

Council Focus Areas 2023 - 2026

2024 Yearend Updates

Transportation

Why is this important?

- Citizens want to move around Airdrie safely and easily in a variety of ways.
- Accessible modes of transportation will help connect people to place.
- Removing transportation barriers will enable more businesses to set up in Airdrie. This will generate more non-residential taxes and revenue for municipal services to the community.
- The 40th Avenue partial interchange and planned rail underpass at Yankee Valley Boulevard are key pieces of infrastructure that will improve traffic flow and have a beneficial economic impact.

Objectives

Enhance mobility and economic growth through improved transportation infrastructure

Transportation

Overall Status:

Enhance mobility and economic growth through improved transportation infrastructure

- Traffic Signal analysis is complete, and the final report is expected by end of Q1. The location for the first set of audible crosswalks have now been identified and will be along Main Street. Installation is also on target and aligned with the library opening date in September 2025. The remaining crosswalks will be replaced as needed and as indicated in the Safety Audit.
- Yankee Valley improvements design has been initiated with the consultant WSP. Construction of grade separation under the CPKC rail remains in 2026 as per the 10-year capital plan. However, Staff is evaluating timing of the improvements as part of an overall approach to upgrades on major arterials.
- The Transportation Master Plan is now being reviewed by BILD CR. The final report is expected by end of Q2 2025.

Leisure, Recreation & Culture

Why is this important?

- Four season opportunities for recreation and social connection through events, arts and culture are highly valued by our community and enhance residents' quality of life.
- Community facilities and amenities are needed to meet the demands of Airdrie's growing population. A revitalized downtown will be a place people want to gather, visit and be, where residents meet and connect socially.
- The library multi-use facility and future westside recreation centre are key amenities that will serve our community.

Objectives

4-season opportunities for recreation and social connection

Community facilities and amenities meet the needs as Airdrie grows

Leisure, Recreation & Culture

Overall Status:

Inspire - Airdrie Multi-Use Facility and Library

Construction updates

- Roofing has been completed; exterior cladding and glass installation are underway.
- The seating for the amphitheater and retaining walls for the playground and outdoor programming area are complete.
- Mechanical and electrical work is progressing in the interior areas, walls started to being closed out and primed, and ceiling framing started.
- Heat is on in the building and drywall finishing has begun.

Other updates

- Exterior art foundations completed
- Work on the interior art (globes) continues to develop based on feedback from the community.
- The facility is scheduled for opening in the fall of 2025.

Leisure, Recreation & Culture

Overall Status:

Southwest Side Recreation Facility

- Functional report and site master plan work commences Q1 2025
- Public engagement activities for site master plan is scheduled in March 2025

Artificial Turf Field

- Project complete. Field opened to the public in September 2024.

NE Regional Park

- Opening of Phase 1A of the NE Regional Park, adding 22 acres of passive recreation space. This phase included construction of a paved pathway loop, seasonal skating loop, gravel parking lot, site furniture and bio-retention.

Environmental Protection

Why is this important?

- Water conservation measures, alternative energy solutions, and energy-efficient transportation options offer opportunities to responsibly protect the natural environment.
- The City will need to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to accommodate these shifts and incorporate solutions that reduce harmful environmental impacts.

Objectives

Implement sustainable environmental practices

Explore Infrastructure opportunities that support the transition of the City's operations towards increased use of renewable energy.

Environmental Protection

Overall Status:

Implement sustainable environmental practices

- The average monthly per capita daily usage of potable water remains slightly below the normal range for the months of September through December over the past three years. Specifically, the average usage was 247.1 liters in 2022, 230.9 liters in 2023, and 218.78 liters in 2024. This downward trend is likely attributable to the adoption of water conservation best practices developed during periods of water restrictions.
- A review of the City's Irrigation network for Parks and Open Spaces has highlighted that 7% of the existing network can utilize non-potable water (stormwater reuse) at the start of 2024. Through ongoing developments in 2024, 11 irrigation sites, 1 of which being a non-potable irrigation site were added to the City's network. Two existing irrigation sites were approved for retrofits to allow for the use of non-potable water.
- Annual irrigation audits to begin in 2025 and will find efficiencies through identification of water losses and irrigation coverage. Site specific plans for conversion to non-potable water will be identified.
- Water truck conversions underway to allow filling from fire hydrants. Trial program to capture water losses during AFD hydrant flushing to take place in 2025 with water being reused for water hanging flower baskets and tree plantings.

