- Hard to commit time to volunteer if commuting 2hrs / day (10hrs/wk)



- Redevelop Old Towne – make it the true centre
- Rip out Railway Tracks – Park beside Library
- Linear Park – Education & Business Campus from Southridge Drive through to 32<sup>nd</sup> Street – aka – Cimarron Blvd Raceway
- Close Elizabeth, McRae Streets – weekends to hold Farmers Market
- Establish trolley cars on those streets.
- 2 & 3 story buildings – prof on 2 & 3<sup>rd</sup> – as part of residential/commercial plan
- Street level – Retails & Restaurants & Pubs/Micro Brewery
- Upper floors – Professional & Residential
- Establish Arts Community – Performers and Artisans
- Summer – Festivals – Plays – Concerts – Plaza.
- Winter – Outdoor Community skating – cleared walking paths – places for fires & Hot Chocolate.

Sustainability and Environmental forward thinking and innovative/leading edge practices and study.  
Bonnie Eckert 17 June 2014



What does Okotoks look like in 2030?

- Little unknown sprawl, we have maintained sustainable foot print

What would Okotoks look like in 2020?

- The question of water supply would be gone
- Town would have flow around streets, businesses, and schools.
- Captured heritage in down town but \_\_\_\_\_(?) techniques used to solve parking, public safety.
- Development of paths & river bank controlled by an authority, official person to ensure development does not control the beauty of the River Valley.
- Inclusion of all – housing is made so all levels of people can have a roof over their heads. Affordable housing.

- Lots of open spaces/walkways.
- Business park(s) with lots of green areas. Adequate parking etc. such that people can work – live & play in Okotoks.
- An Okotoks centre where Arts & Recreation & maybe education facilities are located along with gardens, parks, pathways etc.
- One possible location is in the River Valley on the North side West of Railway Bridge and east of South Railway drive extension.
- Opportunities as well in now annexed areas or D'Arcy Ranch or near Big Rock.
- A municipal plan with adequate affordable housing and senior housing.
- Incentives for certain types/bonuses.
- A revitalized Old Town Okotoks with combination businesses, offices and residential.
- Fas cache improvement program and incentives.
- Redevelopment incentives.
- Parking structure.

- Young entrepreneurial community
- Culturally savvy vibrant night life, bustling neighbourhood
- Ethnically diverse population
- Transit culture (w/ridership)/commuter and local system
- Diverse employment with live/work housing options for those based business/lofts
- Environmentally & sustainability continue to be key drivers for citizens, businesses & residents. World renowned.
- Best in class infrastructure
- Cultural campus/performing arts/post-secondary offering
- Complete & livable communities – pedestrian friendly with easy access.
- Encourage more green businesses
- Market baseball & sports facilities.

- Green industry #1 in Okotoks – known for environmental standards – award winning.
- Smaller affordable houses with bigger garden in new developments – green building – solar, green houses, rain barrels, rooftop gardens.
- Affordable work-live places – small storefronts with second level living for small business, artists, etc.
- Pedestrian and bike friendly Elma/Elizabeth street.
- Restaurants, artist places, unique artisans & businesses on Elma/Elizabeth, cafes, lots of outdoor patios
- Less parking to encourage active & healthy lifestyle.
- Centralized parking structure or structures?
- Tourism Visitors Centre.
- Cultural multipurpose campus, arts, any type, film, industry (oil/gas) post-secondary, culinary, innovation, environmental education, design, sports.
- Indoor Farmers Market (Fresno example)
- Retail incubators
- Capitalize on assets such as baseball school.
- Old Towne building theme – same style
- Educational trail and outdoor gym equipment (Ft. McMurray example)
- Atrium for Music Festivals & Events
- Public transit increase – streetcars in Old Towne?
- More night life options – diverse
- Stores are open longer and on weekends. Amen!!!
- Mix of housing – balanced & affordable
- Balance of Entrepreneurs & big employer corporate business.
- Impose tax for fast food chains for recycling/trash & burden on healthcare – goes towards community funds. As well as packaging at box stores.

#### 2020 – 30

- Walkable/transportation – cycle path, local bus service.
- Age friendly – seniors living, get kids to walk, use active transportation to school.  
– teach each generation to be physically active.
- Vibrant/colorful/appealing
- Cultural exchange – copy whenever you can, it's cheaper & quicker, locally grown visitor attracting – BMX, set target for communities to partner with us to leverage our success.
- Energy core – (Draw), house energy efficiency, more green companies.
- Post-Secondary building – combined with sports facilities.
- Affordable housing

#### Okotoks 2020

- Environmental
- Transport
- Community engagement – dialogue's/conversations – completed.
- Feeding town strat plan
- Strategic plan – yes, yes, yes

#### Okotoks 2030

- Signature attractions – BMX school, enhance relationship with MD/HR partners to create key sport centres for Alberta
- Economic – Significant Growth – 50% employed in Okotoks, Core for – SAIT, U of C, Mount Royal, trade schools, U of L, U of A. Education establishment, small business, help to navigate start up, Entrepreneurial support/resources.
- Main Street Development – redevelopment, central square
- Seniors – rural senior village, all social/economic groups, engaging/involved/empowered, facilities.
- Healthcare – local delivered, adequate, doctors, dentists, other.
- Environmental – passive house development, green space, linear paths, active transportation and all areas in Okotoks with central HUB in downtown, green companies, transport, roundabouts, by-pass routes.

- world leading community for entrepreneur business that focus on IP ⇒ Post Secondary Program
- High IP speciality (start-up, venture, incubator, etc.)
- Strong Arts/Culture Programs/Clubs
- Professions walk to coffee shops & as you sip on your coffee you hear people selling their innovative ideas/products around the world
- People can pop out of their office to play with their kids
- Central Hub for community gathering
- Business Sustainability Strategy → Need for marketing, fundraising and support.
- Keep existing green, sustainable values. Expansion of River Valley Corridor/Pathways.
- Entrepreneurial Business s.s. support flow.
- Walking/cycling to work.
- 50% can live & work in OKOTOKS
- Connected community -
- People know & neighbors
- People know businesses. - Prefer to shop local
- World recognized successful businesses in their niche markets in:
- High educational
- High innovative
- Innovative - high IP (intellectual property) use.
- High value add
- New manufacturing where everything is custom. to use.
- Connected → Blogging + Place
- Yes we & Con. →
- Use innovation.
- Work/Life/Play Balance
- Eliminate commute time & create valuable interactions in the time savings

## A Community By Design

### VIBRANT

- Active Night live - restaurants, cafes, pub.
- Street Live - fun to walk the downtown core

Progressive - A 'yes' can do attitude

Okotoks 2030

Entrepreneurial Hot House

Market diversification co-managed at high level

Cultural Destination for South Calgary & Southern AB

Cultural Destination beyond Calgary

Concerts, plays, dance tours

Okotoks, community (highly) Festivals

we need an outdoor stage for "Summer in the Park" concert

Caterers

to Complete (Connected)

Family (Birth → Death)

offers programs for all ages - recreation, social, cultural

→ 75% of our community that knows people on their street/club

Event Sport Mecca of Alberta How to connect town and Field House?...

Environmental Sustainability Leader

→ H<sub>2</sub>O → Building Standards → Recycling

→ Energy

Silicon Valley for environmental innovation. Draw the companies, researchers, scientists, designers... (Ha? Conference?)

Dynamic workforce (Prof) based in Okotoks

→ 60% of community works locally

Amen! Preach it, Sister!

