

imagineKelowna

Draft vision, principles and goals



imagineKelowna

Kelowna is a City in transition and Imagine Kelowna is the community's vision for how to thrive in the face of unprecedented growth and change. The result of almost 4,000 resident contributions, this is a vision created by the people who live here and one that will ultimately be implemented by the community itself.



Draft Vision and Community Values

For thousands of years, the Syilx / Okanagan people have protected the beautiful lands and waters of the Okanagan, nurturing a healthy and sustainable balance. The first arrivals of European descent fell in love with the beauty here and today we continue to celebrate all the Okanagan has to offer. In 2040, Kelowna is a thriving mid-sized city where people lead active and healthy lifestyles. It is a community that respects the natural wonders that shape its identity. As a place with deep agricultural roots, Kelowna understands the need to protect our environment, manage growth and be resilient in the face of an unpredictable future. Kelowna is a community that:

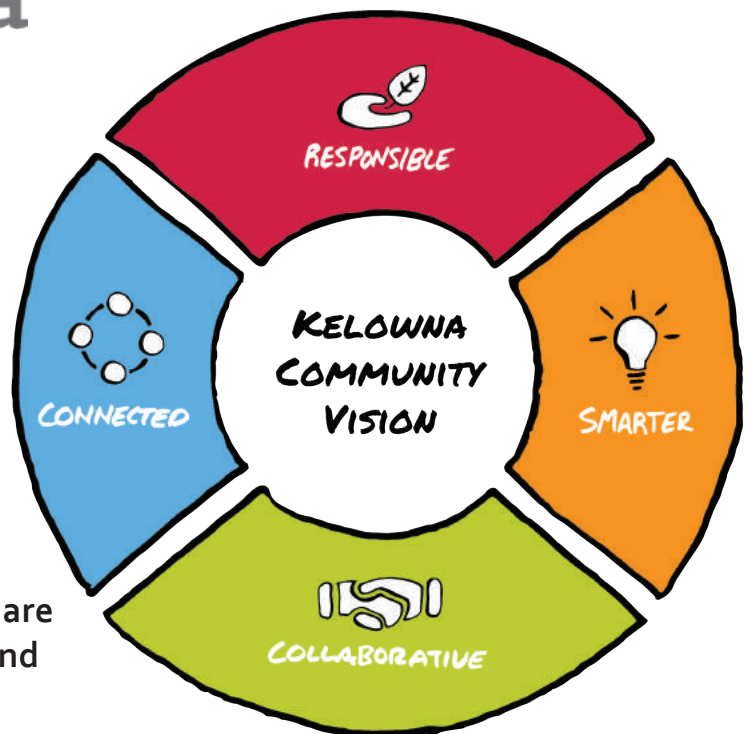
- **puts people first:** What is good for people is at the front and centre of our decision making. We welcome people from all backgrounds because inclusivity and diversity makes us a stronger and more innovative community.
- **values its history:** We celebrate our heritage, but we also acknowledge past injustices and learn from our mistakes to help us build a better future.
- **encourages curiosity and creativity:** We are constantly learning so we can effectively respond and adapt to rapid change. We find innovative ways to meet social, economic and environmental challenges.
- **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 meet the challenges of the future.

By embracing these values, in 2040, Kelowna is a community with the capacity to respond, learn, adapt and grow with change.



Principles and Goals

These principles and their related goals work together as a system and will help the community achieve its vision and ensure a vibrant future for Kelowna:



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

- Embrace diverse transportation options to shift away from our car-centric culture
- Create great public spaces that bring people together
- Provide opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds
- Cultivate a world class arts and culture scene

Smarter: A community that is willing to learn, adapt and grow so we can thrive in the face of rapid change.

- Support innovation to help drive inclusive prosperity
- Take action and be resilient in the face of climate change
- Build healthy neighbourhoods that support a variety of households, income levels and life stages

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

- Concentrate on growing vibrant urban centres and stop facilitating urban sprawl
- Preserve Okanagan Lake as a shared resource
- Strengthen the protection of our land, water and air resources
- Protect agricultural land and promote sustainable farming

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

- Engage with the Okanagan's traditional past and heritage as foundations for building a fair and equitable community
- Nurture a culture of entrepreneurship and collaboration
- Foster resident-driven solutions



CONNECTED

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

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

Kelowna grew up during the golden age of the automobile. For decades, development happened in ways that required people to drive everywhere they went. As a result, Kelowna is one of the most car dependent cities in Canada and over half of its carbon emissions come from transportation. While some progress is being made to provide residents with more choices to get around through investments in transit and active transportation, traffic congestion remains a big worry. In the 2017 Citizen's Survey, 66 per cent of residents identified traffic flow management as a top priority. But traffic congestion cannot be solved just by building more roads as valuable space has to be taken to accommodate them and history has shown new roads give people more incentive to drive and quickly fill-up. And with 80,000 people expected to move to the region by 2040, we simply don't have the land or money available to build enough roads to ensure all their vehicles can move freely and parking is always available.

