



**WHAT
WE
HEARD.**



**PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION**

City Plan Update

Project Overview:

As part of the process to update the Airdrie City Plan, City Administration undertook in-person and online public engagement in the Fall of 2024. The City used its digital communications channels including MyAirdrie, Facebook, X and Instagram to create awareness of the online opportunity. 470 participants responded using the online tools, and approximately 50 attendees participated at the in-person opportunity held at AirdrieFEST. This report provides a summary of those results.

Date: May 1, 2025

Prepared by the City of Airdrie

Executive Summary

A The Airdrie City Plan, adopted in 2014, is the City's municipal development plan (MDP) and provides policy direction to guide the city's growth. As Airdrie grows to 180,000, an updated plan will identify goals and focuses for the next several years.

Online and in-person engagement, conducted in the fall of 2024, asked participants to share their aspirations, values, concerns and priorities for Airdrie as we grow. Responses have been organized into four policy category areas.

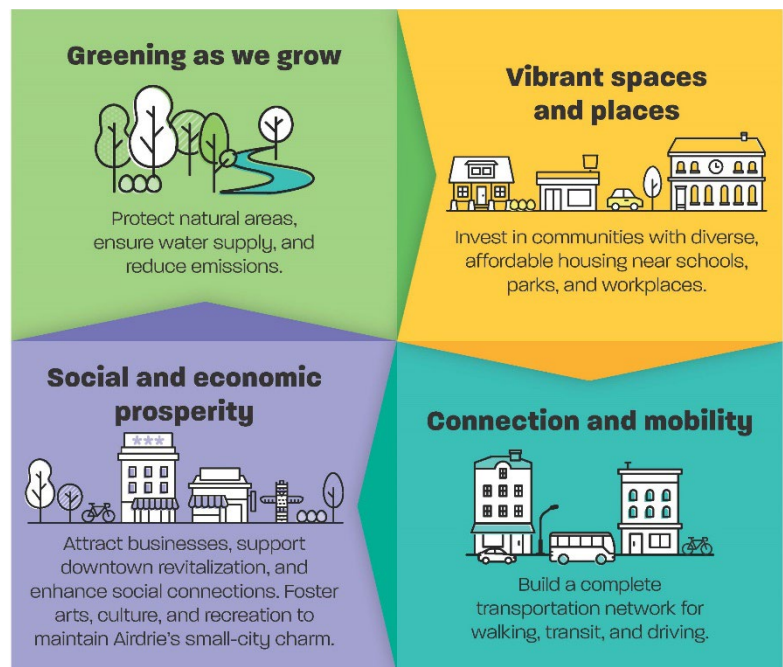
Some of the key topics and priorities for residents included:

Greening as We Grow. Participants strongly valued parks, green spaces and natural areas. Some respondents identified concerns that a focus on housing density may de-prioritize these types of spaces in new developments. Another area of concern included water scarcity, suggestions included sourcing agreements with other communities, improved or expanded infrastructure, or innovative infrastructure (e.g. atmospheric water generators, community-scale rain collection, etc.).

Social and Economic Prosperity. Respondents highlighted the importance of indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities, gathering spaces, and a focus on inclusion as key elements that contribute to a sense of neighborliness, connection to community, and the small town feel that was strongly desired among respondents. Respondents expressed a desire for a greater variety of indoor and outdoor entertainment options within Airdrie. Participants also wanted to see continued support for small local businesses and expressed an interest in attracting employers/businesses in office or technology (e.g. health technology) sectors.

Vibrant Spaces and Places. Respondents commonly referenced Airdrie's small-town charm, family-centred feel, interconnected parks and green spaces, and spaces for community events, festivals, and arts and culture opportunities as valued aspects of life in Airdrie. Participants expressed interest in Airdrie's downtown becoming a hub for retail, restaurants and social connection. Responses in this area also included concerns about Airdrie's infrastructure, services and amenities not keeping pace with growth.

Connection and Mobility. Responses in this section expressed a desire for expanded public transit and expanded pathway network and concerns about the city's growth further impacting traffic congestion. Participants often referenced transportation connectivity both within Airdrie city limits and to Calgary.



