



## **Election 2024**

### **Talking Points for the City of Yorkton Municipal Election**

**November 13, 2024**

*Yorkton has much to be proud of – its active community of volunteers; a variety of cultural, sports and recreation activities and venues; its beautiful tree lined streets; its walking paths; a regional health centre; a state-of-the art technology centre; a regional airport; clean air; clean water; a thriving food processing sector; and a diverse retail and business district.*

*Planning by previous City Councils enabled business growth and expansion and the construction of the many amenities enjoyed by the residents today.*

Ensuring growth continues is the responsibility of City Council. It is important that the Mayor and Councillors elected in 2024 have a vision for the city's growth. They must be willing to be proactive and to explore opportunities that will drive growth for the next four years and beyond.

It is the Chamber's responsibility to provide information and leadership on key business issues and to build support for concepts and practices that will enable Yorkton to continue on its path "where good things happen"!

The Talking Points identified by the Chamber are a result of the Chamber's observations over the past few years and a survey of its members in June.

The Chamber considers these to be the Top 4 opportunities for the Business Community in the City of Yorkton:

### 1. Property Taxes

Since 2022, property taxes have been on the rise. An increase of 4.86% in 2022; 3.93% in 2023; and 3.5% in 2024. Coupled with the increase in interest rates, business owners are feeling squeezed. Further, property assessments are scheduled to increase by 40% in 2025! The Yorkton Chamber stresses that the various orders of government cannot continue to dip into the pockets of businesses. The Chamber recommends that the 2024 – 2028 Council:

- Provide the financial and human resources to the Economic Development department to actively seek out and attract new business to the city
- Advocate for provincial property tax reform and more equitable and realistic assessment values
- Advocate against federal and provincial downloading; and reductions to municipal funding arrangements

### 2. City Budgets

While the 2020 – 2024 Council endeavoured to minimize increases in its Annual Budgets, budgetary increases concern the business community. The Chamber recommends that the 2024 – 2028 Council:

- Hold open, public budget deliberations
- Investigate the feasibility of privatizing some city services

### 3. Business Development

While the current Council often proclaims that “Yorkton is open for business”, that has not been the experience of many business owners. Business owners report road blocks to both business establishment and business growth. While the Chamber recognizes that the city has to have certain “rules” or bylaws in place, and some of these are dictated by the province, the Chamber wishes to see a more commonsense approach to the enforcement of these bylaws. The Chamber recommends that the 2024-2028 Council:

- Review current bylaws that pertain to business establishment. If any are outdated, update them or remove them from the books
- Following consultations with local businesses, City Staff are often perceived to be working *against* business owners. Encourage and enable City Staff to work *with* business owners.
  - ◇Develop phase-ins for compliance with the Beautification Bylaw
  - ◇Develop “levels” of beautification, depending on the location of the business
  - ◇Consider adding an Engineer to the Building department who can make recommendations and suggestions to business owners when they are undertaking renovation or reconstruction projects. Such readily available expertise will ultimately save businesses time and money as they endeavour to meet the Building Code and the conditions of the Bylaws
- Grant greater powers to the Development Appeals Board to review complaints from businesses on a case-by-case basis
- Provide incentives for “first in” on new developments such as the Roundhouse Commercial Development

#### **4. Infrastructure**

An overwhelming number of business owners have expressed a concern about Broadway Street and its condition. Business owners understand that the City has, over the years, been seeking financial assistance from the provincial and federal orders of government to replace the aging water and sewer mains under the street. The Chamber recommends:

- The 2024-2028 Council must continue to persevere with this project or the city is in danger of suffering a near catastrophe such as that which occurred recently in Calgary
- The Regional Airport is the city's link to the world. It is a tremendous asset to the city and region. The Chamber recommends the 2024-2028 Council continue to invest in the Regional Airport through the establishment of an independent Airport Authority with the long-range goal of hiring an Airport CEO
- Funding the city's portion of a new Regional Health Centre will take some creativity. The Chamber recommends the 2024 – 2028 Council consult with businesses prior to making decisions on how to raise these funds.

The results of the 2024 Municipal Election will impact the future of the City of Yorkton. As a member of the Business Community, it's important for you to discuss the Talking Points with potential candidates for Mayor and Council.

More importantly, on November 13, please vote for those candidates you believe understand the needs of business.

*The Yorkton Chamber of Commerce is “the voice of business in Yorkton.”  
Representing over 415 businesses and governed by a Board of Directors  
comprised of elected members, the Chamber advocates for its membership.  
To learn more about the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce, visit [www.yorktonchamber.com](http://www.yorktonchamber.com)*

### **Interested in Serving on Council?**

The following is a brief guide on the process for Nomination:

A Notice of Call for Nominations will be published at least 10 business days prior to Nomination Day. Nomination papers are available at City Hall or on the City’s website [www.yorktonvotes.ca](http://www.yorktonvotes.ca)

The Nomination period will begin 8:00 AM Tuesday September 24. Completed Nomination Papers must be received by the Returning Officer/Nomination Officer by **4:00 PM Wednesday October 9**.

How to file Nomination Papers?

Nomination Papers must contain the signatures of at least 5 eligible voters and a Criminal Record Check must accompany the Nomination Papers. Nomination Papers may be delivered in person or by an agent or emailed.

Other requirements:

- Candidates must complete a Public Disclosure of Private Interests form and include it with Nomination Papers
- Post election, candidates must disclose both their campaign expenses and donations received to run their campaign

To verify the above information or to learn more on how to become a candidate for either Mayor or Council, visit the city’s website [www.yorktonvotes.ca](http://www.yorktonvotes.ca)

### **Knowledgeable and Committed Councillors**

The Chamber appreciates the time and effort it takes to serve on Council. While highly visible, Council meetings actually represent only a small portion of the time committed to serve on Council. Committee meetings, strategic planning meetings, listening to the concerns of tax payers, reading Council meeting packages, checking information, attending SUMA conventions – these are all examples of the demands on the Mayor and every Councillor.

It is, therefore, extremely important, prior to submitting nomination papers, that prospective candidates for Council understand the time commitment required to serve and represent the citizens of Yorkton.

**The All Candidates’ Forum sponsored by the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce  
will be held 7:00 PM Wednesday October 23 at the Gallagher Centre  
and is open to the public.**

**The Forum will be broadcast LIVE on The Rock 98.5FM  
and Access Communications.**