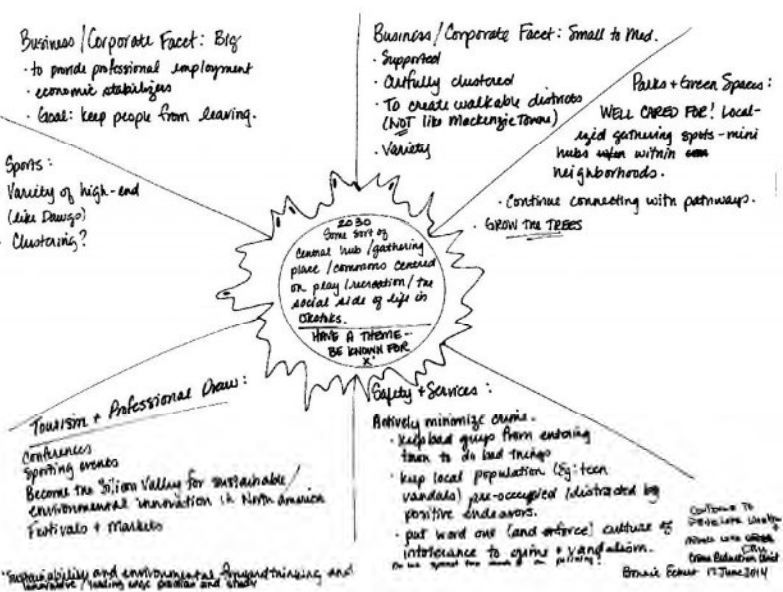
Caring & Giving Community

→ Strong non-profit sector

→ 30% of community actively volunteering in community

\* Hard to commit time to volunteer if commuting 2 hrs / day (10 hrs / wk)

→ 75% of our community that knows people on their street/club



REDEVELOP OLD TOWNE - MAKE IT THE TRUE CENTRE  
 RIP OUT RAILWAY TRACKS - PARK BESIDE LIBRARY  
 LINEAR PARK - EDUCATION & BUSINESS CANALS  
 FROM SOUTHBRIDGE DRIVE THROUGH TO 3RD STREET  
 AKA - CUMBERLAND BLVD RAILWAY  
 CLOSE ELIZABETH, McRAE STREETS - WEEKENDS TO HOLD FARMERS MARKET  
 ESTABLISH TROLLEY CARS ON THOSE STREETS.  
 2-3 STOREY BUILDINGS - PROF ON 2-3RD AS PART OF RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL PLAN  
 STREET LEVEL - RETAIL & RESTAURANTS + PUBS/MICRO BROWNDY  
 UPPER FLOORS - PROFESSIONAL & RESIDENTIAL ✓  
 ESTABLISH ARTS COMMUNITY - PERFORMERS & ARTISANS  
 SUMMER - FESTIVALS - PLAYS - CONCERTS - PLAZA.  
 WINTER - OUTDOOR SKATING - COMMUNITY(S) - CLEARED WALKING PATHS  
 PLACES FOR FIRES & HOT CHOCOLATE

\*sustainability and environmental friendliness and innovative / making use of solar and shade  
 Emma Eckert 17 June 2014

What does OKOTOK look like in 2020?

- ~~little urban sprawl~~ <sup>little urban sprawl</sup>, well maintained sustainable food forest.

What would OKOTOK look like in 2050?

- The Question of Water supply would be gone!
- Town would have flow around streets, Business on 2nd level.
- Capitalist heritage in Downtown but Modern technique used to reduce parking, Public safety.
- Development of Police & River bank controlled by an authority. Official body for urban development. Also must control the security of the River Valley.
- inclusion of all - housing in House on all levels of People can have a view over House. Affordable housing!

→ Lots of open spaces / walkways

→ Business park(s) with lots of green areas  
Adequate parking etc such that people can work - live & play in OKOTOK

→ All OKOTOK center where Arts & Recreation & maybe education facilities are located along with gardens, parks, pathways etc

→ One possible location is in the River Valley on the North side west of railway bridge and east of South Railway Drive extension. <sup>opportunities as well in new areas near or Dirty Road lands or near Big Rock</sup>

→ A municipal plan with adequate affordable housing and senior housing. <sup>→ Incentives for certain types/houses</sup>

→ A revitalized Old Town OKOTOK with combination business, offices & <sup>→ Facade Improvement program & incentives</sup>  
<sup>→ Redevelopment Incentives</sup>  
<sup>→ parking structure</sup>

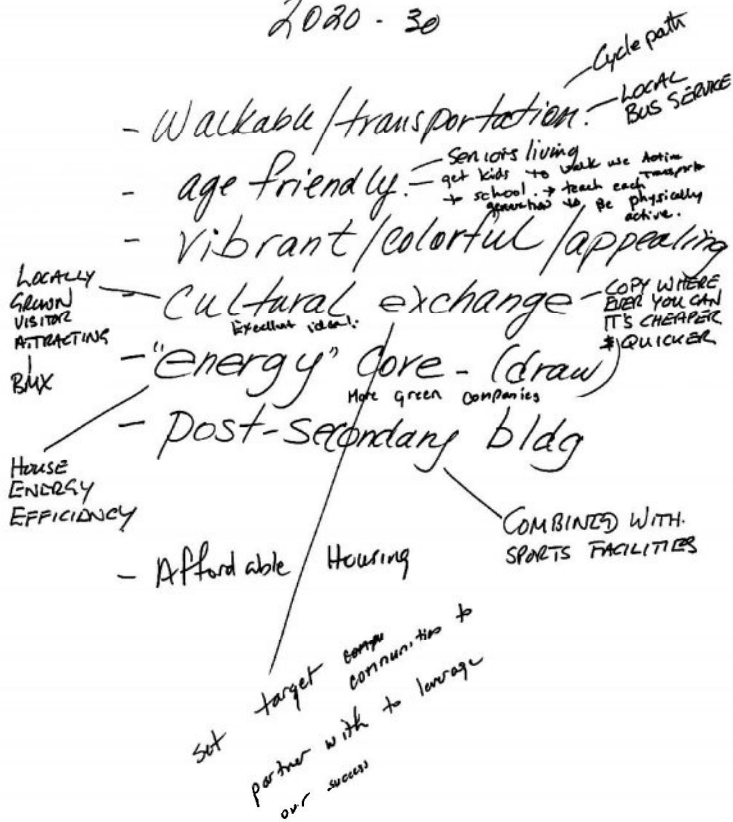
- Young entrepreneurial community
- Culturally savvy vibrant night life, bustling neighborhoods
- Ethnically Diverse population.
- Transit culture (w/ ridership) / Commuter + local system.
- Diverse employment with live/work housing options for home based business / lofts.
- Environmentally + Sustainability continue to be key drivers for citizens, businesses, + residents - World renowned.
- Best in class Infrastructure
- Cultural Campus / Performing Arts / post-secondary offering.
- Complete + livable communities - pedestrian friendly w/ easy access.
- Encourage more green businesses

MARKET BASEBALL + SPORTS FACILITIES

- Green industry #1 in Okotoks & known for environmental standards - award winning
- Small <sup>(affordable)</sup> houses with bigger garden in new developments → Green building → solar, green houses, rain barrels, rooftop gardens
- Affordable work-live places → small store fronts with second level living for small business, artists, etc
- Pedestrian and bike friendly Elma/Elizabeth St.
- Restaurants, Artist places, unique artisans & businesses on Elma/Elizabeth, cafes, lots of outdoor patios
- Less parking to encourage active & healthy lifestyle
- Tourism visitors Centre
- Cultural - Multi purpose campus → Arts, Film, industry (museums), post-secondary, library, innovation, environmental education, design, sports
- Indoor Farmers market (Fresno example)
- Retail incubators
- Capitalize on assets such as Baseball school
- Old Towne building themes → same style
- Educational trail and outdoor gym ~~fitness~~ equipment (Fr. Hustray example)
- Attraction for Music festivals & events
- Public transit increase - STREETCARS IN OLD TOWNE??
- More nightlife options - diverse
- Stores are open longer and on weekends AMEN!!!
- Mix of housing - balanced & affordable
- Balance of Entrepreneurs & big employer corporate business
- Impose tax for fast food chains for recycling/trash & burden on healthcare → goes towards community funds



2030 - 30



## MAKE BUSINESS EASY

- Make the environment attractive and easy for business to want to come to Okotoks. That not only means the hoops that businesses must jump through, but the overall business climate, tax rates, and an exciting, innovative Master Plan.
- Remove administrative roadblocks
- Have "transitional" office space (ability to grow)
- Ensure space availability/location viability
- More cross committee information sharing
- A culture to a "Yes" we can attitude – currently perceived as a "No" environment
- Parking requirements
- Understanding of "entrepreneurial time"
- Process navigation → 1 person to get you through steps start to finish

