

Downtown Action Plan – Record of Public Input

Introduction

As part of the Downtown Action Plan process public input was sought on overall impressions and past and future planning efforts. This involved a variety of means for community members to become involved in the project and help shape the future of their downtown.

This document provides a record of the public input that was obtained. The input received has been presented in its full form rather than being summarized. This is to enable future use of the materials over the coming years as downtown implementation takes place.

Open Houses

Two back to back open houses were held over two days; Wednesday 1pm to 8pm and Thursday 1pm to 8pm at the Kinsmen Centre. The purpose of the open houses was to share background information and materials from past planning exercises and to obtain suggestions for action plan process.

A total of 86 individuals attended over the course of the two day period. This included two high school classes.

The open house offered several ways to share thoughts and ideas. The input received through each of these is provided below.

Post-it Note Comments and Comment Form Question about Current Vision

- Lot of promise; lots of potential with space for development
- Like idea of tying plans together; need an ongoing comprehensive plan for buildings, infrastructure, signage
- Heading in right direction; looks interesting
- Awesome; seems realistic and not too expensive compared to other revitalization projects
- Develop community space (green area)
- Expand sidewalks to encourage walking
- More restaurants, cafes, patios
- More greenery, art and benches along 50 Street
- Have a civic plaza
- Have a welcoming, inviting environment such as tables and chairs outside a restaurant
- Greenery, benches, walking trails, nice storefronts, family oriented

- Extend or connect north-south walking trail through river valley
- Development of public use amenities in the river valley
- Downtown business upgrade incentive grants
- New soccer field/lacrosse pitch in river valley
- A health and diverse river valley
- Dealing with trees in residential areas – many are old and breaking and have to be removed – do not seem to be replaced; need to educate the public why some trees need to be taken down
- Avi concept with development along the railway is inappropriate, should be developed as green space or trails

Post-it Note Comments and Comment Form Question about Three Suggested Improvements

- Public transportation
- Stop need to go to Red Deer for special things like a men's clothing store
- Revitalize the core
- Tax abatement for new development; incentive to encourage a blend of businesses
- Direct Control District from IGA to old hospital site
- Higher end mixed use buildings
- Encourage government buildings to be downtown (e.g. tourism building)
- Target businesses that would enhance local shopping; restaurants, clothing stores, competitive pricing chains
- Community involvement and buy in
- New learning centre
- Designated parking so streets and sidewalks can be developed
- More lights (in trees), benches, trash cans to make it more welcoming
- Frame the downtown area with signage/arches
- A place for people to hang out that is not a bar or restaurant
- A sporting goods shop
- Add bed and breakfasts or a boutique hotel
- Street café and plazas
- Stay open longer – becomes a ghost town after 5pm
- Traditional buildings
- Antique store
- Shared spaces for pedestrians, cyclists and cars
- Convenience store downtown
- Wider sidewalks

- Places for activity
- More trees; make it enjoyable to walk
- Mexican food
- Police, library and Town Office all in the downtown
- Bigger, nicer dog park
- Starbucks; prefer an independent coffee shop similar to a Starbucks
- Battle river valley should be developed as a recreational resource, low impact developments that won't be greatly affected by flooding
- 49 Street sees high traffic volumes as most people cross the tracks at 57 Avenue and travel down 49 Street to cross the bridge rather than turn onto 50 Avenue from 50 Street
- Shouldn't be any street parking allowed at old hospital site when redeveloped, there will be too much parking pressure on 57 avenue in a residential area, use of the vacant lot across the street as parking is a good idea
- Poor water quality and riparian habitat along the river should be addressed
- Residential properties along the east side of the river valley are prone to flooding, no new development should be allowed in the river valley

Comment Form Question about Advice to Project Team

- Keep telling community about plans and why it will improve the town
- Hard to get support to spend on project when taxpayers do not understand the benefits of the project
- Create a welcoming vibe that encourages foot travel
- Create destinations/reasons for coming downtown

Drawing submitted by Resident (see Appendix A)

- Focus on five blocks as compact core with 48 Avenue being south edge and 53 Avenue (both are routes out to Highway 2A) being the north edge
- Make 50 Street and 51 Street one way streets – one north bound and one south bound with all of the cross over streets remain two way
- Add wider sidewalks, boulevard trees and planting strips on both sides of the street for all blocks
- Use mid-block bulb outs to create a chicane in the road rather than straight long run up several blocks to help moderate vehicle speed

