



Allied Arts Council of Lethbridge  
2021 Municipal Election  
Arts Survey: Candidate Response

## **Candidate: Kelti Baird**

### *1. What is your vision for the arts sector within the City of Lethbridge?*

Lethbridge is already home to a robust arts scene, which I like to think of as one of the best-kept secret of the city. It's grown by leaps and bounds in the last few years, with the addition of Casa, improvements of SAAG, and more private businesses opening up opportunities to see local artists perform. All of this is wonderful and contributes to the growing vibrancy of the city!

My Vision for the Arts Sector is even more support and investment. I would love to see some grass-roots art projects like murals and other projects growing from the ground up, even as the City invests in art projects and commissions. I'm excited for what the future can hold for art in Lethbridge.

### *2. What do you believe are the benefits of investing in the arts and how do you view the role of City of Lethbridge in arts investment.*

The City has a very top-down approach to art investments right now and I love the projects but I would like to see the City adjust some bylaws to allow art to flourish at the grass-roots level here as well. I want to see empowerment of people to engage with the arts community and get their own ideas underway. I think the City has a role to play in encouraging engagement with art, culture, and investment. In terms of benefits: local public art brings culture and pride to the community and has shown to transform attitudes about municipal districts in other jurisdictions. People should see art as an enhancement to the public sphere.

### *3. Please share your thoughts on public art and its role in our community.*

Public Art fosters civic pride and a sense of community. It engages citizens and encourages folks to explore and love their community. I think in the world of dollars and cents many people may not appreciate art for all it does to enhance our community and we would need to increase education on why these investments are important.

### *4. Lethbridge City Council has demonstrated their commitment to building a performing arts centre in their recent Capital Improvement Program. Do you support this commitment and if is so what is your proposed strategy for completing the project?*

I support the concept of a Performing Arts Centre and believe it is something that Lethbridge would benefit from greatly. I'm aware that the return on investment for such projects in other similarly sized municipalities far exceeds the expenditures of these facilities over the course of their lifetime.

That being said, I am cognizant of the financial pressures facing Lethbridge in the next term (4 years) as we recover from the global health crisis and continue to deal with the ongoing crises of the Opioid Epidemic and the Climate Change Crisis.

I do think that a PAC is a good investment for the city, I am hesitant to commit fully to the timeline of funding this investment until I can further review our budget and have more insight into the impacts of these combined factors.