## Olde Towne

- Theme for downtown – vibe, more energy needed, architectural controls for buildings, façade enhancements
- Develop that exciting innovative Olde Towne Master Plan for redevelopment that runs from Southridge Drive east to the Towns Operation Centre. It needs to integrate residential business, research and development, arts, sports, parks, paths and more. In short an omnibus plan that establishes Olde Towne as a jewel amongst communities, and creates the desire for people and business to want to be a part of the movement. It must also be a year round plan so that families will want to come out and skate and have a sleigh or wagon ride. It can't be geared to warm weather only.
- Do we want to re-develop the downtown?
- Innovation districts – IT/Innovation
- White Fish Montana example for boutiques
- Parking enhancements and transit – more off-street parking lots
- Indoor walkways
- Thoughts on closing Elizabeth Street to traffic or Elma Street
- Build up to 2-3 storey multi-use buildings – Retail on main, professionals 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- Outdoor basketball court downtown
- Bon fire pits, trolley downtown
- Defining the space, clear vision, restricted parking and access

#### **ATTRACT THE RIGHT TYPES OF BUSINESS**

- What stands in the way of attracting the right business
- Main St needs to create the environment for small business
- Main St and Elma St as part of a whole Down Town complex
- Support for returning family members who bring a small business back to Okotoks
- Target 65% of work population to work in Okotoks/MD/High River etc.
- White Fish, Montana
- Carmel, Indiana
- +15 concept to link both sides of Main St
- Retail on ground floor, residential and small office based business and vehicle parking

#### **WIDER BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

- Giving back to community
- Community focused businesses
- Social focus
- Science park as an embryonic growth core for spin-off industries
- Attraction of High Tech companies relocating to North America and away from Asia

## Arts & culture

- Amphitheatre
- Community events

## Assets

- High education
- Large amount of green space
- Utilize the existing assets of Okotoks. Vibrant sports featuring hockey, baseball, BMX can be enhanced and expanded along with the arts scene. Incorporate artists and artisans, street performers, and galleries. Give people a reason to be in OldeTowne no matter their preferences, no matter the season
- Pathways
- Location
- Youth/young families
- Recreation facilities
- Transportation Hub/Corridor – proximity to airport
- Cultural facilities, Strong Arts programs
- Costco/Retail centre
- Weather (?)
- 3 Commercial Kitchens
- Strong community involvement, Traditions/Community Events
- Water conservation (Environmental Stewardship)
- High end sports teams, Schools – Private/Public availability
- Emergency services, Vets/Dentists, Access to Hospitals
- Low crime
- Active/healthy lifestyles

## Economic Development Sub Committee meetings report – November 18, 2014

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I would like to begin by thanking all the volunteer committee members, Councillors Thorn and Watrin, and the Town of Okotoks Economic Development Staff for their efforts and commitment to making Okotoks a better place for business and residents and business owners.

The Economic Development Sub Committee has held additional meetings throughout the summer and autumn on the alternative 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday meeting times. Outside individuals were invited to participate and provide input into the meetings. In addition, the members personally went out into the community and interviewed over 50 Okotoks residents.

The members identified two key areas holding Okotoks back. These are:

- Systemic roadblocks
- Lack of a unifying vision. Need BHAG\* – Big Hairy Audacious Goals

The Economic Development Sub Committee identified the following four BHAGs:

- We are a YES WE CAN community.
- We have a vibrant downtown core with three anchors.
- We are an Active Transportation community.
- Okotoks is an intellectual property leveraged business centre with businesses servicing local, national, and international markets creating jobs for people to live and work in our community.

These BHAG's are complementary to our current knowledge of the Roger Brooks and the Okotoks Visioning process that is underway. As the reports are available from these two consulting groups, the EDC subcommittee will incorporate the additional findings.

Presented by Yvonne Tollens, Chair EDC

\*BHAG from "Good to Great" by Jim Collins

# Economic Development Sub Committee meeting report – January 20, 2015

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The EDC Sub Committee met on December 16, 2014 and worked on BHAG\* #3 “We have a vibrant downtown core with three anchors.” The three Anchors the Sub Committee identified that would contribute the most to a vibrant downtown are:

- Plaza
- Arts Centre
- Public Market

The Sub Committee identified potential sites (see maps below) for these anchors.



It was identified by the Sub Committee that other interested community groups are stakeholders and should be included in discussions of the Downtown Anchors before a recommendation is made. Key stakeholder groups will be identified and included in future Sub Committee meetings around BHAG\* #3.

(over)





The above map shows the size of the Epcor Performing Arts Centre from Calgary (a 400 \* 265 footprint) transposed on a potential Okotoks site on Riverside Drive.

Presented by Yvonne Tollens, Chair EDC

\*BHAG from “Good to Great” by Jim Collins



# Appendix C EDC Sub Committee Update September 15, 2015

## EDC Sub Committee Update

Yvonne T. G. Tollens

September 15, 2015

## Role of EDC

- Appointed by Town of Okotoks Council to be the citizen representatives for the Okotoks Economic Development Department.
- January 2014 – ED brought in a consultant to do a SWAT analysis and create the ED Plan. The EDC was dissatisfied with the results and experience as this had been the same process in previous years. Wanted to have a round table atmosphere to come up with a better plan to address issues of concern.

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future™ Yvonne Tollens

## Background – January 2014 – to date

- February 2014 – EDC received permission from Council to create a volunteer sub committee that was free to meet outside council chambers and invite additional citizens.
- The EDC Sub Committee met regularly from February 2014 to March 2015 to build solutions that would address major gaps in the economic development of Okotoks.
- Key issues that were identified that needed resolution were:
  - the low non-residential tax revenues. Okotoks is 13% and other communities are 22%.
  - the pervasive negative perception that it is hard to do business in Okotoks,
  - the flagging downtown core with perpetual business turnover, and
  - the high cost of living in Okotoks exacerbated by lack of high paying jobs means that Okotoks is well on its way to becoming just a bedroom community to Calgary.

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future™ Yvonne Tollens

## The Sub Committee put in a significant amount of personal time and expense to seek solutions for the identified issues including:

- Interviewed over 50 residents and business people
- Took courses on ED
- Met with previous EDC chairs
- Attended Roger Brooks, Community Visioning Sessions and reviewed online materials
- Participated in weekend planning session with other chairs working on Active Transportation plan
- Trip to Olds – best IT infrastructure in North America
- Met with Dale Bar – re leading ED with a key focus on how to become investment ready
- Attended Future of Cities Round Table
- Actively sought out other successful communities looking for solutions so we did not have to “re-invent the wheel”
- Met regularly to share information and develop strategies.

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future™ Yvonne Tollens

## EDC Sub Committee – Interviews & Research

Identify why 20k people have chosen Okotoks over Calgary communities, Airdrie, Cochrane, or Chestermere

Interviews identified

- Has a central Downtown
- Clear sense of community
  - "small town"
  - "coming home"

**Vibrant Downtown key  
for Okotoks residents and  
attractive to business owners**

- Amenities including shopping, arts & culture, schools, recreation

Supported by Visioning Project (2014), Community Household Survey (2013)  
(aside: Calgary's Auburn Bay started 2010. Census 2014- 11,127)

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future T&R Textiles

## EDC Sub Committee – Interviews & Research

Interviews also identified the importance of:

- River valley and pathways
- Sustainability / environmental value system

**Okotoks is an active  
transportation community**

Supported by Visioning Project (2014), Community Household Survey (2013)

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future T&R Textiles

## EDC Sub Committee – Interviews & Research

Interviews also identified barriers to doing business in Okotoks

- Red tape, administration at ED, planning
- Okotoks is not investment ready.

**Okotoks needs to become  
a "yes we can" instead of  
a "no you can't" community**

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future T&R Textiles

## ED in Okotoks for last 20 years

- Big box stores, chain restaurants generally developed on bare land
- Massive increase in residential growth of 20k
- Few high paying jobs
- Tax burden is primarily carried by residential
- Little growth in business tax level and currently seeing more jobs lost than gained.

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future T&R Textiles

Attract Business with low environmental impact and high value jobs (in possible environment of no annexation / minimal water)

IP leverage

Increase non res tax base at rate higher than other towns

Citizens can afford to live and work in Okotoks

• Okotoks is an intellectual property leveraged business centre with businesses servicing local, national, and international markets creating jobs for people to live and work in our community.