- Use bulb outs at each intersection to moderate speed, add plantings and shorten pedestrian crossing distance
- Use cobbled stone or different roadway surface at key intersections to mark edges/boundaries of the core area
- Add bicycle trail along 50 Street
- Use wider sidewalks for benches, patios
- Improve Siding 14/Tractor Park by adding a play area
- One key public parking area per block

Student Group Discussions

- Vision: add landscaping, make it safe, entertainment venues like lazer tag, clean sidewalks, spread activities out, mix of uses along the path, currently looks old and cranky
- More traffic lights
- Add plants and trees on streetscape and create a canopy
- Community facilities
- Fix up vacant sites
- Improve parking lots with landscaping
- No more fast food places
- Deal with public intoxication; can be unsafe and creepy
- Keep 2 indoor rinks and redesign the pool
- Civic plaza for studying and a place to hang out
- Would like a nicer movie theatre and cafes, preferably a Starbucks
- Paths in river valley and more things to do in the river valley
- Remove the abandoned buildings

Mark-ups on Airphotos

- Skate park is in a good visible location but needs to be made more interesting/revamped
- Ability to host special events in the river valley at ball diamonds; campers for ball tournaments
- Poorly lit areas and hiding spots along rear lanes is a challenge; more lighting and cooperation with businesses required
- Update store fronts along 50 Avenue, 50 Street and 51 Avenue
- Landscaping, picnic tables, benches or paved parking on vacant areas on 48 Avenue and 50 Avenue
- Parking on the east side of 50 Street near old hospital site would be good
- Make the strip of land along the east side of 50 Street pretty (add trees and landscaping)

- Sporting goods store
- Better pool, rec centre – bigger and cleaner
- Civic plaza near Provincial Building
- Put a four way stop at the intersection of 48 Avenue and 51 Street
- Close Chipman Avenue (one block) in summer months and have markets and festivals or make a pedestrian mall
- Put a four way stop at the intersection of 48 Avenue and 54 Street
- Move library to learning centre at old hospital site
- Campgrounds in the river valley – possible?
- “Welcome to Downtown” sign at the north end of 50 Street
- Remove derelict buildings – several marked with an “X”
-
- Provide more parking and limit the parking on Chipman Avenue to 1 or 2 hours maximum
- Build a plaza with a fountain
- Put a three way stop or traffic signals at the intersection of 50 Street and Highway 53
- Put a 6 sheet curling rink in the rec plex; have 2 new ice surfaces not just 1; have an indoor walking area
- Sell the site south of Fas Gas (location of central water boosting station)
- Put traffic signals at intersection of 53 Avenue and Highway 2A
- More entertainment in Ponoka – lack entertainment for children and teens
- Find it hard to go straight through or turn left at intersection of 53 Avenue and 50 Street from east leg of intersection
- Put something nice where Town Office was and fix up the plaza (old Town Shop) to the south
- Make the parking lot in the river valley more attractive – change up the landscaping

Online Survey

As part of the opportunity to provide input an online survey was available through the project website. The survey ran from February 15, 2017 to March 25, 2017. It asked a series of open ended questions about Downtown Ponoka. These focused on valued aspects of Downtown, challenges and future vision.

The responses received for each question have been provided verbatim and have not been summarized. Those tasked with or volunteering to help implement the Downtown Action Plan should review the comments as projects are being developed.

About the Survey Respondents

Table 1: What is your age?

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Under 18 | 0.96% (1) |
| 19 to 39 | 44.23% (46) |
| 40 to 59 | 44.23% (46) |
| 60 and over | 10.58% (11) |
| Total | 100% (104) |

Table 2: Where do you live?

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Town of Ponoka | 64.08% (66) |
| County of Ponoka | 30.10% (31) |
| Other | 5.83% (6) |
| Total | 100% (103) |

Table 3: What are your top 3 preferred methods of receiving information from the Town of Ponoka about Town projects, services, upcoming events, and other important Town information? (Please write 1, 2 or 3 beside your preferred choices, with 1 indicating your highest preference.)

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| Town Website | 13.00% (13) |
| Mail | 1.00% (1) |
| Newspaper | 29.00% (29) |
| Email | 8.00% (8) |
| Facebook | 35.00% (35) |
| Twitter | 1.00% (1) |
| Radio | 0.00% (0) |
| Other | 13.00% (13) |
| Total | 100% (100) |

(Note for Table 3: preferential selection may not be accurately reflected in data)

What 3 things or aspects of Downtown Ponoka do you treasure the most?