Project Information

Airdrie is on pace to be the third largest city in Alberta. The City Plan is a long-term planning document that will identify how development can support sustainable growth into our future. The last City Plan was approved in 2014. A lot has changed in Airdrie since then.

For the purposes of public engagement, the project has organized policy category areas as follows:



By creating a comprehensive plan that balances social, environmental, cultural and economic perspectives, we aim to accommodate our growing population while preserving the unique character of our city.

Public Participation Approach

Engagement sought to identify Airdrie residents' priorities, values and aspirations about growth in Airdrie. Both in-person at AirdrieFEST and online at Involve Airdrie, participants were asked:

- **Keepsakes (values):** What do you love about Airdrie? What must we keep as we grow?
- **Our Focus (priorities):** What needs our attention as we grow from 85,000 to 180,000 people?
- **Future Stories (aspirations):** Imagine Airdrie in 30 years, with 180,000 people. Write a headline or social media post about what will make Airdrie so great. What will we have achieved?

The City used its digital communications channels including MyAirdrie, Facebook, X and Instagram to create awareness of the survey opportunity, supported as well through regular promotional activities for AirdrieFEST. 470 participants responded to the online survey, and approximately 50 attendees participated at the in-person opportunity held at AirdrieFEST.

Summary of Public Participation Input

The policies in the City Plan are not isolated silos – they overlap and integrate with one another, and participant responses reflect this concept. For example, pathways in the city were noted by participants to be important to recreation (cycling, walking), social connection (spending time with family and friends), and transportation (a way to get around the city without having to use a vehicle). The interconnectedness of city

infrastructure, services and amenities notwithstanding, the feedback in this report has been organized into four key policy categories to help highlight the values, priorities and aspirations in those areas. It is also noted that participants expressed concerns and aspirations about health care and education through their comments. However, these two areas are functions and responsibilities of the Provincial Government and the results in this report are focused on those topics that fall within municipal jurisdiction. Key insights from participant responses in each of the four policy category areas include:

Greening as We Grow.

Participants strongly expressed desire for parks and green spaces. As well there is a priority placed on preserving natural areas such as wetlands and native prairie grassland. Some respondents identified concerns that a focus on housing density may de-prioritize these types of spaces in new developments and would like to see them continue to be a priority. Some participants indicated concerns with water scarcity, referencing the impacts to Airdrie of the 2024 Calgary watermain break. Participant suggestions included sourcing agreements with other communities, improved or expanded infrastructure, or innovative infrastructure (e.g. atmospheric water generators, community-scale rain collection, etc.).

Social and Economic Prosperity.

Respondents highlighted the importance of indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities, gathering spaces, and a focus on inclusion as key elements that contribute to a sense of neighborliness, connection to community, and the small town feel that was strongly desired among respondents. Respondents also expressed a desire for a greater variety of indoor and outdoor entertainment options within Airdrie. Participants wanted to see continued support for small local businesses and expressed an interest in attracting employers/businesses from office or technology (e.g. health technology) sectors to reduce the need for Airdrie residents to rely on commuting to Calgary for work.

Vibrant Spaces and Places.

Respondents commonly referenced Airdrie's small-town charm, family-centred feel, interconnected parks and green spaces, spaces for community events, festivals, arts and culture opportunities as both aspects of Airdrie to ensure we keep – and to further expand as we grow. Participants expressed interest in Airdrie's downtown becoming a hub for retail, restaurants and social connection. Responses in this area also included concerns about Airdrie's infrastructure, services and amenities not keeping pace with growth. Identifying that housing development expansion without concurrent park, recreation, retail and service amenities and transportation infrastructure detracted from quality of life and made neighbourhoods less vibrant.

Connection and Mobility.

Responses in this section expressed a desire for expanded public transit and concerns about the city's growth further impacting traffic congestion. Participants often referenced transportation connectivity both within Airdrie city limits and to Calgary. Comments included positive perspectives on Airdrie's pathway systems and active transportation methods like walking and biking, and a desire for an expanded network of paths.

What we heard?