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future T&B T&B

## EDC Sub Committee Solutions – 4 BHAGS

- We are a YES WE CAN community.
- We have a vibrant downtown core with three anchors.
- We are an Active Transportation community.
- Okotoks is an intellectual property leveraged business centre with businesses servicing local, national, and international markets creating jobs for people to live and work in our community.
- Presented to EDC and Council (via Council Rep) Fall 2014

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future T&B T&B

## Next Steps –Vibrant DT with 3 Key Anchors

- EDC Sub Committee put together our first effort for identifying the 3 Key Anchors
  - Arts Centre
  - Plaza
  - Public Market

Placed these ideas on a DT map to demonstrate possible locations.

This concept was brought forward to EDC and Council (Via Council Reps) in Fall 2014.

Note - The "anchors" are just like shopping mall anchors – there to draw traffic to businesses and increase property, rent, and tax values.

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future T&B T&B

## Next Steps –Vibrant DT with 3 Key Anchors

- EDC Sub Committee identified that a broader community group should be engaged
- Created list of over 30 key organizations / groups / key citizens to vision a downtown Master Plan. Goal for April 2015 was
  - Roundtable discussion 2 day event
  - April - Design plan using a similar format to the Active Transportation Process
  - June - Follow-up round table with the results and further input.
  - Once designed, each group would develop overall plan (including funding) for their anchor and take to council.

Appreciate the Past • Celebrate the Present • Anticipate the Future T&B T&B



## Risk of not creating a Vibrant DT

- If we do not attract key anchors like Arts, Public Market, Plaza etc. to downtown, and they instead create a competing "campus", the restaurants, retail and other businesses will be split. The downtown core will slowly die like many other DT cores.
- The result - one of key reasons why people are attracted to Okotoks will be lost along with a key tax revenue source.

## Next Steps – "Yes we can" community

- Work with other organizations and the town administration to systematically target and remove unnecessary roadblocks.
  - Ideas discussed but not formalized included
    - Create a respected committee of community members and administration that would untangle complaints and remove roadblocks to get to a "yes" solution.
    - As solutions and bridges are built between community and administration, these would be publicized to encourage positive uptake. Those issues that need changes in policy or procedure will go forward to Administration and Council to remove the legislative roadblocks.
    - Community groups would be actively encouraged to bring forward any ideas and as long as there is a commitment to focus on the solution, then the project would be actively moved forward.
    - For example – building a plaza – brainstorm on all possible locations. Consider how existing infrastructure projects could be dovetailed into creating a plaza. Consider creative funding – citizens could "buy a brick" with their personal inscription.
- Tanya Thorn is actively working with a group of developers to remove roadblocks. (In economic recession)
- Support DT Steering Committee – Blade Signs / Patio initiative (business community still skeptical)

## Next Steps – "Yes we can" community

- Business people helping business people
  - New businesses interested in coming to Okotoks would be matched to a mentor business person and support individuals in the community to help them:
    - Find banks, accountants, lawyers
    - Leased or purchased facilities
    - Homes / schools / jobs for spouse
    - "Learning the ropes" to smooth their transition into the community
- This is not the role of and ED officer as generally they are bureaucrats not business people.

## Next Steps – Active Transportation

- Establishing Okotoks as an Active Transportation Community differentiates Okotoks from all other communities.
- Dovetails with Okotoks' established reputation as an environmentally sustainable community.
- Types of businesses we are looking to attract fit well into an ATC.
- Supports overall desire of interviewees to connect and be part of a community as people connect more when they walk than when they drive.
- Need to build brand that includes the ATC values.

## Next Steps – IP Business Attraction

- Identify gaps to “investment ready”
  - For all business inquiries - review why / why not Okotoks?\*
  - What is attractive
  - What is missing
  - What do other locations offer
- Execute the Investment Ready review process
- Review and enhance strategies proposed in 2013 EDC Council presentation on IP Business Attraction

\*This can be done via spreadsheets / binder and then moved to CRM software when available

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## Measurables in the 5 year plan

- Vibrant DT
  - Roundtable Complete with community support
  - 3 Anchors identified
  - Key groups have ownership of Anchor development and bringing plans for funding and building the Anchor
  - Building permits in place to build / upgrade existing buildings in DT core.
  - Parking addressed
  - New buildings/ multi unit developments being built
  - Target number stores, restaurants, etc. met

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## Measurables in the 5 year plan continued...

- Yes we can community
  - Pervasive attitude of business and residential citizens express this attitude in surveys
  - Independent Chamber survey of business finds Okotoks community and administration “business friendly”

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## Measurables in the 5 year plan continued...

- Active Transportation Community
  - AT plan implemented
  - Target % of the population utilized AT
  - Okotoks is recognized as a leading AT Community

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## Measurables in the 5 year plan continued...

- Target % of the population lives and works in Okotoks
- Residential and Non-Residential tax rates moving in line with or better than the provincial key cities
- IP Leveraged Business
  - Strategic plan is developed to target and attract these businesses.
  - Okotoks is investment ready for these businesses
  - Business mentoring / support team is in place and Okotoks is a "yes we can" business environment.
  - Clear targets of \$/ number of businesses / people employed are identified and met.
- Okotoks is known as the place to locate if you are an IP business

## EDC Master Plan Recommendation

- We are a YES WE CAN community.
- We have a vibrant downtown core with three anchors.
- We are an Active Transportation community.
- Okotoks is an intellectual property leveraged business centre with businesses servicing local, national, and international markets creating jobs for people to live and work in our community.
- **Motion – EDC Recommends the 4 BHAG's be included as the key elements of the ED Master Plan.**



# Appendix D Business Attraction June 18, 2013

## Business Attraction

Goal: 22% Commercial Assessment Base

Yvonne T. G. Tollens  
Okotoks Economic Development Committee  
June 18, 2013

## Overview

- Challenges and opportunities facing Okotoks reaching 22% commercial assessment
- Technology Entrepreneurs
- What we can do and next steps

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## Bedroom Community or Business Centre?



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## Goal 22% Commercial Assessment Base

- Challenges
  - High cost of living
    - Most Okotokians need to work in Calgary to get high paying jobs
  - Cost of business in Okotoks high
    - What is the Okotoks advantage when compared to HR, South Calgary, etc.
  - In recent history, have been attracting big box stores / restaurants which tend towards low paying positions
  - Water issues may influence relocation

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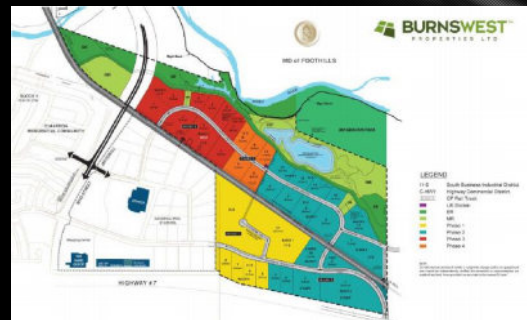


## Goal 22% Commercial Assessment Base

- Opportunities
  - Highly educated, youthful workforce
  - Beautiful physical location
  - Safe, welcoming community
  - Positive community value system
- Large serviced Business Industrial District

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## Southbank Business Park



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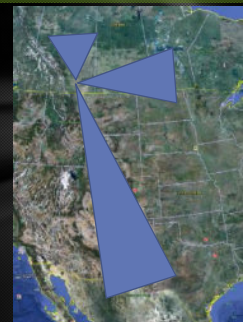
## Technology Entrepreneurs

- Bigger than IT
- Disruptive technologies
  - McKinsey Global Institute
- Background
- Profile of target entrepreneurs

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## Okotoks, Alberta can be a wonderful place for the right entrepreneurs

- "Can do" attitude
- Positive government
- Reasonable tax rates
- Access to skilled employees
- Beautiful location
- Positive community
- Other locations were cheaper, but "soft values offset because if we are happy in our life, we can make the premium dollars in tech."



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## Who are the “right” entrepreneurs for Okotoks?

