

imagineKelowna

THE VISION TO 2040 - June 2018



"WE CAN'T PREDICT THE FUTURE.

Flexibility and adaptability is what is going to help us through all the changes. Values last longer than plans, we can't prepare for everything in the future."

- Imagine Kelowna participant

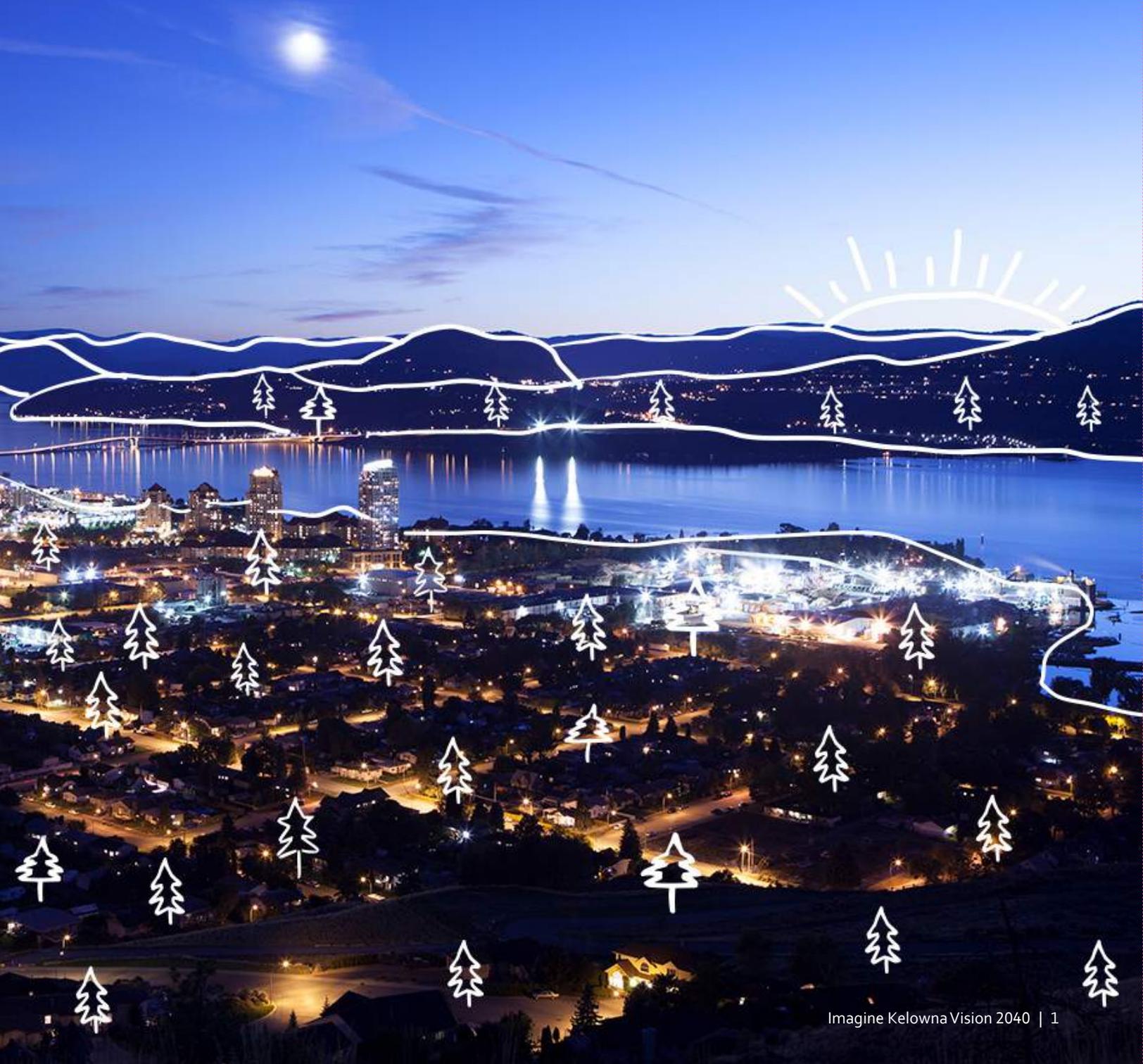




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INTRODUCTION





The result of almost 4,000 resident contributions, Imagine Kelowna is a vision created by our community, for our community.

