



Recognition of Treaty Territory

Olds is on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region of Alberta which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Piikanni, and Kainai First Nations), as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation and the Stoney Nakoda Nations (Chiniki, Bearspaw and Wesley First Nations). This area is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.



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Town Profile

Olds is a town of just under 10,000 residents located between Red Deer and Calgary on the Highway 2 Corridor.

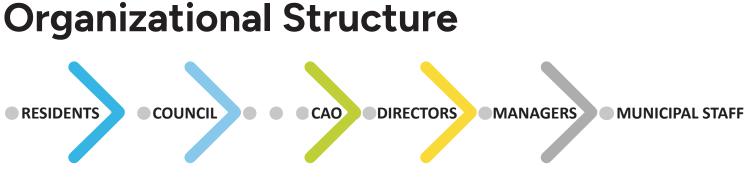
While benefitting from our ideal geography and rocky mountain views, Olds is also home to Olds College of Agriculture and Technology, a century's old institution and the top agriculture research college in Canada.

With over 3,000 students and 400 staff on campus throughout the year, Olds College brings social and economic diversity to our town, making it one of the most dynamic places in rural Alberta.

The Town of Olds is a resilient and resourceful community with citizens who care about each other, interact with one another, and has a strong volunteer base. Olds is proud of its small-town charm that offers big city amenities, opportunities and services.

Olds is proud to be a Fair Trade Town, promoting fair trade concepts in businesses and personal lives of citizens.





Town Council

Town Council is the governing body of the Town of Olds, elected every four years by residents. Council is granted authority under Alberta's Municipal Government Act (MGA) and is tasked with providing strategic direction to administration. Council accomplishes this mandate primarily through strategic planning, policy development, and bylaws. The next municipal election will occur in October 2025.

Town Administration

Town administration is comprised of all municipal staff and is led by the Town's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The CAO is Council's sole employee and is charged with both actioning Council direction and providing advice and operational updates to Council.

The Town of Olds is comprised of five divisions, with each comprising several departments:

DIVISION	DEPARTMENT
Office of the CAO	Economic Development Executive Support Human Resources Legislative Services
Community Services	Communications and Eng Community Development Parks and Recreation
Corporate Services	Finance Grants and Procurement Records Management
Infrastructure	Planning and Infrastructu Operations
Protective Services	Emergency Management Fire Department Municipal Enforcement Liaison to RCMP

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Message from the Mayor

Welcome!

I am grateful to present the 2023 Annual Year in Review on behalf of the Town of Olds Council.

2023 was a busy year for Council and the Town. Through an update to our Strategic Plan, Council goes 'back to basics', focusing on infrastructure, core service levels, and community engagement. As such, the following report is presented to you with our 4 strategic goals as the centrepiece.

1. Our residents and town staff actively communicate and engage with us through open dialogue.

Council works for the community, setting a course for staff to follow to ensure the Town of Olds remains a vibrant place to live and work. Success in this area is impossible without actively engaging with our citizens and our staff to hear concerns, problems, solutions, kudos, and everything in between. In 2023, we attempted to attain this goal through several initiatives that you will read about in this annual report that include Coffee with Councillor sessions, which occurred in the summer and winter; our spring traffic survey; and our 2024 budget survey.

2. Our community is supported and enabled through skillful governance.

Council recognized a need for improvement with strategic planning. A key priority of this goal is for council to direct administration to build organized service levels. Creating these service levels with departmental business plans allows us to demonstrate how actions will be executed and measured. Some results of this include the service level changes residents may have already noticed in our solid waste schedule, our mowing program, and at the Olds Sportsplex.

3. Our Thriving Community is built on sound and collaborative relationships.

Community and regional partners are fundamental to many things the Town and Council do and accomplish. Olds College and Mountain View County are two of our most important relationships, with both lending their support to our ongoing economic strategy and appointing members to the Economic Development Action Committee (EDAC). However, Olds would not be Olds without the strong community organizations that do so much for our citizens and region, and Council recognizes the need to nurture and grow these relationships. This report will speak to some of recent examples and to how we are looking to achieve even more together.