- The old heritage buildings like Busted, the jolly farmer, cool and rustic. The rustic modern lamp posts. The murals on building sides. The old cinema. The new Sirrs law office and provincial building architecture.
- main street is wide businesses are coming back streets are clean and snow is removed
- There are a number of businesses downtown that are unique and draw people and customers in from Ponoka and other communities. Not all of the communities are in the immediate area but people are willing to travel for the unique retail stores. I have watched my customers come in with their babies, watch the kids turn into adults and bring their babies into the downtown. Generations of shoppers and visitors
- peacefulness, walking distance, friendly local shopping
- 1. Finding stores that are unique! Ex- walrus and the carpenter (so sad it's closing!), record shop, health food store, etc. 2. Locally owned shops 3. Attention to flowers, plants, etc. along the streets.
- The walking trails, many stores and businesses in the town so you don't have to leave the community for most necessities. The flowers and flags look nice, friendly people.
- Nothing at the moment. It just looks blah. Does not look inviting at all. So many empty buildings
- The walking trails, many stores and businesses in the town so you don't have to leave the community for most necessities.
- The flowers and flags look nice, friendly people .
- It has a cozy feel and I can get my shopping done in a very streamlined fashion. The shop owners are usually extremely friendly and helpful!
- old town feel - clean
- Pet value Raspberry patch
- Historical buildings, it has everything we need, the people are friendly
- New Town Hall on the property now vacant. The Library where it is presently. Central location for the RCMP. Not in the north end of the town
- Small town feeling Lots of sidewalks New paintings on some buildings
- The unique shops with reasonable prices and not feeling rushed in the shops
- The black street lamps - can't think of anything else
- Convenience. (would like it to be small town shops, supporting local)
- The heritage The activity The way it still feels like a small town
- PERSONAL SERVICE,PARKING
- Klaglahachie Fine Arts Society located in Ponoka United Church Easy to get around with lots of good parking Stores that fill most of our needs

- -business choices, place for Ponoka to shop local, lots of room
- the old maintained buildings-small businesses-decent parking
- some of the old buildings (like the old Jolly Farmer) are wonderful but need work to be restored. For the most part I don't really like our Downtown
- Walking Trails 2. Historic buildings 3. The Potential
- There are some charming historical buildings, river valley is a gem, many initiatives to revamp and rejuvenate the downtown area.
- being able to walk to different businesses the historic buildings the personal friendly service the old historic buildings
- Sorry there really isn't anything I treasure.... i guess the flower baskets, in the summer are nice. Our downtown has gone downhill for years now.
- Free parking. 2. Wide sidewalks. 3. Trees and plants.
- junk stores ,second hand stores, liquor stores
- Curb appeal, building/shop appearance, color
- None. It has not changed since I was born. It needs to be updated and developed. It has potential to be a thriving area in the community.
- I rarely go downtown as the parking sucks
- River, old buildings, parking
- I like the little stores
- location
- As a child I remember a vibrant downtown.
- It's where I grew up. I meet people I know from my community I would always be helped with anything I asked. It is my support.
- the small size of it 2. available parking close to businesses 3. Old buildings though few remain
- homey feel, everyone knows everyone, togetherness (ie-chipman ave garage sale)
- Movie theater, Chinese food, new bridge
- Love chipman ave Love the hanging baskets in the summer Love the small town feel (friendly)
- -unique businesses -lots of variety in walking distance -my favorite lunch spot (raspberry patch soup and sandwiches) and gift shops (flowers for you, walrus and carpenter, siding 14, central office supplies(best wallets ever), the books store.
- 1.Trees along Chipman & Railway. 2. F.E. Algar building 3. The businesses that exist!
- Friendly people. Benches to sit on . Enough parking.
- The historical buildings, the walking path, and the local shopping
- Reading the posters on all the business windows. Happy to see a new hardware store take over an old building. Good there is still a theater after all these years.

