



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

Candidate: Rajko Dodic

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

Answering this question is particularly difficult because there is such a disagreement as to what the 'arts' means? The person who enjoys the Mona Lisa or a sculpture of David probably sees the arts as much different than someone who feels a black velvet painting of Elvis is the epitome of 'good art'. Fans of Metallica might not have the same view of music as an Opera lover. And those who love the works of Shakespeare may not have a fondness of whimsical musicals. Since my role is 'governance', my vision for the arts is to ensure that existing arts facilities and programs are able to continue and, where possible, and having regard to fiscal realities, such facilities and programs and opportunities are enhanced, always bearing in mind the diversity of those who love and appreciate the arts, no matter what form it may take. When running for an elected position, there is a tendency for candidates to do a full-throated endorsement of the goals and aspirations of whatever group is seeking their opinion despite the fact that they will still need at least four other colleagues to agree with them to advance anything beyond just promises. Promises are easy to make; delivery of those promises is much more difficult.

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.

I had the privilege of speaking at the opening of CASA on May 14, 2013 at which time I said:

'Our local arts community has been waiting for this day for a long time. For decades to come, this new arts facility will be a significant cultural and economic asset for downtown Lethbridge and for the entire community.'

I believe that eight years later that has proven to be true. There are still some folks who view CASA as an unnecessary project and oftentimes they state that view based on the cost of the project. I need to remind people that the major funding for the project came from the Federal and Provincial Governments as well as the University of Lethbridge with Lethbridge property tax payers contributing less than 1% of the cost of construction. That is a great example of what partnerships and an investment in Arts can do. In short, investment in the Arts has many benefits and not solely limited to bringing joy to those who experience it.

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

I am well aware of and accept the studies that demonstrate that a vibrant arts community translates into economic benefits. I am also aware of that a portion of monies that are dedicated to art installations when community projects are undertaken and I support that initiative. There are a couple of such works that particularly stand out in my mind; one being the 'smoke spiral' in front of Firehall #1 and the giant train wheels outside the Galt Museum. In the latter case, one could not count the number of times that work has been filmed or photographed. I also want to mention the art work given to us by our sister city of St. Laurent, Quebec which is displayed near our Japanese Gardens and, of course, the iron sculptures of the wolves we gave to our sister city.

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 so what is your proposed strategy for completing the project?

The current council has included this project and its' implementation in the most current Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and I will support that.