4. Sound fiscal practices are balanced with a commitment to prioritizing value for our citizens.

Council understands the responsibility and accountability in managing public dollars and we are always looking to ensure fiscal practices are keeping pace with best practices, that spending always has the community's best interests first, and that financial decisions are communicated effectively with citizens. Council has strived to improve transparency in 2023, through new and recurring engagement efforts. That being said, the Town is facing some significant financial challenges that need to be confronted head on. This will not make everyone happy, but we hope that we can provide enough information for people to make an informed opinion on these matters.

In closing, Council thanks the citizens for all their community efforts and engagement with the Town this past year; the support and feedback from those living here is highly valued. Our community is made up of those that live, work, play and educate here and we as a Council also acknowledge that this past year involved many changes and some difficult challenges. We assure you that Council and administration are working hard to make sound decisions for the Town. Olds is truly a gem of Central Alberta. We look forward to what is to come in 2024.

With Gratitude,

JudyDahl

Mayor Judy Dahl



PIONEER



"Our community is made up of those that live, work, play and educate here...Olds is truly a gem of Central Alberta."

Mayor Judy Dahl

Alive with Opportunity Strategic Plan: 2022 – 2032

Council's Strategic Plan was developed in May of 2022 and updated in February 2023. It is a living document that conveys Council's key priorities to improve the quality of life for residents and provide guidance to administration.

Strategic Goals:



marketing Plan.

Strategic Priorities:

From the strategic plan, Council established priorities for administration to focus on that will help achieve each goal.



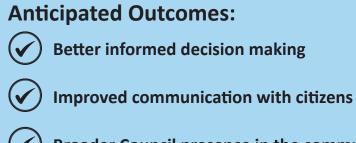
All these priorities are in the process of being actioned by administration and are on track to be completed and meaningfully

The annual budget is a fundamental piece of achieving Council's strategic plan. With an annual spend between \$35 and \$40 million, Council and Administration take care and pride in managing the public purse in a prudent and sustainable manner.

Budget preparation in Olds begins in late summer and wraps up in mid-December. With hundreds of staff and Council hours

Progress on Strategic Goal 1

Our residents and town staff actively communicate and engage with us through open dialogue.



Broader Council presence in the community



Results Achieved in 2023:

Coffee with Councillors

Through 7 sessions in the July and August and 2 in November, councillors and the mayor set up shop at several local businesses and welcomed residents who had questions, concerns, or were curious about Town operations and business. While attendance was lower than we had hoped, there were many positives to build on and we will continue these efforts in 2024.

Community Connection Centre

The 'CCC' opened on September 1st 2023, creating a physical space for residents to meet, engage, and receive support to community resources such as Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), the Mountain View Emergency Shelter Society, and Olds BGC (formerly Boys and Girls Club). In its first 4 months of operation, the CCC welcomed over 330 visitors, providing a welcoming space for citizens and service groups alike. It is already showing benefits to our robust social service offerings in Olds, and we look forward to developing the CCC into a core community asset.

Public Surveys •

- survey a decision was made to increase the solid waste service level beginning in January 2024.
- concerns voiced by residents and businesses for pedestrian safety.

Event Coordination •

- attracted over 6,200 participants.
- measured by enthusiasm from and about our community, is inspiring.



• 2024 Budget Survey: The budget survey ran from August 15 to September 18 and had a record number of respondents at 300. Residents rated the overall effectiveness of the services provided by the Town as "Average". Coming out of the

• **Traffic Survey:** A comprehensive review and public consultation saw the change of school zones into playground zones in various locations as well as the creation of a new zone surrounding Centennial Park. This was initiated due to

• Housing Survey: Prior to the kick-off of the Housing Needs Assessment, the Town conducted an online survey of residents' opinions on housing in the Olds market. Many of our assumptions were further supported by this survey, with most respondents having concerns with both the availability and affordability of certain types of homes in Olds.