- Convenience, history, local businesses
- Closeness of store for pedestrians Benches to sit on Large sidewalks
- That there is so much potential. That it has a quaint historic charm. That there isn't garbage and waste everywhere.
- One of my most treasured aspects of downtown Ponoka is the how clean the streets are kept and the architecture of the older buildings such as the jolly farmer and busted.
- I very seldom go downtown because there is really nothing down there that I need I enjoy the walking trails but because both grocery stores are on the outskirts I seldom go down town.
- History; proximity to main roads, schools, and hospital; and the mixture of new and old buildings.
- Hanging Flower Baskets and the Christmas Decorations
- Walkability Diversity of shops Older buildings still there: heritage
- The historical buildings The cleanliness And also the beautiful hometown feeling
- Fantastic store owners History of Ponoka Community feel
- The history of the place Access ability Local business
- All the old buildings!!!
- Buildings Green space Wide street
- Free parking Good traffic flow
- Renos / refacing old buildings (eg. SIRRS) 2. Youth Centre / Tennis Courts & Outdoor skating Rink (free access) 3. Opening of New Medical Centre
- Free parking, close proximity,
- Historic buildings Great business - Ponoka Health Foods and Central office are my most visited on Chipman. Busted and the Siding 14 Gallery are very special to have a part of our downtown as well. Would love to see more shops like these!
- The character of the buildings. The potential for one of a kind, small town business. The walkability
- Friendliness of the businesses Heritage buildings Trees and flowers in the spring/summer months
- Close and availability Family friendly
- I like the trees & benches It would be nice to have business closer together so you don't have to drive from one end of town to the other just to your shopping
- Quaint, small town feel, the variety of stores we have and how clean it is
- The heritage buildings Shopping local
- When businesses invest in their building (like Wedins and siding 14) We have some amazing stores and salons! Busted. Ponoka Health Food Store, Central Office, The Brick, Beauty Barn, Tangled etc We have Sidewalks! May seem like a small thing, until you visit a town without them and experience what a pain that is

- Need more stores... trees.....benches
- I like to park my vehicle and go to many stores and see fellow towns folk around. I love that there are benches so I can stop and enjoy the view, snack, visit, or stop for a break. I enjoy. I enjoy very much the strong customer service and knowledge that many stores offer. They actually want my business and have morals.
- History, trees, small businesses
- History, local people, ease to walk around
- history
- free parking walkability friendly business owners
- walking paths, original downtown buildings, The Brick School
- honestly not many, the older buildings and their potential
- The locally owned long time running businesses.
- accessibility, heritage, sense of community
- being able to walk from home flowers and banners unique stores
- History, walkability, unique businesses
- Chipman Avenue Old brick
- Small town feel, friendly atmosphere, desire to accommodate the customers by local business staff
- None. There is really no reason to shop in Ponoka.
- The historical buildings, the street parking and trees along the streets.
- heritage buildings, beautiful flowers in the summer and festive lights in the winter, and small stores or businesses that provide a unique experience. Typically they know someone you know.
- Unique stores, history of buildings,
- The old buildings, love the history. Small shops, very unique. Friendly faces of locals.
- Its quiet
- Big old trees Clean Inviting store fronts
- Quiet streets, architecture and quaint store fronts
- able to walk to services I use 2. historical architecture 3. how close it is to the trail system
- small town local owners ample parking historical value
- The historical feel of some of the streets. I enjoy reading the plaques on the origin of the buildings. 2. Local businesses. It is a wonderful experience to shop at a store where the owner knows your name. 3. There is generally ample and free parking.
- Nice sidewalks, greenery, and walking distance from most residential areas.
- Love how you close everything is and easy to get around!
- historic buildings 2) aesthetics (during summer especially with the trees growing) 3) unique business opportunities (due to vacant, yet usable storefronts)

- Close proximity of the businesses - one stop shopping area
- Historical buildings Trees & Flowers
- Brick buildings, decorations on the lightposts for holidays, cleanliness

What do you think are the 3 most pressing issues facing Downtown Ponoka?

