



# **Fostering Community Collaboration**

Strategic Plan 2021-2024





# Vision, Mission, and Values

## **Vision**

Lethbridge is a sustainable community and all residents are actively engaged in contributing to its sustainability.

## **Mission**

Environment Lethbridge inspires and equips people to create widespread community action and engagement towards sustainability.

## **Values**

### *Partnership and Collaboration*

We envision Lethbridge as a leader in sustainability and we believe that a sustainable city can only be achieved through partnership and collaboration with the entire community.

Environmental challenges are broad and far reaching and we must work together to find solutions.

### *Diversity and Respect*

We respect community values and welcome all sectors. Everyone is encouraged to share their opinions and actively participate in the organization. We will ensure that people feel comfortable sharing their opinions and that concerns and controversial issues are dealt with respectfully.

### *Community Action and Appreciation*

We believe that positive solutions are more likely to result in action and that everyone can contribute to Lethbridge's environmental goals. We know that not everyone is ready to make big changes, but they might be ready to make small ones. We help people take action in ways that work best for them. We recognize that many people and organizations have already taken action to reduce their environmental impacts and believe that small actions add up. Everyone should be celebrated for making an effort to be more sustainable.

### *Science-based Decision Making*

We offer realistic, innovative solutions that will lead to action and results. Our decision-making is based on credible science and evidence rather than opinion.

### *Environmental Sustainability*

We strive to reduce our environmental footprint and be a leader in environmental sustainability.



# Context

## **Context**

Environment Lethbridge was formed in 2012 by a group of concerned community members and business leaders. We are supported by and collaborate with a diverse group of organizations and agencies. Our focus is specific to the city of Lethbridge and we envision Lethbridge as a sustainable community.

*The Institute for Sustainable Communities defines a sustainable community as one that “takes into account, and addresses, multiple human needs, not just one at the exclusion of all others. It is a place where people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives feel welcome and safe, where every group has a seat at the decision-making table, and where prosperity is shared. It takes a long-term perspective – focusing on anticipating and adapting to change in both the present and future. A sustainable community manages its human, natural, and financial capital to meet current needs while ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generations.”*

Within this context, Environment Lethbridge has a key role to play in supporting Lethbridge residents and businesses in improving their environmental sustainability and the environmental sustainability of the city as a whole.

## **Alignment with the City of Lethbridge**

Environment Lethbridge’s mission and goals align with the following City of Lethbridge planning and policy documents:

The 2021 Municipal Development Plan establishes the importance of environmental protection and includes policy direction for community gardens, waste diversion, energy efficiency and alternative energy, climate adaptation, GHG emissions, environmental stewardship, and community collaboration.

## **Overall Strategic Direction**

Environment Lethbridge advances our mission of inspiring community action on environmental sustainability and seeks to create a sustainable community by serving residents and businesses within the City of Lethbridge through community collaboration, opportunities for learning and action, and municipal engagement that emphasizes our advantages as a well-connected organization that offers diverse and well-executed programs and effective communications that raise visibility and inspire action.



## Focus Areas

### **Waste Reduction**

Lethbridge has taken significant steps forward on waste reduction over the past three years. This momentum is expected to continue with the implementation of residential curbside organic pick-up in 2023. Recycling and composting programs only address part of the problem. Moving forward, we must place more emphasis on reducing and reusing.

Over the next three years, Environment Lethbridge will continue to support and promote the City of Lethbridge's waste reduction initiatives. We will also continue our efforts to provide action-oriented information combined with opportunities for Lethbridge residents and businesses to take action to reduce their waste footprints. We will increase our focus on reducing consumption, and look for ways to support the development of a circular economy in Lethbridge.

### **Green Energy**

As the impacts of climate change are felt in Lethbridge and around the world, Lethbridge has the opportunity to be a leader in green energy. Generating clean energy is only half of the solution, we must also focus on improving energy efficiency in buildings and transportation.

Our priorities over the next three years will include community education around climate change, green energy, and energy efficiency. We will promote local initiatives related to these areas, including the Southern Alberta Renewable Energy Cooperative and the Clean Energy Improvement Program. We will also encourage households and businesses to reduce their energy footprints.

### **Climate Resilience**

Even as we continue to focus on reducing carbon emissions, we must also focus on creating a resilient community that can withstand the increasing impacts of climate change.

The City of Lethbridge's newly revised Municipal Development Plan puts a strong emphasis on climate adaptation planning within Lethbridge. Over the next three years, Environment Lethbridge should continue to lead conversations and initiatives around climate adaptation. We also have a role to play in building urban resilience. Although we must be strategic in the programs we develop in this area and be mindful of not competing with our partners, we should focus on helping residents enhance their backyard resilience and on supporting best practices for the management of Lethbridge's urban natural areas.



## Strategic Priorities

### **Community Collaboration**

Environment Lethbridge creates and facilitates opportunities for individuals, organizations, and businesses to collaborate on sustainability.

### **Learning and Action**

Environment Lethbridge inspires residents and businesses to learn and take action to increase the environmental sustainability of their homes and businesses.

### **Engagement with Local Government**

Environment Lethbridge is a proactive voice for sustainability that informs and encourages the City of Lethbridge to adopt policies that support and promote environmental sustainability.