Environmental Protection

Overall Status:

Explore infrastructure opportunities that support the transition of the City's operations towards increased use of renewable energy

- The Green Fleet Strategy being developed outlines our approach to decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in municipal operations in alignment with the corporate objective for a five per cent annual reduction in GHGs over the next five years. The strategy will be presented to ELT in Q1 2025.
- The Fortis Alberta electric transit bus feasibility study with the Canadian Urban Transit Research Innovation Consortium is anticipated to be completed by end of February 2025. Transit is also working on a Metro-Regional application with Calgary to obtain funding for Zero Emission Busses and transit facility infrastructure to support Electric and/or Hydrogen transit equipment

Caring Community

Why is this important?

- All residents feel a sense of belonging in our community.
- Supporting and caring for citizens who are experiencing social vulnerability enhances social well-being and helps residents to access resources here in Airdrie so they can stay in the community.
- Offering a full range of integrated below-market housing options allows residents to access housing that is achievable on their income. Developing a strategy to guide that is a foundational step.
- Removing social and physical barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion will enable all members of our community to access opportunities and participate in activities.
- Embracing the intent of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action will help create understanding to support stronger Indigenous connections in the community. Airdrie will be a place where all people can live with dignity, value, and purpose.

Objectives

All residents feel a sense of belonging in our community	Advocate for enhanced social well-being
Create the environment where all residents can access housing based on their income and accessibility needs	Stronger community connections with all multinational residents and cultures, including Indigenous connections
All residents can access opportunities and participate in activities	

Caring Community

Overall Status:

Enhanced social well-being

- **The City of Airdrie released its first Social Well-Being Survey Community Report in March 2023.** This survey was conducted to gain a better understanding of how social conditions in Airdrie are affecting the lives of residents. The full report back to the community was made available in October 2024 at <https://involve.airdrie.ca/social-wellbeing-survey>
- **EDI Path forward was presented January 2024 by Council.** The first step outlined in the path forward was Learning the Space; learning from and building relationships with community groups, other municipalities, and external groups involved in EDI. In this step, Administration completed:
 - 2024 EDI Community Group Symposium was well attendance and a great success.
 - Throughout 2024 and beyond, Administration continues to build strong and meaningful connections in the community.
 - Developed a newcomers' webpage to act as a central online resource for residents.
- **Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Community Stakeholder Engagement.**
 - Administration engaged with FCSS funded agencies several times throughout 2024 to connect, network, and share important FCSS information. Much of this targeted consultation will inform the 2026-28 FCSS Funding Strategy.

Caring Community

Overall Status:

Enhanced social well-being continued

- **Increased civic engagement for youth and stronger youth voice in City decision-making.**
 - In Q1 2024, The Airdrie Board of Youth Affairs became an official advisory board to Council. This youth board provides information and advice to Council, administration, and local youth organizations as directed by Council based on recommendations provided by the Board in relation to issues that may affect youth in the Airdrie community.
- **Help protect the health and safety of residents experiencing vulnerability and houselessness during extreme weather events.**
 - In 2024, a group of dedicated and committed community service providers, now called the Extreme Weather Action collective, formed to coordinate, and work together to provide supports and services for residents experiencing vulnerabilities during extreme cold weather events.

Caring Community

Overall Status:

Stronger community connections with all multinational residents and cultures, including Indigenous connections

- Indigenous history and culture training session was conducted with Council in November 2024.
- February 2025: Indigenous consultant will work with Council to develop the action plan for how the City will engage Indigenous communities.
- Final draft of the action plan will be presented in March 2025.

Caring Community

Overall Status:

Access to housing, 2024 Affordable Housing Summary:

Airdrie's 2024 – 2030 Affordable Housing Principled Action Plan is the city's guide to utilizing municipal tools to achieve housing that serves community needs.

In 2024, the City of Airdrie started implementation of the Plan, including setting the foundation to position the municipality towards achieving Council's vision of a caring community where all residents can access housing based on their income and accessibility needs, including housing serving decision-making members of Airdrie's labor force.