- # of spaces for lease does not give a nice streetscape. Public Safety at night
- Getting more businesses lack of clothing and shoe stores for people Sote for reasonable priced childrens clothing
- Trying to draw people within the community of Ponoka to support their local offerings. The shopping trend is to leave the downtown and or Ponoka for their shopping needs. It is difficult to interest potential business when the downtown struggles to thrive.. Kind of the chicken or the egg idea.. Set up a business and hope to draw customers into the downtown area or try to fill a perceived need as exposed and offered with the support of the town of ponoka together with the local chamber of commerce.
- Buildings and street decor need a modern face lift 2. more garbage cans would be nice when walking as well as recycling cans for bottles, etc. to go along side them. 3. Way-finding signage
- Lack of places to hang out- I go downtown to get what I need but there is no reason for me to stay. Patios, coffee shops, etc would be amazing! 2. Lack of events aimed for young adults. There are lots of family oriented events but nothing that would interest someone in their 20's or 30's without children. 3. Too many similar stores. Discount stores, thrift shops, etc. are handy but it seems like that is all that we have these days.
- Rent too high in shops Not enough variety of stores Too many second hand shops
- Empty buildings/lots Parking Could use a central celebration area to gathering area for all ages Maybe a few to many hanging out on the streets by the bars
- There is really nothing to shop for. Not like when I was growing up in Ponoka in the 60, 70, 80 and early 90's. Ponoka is looking like a ghost town except for hair salons and liquor stores.
- Some of the older buildings are eye sores, and really need a facelift. ie the old building on veterans way adjacent the railway tracks, the building across from Shoppers Drug Mart. The now vacant lot where a Bruce's Hardware was looks terrible!
- get rid of the bar/ hotel, always drunks, homeless people and natives hang around the royal. It is a scary place after dark. Nervous to even walk across street to get pizza. - no stores/ we have enough dollar stores and hardwear stores - old,run down. Like most of ponoka around down town it's old and not visually appealing. Very sad.
- Minimal services/stores- nothing that gathers ppl after hours (other than royal...) Many abandoned buildings that either need

to be torn down or re-done. Things all close by 5! And not able to purchase many basics within our own town

- Litter it should be cleaned on daily basis. when the town supplies flowers downtown somebody needs to be responsible for taking better care of them I thought they looked horrific last year, we put all that money into purchasing flowers and then no one looks after them. When I look at other small communities such as Bowden, Millet, Innisfail etc. They all have beautiful flowers and lots of benches along downtown streets which are very inviting to out of Towners. Vagrancy. Graffiti clean it up don't just leave on buildings for months or years it looks like we don't care. Business owners should keep their business clean and tidy on the outside as well as inside.
- Down Town revival of the central location, which I do not think can happen if you move so many essential part to other locations
- Older buildings not maintained. Abandoned building on the corner by the railroad park. Cigarette butts littered everywhere
- There are not enough stores that are wheelchair accessible therefore we do not shop at those stores. More parking & respect for handicap parking signs.
- Lack of parking on chipman, safety, no safe evening entertainment area - pub
- TOO MANY thrift shops, dollar stores and such. People leaving to do shopping in the city due to lack of selection and inflated prices in town.
- Lack of entertainment Lack of parking Lack attractive buildings (some need to be cleaned up or to redo their signs)
- GETTING CUSTOMERS TO SHOP DOWNTOWN, MORE BUSINESSES
- Empty Buildings Need of Stores selling shoes, clothing (particularly mens) Public Washrooms
- -Needs more modern look, force building owners to destroy or re do derelict buildings, vacancy tax applied to building owners who leave buildings vacant.
- the old abandoned gas station needs to go, and the white building past shoppers needs to go. need more versitility in businesses, too many liquor stores, chinese food, gas stations, hardware stores.
- There is no draw to go downtown, it is unappealing to the eye and looks old and run down. Need exciting new businesses to attract all residents of Ponoka from young adults to seniors.
- Lack of amenities (i.e., neighbourhood pub, coffee shop with longer hours). 2. It's looking "tired" 3. Limited business hours (many stores only open 9-5)
- not enough shopping opportunities, people are forced to buy their clothes, shoes, toys etc. elsewhere. The stores that we do have are too scattered out. It would be nice to have a core where you could walk and hit a bunch of little boutiques/ coffee shops in one session. Maybe encourage entrepreneurs more. It would also be great to have a rec center type of facility where the focus is on the arts: drama, visual arts work hops, music classes, cooking classes etc. to provide for those of us who are less

athletic. Recreational opportunities for everyone, not just athletes.