• **Special Events:** The Town of Olds hosts or helps host many community events throughout the year, with support of our many volunteers. These include Canada Day, Olds Fashioned Christmas, Volunteer Appreciation, Community Showcase, Youth Week, Seniors Week, and Culture days. With just these 7 events, the Town had support from 183 volunteers and

• Economic Development Week: On May 9th, Economic Development Week was celebrated in the Town of Olds with the official launch of the Invest Olds brand and website. This event was attended by over 50 local citizens, businesses, and investors and was hosted at Olds College. Economic growth is a primary focus for the Town and the success of this event,

Progress on Strategic Goal 2 O

Our community is supported and enabled through skillful governance.

Anticipated Outcomes:

Long-term plans in place

Vision for the future

() Improved citizen trust in local government

Results Achieved in 2023:

Throughout 2023, Council met in four separate sessions to review many of the Town's core service levels and discuss frequency, quality and cost of the following:

- Solid Waste
- Snow Clearing
- Aquatics

SportsplexMowing

• Sportsfields

- Municipal EnforcementStreet Sweeping
- Road and Sidewalk Repair

In these sessions, Council compared our current service level efforts to the resources we were devoting to them and either confirmed each was suitable or directed administration to bring forward a policy adjustment. Some of the core services that were adjusted in 2023 include:

• Solid Waste:

The Service Level was increased to have more collection days per month for both black and blue bins, and a seasonal increase to green bins.

• Green Space Maintenance:

The Service Level was reduced for certain green spaces to a bi-weekly mowing and maintenance schedule, primarily in areas that did not receive public use or foot traffic.

Aquatics:

↓ The Olds Aquatic Centre (OAC) experienced a reduction in operating hours in 2023, which was instituted as a cost savings measure. This equates to an ~\$80,000 annual savings to the Town and was largely decided based on program utilization. This will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Town.

• Communications Strategy

Also related to Strategic Goal #1, the communications strategy fits here because it represents the first recent attempt to bring structure to the communications function at the Town. As a core priority of Council, administration drafted this strategy to delineate responsibilities and expectations of staff when it comes to communicating internally and with our public and improve transparency.

Through this initial step, the Town of Olds is committed to becoming a leader in citizen engagement and communication.

Organizational Review

Started in 2022, an Organizational Review of Town Operations was finalized in early 2023, with 78 recommendations offered to Council and administration to improve the effectiveness of our service delivery to citizens. In 2023, most of these goals are in progress towards completion with 26 being deemed complete.

• Organizational Changes

Following the organizational review, Town administration experienced a large reorganization in 2023, resulting in both needed and difficult changes. During 2024 budget deliberations, Council made the decision to cut 4 full-time positions from the Town's staffing compliment, resulting in layoffs. While other decisions by the CAO led to changes to senior leadership, with administration welcoming two new directors in late 2023. Adrian Pedro joined as the Director of Infrastructure and Lorraine O'Brien as the Director of Community Services. Throughout these and other changes in 2023, Town staff yet again demonstrated their professionalism and work ethic by embracing change and enabling new processes and people to be integrated into our organization.

• Housing Needs Assessment

Housing shortages and affordability issues are affecting the entire province and country, with Olds being no exception. To address this, Council funded a housing needs assessment to provide Olds specific data to help the Town better understand our position and to provide developers with baseline data to hopefully support their interest to build housing here.



Progress on Strategic Goal 3

Our thriving community is built on strong and collaborative relationships.

Anticipated Outcomes:





Community cohesiveness

Improved regional collaboration

() Better decision making

Results Achieved in 2023:

- Intermunicipal Relationships
 - Mountain View County: With Olds being the hub for much of the Mountain View County region, it is no surprise that our most important municipal partnership is with the County. In 2023, the Town and County implemented a revised Fire Service Agreement, appointed members to both Olds and Area Health Professionals Attraction and Retention Committee and the Town-led Economic Development Action Committee (EDAC). The Town of Olds is fortunate to have a strong partner in the county supporting our region.
 - Community Lifestyles Committee: Olds is a designated Age-Friendly Community, meaning that we have committed to making our Town a better and safer place to live for senior citizens. The Community Lifestyles Committee leads this initiative and updates the Town frequently on needs and issues facing our senior community, from accessible sidewalks to health care delivery.
 - Public Art Committee: After a brief hiatus, the Public Art Committee was reformed with some previous and new members. The PAC is a group of local art enthusiasts who want to promote various artistic efforts in Olds. From murals to sculptures to music and theatre, public art enriches a community, and we are grateful for these volunteers who keep that vision alive in Olds.