Imagine Kelowna is our response to the forces of change. In 2018, Kelowna is a city in transition and Imagine Kelowna is the community's vision, principles and goals to thrive in the face of unprecedented growth and change. The result of almost 4,000 resident contributions, this is a vision created by our community, for our community.

Kelowna is a thriving city and an incredible place to call home. To flourish in the future, we need to be agile, resilient and unafraid to do things differently. The community has made it clear that as we grow, we need to look out for one another and protect the stunning environment that sustains us. Our vision for an inclusive, welcoming, prosperous and sustainable future calls upon us all to be ambitious to embrace the challenges ahead.

We want to be a welcoming community where lifestyle and economic opportunities are available to everyone. This means ensuring that everybody who lives here can make a living, find suitable housing, and get around easily and safely.

The Imagine Kelowna goals are also aligned with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, linking what we are doing locally with larger global efforts to shift the world onto a more equitable, sustainable and resilient path.

Kelowna is at a pivotal time in its evolution, one full of great opportunities.

THE VISION





In 2040, Kelowna is a thriving mid-sized city that welcomes people from all backgrounds. We want to build a successful community that honours our rich heritage and also respects the natural wonders that contribute to our identity.

As a place with deep agricultural roots, Kelowna understands the need to protect our environment, manage growth and be resilient as our future unfolds.

After an 18-month long conversation in the community about our future, a vision for the qualities we want to exemplify emerged. We want a community that:

Puts people first

We try to balance the needs of everybody in our decision making. We recognize that inclusivity and diversity make us a stronger and more innovative community.

Values its history

We celebrate our heritage, and learn from our past to reconcile it with a better, more inclusive future we see for ourselves.

Encourages curiosity and creativity

We learn continuously to respond and adapt to rapid change. We find innovative ways to meet social, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities.

Recognizes the changing roles of individuals, businesses, governments and community organizations

The well-being of our city is a shared responsibility and everyone needs to do their part to seize opportunities for improvement.

PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

IMAGINE NEXT



THE 2040 VISION



The following principles and goals work together as a system to help the community achieve its vision:





COLLABORATIVE

Principle 1 – Collaborative:

A community where people of all backgrounds work together to meet collective challenges.

Goal: Engage with the Okanagan’s traditional past and heritage as foundations for building a fair and equitable community.

We will honour our rich heritage while also following the lead of our local Indigenous communities towards a path of reconciliation.

Goal: Nurture a culture of entrepreneurship and collaboration.

Entrepreneurship is weaved into Kelowna’s cultural fabric, making our community more creative, collaborative and better able to meet the challenges of the future.

Goal: Foster resident-driven solutions.

We unleash our community’s hidden talents to solve the tough challenges of the future.



SMARTER

Principle 2 – Smarter:

A community willing to learn, adapt and grow so we can thrive amid rapid change.

Goal: Support innovation that helps drive inclusive prosperity.

We are building a nimble and resilient economy that doesn’t leave anyone behind.

Goal: Take action and be resilient in the face of climate.

We will seize the opportunity to face climate change head-on for a hopeful and sustainable future.

Goal: Build healthy neighbourhoods that support a variety of households, income levels and life stages.

Everyone in our community should be able to find stable and appropriate housing.



CONNECTED

Principle 3 – Connected:

A community where residents are connected to their neighbours, their city and the wider world.

Goal: Embrace diverse transportation options to shift away from our car-centric culture.

Making it easy for people to choose non-driving options protects the beauty of Kelowna and makes getting around more enjoyable.

Goal: Create great public spaces that bring people together.

We need great public gathering places like parks, plazas and community centres where people can meet and connect with others.

Goal: Provide opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and identities.

We all benefit when everyone in the community has access to economic, recreational and social opportunities.

Goal: Cultivate an accessible and engaging arts and culture scene.

Everyone can find something that interests them to engage in, from grassroots initiatives to professional endeavours.



RESPONSIBLE

Principle 4 – Responsible:

A community where decisions are made ethically and where social and environmental concerns are prioritized.

Goal: Concentrate on growing vibrant urban centres and limit urban sprawl.

Denser neighbourhoods make our city healthier, more sustainable and easier to get around. They make more financial sense, too.

Goal: Preserve Okanagan Lake as a shared resource.

Okanagan Lake is the jewel that makes Kelowna sparkle.

Goal: Strengthen the protection of our land, water and air resources.

Our stunning environment is the foundation that all of our other aspirations stand on.

Goal: Protect agricultural land and promote sustainable farming.