- high rent and utility costs taxes
- Store fronts are looking very old Trees, benches make it look alive Places to shop, not second hand...
- Most of the buildings look neglected. 2. Too many vacancies. 3. Lack of inviting sitting spots/green spaces.
- Empty building, lack of businesses, no developed industrial land available for future business growth.
- Untidiness, benches (rest areas), garbage
- Getting rid of or moving businesses that are currently located in the "downtown" core. Or just another change for those who are not in favor of it. The younger generation needs something to look forward to in this community. Many communities located in close proximity to us have been implementing new ideas making their areas more attractive to reside in. We desperately need a change to the "look" of downtown.
- It's boring. The parking sucks. We need actual, affordable businesses so that I don't have to leave town when I need new clothes or footwear etc.
- empty buildings, weeds in sidewalks, lack of businesses
- The bars down town over serve customers and there's often too many drunks outside by the bars smoking Most of the down town looks run down The apartments above the bars are a complete dive and nobody should be living it them . It ruins down town and it's worst the the oasis was .
- dilapidated buildings, empty store fronts, too many used goods stores, dollar stores, liquor stores.
- Unique dining experiences, maybe bring back old favourites with a new spin, Poor Gordies, or tea house, maybe a craft beer house.
- Lack of support because people shop outside of town. Lack of places for trucks and trailers to drive and park. Lack of town leaders being responsible in fulfilling their promises to work for the people.
- Attracting and retaining businesses 2. Presenting the downtown area as a place where people come (to do business, to celebrate, to learn, to govern) Placement of Town Hall and Library that is centrally located that will become a Hub close to downtown and other facilities and housing 3. A chance to use the Provincial building and park area across the street as that hub and highlight one of the architectural gems.
- new small business don't advertise (to much \$\$?), so unless I walk into shop, I don't know they exist; stampede week is dead downtown, have something going on to draw people down when rodeo not on, even for non rodeo fans; so many empty buildings downtown is depressing and gives it a feel of a dying town, more places to eat besides Chinese food. Who decides that we need a bigger pet store to push out the little guy? We have seen this over and over and its maddening.
- Not enough lights, not enough coffee shops, too many hotels called the royal
- Lack of businesses High cost of rent in empty buildings Economy

- drunks from the Royal and Leland, trying to wait for the bar to open at 10am in other business and being passed out on the sidewalk in the middle of the afternoon - empty storefronts -Think some of the storefronts and sidewalks could use a face lift but that is difficult to do with privately owned businesses.
- Lack of businesses - specifically retail businesses
- Public washrooms, special by the walking trails. Some thrift stores do not look appealing . Old empty buildings.
- Much of the business is moving closer to highway 2a and away from the downtown core, causing an increase in empty buildings in the downtown area. Aside from moving business away from downtown, it decreases the attractiveness of downtown for other businesses.
- Too many thrift/antique new & used stores. People don't need all the clutter & then businesses fold. Need a shoe store. Don't need all the England type features on Chipman Ave like too much sidewalk & lamp posts. Too chopped up & often can't get a parking spot.
- Too spread out. Competition from highway. Should be a destination.
- Economically shopping Variety of shopping options Nothing to do or draw you there
- The vacancy rate is very high. Not many green spaces or places to walk. Upkeep in general.
- I believe one of the most pressing issues facing downtown Ponoka is the lack of

relevant shops for its community. I do not believe that Ponoka needs two vape/smoke shops, and multiple beauty salons. I honestly can't think of the last time I went shopping in town besides to get groceries or the drug store. Another pressing issue is the lack of respect towards local shops, I do not agree with the pet store being ran out of business by a larger company. Ponoka is a small close knit community and I strongly believe that local businesses should take priority when considering bringing larger companies into Ponoka.

- The run down buildings and eyes sores.
- Upgrades to rental buildings in Downtown Ponoka. We need an ordinance the makes Owners bring all their buildings up to the 21 century as far as wiring, plumbing and maintenance. I have worked in two of the rental buildings and they are in horrible conditions. Business owners to be made to clean up regularly in front of their premises. Eg: cigarette butts and garbage cleaned up daily. Weeds and grass & trees growing out of sidewalks in front of businesses looks neglectful and uncared for. Junk in back alleys cleaned up. Ms Butterfields building looks great and all of the business owners should do the same.
- Too many failed businesses, not enough entrepreneurship, a lack of a plan.
- Too many liquor stores, too many second hand stores not enough variety or clothing or shoe stores that offer quality stuff for affordable prices.
- Empty shops No gathering space A lot of places are very difficult to get into or shop in with a stroller and we have tons of moms with babies around here