- Actions focused on building municipal capacity and increasing the suite of municipal tools that will help open homes serving low and moderate income households included:
 - Strengthened internal coordination mechanisms within Administration such as processes for identifying affordable housing opportunities throughout the land and development planning process (*Affordable Housing Supply Policy*);
 - establishment of cross-departmental teams to better activate municipal tools that will improve the enabling environment for developers to build the types of homes that the community needs;
 - Increased capacity in staff and contracted services, including establishing a new city service line with the creation of the Affordable Housing Department
 - Increased evidence-based decision-making mechanisms to achieving the right housing solutions that will get homes opened faster

Caring Community

Overall Status:

Access to housing, 2024 Affordable Housing Summary continued

- Presented Council with presentations/analysis/recommendations for policy that will increase housing diversity and affordability, including the Airdrie Affordable Housing Needs Assessment (February 2024) and the evidence-based case for allowing secondary suites in Airdrie (June 2024)
- Struck a consensus-based task force called the Airdrie Housing Solutions Working Group (AHSWG) between Airdrie’s private industry partners, non-profit housing operators and City Administration that achieved a set of consensus-based recommendations on strategies to improve affordability for all residents.
- Achieved improvements in the regulatory environment to encourage Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) by allowing more allowing secondary suites through bylaw improvements.
- Increased public education and transparency through the Affordable Housing Public Education Campaign provided residents with information on the benefits of supporting housing diversity and affordability in every neighborhood to achieve a complete and economically prosperous community. The campaign included educational videos, public engagement, local media stories, YouTube videos, Spotify ads and social media posts throughout 2024.

Caring Community

Overall Status:

Access to housing, 2024 Affordable Housing Summary continued

- Supported Airdrie Housing Limited (AHL), Airdrie’s municipally owned housing provider, in their ability to continue operating non-market affordable homes serving the most vulnerable through operating fund support including:
 - supporting municipal property tax cancellation of almost all AHL homes in alignment with the Government of Alberta Bill 20.
 - supporting AHL’s annual operating grant
- Supported funding targeting capital investments that will open homes including:
 - an \$800K grant for AHL land purchase which will be used for a future AHL project (December 2024)
 - municipal support totaling \$100,500 for a Habitat for Humanity project that will open 11 new homes serving members of the labor force with children under 18 years of age.
 - Contribution of \$830K from surplus funds to Airdrie’s Affordable Housing Reserve Fund
- Full compliance and successful implementation of Airdrie’s Housing Accelerator Fund agreement in 2024 has positioned the municipality for successfully receiving it’s second of four anticipated contributions from the federal government for local housing solutions. If all payments are received, the HAF contribution will total \$24.8M. Airdrie submitted the first attestation report (August 2024) and completed the planning process for the first annual CMHC report due on March 15, 2025.

Economic Prosperity

Why is this important?

- Locating more businesses in Airdrie will shift the tax base away from reliance on residential taxation. It will support residents' needs, both financial and social.
- Retaining existing businesses will keep jobs in the community and maintain non-residential tax revenue to support community needs.
- Residents can work, live, and play in Airdrie.
- Revitalizing Airdrie's downtown is essential for becoming a thriving small business center and place people want to gather, visit and be. Downtown investment provides a higher level of return than other parts of a city. It forms an important part of Airdrie's brand and identity. Completion of the downtown plan is a foundational piece to guide revitalization.
- Locating the library multi-use facility in the downtown will be a catalyst for downtown revitalization.

Objectives

Improve the non-residential to residential assessment ratio

Create opportunities for owners to revitalize Downtown

Attract, retain and grow business

Grow Airdrie's visitor economy

Investment readiness

Economic Prosperity

Overall Status:

Attract, retain and grow business

- Secured \$250,000 in grant funding from the Northern & Regional Economic Development (Provincial) and CanExport (Federal) programs