Supporting agriculture helps ensure food security while preserving vital green infrastructure.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLABORATIVE

A community where people of all backgrounds work together to meet collective challenges.

Goal: Engage with the Okanagan's traditional past and heritage as foundations for building a fair and equitable community

We will honour our rich heritage while also following the lead of our local Indigenous communities towards a path of reconciliation.

Kelowna has a rich heritage – some to celebrate, some to reconcile. Some of those stories are told at historical sites including the Guisachan Heritage Park, the Myra Canyon trestles, the Laurel Packinghouse, and the syilx Okanagan banners at the entrance to Kelowna's downtown. Historical points of pride include Kelowna's deep agricultural history, its reputation as a pioneering wine region, and the significant contributions people from Kelowna have made in the fields of politics, business, sports and the arts.

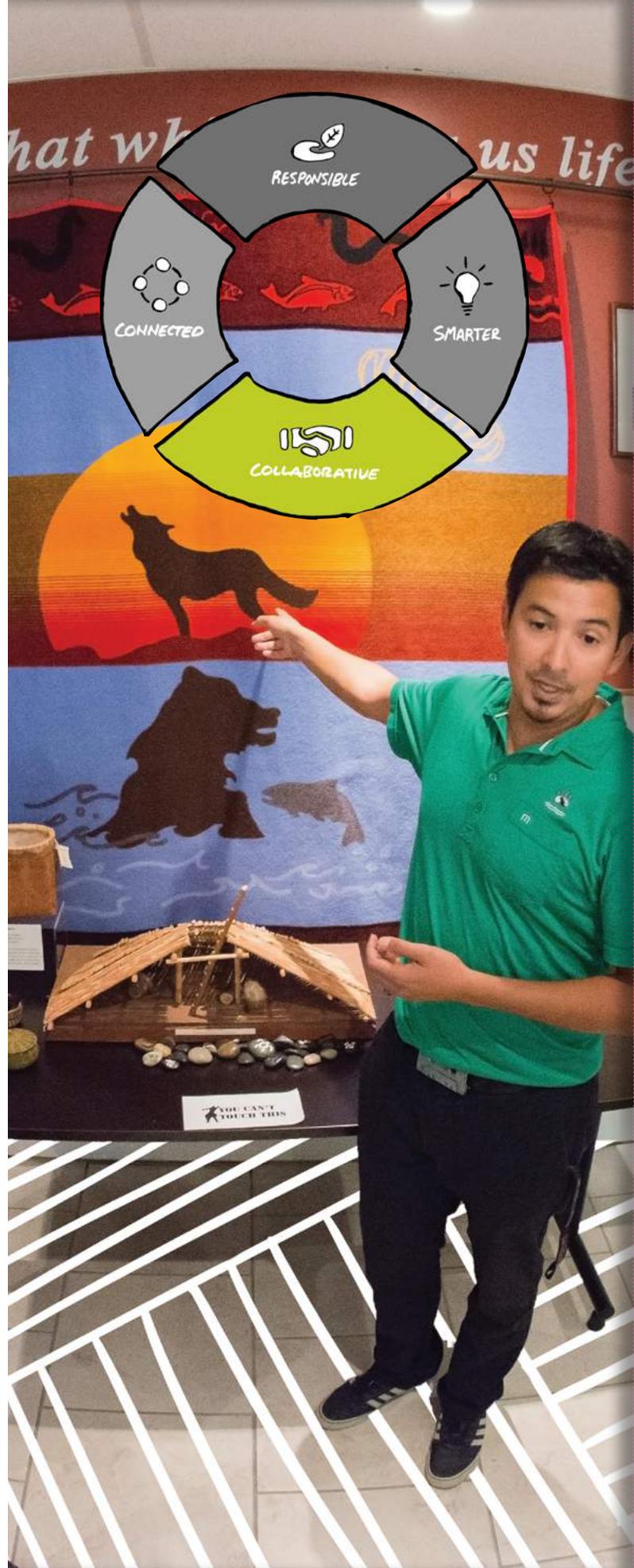
There is also work to be done to reconcile our past with the equitable community we say we want to become. Imagine Kelowna conversations with Indigenous representatives explored how the syilx Okanagan people never ceded their territory and were displaced from their land and onto reserves by the provincial and federal governments, and their children were sent away to residential schools.