- Technology based companies
- Have an established international market
- Business can be relocated to Okotoks while maintaining existing clients
- \$3m+ annual sales
- 10+ skilled employees
- Entrepreneur owned
- Age 30 – 50

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## Why entrepreneurs of this business size and demographic

- Direct connect with decision maker
- Fire in belly
- Have proven track record and have potential to grow in right environment
- Will chose location for business opportunity and quality of life

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## Where do we find these entrepreneurs and what do we have to offer them?



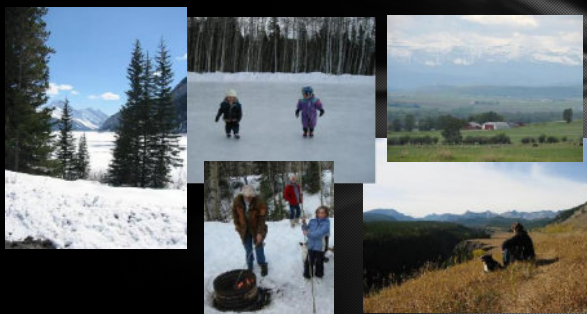
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## Dreams and Fears

- Why did the European Immigrants chose Okotoks?
  - Quality of life
    - "like winning the lottery"
    - Safe
    - Space
  - Community is growing, new, vibrant, welcoming
  - Lack of racial strife
  - Animals, mountains
- Opportunities for themselves and their children

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## Our backyard



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## Europe is struggling

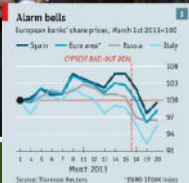
- Slow current and projected growth – economic stagnation
- EU opportunities have been captured
- Burden of weaker countries in EU
  - Tax surcharges being paid to support bank bailouts
  - Germany, Netherlands populations supporting Greece, Cyprus, Portugal, Italy, Spain
- EU leaders seeking tax and policy changes

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## The Cyprus bail-in - A bungled bank raid

Economist March 23, 2013

*The deal reached in the wee hours of March 16th in effect "bailed in" all the island's (Cyprus) bank depositors, insured as well as uninsured. The 9.9% levy on deposits above the €100,000 (\$130,000)*



## Business Value in Okotoks, Alberta

- Stable government
- Clear and business friendly tax policies
- Educated population
- Excellent market access
  - NAFTA
    - Access to US and Mexico
    - No tariff trade
    - Travel access
    - Neutral corporate and personal tax

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## Easy access to the world

- Calgary International Airport
  - Shanghai
    - Frankfurt – 8900 km, London – 9200 km, Okotoks – 9400 km
  - Houston
    - Frankfurt – 8400 km, London – 8800 km, Okotoks, 2800 km
- Freight costs
  - Shanghai – Container
    - Germany \$1600-1800, London \$1650-1750, Calgary via Vancouver \$950-1000.



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## How do we reach these people?

- Marketing
- Money
- Structure

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## Guerilla marketing

- Clear definition of the target market niche – narrow / tight focus
- Clear understanding of the decision maker's fears and dreams
- Clear understanding of how Okotoks can meet the entrepreneurs' needs; both personal and professional

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## Guerilla marketing continued

- Use today's Internet and social media tools to reach the audience
- Harvest resources close at hand that will reach our market:
  - Brainstorm who is in community we can tap into
    - Existing immigrants
    - Entrepreneurs in the right demographic / market and identify their electronic communities
- Smooth barriers – example:
  - Help with the paperwork
  - Have mentors for each entrepreneur
    - Chamber, Rotary, existing entrepreneurs, other immigrants

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## Four sources for funding

- Municipal
- Business
- Provincial
- Federal

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## Special Immigrant Entrepreneur Visa

Federal Government is developing immigration programs directed towards entrepreneurs:

January 24, 2013 - "Canada will launch a brand new program on April 1 to recruit innovative immigrant entrepreneurs who will create new jobs and spur economic growth. Our new Start-Up Visa will help make Canada the destination of choice for the world's best and brightest to launch their companies. Recruiting dynamic entrepreneurs from around the world will help Canada remain competitive in the global economy."

*Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney*

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2013/2013-01-24.asp>

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## Thoughts on Structure

- Committee of 5, including volunteer entrepreneurial / immigrant leaders and an Okotoks Councillor
- A town Staff Person
- Network of support resources
  - Mentors
  - Immigration experts
  - Bankers, realtors, etc.

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## 50 for 500

50 Technology based entrepreneur business  
marketing to the world market  
For 500 high skilled jobs

Filling the Okotoks Southbank Business Park

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## Let's talk ....

Your thoughts, insights, inspirations

Next Steps...

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DOWNTOWN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN		Appendix E: Downtown Steering Committee R. Brooks Summary							
Developed by Okotoks Economic Development		Updated November 2015							
#		OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMELINE	Start Year	LEAD ORGANIZATION/ COLLABORATION	UPDATE/RESULT	CONTACT	NOTES
1		Explore BRZ for downtown	OTO to explore next steps	Short Term 1-3 Years	2015	OTO	(10/1/15) OTO representative is leading the initiaitve and a separate group has been formed to champion the project. (5/19/15)Annie from BRZ's in Calgary spoke at OTO AGM Discussed at OTO Annual General Meeting	Leah/Mark D/Alex	Will be again addressed after rebranding of OTO
2		Explore Downtown rebranding with Olde Towne Okotoks group	ODSC to start initiative for a branding exercise for downtown only in consultation with OTO, Downtown businesses and Ec. Dev.	Short Term 1-3 Years	2015	ODSC Subcommittee/Ec Dev - Alex	Branding sub committee formed. Consultant Roger Brooks hired. Brooks Presenmtation scheduled for September 29th followed by Branding Committee meeting and Stakeholder interviews. Completion March 2016. Next meeting Nov.18th	Jody S./ Alex	Council <b>approved</b> to transfer monies earmarked for Wayfinding to Downtown Branding Initiative
3		Remove Elma Street Sign, promoting street as the retail district	Remove sign - explore enclosure policy	Short Term 1-3 Years	2015	Town of Okotoks, Ec Dev to lead, check with Transportation	Committee recommended to take sign down. Ec Dev to direct accordingly. Committee recommended to address replacement/removal of service clubs signs with council	Alex	EcDev. To talk to J. Greenshield re: sign
4		Remove chain link fencing downtown - Use cedar or wrought iron	Replace fence - Downtown only - Initiate conversation with property owner	Short Term 1-3 Years	2015	Town of Okotoks- EcDev., Planning matter, Engineering, Parks	Shane/Alex discussion with property owner, included Korean translator. Possibly part of next phase downtown revitalization. Owner cut grass.	Alex/Shane	Part of landuse bylaw discussion in 2016 - at this point no policy in place.
5		Consider removing outdoor furniture bolts	Add furniture.	Short Term 1-3 Years	2015	Town of Okotoks- Planning, Engineering, Parks	Unbolt 50% of furniture - recommendation to council. Changed to leave furniture as is and add furniture not bolted. Implemented summer 2015. Project was well received however experienced vandalism and theft. Committee recommends to replace the furniture in Spring 2016	Alex	Monies need to be added to budget for this project to continue next summer. <b>Motion</b> to recommend to council to replace furniture in 2016
6		Ensure cleanliness of public places	Visit sites in question and remove any debris in collaboration with various lead organizations	Short Term 1-3 Years	2015	Town of Okotoks- Parks & Transportation in collaboration with Chamber, River Valley, Active Transportation	Discussion required at Administration level - Krista and Jamie - suggest to invite them to one of our meetings. Cigarette butts a mayor problem, which committee would like to see rectified.	Christa/Jamie	Ongoing
7		Develop 24/7, 365-day visitor information kiosks with brochure distribution. Implement leaderboard for upcoming events at current town plaza	include locations: municipality, library and highway info may location. Event board for plaza and highway info location	Short Term 1-3 Years	2016	Town of Okotoks- Economic Development/ Even	Not in budget. Discussion required at Administration level. Committee discussed and recommend to council to allocate \$5,000 for brochure rack and leaderboard.	Shane/Alex	<b>Motion</b> to recommend to council to allocate \$5,000 for a brochure rack in downtwon in 2016
8		Downtown opening hours (10+ stores open after 6PM)	M. Patterson and OTO in collaboration with Ec Dev. Promoting longer hours and initiate additional campaigns	Short Term 1-3 Years	2014-2016	Olde Towne - (M. Patterson), Town Ec. Dev	Ongoing. OTO continues to encourage businesses to stay open longer on Thursdays and add Sundays opening. Explore additional events to make decision easier for businesses to stay open	Mandy/Alex	
9		Beautification initiatives (encourage landscaping – garden showcase)	Coordinate with lead organizations and businesses possible annual flower baskets and seasonal decorations	Short Term 1-3 Years	2016	Private and Olde Towne, Chamber, Town Ec. Dev, Parks (Christa), non-profit	Annual initiative. Possibly get Service Clubs involved	Christa/Alex	
10		Communication with Realtors and Landowners to recruit the right tenants	Organize event to initiate discussion	Short Term 1-3 Years	2016	Town of Okotoks- Economic Development	Will have its own meeting to discuss communication plan	Shane/Alex	
11		Enhance Marketing material and develop focused Marketing campaigns:	Promote “The Very Best of Okotoks, Alberta” – best/unique downtown businesses. Brochure on top ten things to do in Okotoks	Short Term 1-3 Years	2015/16	Town of Okotoks- Ec. Dev/Communications	Addressed and implemented. Ongoing annually	Alex	Top 10 things to do in Okotoks included in Visitors Guide. Event promotions - # of things to do campaign. <b>Completed</b> for 2015