Business Retention & Expansion

- Directly supported 435 Airdrie businesses in 2023-2024 through our entrepreneur support programs. This includes Digital Service Squad, SMARTstart, AdvanceSMART, Discover, Mentor Meet Up and Right for Your Business.
- Hosted 62 events and workshops attended by 1,000+ businesses/entrepreneurs and we exhibited at an additional 4 events.
- Delivered the Right for Your Business Support Program to assist local businesses post pandemic.
 - 43 storefront businesses received 1:1 customized support including marketing, legal, lease negotiation, business coaching, succession planning, financial and more.
 - \$74,000 was injected into the economy through paying 20+ business support professionals for their services.
 - Hosted learning opportunities attended by 120 entrepreneurs
 - Purchased a license for a new program, Cashflow Canvas, and trained 7 future facilitators
 - 58% of the program budget was sourced through grant funding
 - Positive feedback received from participants.

Economic Prosperity

Overall Status:

Attract, retain and grow business continued

Visitor Economy

- Initiated the development of a Sport Tourism Strategy (completion Q1 2025)
- Several film productions filmed in Airdrie including *Die, My Love* and *Top Chef US*
- New destination marketing campaign won a Platinum MarCom Award
- Drew spectators to Airdrie through major sport events including the Grizzly Classic and Canadian Major Football League National Championships. The Silvertips Lacrosse announced Airdrie as their home.

Business & Investment Attraction

- Recorded \$811 million in investment (2023, Source: Growth Report)
- Executed Our Growth Drives Yours Marketing Campaign reaching markets across Canada including launch of new video and investment e-newsletter. Hosted Real Estate Review attended by 85 people.
- Exhibited at the World Agri-Tech Innovation Summit and Future Food Tech Summit
- FortisAlberta announced the relocation of their head office to Airdrie (2026-27)
- Industrial land development began in the new East Points Commercial Centre
- Construction began in South Point Commercial Village
- CMRB approved a three-year pilot project to collaborate regionally on investment attraction initiatives

Economic Prosperity

Overall Status:

Revitalize DT

- Year one of the Downtown Incentive Program was a success, approving 21 out of 23 funding requests and allocating \$480,000 to support \$1.6 million in private investment for downtown improvements and activation.
- Council supported the creations of a downtown overlay within the Land Use Bylaw, enabling Administration to apply specific policies and flexibility from the Downtown Plan to development regulations. This change reduced the timeline for new development or major redevelopment from 40 business days to 10.
- Administration also developed a brownfield development guidebook, providing detailed information and instructions for redeveloping brownfield sites.
- Throughout the year, 89 out of 152 downtown business managers and owners were engaged through business visits and three city-led engagement initiatives. Additionally, three city-led events (Cocoa Fever, Open for Canada Day, and Trick or Treat Downtown) attracted over 300 visitors to the downtown area per event.

Informed & Engaged Community

Why is this important?

- Attracting new groups into the City's citizen engagement processes to include a wider scope will ensure representation from residents with varying interests, backgrounds, and demographics.
- Community stakeholders feel heard and that their input has been considered in decision-making
- Citizens will have access to information about civic events, service updates, City advocacy efforts and opportunities to get involved.
- Creating a public engagement framework and having an online public engagement tool are foundational steps in improving engagement.

Objectives

Increased public participation in engagement opportunities

Community stakeholders feel heard and that their input has been considered in decision-making

Citizens will have access to information about civic events, service updates, City advocacy efforts and opportunities to get involved

Informed & Engaged Community

Overall Status:

Increased public participation in engagement opportunities

Year End 2024: In Spring 2024, Airdrie launched its new online engagement platform, Involve Airdrie. By Q2 2024, the platform averaged 8,511 visitors per month with a 34.2% engagement rate. The 2023 Citizen Satisfaction Survey revealed that 17% of residents participated in public engagement, with the main reasons for non-participation being lack of awareness (47%) and lack of time (27%). With enhancements like Involve Airdrie, MyAirdrie notifications, and increased advertising, improvements are expected in 2025.

Q4-2024: In the 2023 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, 17% reported that they had participated in public engagement and the top reason for not participating was lack of awareness with 47% of people reporting this. The second highest reason was lack of time at 27%. With the changes made during 2024 including the use of Involve Airdrie, MyAirdrie notifications regarding public engagement, and increased advertising, we expect these numbers to improve for 2025.

