

**Jenn Prosser responses**  
**Candidate for Lethbridge City Council**

1. Will you oppose privatization of municipal services and infrastructure, including Public-PrivatePartnerships aka P3s? Will you support bringing previously privatized services in-house?

P3s have proven time and time again to be more costly and of lower quality than publicly built infrastructure and publicly delivered services. The City of Lethbridge has contracted out almost every service available at city owned facilities. This has led to less control of these services by the city, and less opportunity to provide support through these facilities.

For example, the operations of our recreational facilities are owned, maintained and the responsibility of the city but we have contracted out the service delivery. This is of particular concern when it comes to the contracting of service operations out to for-profit corporations. That means that unlike other cities, despite recreational facilities being owned and built by the city, rec facilities are not compelled to offer reduced cost passes or free passes for low-income folks or workers and family members that support people living with disabilities. As it is tax dollars that go into the building, maintenance and operations - any profit created goes into the pockets of corporate shareholders and not back into city services or into investments in our community.

I am committed to working to bring city facility operations back in house - supporting those worker's right to living wages, full-time hours where desired, job security, and collective bargaining rights.

2. Will you support your employees and your community by ensuring the municipality employs staff with living wages, full-time hours where desired, job security, and collective bargaining rights?

Absolutely. I fully support CUPE 70 and the collective bargaining process. A strong CBA is important to upholding good working conditions, living wages, full-time hours where desired, and job security. It is one way for our community to live our value of respect, and uphold dignity.

3. Will you oppose attempts from the provincial government to legislate against municipal staff including cuts to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, or restrictions on their right to strike?

Absolutely. The cuts to LAPP are a disrespectful attempt to undercut public sector jobs and punish workers. The attempts to restrict a worker's ability to strike is another attempt to union bust by this provincial government and it is unacceptable. I am a unionist, and unequivocally support union and non-union workers' right to take job action as a collective organizing tactic to secure fair wages, fair treatment and workplace safety.

4. How do you propose your municipality deal with funding shortfalls, cuts, and downloading of responsibilities from federal and provincial governments? Do you favour spending cuts over tax increases?

Budgets are about priorities, and while municipalities cannot run deficits, they can ensure that through collaboration and funding opportunities they can expand the city government's capacity and prioritize funding services and supports that meet the basic needs of everyone in our city. Continuing to point the finger at other levels of government when those governments are refusing to deliver necessary services isn't working, and frankly it is the city government's responsibility to care for the well-being of all our citizens in any way that we can.

When I am at the doors and in the community, I am not hearing that our city taxes are too high - I am hearing that folks don't feel that they are seeing a return on their investment. That is troubling, and it can erode the faith folks have in local governments and in the value of taxes turning into collective benefit. Tax increases must be measured against the impact it has on the budget in terms of increased services and the impact it has on taxpayers - particularly those already experiencing financial hardship. However, when tax dollars are spent on the things that increase quality of life, boost our local economy, support workers and help provide access to basic needs - those dollars stretch much further as a collective.

That is why I am putting forward ideas like affordable and accessible childcare, affordable housing, free transit and a climate resiliency plan that not only creates huge economic benefits but also lifts folks up so that they can meet their needs. While these transformational ideas require investment, they are also proven to return that investment on multiple fronts.

5. Do you support measures such as mask mandates, vaccine "passports", and vaccine mandates for staff to limit and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in your municipality?

The choice by the provincial government to cut off the financial and shelter supports for those infected with COVID and eliminate protected sick days for workers that have symptoms of any cold or virus is a blatant disregard for the health and safety of our communities. Without paid sick leave or even the most basic job protection, many people who are sick with COVID or other illnesses will have no choice but to continue to go to work - a sure-fire way to increase and spread infection in our community.

I 100% support public health measures that abide by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms - and the courts have made clear that mask mandates, vaccine mandates and vaccine passports are measures that meet the Charter's restrictions under section 1.

Regarding mask mandates, the Delta variant is proving to cause more serious infection in younger people and no vaccine available for those under 12, I believe a masking by-law for indoor spaces, especially places open to youth under 12, is an action we as a community can take to keep people safe. Even though I am fully vaccinated, I still make the personal choice to mask when I am in indoor spaces - particularly when I cannot physically distance myself from

others. As a parent of someone too young to be vaccinated, I believe it is the least I can do to keep others, particularly children, safe.

6. Do you support measures to reduce municipal reliance on services fees and fares, such as eliminating transit fares?

Absolutely yes.

The new transit lines, "City LINK", were primarily a response to the \$350,000.00 cut to Transit made by the current city council in 2021 and the expectation to maintain annual operating budgets with a \$350,000.00 yearly reduction. And while I was initially excited for some of the proposed changes - particularly the direct routes and increased service times during the day on major commuter routes, it is clear that the cuts to the community transit service, changes to the lines on the Northside, and the on-demand system have made using transit incredibly difficult. In particular, the on-demand service has been a significant challenge for many transit riders, finding themselves unable to access transit at all in the evenings and weekends.

Ultimately, I think the Transit Manager's quote in a previous article on the changes is really emblematic of the problem, "The mandate we were given wasn't to go improve transit services," he acknowledged. "The mandate we were given was to reduce our budget by \$350,000..."

If transit continues to be underfunded and face future cuts, it will continue to be inaccessible. The negative impact the budget cut is having on transit users will only decrease transit use - thus making another case for more cuts until the service is essentially gone.

Moving to free transit will support everyone in the city, increase ridership and decrease the number of cars on our roads. That means we need proper funding - a reinstatement of the lost funding and future increases in funding to ensure transit is able to operate routes that actually meet the needs of folks. If elected, that is exactly what I will fight for.