The following sections provide summaries of the responses to the three engagement questions, organized by policy category.

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Greening as we grow

Keepsakes (values). What do you love about Airdrie? What must we keep as we grow?

Respondents celebrated Airdrie's green spaces and pathway connections (14 mentions), preserving green spaces (5 mentions) and integrating green spaces into new development (3 mentions).

"I love the green spaces in Airdrie, the paths that take me almost anywhere, the new parks that keep popping up, the beavers, and the sunrises and sunsets. [...]"

"I hope we maintain and grow green spaces with mature trees."

Our Focus (priorities, challenges). What needs our attention as we grow from 85,000 to 180,000 people?

Respondents want to see an increase in park spaces and tree planting (27 mentions), and an increase or preservation of green spaces in development (21 mentions) and the preservation of green spaces/ agricultural land more generally (2 mentions). Participants also expressed that water security needs our focus (10 mentions), referencing the impacts of the Calgary water main break in June 2025. To this end respondents recommended sourcing agreements with other communities and improved or expanded infrastructure.

"[...] Airdrie needs to have much more margin for heat reducing space (green space and trees) and space for people to enjoy nature."

"The new developments seem to prioritize maximizing housing density [...] with less emphasis on integrating green spaces, nature, and beautiful landscapes."

"Resource security is really important. The past few episodes with water restrictions show how vulnerable Airdrie is to the issues of neighboring cities. [...] We should look towards water generation, (atmospheric water generators [...]), storage, rain collection, etc. on an industrial/community scale, to minimize the impact of future issues [...]"

Future stories (aspirations). Imagine Airdrie in 30 years, with 180,000 people. Write a headline or social media post about what will make Airdrie so great. What will we have achieved?

Respondents' headlines referred to abundant green spaces and lots of trees (13 mentions), expanding parks and pathways (5 mentions) and native vegetation (12 mentions). There were also referrals to sustainable energy options (7 mentions).

"Airdrie sets a new standard for parks and greenery. Native trees and shrubs in abu[n]dance [...]."

"Airdrie, the city leading Alberta in Green and Smart City scape. It harbours the technology brains in Alberta."

"Green spaces with naturalized areas-tall grass that allows for wildflowers/pollinators. Solar panels on building roofs, more wind/turbines"

Vibrant spaces and places

Keepsakes (values). What do you love about Airdrie? What must we keep as we grow?

Respondents' regularly referenced Airdrie's small town feel as a very important element to keep, and one they expressed concern about given the pressures on traffic, infrastructure and amenities associated with growth (24 mentions). Respondents' also highly valued family-orientated amenities such as outdoor walking paths and community events and a love of these activities (10 mentions). Other topics for things we should keep as we grow included: maintaining low taxes (5 mentions), maintaining safe community feel (4 mentions), infrastructure, affordable housing (2 mentions), need senior-friendly housing/care (3 mentions).

"As a long-term resident of Airdrie, I love how friendly the community is. From neighbourhood block parties to saying hello to people we meet while walking or biking on the many pathways around town, we are proud to live in a friendly city with growing diversity. With growth comes new challenges, which is a surprise to no one. And those challenges need to be met with a focus on the future while maintaining relevancy and affordability for residents."

"I love that Airdrie prioritizes community events such as the Canada Day parade and airdrieFEST. These events bring the community together while also promoting local businesses. Airdrie's biggest draw is that it's a great place to raise a family and these events contribute to that in a big way."

Our Focus (priorities, challenges). What needs our attention as we grow from 85,000 to 180,000 people?

Respondents expressed that there is a need to prioritize addressing infrastructure gaps over more housing development, there is a strong sense that growth in Airdrie in recent years has been so fast that infrastructure and amenities have not kept pace (43 mentions). Some respondents are concerned that growth has come at the expense of developing community infrastructure, amenities and services and reflects a disconnect between community and decision-makers (9 mentions). Respondents mentioned housing density (18 mentions) – with some seeing increased types of housing contributing to more housing affordability, and others concerned that there should be less multi-family housing in Airdrie. Community character and small-town feel were also important areas of focus for respondents (48 mentions).

