



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

Candidate: Shelby J. MacLeod

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

My vision is a diversified arts community with accessible art spaces for all citizens and visitors to Lethbridge that encourage people to enjoy and grow their understanding of others through conversations about the art. I remember, Arts are Alive and Well projects, that provided opportunities for all ages and levels of artist to get involved, create and show their art. Small art events have grown, developing into bigger well supported events that continue to grow. Lethbridge has an excellent inventory of artist talent that continues to grow and develop. I am proud of our artists and their work.

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.

Art can elicit pride, tell a story – an interpretive history or futuristic, art can be a tourism addition or a main attraction that draws people. I believe venues like Nikko Yuko Japanese Garden, that has become a major destination for the city, is also a product of great art vision and design work, which will host feature artists in the years to come with their new building. Art is interpretive and has the ability to give our citizens and visitors a historic self-worth of the community. When Council approves the annual arts budget, it signals we value the artists and the people who work in the industry. The ongoing investment in the arts has many benefits from mental health and wellness, to artist pride, public joy and jobs, which is all really baseline economic development for the humanities.

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

I am in favour of public art. Usually public art are larger installations that can be seen from your car, touched, or even sat on. History shows, that many installations are photographed and shared on post cards, now those images are shared around the world, with the click. Some public art pieces are funny and some are far more serious, that require contemplation - as to their meaning. Public art is a good for everyone, the artist, the city, the people who view the art, from a smile to having a serious talk about – what is it mean or what is this art piece trying to say.

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?

As a citizen the easy answer is yes, to a new performing arts centre. Should I be elected, the decision gets harder, as to **how much will it cost the taxpayer?** I understand that the current vision for a new performing art center is one of cutting edge and yearly maintenance costs well over \$1 million dollars per year, regardless of how many concerts it hosts. The next question people ask is how much will every homeowner and business pay on their property tax – ticket pricing aside. As a Council, we will have to deal with sustainable financing and real long term operational costs projections. The City debt level may also affect timeline decisions; unless a public / private partnership came available, which would speed up construction timeline. A new performing arts centre will be a very important addition to Lethbridge and Southern Alberta; it will enhance the cultural and tourism fabric of our society for years to come. I believe we must be strategic on building and able to fund the ongoing maintenance forevermore, as we do on all city owned buildings.