12		Encourage business owners to improve appeal and invitation to visitors. Outdoor patios and encourage curb appeal and more exterior displays	Research various communities and provide council with recommendations. Inventory for possible interested businesses. Encourage businesses to change "Closed" signs to a more friendly approach. Encourage businesses to provide directions to public washrooms versus stopping them at the door.	Short Term 1-3 Years	2015	Town of Okotoks- Planning, Ec Dev, Chamber, OTO	Education ongoing. Summer Student and Alex visited all downtown restaurants to inform owners about outdoor patio. Doug Griffith presentation may provide encouragement to community. Follow up with Business owners.	Shane/Alex/Michael/Steve	New bylaw in place and education ongoing. Summer 2015. <b>Council Motion</b> to research outdoor patio options -completed
13		Promotion for key recommendations of the Implementation Plan	Make a list of these "suggestions" and spread them out to businesses and other organizations	Short Term 1-3 Years	2015	Downtown Committee	Discussion required at Committee level. Separate meeting suggested for 11/16	Mark R./EcDev	
14		Blade signage improvements	Research various communities and provide council with recommendations.	Short Term 1-3 Years	2015	Town of Okotoks- Planning, Ec Dev	Research - Completed and landuse bylaw improvement implemented. Education for businesses ongoing	Shane/Alex/Michael/Steve	Implemented - Council Motion to research presentation April 13th
15		Increase weekend programming	Implementation of a stand alone farmers market. Ask Town of Okotoks for program funding for performing arts at little plaza; to include in 2016 budget.	Short 1- 3 Year	2015	Town- Programs/Events/Ec Dev	Possibly include Mobile Vending in initiative. Discussion on committee level required. Discussed in Oct 2015 - M. Doherty one man show which makes enhanced programming difficult		Committee to recommend to council to increase budget for events.
16		Development of Wayfinding system and consider including a pedestrian wayfinding	Map all signs that need to be replaced and explore options of additional signage for pedestrians	Medium Term 3-5 Years	2017	Town of Okotoks: Ec Dev with input from Planning, Engineering, Corporate Communications	Ec. Dev to work on RFP end of 2016/17	Shane	New budget item for 2016/17. Council approved up to \$70,000 for conducting a Wayfinding study in 2015, which was transferred to the Branding initiative.
17		Explore Parking solutions	Review Parking requirements and provide alternative solution: parking versus patios. Develop Parking Master Plan	Medium 3- 5 Year	2015/2016				
18		Explore and development of downtown focus point, i.e. town plaza	Explore Options and develop separate project plan with features and timelines	Medium 3- 5 Year	2015/16				
19		Review possible improvement to current town stage area		Medium 3- 5 Year	2015				
20		Explore Street Entertainment for Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons year round		Medium 3- 5 Year	2015/16				
21		Develop architectural design guidelines for downtown		Medium 3- 5 Year	2015				
22		Initiate year around public market	Explore Options and develop separate project plan with features and timelines	Medium 3- 5 Year	2017				
23		Implement more bike stands		Medium 3- 5 Year	2016/17				
24		Add more cross walks		Medium 3- 5 Year	2017				

25		Elma Street: Use house numbers instead of interpretive numbers for historic walking tours and heritage buildings. Include brochure distribution somewhere		Medium 3-5 Year	2016/17				
26		Explore downtown Gateway feature		Medium 3-5 Year	2017				
27		Increase of Public Washrooms		Medium 3-5 Year	2017				
28		Re-develop strip mall parking lots to integrate and expand on patio options as well as curb appeal.		Long Term 5- 10 Years	2016				
29		Develop critical mass (10-10-10 rule)		Long Term 5- 10 Years	2016				



## Post-secondary Education Committee Report to the Town of Okotoks

March 2015



### Committee Composition

Chair:	Councillor Ray Watrin
Vice-Chair :	John Lockhart - Community Member
Corinne Finnie:	Director Regional Stewardship - Education Business Development, Foothills Region, Bow Valley College
June Diment:	Regional Lead: Foothills, Bow Valley College
Arlene Frederick:	Christ the Redeemer School Division Representative
Doug Stevens:	Foothills School Division Representative
Delilah Miller:	M.D. of Foothills
Tannis Adrejcin:	Okotoks Economic Development Committee Representative
Allen King:	Community Member
Sharon Nichols:	Community Member
Leslie Duchak:	Community Member
Alexandra Ross:	Okotoks Economic Development - Town Representative

## Questions addressed since the last UPDATE to Council by the Post-Secondary Education Committee



- ▶ What is the scale of the Post Secondary education and employment opportunities in Okotoks ?
- ▶ What are future employability skills required by business and industry?
- ▶ How can we improve access through blended and on-line learning?
- ▶ How can we continue to build relationships with other post-secondary institutions?



## Accomplishments 2014

- ▶ Agreed to implement Dual Credit programs between secondary and post-secondary institutions
- ▶ Agreed First Year Undergraduate University programs
- ▶ Continuing Education programs
- ▶ Career Program
- ▶ Vision Exercise and Strategic Action Items

# VISION



## Drafting a Legacy of Educational Leadership

### Environmental Sustainability Focus

- ▶ *Centre of Excellence for Renewable Resources*
- ▶ *Innovation and Technology*
- ▶ *Solar Thermal and Energy Efficient Technologies*
- ▶ *Water conservation and Innovation Studies*
- ▶ *Agriculture for Sustainable Food Institute*
- ▶ *Land Management School of Business*





# Drafting a Legacy of Educational Leadership

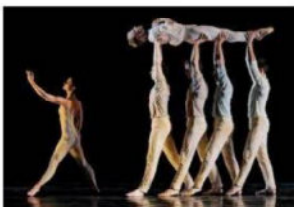
## Arts and Culture Focus

Some Examples are:

- ▶ *Digital Arts and Design*
- ▶ *Film and Multi-Media Centre*
- ▶ *Health and Wellness Studies*
- ▶ *Theatre and Performing Arts Centre*
- ▶ *Culinary Arts Institute*
- ▶ *Centre for Social Innovation*