### **Operational Stability**

Environment Lethbridge is an effective and efficient organization that achieves long-term stability.



# Community Collaboration

Environment Lethbridge creates and facilitates opportunities for individuals, organizations, and businesses to collaborate on sustainability.

## **Strategies**

Facilitate collaboration between organizations and agencies

Environment Lethbridge will bring together existing and emerging organizations and agencies to share information and create connections to enhance sustainability initiatives in Lethbridge.

*Create tools to support the development of community leaders*

Environment Lethbridge has a unique opportunity to provide individuals with the ability to take both small and large actions. We will seek out ways to empower individuals to put their ideas into action and we will support emerging leaders and grassroots community organizations.

*Create a hub for sustainability information and initiatives*

We will host a hub for information, not just about sustainability, but about local initiatives in Lethbridge, whether or not Environment Lethbridge is involved in their delivery. As part of this strategy, we will provide opportunities for groups and individuals to connect, both in person and online.

## **Priority Initiatives:**

- An online portal that provides a single point of contact to environmental information, organizations, success stories, experts, and events. This portal will also include a way for people to interact and engage online.
- A micro-grants program for individuals who wish to put a sustainability idea into practice.
- A training/mentorship program for emerging environmental leaders/nascent organizations.

## **Outcomes:**

- Collaboration between organizations and agencies increases
- Sustainability organizations have a shared understanding of each other's priorities
- Grassroots sustainability initiatives increase
- Emerging leaders are supported and engage with sustainability initiatives
- The community is informed about sustainability in Lethbridge

## **Indicators of Success:**

- Year over year increase of portal users following launch date
- Number of organizations and agencies participating in collaborative information sharing
- Number of grassroots initiatives directly supported by EL
- Number of emerging leaders receiving support and mentoring



# Learning and Action

Environment Lethbridge inspires residents and businesses to learn and take action to increase the environmental sustainability of their homes and businesses.

## **Strategies**

*Provide tools to Lethbridge residents to help them take positive actions to be more sustainable.* People are inspired to take action in different ways. For some people, increasing their knowledge of sustainability issues and options can result in action. For others, seeing examples of actions taken by others can be inspiring.

*Support small and medium-sized businesses and help them to take action to be more sustainable.*

Businesses, particularly small and medium sized businesses, have an important role to play in improving sustainability in Lethbridge. Working with local businesses requires a targeted approach and has the opportunity to provide an earned revenue stream for EL.

## **Priority Initiatives:**

- Develop resources such as sustainability guides, online tools, maps, and other resources to provide residents, businesses and youth with credible information to make positive environmental choices.
- Provide opportunities for people to learn about environmental sustainability
- Deliver programs that convert learning to action
- Celebrate those who take action

## **Outcomes:**

- Residents have a solid base of knowledge to help them take action to be more sustainable
- Residents can see and learn from examples of sustainable action in Lethbridge.
- Increasing numbers of small and medium sized businesses are adopting sustainable practices.

## **Indicators of Success:**

- Number of participants in action-focused programs who commit to making changes
- Number of businesses participating in EL programs who commit to action plans



# Engagement with Local Government

Environment Lethbridge is a proactive voice for sustainability that informs and encourages the City of Lethbridge to adopt policies that support and promote environmental sustainability.

## **Strategies**

### *Public Policy*

We will proactively encourage the development of public policy that supports sustainability in Lethbridge.

### *Collaboration*

We will collaborate with business units at the City of Lethbridge, including Waste and Recycling, Water, Parks, Corporate Sustainability, and Planning to jointly develop and promote initiatives. In addition, Environment Lethbridge will bring forward community concerns as appropriate.

## **Priority Initiatives:**

- Priority initiatives to be determined in alignment with our focus areas.

## **Outcomes:**

- City of Lethbridge staff and City Council respect and seek out our input and expertise and look to EL to inform City policies and planning.

## **Indicators of Success:**

- Number of consultations or joint initiatives with City staff





# Operational Stability

Environment Lethbridge is an effective and efficient organization that achieves long-term stability.

## **Strategies**

### *Recovering from COVID*

The pandemic has constrained our ability to deliver programming and engage with local residents and businesses. As recovery begins, we will need to re-establish our public presence and elevate sustainability issues in the community.

### *Diversity*

Over the next three years, we will take steps to diversify our organization, both in terms of our staff, board, and volunteers, but also with our target audience.

### *Resource Development*

Funding is critical to our ability to deliver our mission and programs. We will apply for charitable status and explore funding options including government support, earned revenue, and grants.

### *Community Outreach*

We will engage with stakeholders and community to establish Environment Lethbridge as a leader in the community. It is expected that there will be elections at all three levels of government over the duration of this plan and we will engage with newly elected and re-elected officials.

## **Outcomes:**

- We are a diverse organization that engages with a cross-section of the community.
- EL has the necessary funding to support the capacity needed to deliver its programs.
- EL is widely known in the community.
- EL provides credible environmental information to the community on an ongoing basis and that information causes people to take action.

## **Indicators of Success:**

- Maintenance and increase of funding
- Diversification of funding sources
- Number of external communication hits (including social media, earned media and speaking opportunities)
- Implementation of a Diversity, Inclusion and Equity framework