Looking ahead

To effectively address homelessness, health and other social issues that disproportionately affect Indigenous people, we need to follow the lead of the syilx Okanagan communities in learning from our history so we can collectively find ways to move forward. For Kelowna's non-Indigenous leaders and residents, this starts by learning about the local Indigenous communities on whose territories we reside.

Kelowna is not alone in doing this kind of work. In the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, our history with Indigenous people is something communities across this country are looking to understand and address.

Strategies include the City's continued collaboration with Indigenous communities on projects such as "Journey Home" and the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's "Calls to Action." To realize this goal, governments and non-Indigenous individuals, businesses and organizations need to reach out to their local Indigenous communities and follow their lead toward a path of reconciliation.



Goal: Nurture a culture of entrepreneurship and collaboration

Entrepreneurship is woven into Kelowna's cultural fabric, making our community more creative, collaborative and better able to meet the challenges of the future.

Our city has one of the highest rates of self-employment in the country and in 2016, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business named us the Top Entrepreneurial City in Canada.

One of the reasons entrepreneurs are so successful here is that they don't have to work in isolation from one another. There are a lot of resources that bring entrepreneurs in Kelowna together, from post-secondary programs, to co-working spaces, to business incubators and mentorship programs.

Looking ahead:

The big challenge for our community is one that is faced by all successful entrepreneurs – resisting the urge to rest on our laurels. During the Imagine Kelowna process, we heard calls to not only continue supporting the kinds of programs mentioned above, but to create more of them, something that will require co-operation between multiple levels of government and community partners.

Successful entrepreneurs are creative, collaborative and are able to keep going in the face of hardship. These are the same kinds of talents that we need to draw on as a community to be able to adapt to a changing world.

Social entrepreneurship (the use of entrepreneurial techniques to address social, cultural, or environmental issues) is growing in popularity and throughout the Imagine Kelowna process we heard the community would like see more of it. Ways to move this goal forward include ongoing relationships with institutions and organizations that provide entrepreneurial guidance. However, government can only support entrepreneurship. It is up to entrepreneurs themselves, as well as other community stakeholders to embrace the ideology and take this goal to heart.



Goal: Foster resident-driven solutions

We unleash our community's hidden talents to solve the tough challenges of the future.

Residents or community-based organizations are often in the best position to find solutions to their communities' challenges.

The City nurtures small-scale initiatives through its neighborhood grants, delivered in partnership with the Central Okanagan Foundation to support resident-led neighbourhood enhancement projects. The City also celebrates volunteerism and collaborates with organizations, individuals and companies to help provide community facilities, programs and services.

Technology is changing the way people get involved, as social media and sharing-economy apps have given residents more tools to help them share information and collectively organize. These platforms and channels make it easier for residents to connect with each other to do things like buy and sell goods, organize events, rally around political or social causes, carpool, exchange services, create communities around shared interests, and much more.

Looking ahead:

Getting even more residents involved in community efforts is the challenge, along with coordinating those efforts to ensure they align with community goals. If we can achieve that, we have a great opportunity to make our city even better.

Pursuing more partnerships, as long as they are well-designed to protect taxpayers and ensure that each partner's role is well defined was cautiously supported through the Imagine Kelowna process.

Challenges and opportunities in technologies such as ride sharing or short-term rental housing require the right balance between facilitating and regulating these kinds initiatives to enjoy benefits and minimizing conflicts. This goal can be addressed by programs like the City's Strong Neighbourhoods, along with strong bylaw and regulation can work to create the right balance for Kelowna.

PRINCIPLE 2: SMARTER

A community willing to learn, adapt and grow so we can thrive amid rapid change.

Goal: Support innovation that helps drive inclusive prosperity

We are building a nimble and resilient economy that doesn't leave anyone behind.

Innovation is driven and supported by government, local businesses, institutions and organizations – UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College are connected to the business community and are centres of academic excellence. Accelerate Okanagan and the Okanagan Centre for Innovation have become valuable resource hubs for the fast-growing technology industry.

While innovation is clearly central to the technology sector, it is also increasingly important in many other parts of our economy and society including agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, healthcare, education and the delivery of public and social services.

Looking ahead:

Companies are recruiting innovative and talented people from other cities, but Kelowna's tight housing and rental market can make that a challenge.

One important opportunity to help meet the recruitment needs of local businesses is to increase the training and education opportunities available to people who already live here. Entrepreneurship, education and training opportunities can also be a key driver of inclusive prosperity – which ensures the benefits of economic growth are widely shared throughout the community by people from all economic backgrounds while finding solutions for social and environmental challenges.