## Creating a Culture of Excellence



## Complementing indoor and outdoors Culture & Learning



## Innovation in Partnership with Industry



### INNOVATION TRAIL

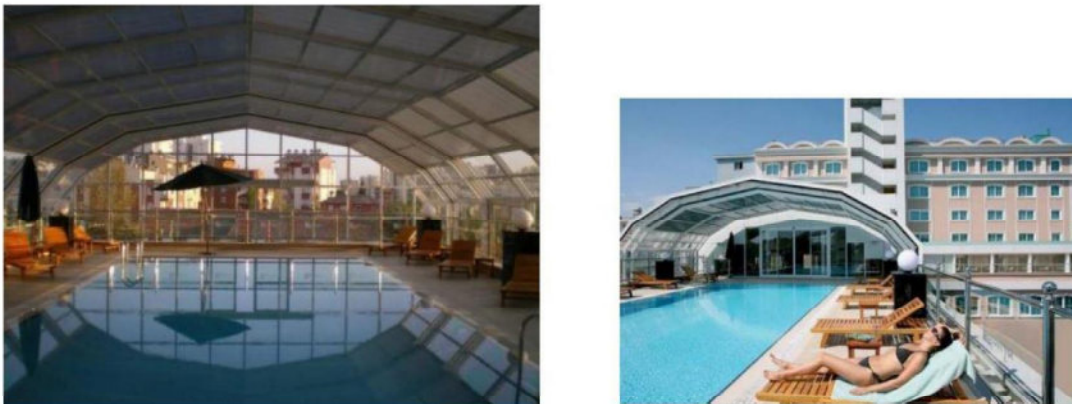




## Combining Learning with Business

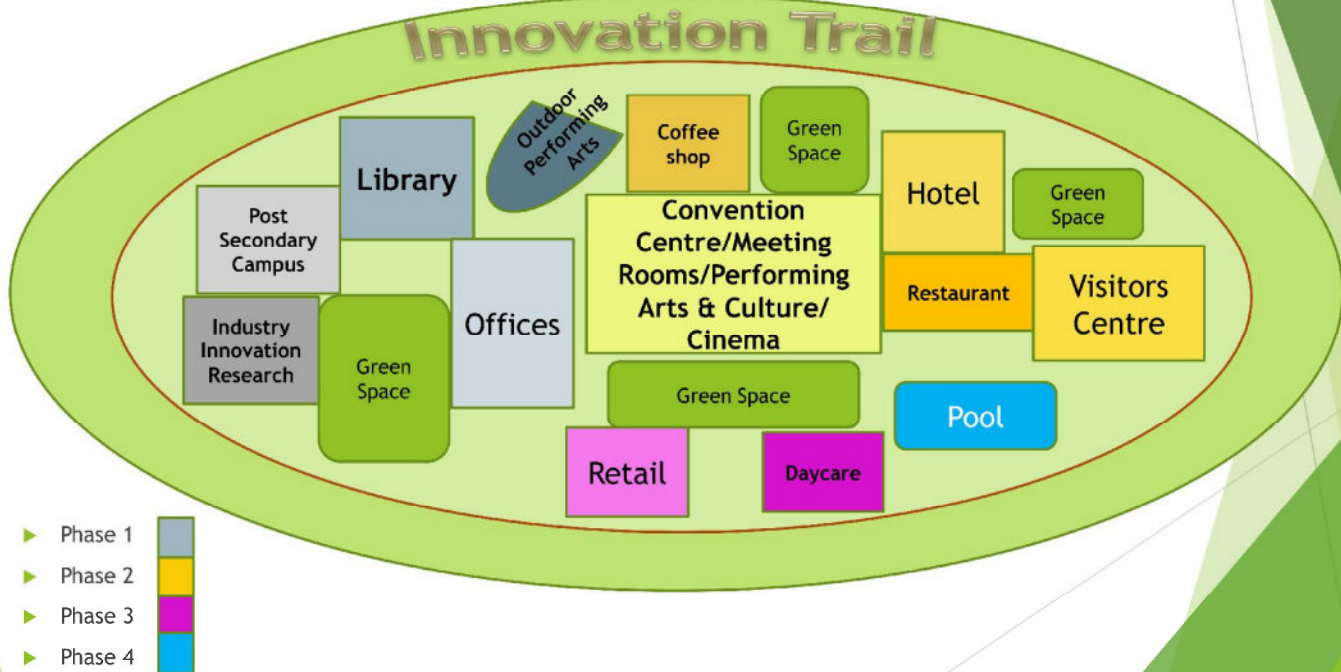


## Add Smart Recreation



Recreation: Indoor/Outdoor Pool

# The Vision: Centre of Excellence Innovation, Business, Environment, Intellect, Arts & Culture



## Operational Sustainability

- Offices
- Retail
- Hotel
- Convention Centre
- Restaurant
- Coffee shop



## Partnerships with public and private stakeholders could include:

- ▶ Town of Okotoks
- ▶ High Schools
- ▶ Public Library
- ▶ Cultural Campus
- ▶ Provincial Offices
- ▶ Post-Secondary Institutions
- ▶ Hotel/ Hospitality Facilities
- ▶ Conference
- ▶ Retail
- ▶ Industry
- ▶ Research and Innovation
- ▶ Private



## Benefits to Okotoks and Region

- ▶ Increase of intellectual capacity
- ▶ Creating a Culture within the community that attracts our target sectors
- ▶ More jobs
- ▶ Increase of economic activity and investment in Okotoks and region
- ▶ Increase of tourism activities
- ▶ Diversification
- ▶ Catering to the provincial overall goal
- ▶ Possibility to mitigate high school and university drop outs
- ▶ Attracting other industry through niche education
- ▶ Investment attraction





# Integration of Post Secondary Vision with Okotoks Community Vision

► TBA

## Strategic Next Steps :

- 1.Community engagement
- 2.Engagement of industries
- 3.Post-secondary partner preparation
- 4.Value-add business discussions
- 5.Funding research and development
- 6.Establish stakeholder representation



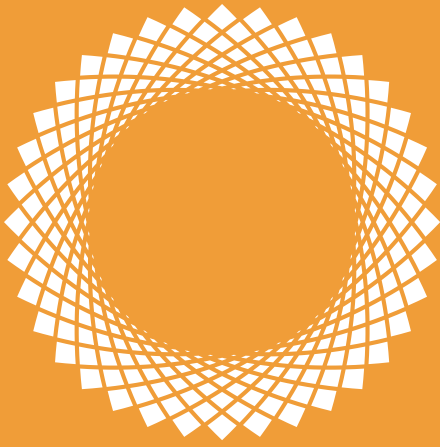
**dream big.**  
it's the first step to success.

# Thank you!



Okotoks Post- secondary Education Committee

# Appendix G: Community Visioning 2014



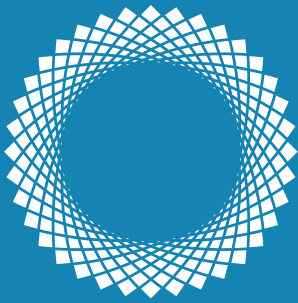
## OKOTOKS COMMUNITY VISIONING 2014

**SHARE YOUR IDEAS.  
SHAPE YOUR COMMUNITY.**  
SHARE TO SHAPE 2014.

## SUMMARY

January 2015

Prepared by: O2 Planning + Design  
Prepared for: Town of Okotoks



# OKOTOKS COMMUNITY VISIONING 2014

SHARE YOUR IDEAS.  
SHAPE YOUR COMMUNITY.  
SHARE TO SHAPE 2014.

## SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT PHASES

**ONE** IDENTIFY VALUES AND ASPIRATIONS

**TWO** REFINE IDEAS

**THREE** PREPARE DRAFT AND FINAL VISION

PROJECT LAUNCH SEPTEMBER 10  
LESSONS FROM THE FUTURE FOR CITIES

### ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



**13**

WEEKS (SEPTEMBER 10 – OCTOBER 15)  
WEEKS (OCTOBER 22 – NOVEMBER 12)  
WEEKS (NOVEMBER 27 – DECEMBER 12)



**2**

ROVING SHARE-TO-SHAPE KIOSKS



**10**

LOCATIONS



**5**

WORKSHOPS  
(PUBLIC (2), STAFF, COUNCIL, COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL)



**3**

COMMUNITY EVENTS



**2**

DROP-IN EVENTS  
(GALLERY EVENT, OPEN HOUSE)



ONLINE  
MAPPING TOOL



ONLINE SURVEYS



ONLINE DISCUSSION  
FORUM



STAKEHOLDER  
COMMENT FORMS



COMMENT BOX



IMAGINE THE FUTURE VIDEO  
GRADE 6

IMAGINE THE FUTURE ACTIVITY  
ELEMENTARY + HIGH SCHOOL

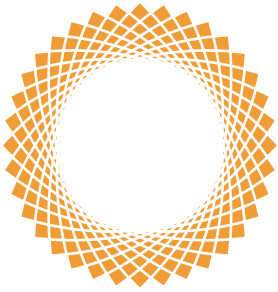
**2500+** COMMENTS RECEIVED  
**250+** PEOPLE ATTENDED

PHASE ONE  
**1800+**  
**140+**

PHASE TWO  
**600+**  
**80+**

PHASE THREE  
**60+**  
**30+**





# OKOTOKS COMMUNITY VISIONING 2014

**SHARE YOUR IDEAS.  
SHAPE YOUR COMMUNITY.**  
SHARE TO SHAPE 2014.

## THEMES

Fourteen major themes that imagine what Okotoks could become in the future have been identified and refined during the OCV process.