“As Airdrie grows, it would be wonderful to see a charming entertainment area develop, with cafes, restaurants, bars with patios, and small shops, all bringing a quaint, old-town vibe to a single street or mile. This would add a vibrant and cozy atmosphere while retaining the town's welcoming and clean character.”

“I understand the need for growth of City of Airdrie, several critical issues have not been addressed by City Hall, [...] City Hall and its Officials are turning a blind eye to them.”

“With all the discussions on affordable housing, why have we not zoned anything for modular homes? Those don't use a lot of space, and are ready to go [...]”

Future stories (aspirations). Imagine Airdrie in 30 years, with 180,000 people. Write a headline or social media post about what will make Airdrie so great. What will we have achieved?

When imagining the future of Airdrie, respondents identified a balance between growth and small-town charm (53 mentions), aligning infrastructure and growth (44 mentions) and avoiding infrastructure strain (38 mentions). Respondents also envisioned community-centered living (32 mentions) and family-focused values (25 mentions), as well as a distinct Airdrie identity (28 mentions) and independence from Calgary (14 mentions). Other topics included limiting new construction (7 mentions), ensuring accessibility (6 mentions), affordable housing (6 mentions) and seniors housing (3 mentions).

“A people focused city with gathering areas to come together and celebrate who we are. Continued focus on art, culture and small business.”

“Airdrie, a big city with small city charm! Everything you need right within your community! Come explore the friendly city that has it all!”

“Sustainable growth works when the infrastructure and resources match the needs of the population, everyone is a part of the vision.”

“Airdrie will need retirement homes and care facilities to accommodate aging population of Calgary and Airdrie [...]”

Social and economic prosperity

Keepsakes (values). What do you love about Airdrie? What must we keep as we grow?

Respondents identified community spirit and volunteerism (10 mentions), cultural and recreational opportunities (7 mentions), a safe and welcoming community (7 mentions), and friendly atmosphere (6 mentions) as important elements to keep as Airdrie grows.

Other topics included, local/community events (2 mentions), need entertainment areas (2 mentions), pedestrian friendly shopping areas (2 mentions), support for local artists (2 mentions), appreciate diversity (1 mention), encourage community connections (1 mention), feeling of youthful energy (1 mention), need cultural events (1 mention), need for community support (1 mention).

I love that Airdrie prioritizes community events such as the Canada Day parade and airdrieFEST. These events bring the community together while also promoting local businesses.

"When my husband and I were looking for a place to move and raise our children we fell in love with Airdrie for several reasons. {...} We wanted a home in a community we're our kids could go out and play in the neighborhood without us worrying if they would be safe. Our new community gives us this."

Our Focus (priorities, challenges). What needs our attention as we grow from 85,000 to 180,000 people?

Respondents highlighted the need for more recreation amenities, both types of spaces, and number of spaces (35 mentions), community gathering spaces (23 mentions), entertainment options (16 mentions), accessible spaces for community events (12 mentions), and more leisure activities (10 mentions). Respondents are also interested in attracting diverse industries to create jobs in Airdrie (20 mentions) expressing an interest in living and working in Airdrie, supporting local retail businesses and improving transportation within the city to make getting to local jobs easier. Some respondents identified concerns that too much high-density housing is contributing to increased traffic and parking congestion, leading to a feeling of overcrowding.

Other topics included, social connections for community (8 mentions), maintain low taxes (8 mentions), community art spaces (5 mentions), need youth support programs/activities (5 mentions), innovation (4 mentions), hub for medium and large businesses (3 mentions), culture and heritage (interpretive signs, etc.) (3 mentions)

"While Genesis is fantastic, it is barely adequate at our current population level. Outdoor recreation also needs to be addressed. With only one splash park in Airdrie it is impossible to enjoy on those hot days because of crowding. [...]"

"Airdrie needs to stop developing so many condos/apartments [...]. We are too focused on [...] these units and it's taking away from a balanced community."

"[...] attract businesses and industries [for] diverse employment opportunities. [...] help ensure that residents have access to fulfilling jobs right in their community. [...]"