Citizens will have access to information about civic events, service updates, City advocacy efforts and opportunities to get involved

Year End 2024: This objective was completed in 2023 with additional information streams created and are continually updated

Informed & Engaged Community

Overall Status:

Community stakeholders feel heard and that their input has been considered in decision making

Year End 2024: Involve Airdrie project pages featured timelines showing decision points and public engagement usage. "What We Heard" reports, such as those for the NE Regional Park Master Plan (end of 2023) and Accessory Suites Bylaw Updates (spring 2024), were shared with Council and on Involve Airdrie in Q2 2024. The use of these reports increased from 30% in 2023 to 60% in 2024, with a goal of 80% in 2025. These reports help participants understand collective feedback and follow decision-making progress. In the 2024 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, 10% were very satisfied and 27% somewhat satisfied with public engagement. Improvements are expected in 2025.

Q4-2024: What we Heard Reports (WWHR) have become more used more of the time in 2024. WWHR were available 30% of the time in 2023, 60% of the time in 2024 and we will strive for 80% of the time in 2025. What We Heard Reports are crucial in helping those who participated understand how all people who participated felt as a whole and the next steps allow them to follow the decision making as it progresses. In the 2024 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, 10% reported they were very satisfied with public engagement while 27% reported they were somewhat satisfied. With the changes made in 2024, we expect these numbers to increase for the 2025 Citizen Satisfaction Survey.

Advocacy

Why is this important?

- Advocacy efforts for healthcare infrastructure and mental health supports for the community are of highest importance. Healthcare is a top concern for Airdrie residents.
- Citizens will be able to see what actions Council and Administration are taking to advocate for Airdrie on a variety of issues.
- A structured advocacy framework will position the City for increased success with advocacy efforts.
- Citizens will understand what services fall within the City's control and those that are outside the City's direct control but can be influenced through advocacy by the community and the City.

Objectives

Airdrie has effective partnerships with other levels of government to address the issues affecting quality of life for our residents and businesses

Citizens understand what services the City provides and how they can advocate for services provided by other levels of government

Citizens will be able to see what actions Council and Administration are taking to advocate for Airdrie on a variety of issues.

Advocacy

Overall Status:

Increased advocacy efforts, communications and awareness

Year End (Q1 to Q4 2024): The second annual Airdrie Day at the Alberta Legislature was successfully hosted in Q4 2024, emphasizing the need for provincial contributions to support future growth through new wastewater and water infrastructure. In Q3, Intergovernmental Services hosted an advocacy booth at AirdrieFEST; educated residents on the responsibilities of various government levels and provided Council members with an opportunity to engage directly with the community. Continuous efforts were made to advance key advocacy priorities for Airdrie through meetings with ministers and senior government officials. Extensive staff support was dedicated to participating in the Alberta Municipalities 2024 policy resolution process, ensuring that Airdrie's interests were well represented.

Q4-2024: During Q4 2024 Airdrie hosted our second annual Airdrie Day at the Alberta Legislature highlighting the need for a provincial contribution to new wastewater and water infrastructure to support future growth. Work continued to move key advocacy priorities forward for Airdrie through both ministerial and senior government administration meetings.

Advocacy

Overall Status:

Strengthen intergovernmental relationships

Year End (Q1 to Q4 2024): The Administration held a total of 36 meetings with Ministers & 21 meetings with senior government officials. Advocacy for Airdrie's priorities included meetings with key ministers in Health, Education, Infrastructure, Transportation, Housing, Children & Family Services, Agriculture, Public Safety and Municipal Affairs. Efforts focused on supporting the new wastewater pipeline and accompanying infrastructure, involving meetings with Cabinet Ministers, Airdrie MLA Angela Pitt, and Calgary region elected officials. Airdrie City Council representatives met with seven Cabinet Ministers to advance various key issues. Continued support for provincial engagement opportunities, regional collaboration through the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB), and inter-municipal initiatives. Airdrie Day 2024's focus on sustaining effective partnership was to securing funding commitments from the GOA for wastewater and water infrastructure to support ongoing residential and non-residential growth.

Q4-2024: In Q4 Airdrie City Council representatives and senior administrative staff continued to support provincial engagement opportunities, regional collaboration through the CMRB and inter-municipal initiatives.