When it comes to driving prosperity however, government is only a supporting player. To achieve this goal, it will need to be embraced by academic institutions, other community organizations, and especially by the private sector.



Goal: Take action and be resilient in the face of climate change

We will seize the opportunity to face climate change head-on for a hopeful and sustainable future.

Since the 1970s, the number of natural disasters like floods and wildfires have quadrupled worldwide – and Kelowna has not been immune to this trend. Recent spring floods and wildfires have impacted thousands of residents and caused tens of millions of dollars in damage.

Looking ahead:

Climate change is top-of-mind for citizens making more energy-efficient buildings, improved transit and active transportation options, and incentives to conserve water, electricity and other resources a high priority.

The need to adapt to climate change will also create opportunities. Changing temperatures may mean some new crops become viable locally, while protecting and enhancing our green infrastructure can help improve our overall quality of life. Natural assets, like agricultural land and our extensive network of streams, contribute to the natural beauty that makes Kelowna such a great place to live. At the same time, these natural areas retain rainwater, help prevent flooding and recharge aquifers. We also have innovative tech and academic sectors that can help develop solutions to the local effects of climate change.



Goal: Build healthy neighbourhoods that support a variety of households, income levels and life stages

Everyone in our community should be able to find stable and appropriate housing.

It has been difficult in recent years for some individuals and families to find adequate housing they can afford, contributing to unprecedented housing and homelessness challenges. The City is taking steps to encourage the development of healthy neighbourhoods through strategies to support people of all ages and abilities. How communities are planned and built, and the services and resources provided within them, directly impacts people's physical and social health. Initiatives underway to address these goals include the Smart City Challenge proposal, Healthy City Strategy, Healthy Housing Strategy and the Journey Home Strategy, which is a City-led partnership creating a plan to develop housing and supports to address homelessness. Kelowna is also starting to see more rental housing built, driven in part by market demand and by tax incentives offered by the City.

Looking ahead:

We have identified the need to develop a healthy and resilient housing system with the following key characteristics: diversity of form and tenure, affordability and accessibility, and inclusiveness and coordination. We are also taking steps to identify and implement the wide range of supports our community's most vulnerable need to access and maintain housing that meets their unique needs.

Over the years, Kelowna has been a leader in introducing new forms of housing, such as carriage houses and stacked townhouses. We can continue this trend by allowing other new forms like tiny houses, narrow homes and lock-off suites in apartments. These forms of housing will help densify neighbourhoods that currently only feature single-detached dwellings.

We can also look into allowing new kinds of housing tenures like co-housing (a community where residents own their own units, but share common amenities with their neighbours, like a kitchen, workshops or guestrooms), and fee-simple row housing (row housing is usually strata-titled).

The City's continued working relationships with organizations like BC Housing, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Urban Development Institute will help – so will residents' support for implementing change in their own neighbourhoods.



PRINCIPLE 3: CONNECTED

A community where residents are connected to their neighbours, their city and the wider world.

Goal: Embrace diverse transportation options to shift away from our car-centric culture

Making it easy for people to choose non-driving options protects the beauty of Kelowna and makes getting around more enjoyable.

With well over 80,000 new residents expected to move to the region by 2040, our current level of car use is not compatible with the kind of city we say we want to live in. While some progress has been made to provide residents with more choices to get around through investments in transit and active transportation, increasing traffic volumes and congestion remain a risk to physical health, economic growth and overall quality of life.

Looking ahead:

It sounds counterintuitive, but traffic congestion cannot be solved just by building more roads. New roads give people more incentive to drive and then quickly fill up. Plus, the land acquisition and construction costs for more roads would require big tax increases or service cuts to pay for them.

Mass transit, shared transportation services and active transportation networks can offer convenient alternatives to single-occupant car trips, especially for shorter trips between dense urban neighbourhoods. With 50 per cent of Kelowna residents and 80 per cent of the city's jobs already located within a five-minute walk of frequent transit service, we have a strong foundation to build on.

Making it easier for people to choose non-driving options more often also benefits those who absolutely must drive. Prioritizing transit and active transportation networks, while continuing to make targeted investments in our road network, leads to the efficient movement of people, goods and emergency vehicles, even as our city grows.





Goal: Create great public spaces that bring people together

To be a great city we need great public gathering places like parks, plazas and community centres where people can meet and connect with others.