Future stories (aspirations). Imagine Airdrie in 30 years, with 180,000 people. Write a headline or social media post about what will make Airdrie so great. What will we have achieved?

Respondents' headlines identified fostering community pride which was attributed to diversity, a small town feel or a wealth of amenities such as parks and recreation opportunities (22 mentions). Recreation and leisure amenities also featured in respondents' aspirational headlines (22 mentions), with a focus on resident well-being (20 mentions). Developing sports facilities (16 mentions), and cultural offerings/events (13 mentions) including social spaces for people and families to gather (12 mentions) and a vibrant downtown entertainment area (12 mentions) were mentioned by respondents. As well respondents' headlines included visions of Airdrie being a centre for innovation, tech and healthcare, combined with comments on sustainable infrastructure and interest in shopping (14 mentions).

Other topics included: maintain low taxes (11 mentions), economic development and innovation (9 mentions), promote inclusivity (7 mentions), cultural and community (social) development (6 mentions), enhance arts and culture venues (6 mentions), support community events (5 mentions), job creation (4 mentions), host national athletic meets (3 mentions), more commercial development (3 mentions), public art (2 mentions), attract tech start-ups/industries (2 mentions), support small business needs (2 mentions), affordable utility costs (1 mention).

"Airdrie has a strong business economy, several green options to keep the city environmentally sustainable, and 100% electrical transportation."

"Airdrie has achieved amazing togetherness where we support people from all backgrounds to thrive and build happy healthy lives & families."

"Airdrie excels in local recreation opportunities for youth with accessible spaces in walking distance!"

"Tech companies are investing in Airdrie as Alberta's Leading Green City! Making it a hub for investors in all sectors. Airdrie is the future."

Connection and mobility

Keepsakes (values). What do you love about Airdrie? What must we keep as we grow?

Respondents value walkability and connectivity (17 mentions). They expressed appreciation of Airdrie's pathway system and would like to see it expanded (5 mentions).

"I love that there are pathways to walk all around Airdrie. I don't have to worry about running with my dogs on sidewalks or roads, there are beautiful pathways around all the communities."

Our Focus (priorities, challenges). What needs our attention as we grow from 85,000 to 180,000 people?

Transportation connectivity and expansion of public transit were important considerations for respondents (26 mentions). Respondents expressed frustration at the time it requires to travel across the city and sometimes associated it with the timing of lights. (23 mentions), and also referenced general road improvements and/or provided specific examples of locations for road expansion. (23 mentions). Comments on the expansion of public transit often referenced the connection between Airdrie and Calgary (18 mentions).

"[...] Better transit connectivity especially in new areas {...}"

"Road network needs serious work. It shouldn't take 20 min to drive from Hillcrest to North Airdrie along 8th. [...]"

"This city needs right now, and more so in the future, a much better and much more reliable public transit system in the city [...]"

"[...] Traffic Flow - getting two green lights shouldn't feel like winning the lottery. [...]"

Future stories (aspirations). Imagine Airdrie in 30 years, with 180,000 people. Write a headline or social media post about what will make Airdrie so great. What will we have achieved?

Key areas of aspirational connection and mobility in respondents' headlines included public transit and connectivity (27 mentions), c-train or regional train travel (18 mentions), improvements to traffic congestion (11 mentions). Other topics included, expanded bus routes (5 mentions), upgraded roads (2 mentions), synchronized traffic lights (2 mentions), electric transportation (2 mentions)

“2030: Airdrie leads Alberta in sustainability with the opening of new c-train station to connect Airdrie commuters to Calgary!”

“Airdrie’s population cap allowed for updated infrastructure – making local traffic and train crossings a breeze!”

“25 years of APEX: How the Alberta Passenger Express train connected communities throughout the province.”

“I imagine Airdrie in 30 years with cheaper transportation, more bus stops that are more frequent. Sooner the Better.”

What’s Next & Timelines

Along with consideration of our comparative research and internal discussions – the feedback here will be used to help us refine our update to the City Plan.

Contact Information

For more information regarding the City Plan update project, contact:

Jordan Furness, Team Leader, Policy Planning
City of Airdrie
Email: planning@airdrie.ca