



June 9, 2026

Council Term Direction

Prepared by: Ryan Veldkamp, Executive Advisor Enterprise Strategy Governance & Alignment
Sabrina Asher, Strategic Change and Engagement Advisor
Jill Craig, Senior Communications Consultant
Fabiola Hutton, Executive Assistant
Department: Enterprise Strategy, Governance & Alignment Office

Report Summary and Recommendations

This report presents the proposed 2026–2029 Council Term Direction for Council adoption. Between January and May 2026, Council participated in a series of Committee of the Whole sessions to establish strategic priorities over the current Council term. While the title is Council Term Direction, it is a shared strategic framework to support long term community outcomes through collaboration, accountability and measurable implementation.

Administration recommends adoption of the 2026–2029 Council Term Direction as presented in Appendix A.

Proposed Resolution

Resolved that Council of The City of Red Deer having received the report from Enterprise Strategy, Governance & Alignment Office re: Council Term Direction dated June 9, 2026 re: Council Term Direction hereby adopt the 2026-2029 Council Term Direction as presented in Appendix A.

Rationale for Recommendation

1. Establishing Clear Council Direction

The proposed Term Direction establishes Council's strategic priorities and intended outcomes for the 2026–2029 term.

2. Supporting Coordinated Organizational Planning

Adoption of the Term Direction will support alignment between Council priorities, organizational planning, and future budget decision-making.

3. Advancing Long-Term Community Outcomes

The Term Direction provides a shared strategic framework to support long-term community outcomes through collaboration, accountability, and measurable implementation.

Background

Council's Term Direction establishes Council's strategic priorities for the current term and is intended to guide organizational focus, decision-making, and future planning activities.

The Enterprise Alignment Framework (Appendix B) incorporates several strategic directions, including:

- Red Deer 2050
- The Municipal Development Plan
- Council's Term Direction

Together, these documents support consistent long-term planning and organizational alignment across The City's strategic and operational work.

Development of Council Priorities

Between January and May 2026, Council participated in five Committee of the Whole strategic planning sessions to establish priorities for the 2026–2029 Council term.

Council identified a combination of City-led primary and Shared partnership with the Community priorities for the term. Council also identified a set of “How We Work” principles intended to guide governance, accountability, and organizational culture throughout the current term.

City-Led Primary Priority

Council identified the following as a primary responsibility of The City through Council and Administration:

Fiscal Discipline – Planning for today and tomorrow

Council Intent

Protect Red Deer's long-term financial health through disciplined spending, thoughtful service choices, and responsible investment in infrastructure and community assets.

Council Examples for Alignment

Council discussions highlighted examples such as:

- maintaining predictable and stable property tax increases
- strengthening financial reserves
- delivering on the City's Financial Roadmap
- investing in infrastructure and community amenities
- improving public understanding of municipal finances
- exploring creative revenue opportunities and partnerships

Shared with Community Priorities

Council identified the following as shared responsibilities that depend on collaboration between The City, community partners, other orders of government, businesses, organizations, and the broader community:

Safe & Supported Neighbourhoods – Build confidence in the places Red Deerians share

Council Intent

Work with partners to improve community safety, address homelessness and addiction, and ensure neighbourhoods and public spaces are welcoming, cared for, and feel safe.

Examples for Alignment

Examples identified through Council discussion include:

- reducing crime and improving perceptions of safety
- lowering the point-in-time homeless count
- increasing supportive housing options
- strengthening coordinated responses to vulnerability and addiction
- ensuring public spaces and neighbourhoods feel safe and well maintained
- improving access to transit, gathering spaces, and supports

Economic Growth & City Pride – Building a Red Deer people and businesses choose

Council Intent

Strengthen Red Deer's position as Central Alberta's economic hub by supporting local business growth, revitalizing key commercial areas, attracting investment, and creating a city where people choose to live, work, visit, and build their future.

Examples for Alignment

Council discussions identified several examples that reflect this priority, including:

- supporting business retention and growth in Red Deer
- reducing commercial vacancies and strengthening downtown vibrancy
- improving employment opportunities and economic diversification
- attracting tourism activity and major events
- building Red Deer's reputation as a community of opportunity and connection
- supporting population growth and encouraging youth to stay or return

Housing that works for Red Deer – Supporting choice, stability and affordability

Council Intent

Support a housing system that offers stability, choice, and progression so residents can find homes that meet their needs at every stage of life.

Examples for Alignment

Council discussions highlighted examples such as:

- increasing housing starts
- supporting infill and secondary suites
- expanding supportive and affordable housing options
- improving movement through the housing continuum
- encouraging mixed housing types and density

How We Work

Council also identified the following principles intended to guide governance, decision-making, accountability, and organizational culture:

- Inter-governmental relationships and advocacy
- Continuous improvement and organizational excellence
- Clear municipal roles and core services
- Community engagement and evidence-based decision making
- Trust, transparency, responsive and accountable

Community Insights

Council considered existing community feedback and engagement results throughout development of the proposed Term Direction, including:

- Community Compass – What We Heard Report
- Red Deer Citizen Satisfaction Survey
- Living in Red Deer Survey
- Existing engagement and strategic planning feedback

Council also considered feedback gathered through community conversations, and engagement opportunities, such as the April 2026 “Coffee with Council” session.

Next Steps

Upon adoption, the Council Term Direction will guide organizational planning, policy development, service delivery, and future budget prioritization over the term.

Administration will align departmental planning and organizational objectives through an Objectives and Key Results (OKR) framework to support implementation including resourcing, accountability, and performance measurement. There will be many checks and balances for alignment over the next 4 years. Administration will build the OKRs and share this interpretation with Council. Administration will report regularly on progress to Council and community. The direction can be adjusted by Council over the term.

Risks and Operational Considerations

Implementation of Council’s Term Direction will require ongoing organizational alignment, prioritization, and coordination across departments over the duration of the term. Some priorities, including housing, economic growth, and neighbourhood safety, will also require continued collaboration with community organizations, external partners, and other orders of government to support desired outcomes.

One of the greatest challenges of leaders and organizations is maintaining focus to maximize productivity for positive change. Municipal governments continue to have many demands, limited resources, external pressures, and citizens with differing priorities. As elected officials for the community, Councils’ leadership is providing a clear direction and then maintaining that direction to advance these critical objectives for the overall community.

Appendices

Appendix A – 2026–2029 Council Term Direction One-Pager

Appendix B – Enterprise Alignment Framework

APPENDIX A

2026-2029

COUNCIL TERM DIRECTION



Council's direction sets out the priorities that will guide this four-year term and shape the City's work in service to the community. It highlights where Council will focus its leadership and decision-making, with Administration aligning their work to support Red Deer's needs and future growth. Some priorities, like Fiscal Discipline are primarily the responsibility of the City Council and Administration, while others are shared responsibilities that depend on collaboration with the community and other areas of governance. Together, these priorities form a clear and shared vision for the term ahead.

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS



HOW WE WORK

Inter-governmental relationships and advocacy

Continuous improvement and organizational excellence

Clear municipal roles and core services

Community engagement and evidence-based decision making

Trust, transparency, responsive and accountable

APPENDIX B