Provincial and Federal Governments

- Relationships and advocacy with both orders of government have been maintained in 2023, with several meetings with our local MLA and MP, as well with Provincial Ministers in Edmonton. The Town of Olds advocacy priorities include:
- Restoration of Capital Funding for Core Infrastructure
- Improvements to Health Care Delivery in Olds, specifically at the Olds Hospital
- Affordable Housing Advocacy for Rural Areas
- Advocacy on behalf of Olds College to support funding for a new trades building and to change the current tiered compensation structure for educational institutions.



Progress on Strategic Goal 4

Sound fiscal practices are balanced with a commitment to prioritizing value for our citizens.

Anticipated Outcomes:



Reduced utility expenses

Meaningful capital plans

Results Achieved in 2023:

Infrastructure Renewal

The primary focus for Town administration is improving our core infrastructure. The key component of this focus is the correction of our issues in our water and sanitary systems, which significantly affect the Town's financial performance and resulting in controlled releases from our sanitary lift station into the surrounding environment.

• Vapour Testing

In 2023, the entire sanitary system in the Town of Olds was tested for leaks and cross connections by injecting nonhazardous vapour into manholes. This allowed us to identify several dozen areas of concern, and repairs are underway.

• 52nd Street Replacement

The multi-year effort to replace the entirety of 52nd Street's underground infrastructure from 57th to 50th Avenues was complete. This infrastructure was approximately 70 years old and at the end of its useful life.

• Water Meter Pilot Program

The Town of Olds has over 4,000 water meters it is responsible for maintaining, and most of them require upgrading or replacing. In 2023, we began a 100-meter pilot program using meters equipped with ultrasonic technology for leak detection. If this trial is successful, the full-scale replacement program could commence in 2025.

- 2023 Repair and Maintenance Program
- 15 catch basin repairs
- 16 mahole relines
- 8 utility dig repairs
- 1 water vault meter installation

- 55 tonnes of hot mix asphalt repairs
- 3 large paving repairs
- 22 sidewalk locations replaced

• Planning and Economic Development

- Planning for Future Growth & Managing Current Growth
 - Permit Approvals

2023 was the busiest year since 2015 for new housing starts (28), number of building permits issued (138), and total dollar value of permits (\$16,188,667). While it is reassuring seeing the momentum, given the challenging economic climate for builders and developers, we hope to see continued growth in these numbers.

- Areas Structure Plans (ASP) the Town and Council focused on 3 ASPs:
 - annexed lands to the NE of Olds.
 - been rezoned for multi-unit dwellings. We expect construction to begin in spring 2024.
- Sanitary Modelling Study system's capacity was undertaken to ensure capacity exists for further connections.

• *Economic Development Strategy*

- one member to this committee.
- Grant Funding
 - federal governments.

Olds Aquatic Centre Retrofit

After a 4-month shutdown, the Olds Aquatic Centre reopened in November 2023. The purpose of this closure was to replace the mechanical systems, roof, and windows with more energy efficient options. This was a \$2.75 million project, funded with a \$2.2 million federal grant, a \$130,000 contribution from Mountain View County, and a \$420,000 from the Town of Olds. This will give this facility an additional 20-years of anticipated life while reducing utility costs by up to 40%.





An area structure plan is one of the initial phases of planning the future growth and servicing of an area. In 2023,

• Northeast ASP: The Town is creating this new ASP in partnership with Mountain View County in the recently

Miller Meadows ASP: Located at the south end of Town, between 57th and 53rd Avenues, this land has now

• Vistas ASP: This ASP was amended to rezone a large potion of the remaining land for duplex development.