Public spaces like parks, plazas, community centres and urban centres are catalysts to community cohesion and vibrancy. Residents and visitors alike value public spaces such as Stuart Park, the revitalized Bernard Avenue, Roxby Square and Rutland Centennial Park. The City continues working with businesses and other stakeholders on placemaking initiatives that reclaim unused or underutilized public spaces, like the Bernard Avenue Laneway project where people can walk, socialize or buy food and drink from an on-site concession.

Looking ahead:

The demand and appeal of attractive, dynamic public spaces will grow as the city grows. The City has long-term plans to build more parks and recreation facilities throughout Kelowna, but providing great spaces that are accessible to everyone is a shared responsibility and there are opportunities for community-minded individuals and organizations to undertake their own placemaking initiatives or other projects.

Property developers can play a role by incorporating plazas or small parks into their projects and ensure these privately-owned spaces are open to everyone.

Goal: Provide opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and identities

We all benefit when everyone in the community has access to economic, recreational and social opportunities.

The entire community benefits when economic, recreational and cultural opportunities are available to everyone. Kelowna is home to people of all ages, abilities, gender identities, sexual orientations, religions and national origins. The community's emerging diversity is increasingly on display at the growing number of grassroots events and cultural celebrations staged and attended by residents.

Kelowna is also paying more attention to accessibility. The City's Community for All Action Plan assessed the accessibility of parks and buildings and has identified actions to help create a city that is healthy, safe, active and inclusive for seniors, children and those with diverse abilities.

Looking ahead:

Through the Imagine Kelowna process there was a strong desire to see continued diversity and more cross-cultural sharing through events and celebrations. Ensuring everyone has opportunities to get an education, earn a living and afford decent housing was also important.

All organizations in Kelowna need to assess the accessibility of their facilities, programs and events, and take steps to ensure they are open to as much of the community as possible.

Some key projects currently underway to ensure we reach this goal include the City's Healthy City Strategy, Healthy Housing Strategy, and Journey Home Strategy.



Goal: Cultivate an accessible and engaging arts and culture scene

Everyone can find something that interests them to engage in, from grassroots initiatives to professional endeavours.

Arts and culture delivers direct economic benefits to our city, creating jobs and generating millions of dollars in annual economic activity. Artists, designers and other creators work in a variety of sectors, like technology and retail, while Kelowna is also home to a number of award-winning studios and talented production crews, putting the city at the centre of the Okanagan's growing film and animation industries.

Many professionals in a range of industries can choose to live and work wherever they want, and that choice often comes down to quality of life, where arts and culture are important considerations.

Looking ahead:

The challenge ahead is how to continue building up our arts and culture scene and get more people participating in it. Fortunately, local organizations offer classes and workshops that give members of the community the opportunity to participate directly in artistic and creative enterprises. Kelowna also has a variety of education institutions and programs that offer training to those who are pursuing careers as professional artists and creators.

Going forward, it will be important to support a wide-spectrum of opportunities, from grassroots initiatives to professional endeavours so that everyone can find something that interests them to engage in. An update to the Cultural Plan will help guide the community, as we invest time and money in the infrastructure and organizations that support arts and culture.



PRINCIPLE 4: RESPONSIBLE

A community where decisions are made ethically and where social and environmental concerns are prioritized.

Goal: Concentrate on growing vibrant urban centres and limit urban sprawl

Denser neighbourhoods make our city healthier, more sustainable and easier to get around. They make more financial sense, too.