Create great public spaces that bring people together

Public spaces are a city's common ground, places where people from all backgrounds can come together. Public spaces can be indoor or outdoor and includes areas like parks, plazas, sidewalks and streets. The City is trying to do its part. In 2015, Kelowna's newly developed Stuart Park won the Canadian Institute of Planner's Great Public Space in Canada award. The jury called the park and its civic plaza, "a year round destination and the cultural and civic heart of Kelowna." Government cannot do it alone however. Providing great spaces that are accessible to everyone is shared responsibility. Recently, the City began working with businesses and other stakeholders on placemaking initiatives that reclaim unused or underutilized public spaces.

Provide opportunities for people of all ages,
abilities and identities



We all benefit when economic, recreational and social opportunities are widely available. Inclusivity and diversity have been shown to boost a community's health, resiliency and economic prosperity. According to the 2016 Census, the Central Okanagan is the sixth fastest growing metropolitan area in Canada and is slowly becoming more diverse. This increasing diversity is reflected in the growing number of festivals and cultural celebrations taking place here. And through its Community For All Action Plan, the City has started taking steps to try and ensure that residents of all ages and abilities can be active and engaged community members. However, we cannot afford to become complacent as rapid population growth can also lead to more economic inequality, social isolation and other social problems.

Cultivate a world class arts and culture scene

There is a close relationship between a rich arts and culture scene and a city's economic vitality and its ability to compete for talent. Kelowna is growing in prestige within Canada's music industry and regularly attracts high profile shows, industry conferences and festivals. Meanwhile, UBC Okanagan's Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies has put Kelowna on the map in the visual arts, performing arts, and creative writing worlds, and a number of internationally renowned digital animation studios now call Kelowna home. The city is also at the centre of a growing Okanagan film industry that is seeing an increasing number of movies shot here, ranging from small indies to major Hollywood productions. As long as this momentum continues, Kelowna has the potential to become home to a thriving arts community whose members are recognized and respected throughout the world.





A community that is willing to learn, adapt and grow so we can thrive in the face of rapid change.

Support innovation to help drive inclusive prosperity

While Kelowna is well-known for its agriculture, tourism and real-estate industries, it has also become a technology hub. Locally, the technology sector has grown into a 1.3 billion-dollar industry with more than 600 companies employing about 7,600 people. There is still lots of room to grow, provided companies can find the talent and support they need. And while innovation is synonymous with technology, it is also increasingly important in many other parts of our economy and society including manufacturing, transportation, healthcare, education and the delivery of public and social services. Above all, it's important that innovation creates opportunities for people from all socio-economic backgrounds. Otherwise we risk being a community driven by the social problems that come with growing economic inequality.

Take action and be resilient in the face of climate change

In 2017, Kelowna experienced one of its most extreme weather years ever. Historic spring floods impacted approximately 3,200 residents and caused tens of millions of dollars in damage to public and private property and infrastructure. This was followed by the driest summer ever recorded, which contributed to a devastating wildfire season that blanketed Kelowna in smoke. As global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions continue to grow, these types of extreme weather events are expected to occur more regularly and Kelowna needs to implement measures to mitigate their impacts. At the same time, we need to reduce our GHG emissions in order to become more sustainable and provide hope for the future. The bulk of Kelowna's GHG emissions come from vehicles (55 per cent) and buildings (36 per cent.)

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

Kelowna is ranked among the least affordable cities in Canada for housing. A low vacancy rate is making rental housing hard to find and driving up rents, while the steady climb of housing prices is putting the traditional dream of home ownership out of reach for many families. We need to work towards a healthy housing system with the following key characteristics: diversity of form and tenure, affordability and accessibility, and inclusiveness and coordination. We also need to take into consideration the wide array of supports to assist our community's most vulnerable in accessing and maintaining housing that meets their unique needs.