To ensure we're able to handle new growth areas and infill growth, an engineering assessment of our sanitary

• In 2023, the Economic Development Action Committee (EDAC) was appointed with both elected and public-atlarge members. A primary goal of this committee is to steer the creation of our Economic Development Strategy. To date, we have partnerships with Olds College and Mountain View County, with both organizations appointing

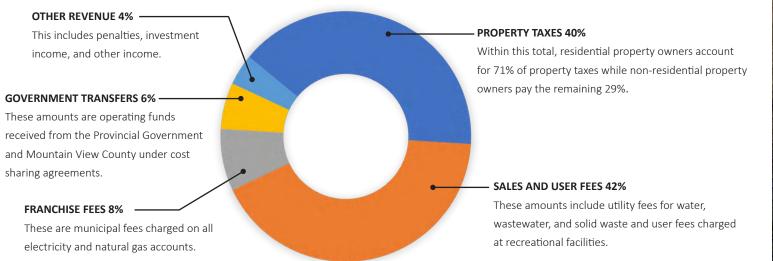
• The Town frequently applies for grants to help offset costs of planned projects and to enable new projects. In 2023, the Town was successful in soliciting over \$4.8 million grants from various agencies within the provincial and

Financial Performance

Complete 2023 financial data will be available May 2024, after the 2023 annual report is published. The audited financial statements will be released at that time. However, we can still capture key trends and important milestones of the past year.

Revenue

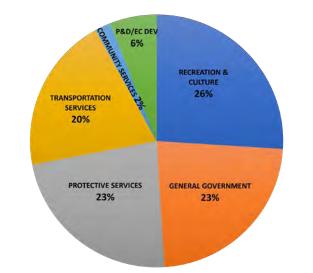
The Town of Olds, like all municipalities, has limited revenue sources:



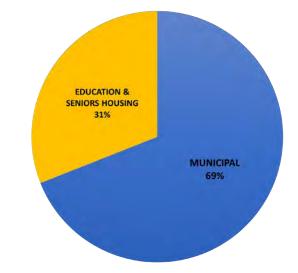
In 2023, the Town's largest taxpayer, SNDL (formerly Sundial Growers), closed its operations in Olds. This resulted in a tax loss of over \$400,000 and a yet unknown amount in franchise fee revenue loss. Town Council pivoted during budget deliberations to make difficult but necessary cuts to ease the burden on remaining taxpayers.

How did your tax dollars get spent in 2023?

The municipal portion of your property taxes is based on the Town's budgeted revenue requirements.



The municipal portion, just over \$10.5 million in total, is used to pay for amenities and services, such as roadways, fire, parks, recreation facilities and much more!



Included on your property tax bill are taxes that the Town collects on behalf of the Provincial government for education and Mountain View Seniors Housing; these together account for 31% of property tax bills.



Risks and Challenges

- Capital Funding Decrease
 - more expensive to maintain.
- Water Loss
 - infrastructure or to malfunctioning water meters. We estimate this dollar loss at \$750,000 annually.
- Inflow and Infiltration (I&I)
 - estimated cost of I&I in 2023 is \$1.45 million.

 Since 2019, the Province of Alberta has reduced capital funding to municipalities by 33%. This affects our ability to replace infrastructure and puts additional pressure on operating budgets, as aging capital assets become

• The Town has battled water loss for many years, with ~30% of water purchased regionally lost to broken

• Since the switch to the regional wastewater commission in 2014, the issue of storm and groundwater getting into our sanitary system has become a much larger issue. Prior to 2014, the water simply went to our lagoons, where it sat. Now, it gets pumped to the City of Red Deer and treated, which is a substaintial cost. The

Residential / Non-Residential Assessment Comparison

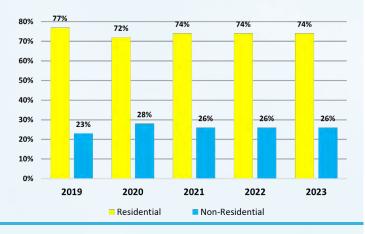
Known as the 'Split', this is as an indicator of municipal financial health. Ideally, an urban municipality like Olds would see consistent growth in the proportion of non-residential assessment (i.e., private business properties) compared to its residential assessment (i.e., houses).