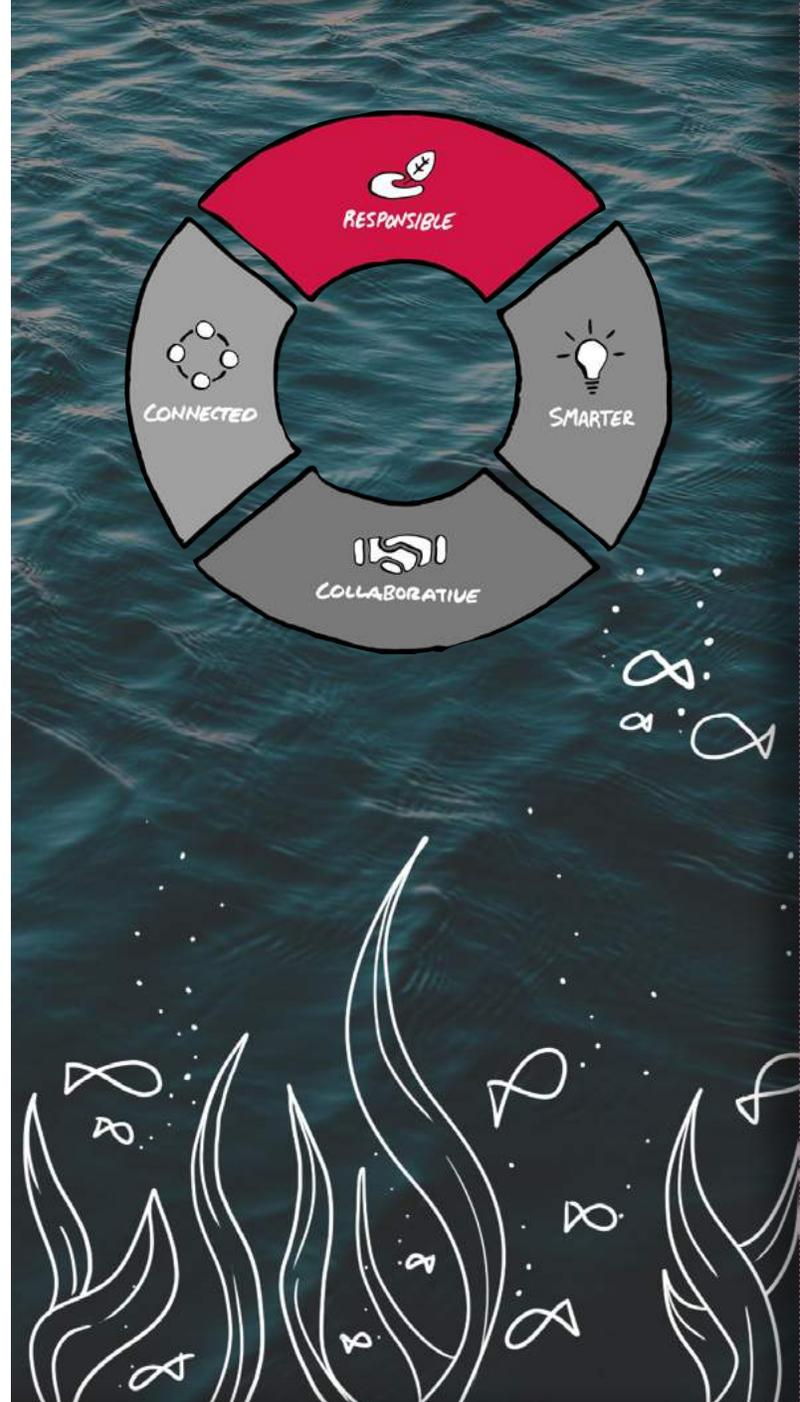
To counter the costs of urban sprawl – building new infrastructure, increased traffic congestion, loss of open spaces and natural habitats – the City has established a permanent growth boundary. This boundary mandates that roughly 40 per cent of future growth be concentrated in five urban centres: Downtown, Rutland, Capri-Landmark, Midtown and South Pandosy.

To support this, the City has developed the Urban Centres Roadmap. Other planning efforts that support urban centre revitalization include the 2016 Civic Block Plan, the 2014 Bernard Avenue Revitalization Project, the 2012 Downtown Plan, and the 2018 Capri-Landmark Urban Centre Plan.

Looking ahead:

Through the Imagine Kelowna process there was clear support for growing our urban centres and limiting the amount of development allowed in natural or agricultural areas. They could see how denser neighbourhoods make it easier to improve transit, build community centres, and link our networks of paths for walking and cycling. The shift to a knowledge-based economy also means that urban centres are becoming places where economic innovation happens and new jobs are created, especially in sectors like technology and research and development.

At the same time, people who live in neighbourhoods filled with single-family homes can be resistant to densification efforts if they feel the character of their neighbourhood is threatened. This means development projects in our urban centres needs to be thoughtful and well-designed. Ultimately, the City's Urban Centres Roadmap, neighbourhood plans for individual urban centres, the Healthy Housing Strategy, the Housing Needs Assessment, the Official Community Plan are all geared to improve our quality of life by reducing our dependency on cars and making it easier for people to live, work, shop and play in the same neighbourhood.





Goal: Strengthen the protection of our land, water and air resources

Our stunning environment is the foundation that all of our other aspirations stand on.

Kelowna is fortunate to have a lot of natural and agricultural lands within its boundaries and there is a strong desire among residents to preserve this area's natural resources.