"Fostering creativity and enabling our young people so that they can shape & influence the future of Kelowna"

-Kelowna resident



RESPONSIBLE

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

Concentrate on growing vibrant urban centres and stop facilitating urban sprawl

Historically, the City encouraged low-density, car-dependent development to spread outward into natural and agricultural areas, largely in the form of single family homes and strip malls. This kind of urban sprawl does not pay for itself over the long term. These developments require expensive infrastructure and services that end up being subsidized by residents in other parts of the city. Other consequences associated with urban sprawl include increased pollution, higher taxes, increased traffic congestion, loss of open spaces and natural habitats, increased social isolation, and negative health outcomes like higher rates of obesity and chronic diseases. To counter urban sprawl, the City has established a permanent growth boundary and created five urban centres (Downtown, Rutland, Capri-Landmark, Midtown and South Pandosy.) The City has also mandated that the majority of new growth should happen within these urban centres. Vigilance and more work on this front is required however, as there continues to be a high demand for this kind of development.

Preserve Okanagan Lake as a shared resource

Okanagan Lake is the jewel that makes Kelowna sparkle. It is our greatest asset, drawing people here for lifestyle and recreation opportunities. It is also an important source of water for drinking, irrigation and fighting fires. As well, many of the waterfront areas that people like to visit are also important wildlife and flora habitats. Because much of the lakefront is privately owned, the City has been buying waterfront land over the years to increase public access. It 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. Protecting the lake and maximizing public access are critical to maintaining a high quality of life, not only in Kelowna but throughout the Okanagan Valley.



Strengthen the protection of our land, water and air resources

As Kelowna has expanded over the years, valuable natural space has been paved and built on. Kelowna also has one of the lowest per-person fresh water availabilities in Canada, especially during the summer. And while Kelowna's per-capita water use has been steadily declining over the past decade, our summertime water consumption is still well above the national average, thanks largely to outdoor irrigation. As for air quality, some Kelowna neighbourhoods regularly experience higher concentrations of particulate matter because of vehicle emissions and wood smoke. The City is taking steps to preserve our natural ecosystems by protecting important areas like Knox and Dilworth mountains. It is also working to create a resilient water system through the 2017 Kelowna Integrated Water Supply Plan and trying to help improve the region's air as a partner in the Regional Air Quality program. However, our ability to survive and thrive in the future will ultimately require residents to change their behaviours, as well as changes to our development patterns.

Protect agricultural land and promote sustainable farming

Farming has been a foundation of Kelowna's local economy and identity for over a century. Over that time, agriculture has also shaped Kelowna's development pattern, with the community growing around the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). About 55 per cent of the city's land base is zoned for agriculture, yet this land is often at risk as it tends to be flat, affordable and well located, making it attractive for urban development. In concert with local and provincial partners, the City is making strong efforts to protect our valuable agricultural land while encouraging a vibrant, sustainable agricultural industry for the future. These efforts will be even more vital in a future where food security is challenged by the impacts of a changing climate.





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

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

Kelowna has a rich heritage with lots to celebrate and be proud of. But there are also darker, under-told chapters to our history that we need to deal with if we want to fully understand the inequalities and social challenges our community faces. For example, local First Nations people are bringing to light their experiences with residential schools and how those abuses resulted in intergenerational trauma that continues to impact not only First Nations people, but the community at-large. We need to follow the Sylix/Okanagan Nation's lead in grappling with that history so that we can collectively find ways to move forward.

Nurture a culture of entrepreneurship and collaboration

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. Kelowna 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 they don't have to work in isolation from each other. There a lot of resources that bring entrepreneurs in Kelowna together, from post-secondary programs to co-working spaces to business incubators. Continuing to support and encourage entrepreneurship will not only help Kelowna economically, but with the growing popularity of social entrepreneurship (the use of entrepreneurial techniques to address social, cultural, or environmental issues) it can help us on a number of other fronts as well.

Foster resident-driven solutions

Residents are often better equipped than their governments when it comes to figuring out ways to enhance the quality of life in their communities. That is why the City has partnered with the Central Okanagan Foundation to provide small grants to support resident-led neighbourhood enhancement projects. But that is only the tip of the iceberg of what is possible, especially with the advent of the technology-enabled sharing economy, which is still in its infancy but appears destined to grow. The challenge is to find ways to both encourage and regulate genuine grassroots innovation.



"That's really cool about the energy of this place, people take ownership and want to make it better. Fantastic attribute for a city to have."

-Kelowna resident