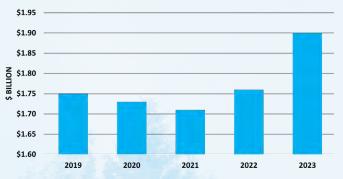
As of 2023, that split is 74% - 26%, which is a healthy ratio.

Assessment Growth

The total value of property in a municipality is referred to as its Assessment. The Town of Olds is looking for annual growth in this metric.

While recent growth is fueled largely by inflation in the housing market, we are on the cusp of achieving tangible growth through new development plans and initiatives.





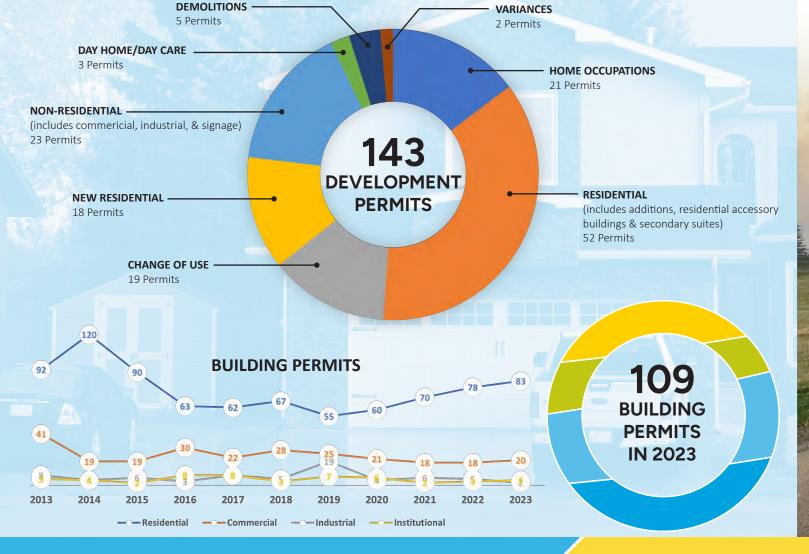
Business and Development Stats

Business licenses are a leading indicator of business health and confidence in the Town of Olds, especially for small businesses. As seen below, 2023 was our best year for business licenses, following a decrease during and following the pandemic.

Development statistics are also trending upwards for residential development and overall development permits. While we are below industrial permits in recent years, it is important to clarify that the \$100 million SNDL (formerly Sundial Growers) facility construction does heavily influence the period from 2016-2019.

INDICATORS Indicators that the organization monitors, which can influence outcomes	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Number of Business Licenses (including non-resident licenses)	x	-	-	3	728	712	696	680	758
Total New Housing Starts (including secondary suites)	45	21	46	25	14	10	22	23	28
Estimated Residential Construction (\$Millions)	13	6	12	9	4	4	7	8	10
Total Number of Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional Permits		43	39	41	53	32	27	28	26
Estimated Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional Construction (\$Millions)	2	7	15	23	29	26	2	6	5

Olds Fire	Depa	rtment [*]	Total Ca	II Volum	е	
Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Calls	372	354	385	435	464	
% Increase	-	-4.80%	8.70%	12.90%	6.60%	



2023 Spotlight

Key developments this past year

1. Mountain View Power (MVP)

The Town took ownership of MVP in early 2023 following the closure of the Olds Institute, whose volunteers started the program over a decade ago. MVP is an energy marketer that sells electricity and natural gas to customers of Olds and area. Most importantly, all profits from MVP are invested into the community through direct and indirect funding. The largest source of this funding is the MVP Community Grants Program, which distributed \$120,000 over 2 grant intakes to 6 local community groups in 2023.