The 1992 Strategic Community Plan emphasized the need to protect the environment and since then the City has made progress to protect, restore and enhance environmentally sensitive areas like riparian zones, wetlands and the foreshore of Okanagan Lake. The City is also working to create a resilient water system through the 2017 Kelowna Integrated Water Supply Plan and is trying to help improve the region's air as a partner in the Regional Air Quality program. These actions have contributed to the culture of environmental awareness that has taken root in the community over the last 20 years.

Goal: Preserve Okanagan Lake as a shared resource

Okanagan Lake is the jewel that makes Kelowna sparkle.

Okanagan Lake is the jewel that makes Kelowna sparkle. It is our greatest natural asset, drawing people here for lifestyle and recreation opportunities. It is also an important source of water for drinking, irrigation and fighting wildfires. As well, many of the waterfront areas that people like to visit are also important wildlife and flora habitats.

To increase public access to the lake, the City has been strategically buying select waterfront properties as they become available, turning the foreshore into public land and putting the rest back on the market. The City is also trying to responsibly manage the water supply through the City-owned water utility, the 2017 Kelowna Integrated Water Supply Plan and its participation in the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Looking ahead:

Okanagan Lake was very important throughout the Imagine Kelowna process where two themes surfaced: we need to improve public access to the lakefront and we need to protect Okanagan Lake and its surrounding environment. There was overwhelming support for the idea to protect natural streams and the storm water system that feeds into Okanagan Lake to maintain higher water quality. Participants were also enthusiastic about the idea to balance recreational and quality of life opportunities with environmental protection, water quality and public ownership of the waterfront.

The challenge is turning these popular ideas into concrete proposals that can earn consensus from the many stakeholders who have an interest in Okanagan Lake's future.

Looking ahead:

Our ability to survive and thrive in the future will require government and residents' actions to protect and restore our land, air and water.

Some of the ideas contributed through the Imagine Kelowna process included using solar panels, replacing lawns with xeriscaping, installing rain barrels, banning bottled water, and using grey water for tasks where potable water isn't needed. While most of these are actions individuals can take, contributors generally want to see government take the lead by banning harmful practices and providing incentives to adopt better ones.

Work already underway to protect our natural strengths include the City's Community Climate Action Plan, the creation of a Community Climate Adaptation Strategy, the 2017 Kelowna Integrated Water Supply Plan, the Regional Air Quality Program, the Pesticide Bylaw, the Transportation Master Plan, and the Official Community Plan.





Goal: Protect agricultural land and promote sustainable farming

Supporting agriculture helps ensure food security while preserving vital green infrastructure.

More than 40 per cent of Kelowna's land base is within the Agricultural Land Reserve and about 55 per cent of the city's land base is zoned for agriculture (including both ALR and non-ALR-land).

The City and provincial partners are making strong efforts to protect our valuable agricultural land and encourage a successful agricultural industry. A new agricultural plan was endorsed in 2017 for our community.

Looking ahead:

The feedback we received during Imagine Kelowna made it clear that agriculture is important to the community as a whole and not just people who are directly connected to farming.

Vigilance is needed, even to protect land in the ALR, as City Council is regularly asked to support requests from land owners who have compelling arguments for why they should be allowed to use their ALR land for non-agricultural purposes or remove it from the ALR altogether.

Actions to protect the land and encourage farming are included the City's Agricultural Plan, the Official Community Plan, and the City's participation in regional and provincial initiatives.

imagineNext





Under the banner of Imagine Next, the City will use Imagine Kelowna to help shape its priorities and provide the foundation for future strategies and projects such as the Official Community Plan (Our City as we Grow), the Transportation Master Plan (Our City as we Move), Intelligent City Strategy, and many others.

The principles and goals of Imagine Kelowna will guide the development of these plans and other initiatives, which will also draw on the rich data of public input and research that was compiled from the extensive Imagine Kelowna engagement. At the same time, Imagine Next will unify strategies and projects that already exist or are underway to make sure they work together to build the kind of community Kelowna residents want.

However, Imagine Next doesn't only involve the City. It also provides direction to organizations, institutions, businesses, agencies and other levels of government to change the way we work together, how we make decisions, and how we engage with Kelowna residents. Ultimately, Imagine Kelowna is the community's vision to ensure a vibrant and resilient future. It is up to all of us to imagine what's next and help make Imagine Kelowna a reality.



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