### SOCIAL CAPITAL (PEOPLE)

- People are the most highly valued community asset
- Sense of knowing others, sense of community, friendliness, and coming together at community events are the foundation of the "small town feel"
- Okotoks needs more places for people to gather (plazas, markets, creative centres)
- "We give each other that Okotokian acknowledgement of smiling, waving 'thanks' for stopping to let us cross the roads or allowing each other into lanes on busy roads"
- "I run into people I know about Town"



### PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

- The river valley landscape and mountain views are key natural features to celebrate and protect
- The sense of being close to nature contributes to the "small town feel"
- Pathways and trails connect people to the natural environment, and link-up neighbourhoods
- Preserve and expand the pathways and open space system as the community grows to nurture this asset



### DOWNTOWN

- Downtown should be a more active, vibrant place where there are things to see and do throughout the day and into the evening
- As a central gathering place, downtown requires attention, investment and some re-thinking
- Design, programming and services should reflect the people who make Okotoks great
- Need to address design and mix of commercial / restaurant uses



### NEIGHBOURHOODS

- Neighbourhoods are focal points of community activity
- Design is inclusive, environmentally responsible, compact and complete
- Spaces such as parks, community centres and small-scale commercial services create places for people to gather and socialize



### MOBILITY

- Transit (local and regional) is a defining feature of Okotoks in the future
- People choose active transportation options such as walking, biking or other people-powered modes over personal vehicle use
- Streets are safe, with high-quality infrastructure for all transportation modes



### CULTURE

- Okotoks is a cultural village where residents have access to a range of cultural opportunities
- Heritage, cultural and creative resources contribute to a thriving economy and residents' quality of life
- Cultural resources should be valued through community investment and support



### RECREATION

- Recreation facilities (eg. swimming pool, ice space, outdoor space) meet the needs of a healthy, active and engaged population
- Indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities are equitable, accessible and affordable
- Recreation contributes to a healthy lifestyle



### DESIGN / BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- The built environment is beautiful, reflects pride in the natural landscape, is well-connected, and supports the creation of an active and healthy lifestyle
- Housing is affordable, flexible and more diverse, and meets the needs of all residents young and old
- Develop a distinctive style beyond the "suburban" aesthetic



### ENVIRONMENT

- The Town is a leader in the provision of environmentally responsible services (recycling, composting, waste management)
- Focus on renewable energy and eco-innovation (solar power, district heating)
- Reduce waste, reduce energy use, preserve the river valley
- Create affordable environmental solutions



### GOVERNANCE

- Continue to invest in community events, high-quality provision of services, emphasis on relationships with people
- Model a "culture of yes" to promote innovation
- Regional focus to promote collaboration and cooperation
- Balance provision of services with affordability



### ECONOMY

- Locally-based
- Attract a range of professional and "living wage" jobs to improve affordability and reduce number of people who need to commute
- Market attractiveness of living in a complete community to attract small and medium-sized businesses
- Tourism is a component of economic development



### EDUCATION

- School spaces keep pace with population growth
- High-quality opportunities for continuing education, including a potential post-secondary campus
- Schools are multi-purpose community hubs



### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Promote a healthy and active lifestyle through recreation opportunities, cultural outlets and resident participation
- Facilities and services are inclusive, and help people stay healthy through every stage of their life
- Embrace an outlook that allows people to thrive in Okotoks throughout their entire lives



### COMMERCIAL / RETAIL SERVICES

- A full range of commercial and entertainment services reduces commuting to Calgary, and helps "complete" the community
- Ensure that shopping and restaurants are balanced north and south of the river
- Neighbourhood-level services animate community nodes that can be easily accessed by walking, cycling or other active modes

## VALUES

Six core community values were distilled from the fourteen major themes. Values are the building blocks for the vision and principles, and are a collective expression of what is most important to the Town.

### CARING

- People are friendly
- People look out for one another
- People take pride in their Town
- People thrive

### COMPLETE

- A range of housing, jobs, educational opportunities, services, recreation and culture are provided in the community
- The needs of all residents, regardless of income or age, are equitably met

### CONNECTED

- People can easily access community services
- Mobility emphasizes walking, cycling and transit use
- Integrated design links the built, social and natural environments

### ACTIVE, INCLUSIVE + DIVERSE

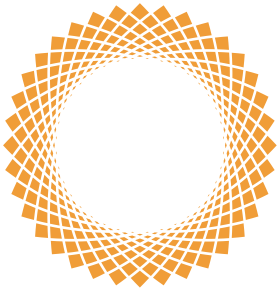
- Healthy, balanced lifestyle for all
- Strong participation in civic culture / community events
- Accessible heritage, cultural, creative, play-based and sporting resources

### GREEN

- Respect and conserve the natural environment
- Become leaders in climate change adaptation, energy reduction and renewable resources
- People are mindful of their actions and impacts

### RESILIENT

- Strong leadership
- Enduring commitment
- Affordable services
- Adaptive management
- People and municipal government strive for innovative and creative solutions



# OKOTOKS COMMUNITY VISIONING 2014

**SHARE YOUR IDEAS.  
SHAPE YOUR COMMUNITY.**  
SHARE TO SHAPE 2014.

## TOWN OF OKOTOKS COMMUNITY VISION

The Town of Okotoks is resilient, where people, businesses, ideas and sense of community thrive. Grounded by the Sheep River valley and supported by thoughtful planning and design, a strong local economy and a vibrant civic culture, Okotoks offers exceptional quality of life at every stage of life. Respect for each other and the natural environment makes Okotoks home.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### Livable Okotoks

People make Okotoks the caring, safe and welcoming place that it is. Public spaces are cherished, natural features are valued, and community needs are met. An appropriate mix of land uses, mobility options, infrastructure and accessible, affordable and equitable services provide the foundation for sustainable growth. High-quality education opportunities support life-long learning. The transportation network is multi-modal, allowing for the environmentally responsible and cost-effective movement of people and goods.

#### Inclusive Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods are connected, fostering a sense of community among residents. Housing is flexible, affordable and desirable, and meets the needs of residents of all ages, income levels and family types. Design and architecture create places that reflect neighbourhood culture. Community gathering spaces are animated and anchor neighbourhoods. Streets are lively and engaging places, where people can move around in a safe and inclusive environment. New communities are permeable and connected to encourage active transportation.

#### Sustainable Design

The places and spaces that make up Okotoks are designed with the environment in mind. Energy, air quality, land and water conservation are critical elements integrated in all planning and development projects. Okotoks is a leader in low-impact, environmentally conscious design. Creative resources, advanced technologies and respect for nature create a unique sense of place based on environmental stewardship. Regional and local transit provide efficient transportation alternatives and reduce vehicle use.

#### Vibrant Civic Culture and Heritage

Residents joyfully embrace Okotoks, and cultivate a rich quality of life. Okotoks provides access to a wide range of cultural resources, fostering audiences, participants and creators who contribute to community building and economic development. The strong tradition of community events is a hallmark of living in Okotoks. Residents are engaged in civic life, and Town Council and administration promote open dialogue.

#### Active Lifestyle

Residents enjoy an active lifestyle that nurtures community well-being. Health and wellness facilities support the needs of residents at every stage of life. Opportunities for sport and play are accessible in high-quality recreation facilities, multi-use civic buildings and a complete parks and open space network. These public spaces strengthen the bond between residents, and to the places they share.

#### Strong Local Economy

Okotoks-based employment and businesses strengthen the economy. Okotoks takes a collaborative approach to economic growth, creating new opportunities that complement the region. Okotoks promotes innovation and attracts businesses and industries. A thriving downtown supports economic development. Okotoks is a place to live, work and play, where local employment encourages residents to actively engage in their community.