2. Invest Olds

The Town of Olds' economic development arm launched its investment attraction website www.investolds.ca in 2023. Interested investors and developers can now quickly source available lands and properties in Olds as well as access local supplier lists, GIS maps, incentive programs, and more. In 2023, Invest Olds, through the provincial RRS and RES programs attracted 30 immigrant workers to local businesses and 2 new immigrant entrepreneurs who opened businesses in Olds. Additionally, 758 business licenses were sold which included 75 new business starts. Following the housing needs assessment, a promotional campaign ensued profiling 27 potential properties available for multi-unit development. Invest Olds attracted the attention of Business View Magazine and international recognition as a place to invest in Canada. And, closing the year strong, the Globe and Mail ranked Olds as the 52nd most livable city in Canada, adding even more excitement for the potential of 2024!

3. Olds Fire Department (OFD)

OFD had a remarkable 2023. With 464 calls for service, this marked the department's busiest year to date. This does not include the wildfire responses that saw members deployed to Drayton Valley, Peace River, and Rainbow Lake to support other communities in their times of need, or the tornado event that occurred in Mountain View County this summer, or the December 15th incident on highway 2 that saw several motor vehicle incidents involving over 40 vehicles. The Town owes a huge debt of gratitude to OFD members.

4. Planning and Development

The Town reorganized its Planning and Development department in 2023, creating a manager to oversee both our engineering and planning functions. While we continuously strive to improve our processes, this team has done an exceptional job leading projects, processing permit applications, and demonstrating results. With the average approval time for development and building permits issued by administration under 5 business days, we are streamlining our own internal processes while helping applicants navigate the provincially regulated safety codes regime that all municipalities follow.

5. O-NET

After issues with the TV platform, O-NET has undergone significant changes in leadership and is now focused on having its subscriber base converted to the cloud-based television provider, ESPIAL. Further improvements will be made to the core infrastructure supporting the network to improve the O-NET offering and keeping it a competitive local provider of internet and TV. As the sole shareholder of O-NET, the Town of Olds Is thankful for the patience of loyal customers during this transition and to the staff at O-NET who have worked hard to support this forward movement.



Looking Ahead - 2024 Priorities

Utility Repair

2024 will be focused on investigating and repairing our water and sanitary system to reduce the financial burden and environmental liability of water loss and I&I. Our target is a 10% reduction in each by the end of 2024. This will not be an easy task, but 2024 will see the people and plans prepared to achieve this goal.

Service Level Reviews

We will move into phase 2 of our service level reviews by adopting more accurate costing methods for our services and projects, as well as establishing clearer performance indicators and measurement. This will allow us to both track our own operational and financial performance and demonstrate a stronger level of accountability to our citizens.

Capital Planning

Council has communicated the need to have stronger capital planning and reserve strategies for renewing our core assets, including infrastructure, equipment, and facilities. This will occur in 2024 with the first draft plans being created by the end of Q2. Capital planning involves scheduling and costing the full lifecycle of assets from purchase through to replacement; from fire trucks to computers, and splash parks to graders, establishing an accurate 'cost of ownership' of our core assets will allow us to spend tax dollars more effectively.

Economic Growth

The Town of Olds understands that in order confront the challenges we face and to take advantage of the opportunities we have, we must grow our economic base. That means more new houses, more new businesses, and more new taxpayers, but also stronger existing businesses, more affordable homes and rentals, and less financial pressure on current taxpayers.

The Town of Olds has a strategic advantage over much of rural Alberta in that it is a community where people want to live and to do business. With our ideal geography, strong commercial sector, Olds College, robust heath care network, and a burgeoning arts and culture scene, the Town has many things working its favour to to enable sustainable economic growth.



Community Connection Centre

We outlined on Page 7 the creation of the CCC and its early successes. But what we are most excited about is what it will become. By centralizing the Town's social services functions and providing office and programming space for complimentary non-profit organizations to operate, we believe our community will turn this space into a hub for wellness and connection. This is only the beginning of the CCC and its positive impact on our Town and region.



By working with our local and regional partners, 2024 will set the stage for long-term progress in our housing sector, commercial developments, and

Corporate Report

Following the completion of our audited financial statements for 2023, the Town will release a mid-year corporate update in 2024 to report on the final results of 2023 and comment on 2024 progress. Stay tuned!

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