- Empty buildings Nothing drawing people to the core of downtown And also buildings aren't being kept up
- Lack of parking Some abandoned/unkept buildings are eyesores Could use more variety of shops
- Loss of shops Older buildings that look it Not a draw compared to larger communities
- Not enough business. Its all moved to the hwy. It is getting better though.
- Vacant/run down buildings Vacant lot Run down white building by the bridge
- Need shopping besides thrift stores. Brighten it up Bring on retailers - working class clothes, plus sizes, shoes.
- Too many vacant buildings 2. Lack of in town shopping (lost to big box stores) 3. Too many second hand stores (very limited NEW clothing stores)
- Commercial vacancies, Angle parking on 50th, pride of ownership
- There is so many crosswalks between the movie theater and Shoppers yet no one uses them! I also think many drivers are driving to fast in this area. Its an accident waiting to happen but I'm not sure what could be about that.
- The high rental rates. The lack of upkeep. The plethora of second hand stores.
- Parking Lack of retail So many empty buildings
- not enough drawing power. People want to get everything done at one place. Poor parking.
- How empty it is down town
- All the empty buildings, stores not being able to make it and have to close, and we cannot get everything we need in Ponoka.
- The junk the second hand stores have all over the sidewalk. Lack of parking. Business owners should not be able to park on Chipman. The mess in the mornings near the Royal and Leland
- It would be helpful if something could be done about buildings being used for personal junk storage. It ruins our downtown for everyone. I know there could be a financial barrier to removing decrepit buildings, but perhaps some sort of incentive is possible. The first two items may discourage new businesses from exploring Ponoka as an option, so I think purposefully addressing them would have a big overall impact We also don't need any more thrift/second hand stores, or liquor stores.
- More shops... coffee spot that takes debit... updated signage on some older buildings
- The amount of vacant buildings
- Chain stores offering more services for less money. Not many people are choosing to support local markets.
- Buildings not being kept up. Not enough businesses coming in.
- Vandalism, safety in evening, vibe of empty buildings
- revitalizing the business district. Making it unique to bring people in to shop. Akin to the Pigeon lake, shopping area and their marketing

- vacancies deteriorating buildings lack of customers
- Downtown style - should be a western theme not English!!, To many new and used stores!!, Multiplex Arena!!
- graffiti , closing or absent businesses
- The homeless mostly natives that wander around intoxicated. The empty run down looking buildings because of the high price of rent.
- too many vacant spaces, deplorable living conditions above and adjacent to businesses, derelict buildings (eyesores)
- too many empty buildings run down businesses derelict buildings
- Lack of foliage, need for outdoor patios for dining or coffee, parks with picnic tables. Perhaps small play equipment for children, cleaning up old building or ones that are abandoned
- Rundown business Too many thrift stores
- Lack of businesses, lack of support of businesses, negative attitudes towards the current state of town.
- The most pressing issue is that businesses outside Ponoka provide better products, services, prices, and customer service, than businesses in Ponoka. Owner-operated businesses in Ponoka tend to have inattentive or undertrained staff, a mediocre selection of products, non-functional websites, and prices high enough that they offset the cost of driving to another town or city. This is really backwards to how it should be. Owner-

operated businesses should offer better customer service at least than multinational corporations, but in Ponoka that does not seem to be the case. For example: - I do at least half of my grocery shopping in Lacombe or Red Deer. - I buy electronics and non-perishable household items online. - I shop at home improvement warehouses in Red Deer or Edmonton. - The company that fixes my appliances comes from Lacombe. - I eat at restaurants in Lacombe or Wetaskiwin. - I do my banking in Red Deer. Ponoka businesses need to stop relying on people who shop local purely for the purpose of shopping local. They should treat out-of-town businesses in the same industry as competition, and try to be so much better that Ponoka will be a destination for customers in other towns and not the other way around.

- Available Parking Empty building Lack of variety
- The business that is here is great but the business downtown appears to be more services than shopping. In a population of 7200 you can't buy a pair of shoes. For the basic you have to leave town.
- Parking,
- Bring in more small shops, more locally owned businesses. Some buildings need a little fixing up.
- Stores and sidewalks are not accessible to wheelchairs. There are not many stores or services
- Stores that you can shop at
- Rundown, sidewalk repair needed, maintenance in general

- revitalisation of older buildings 2. bringing in new business
- unique stores does not constitute dollar stores and thrift stores. Complete lack of variety and purpose for visiting downtown. Practically no dining or entertainment options that don't scare the hell out of you just walking in the door
- Unfortunately stating the obvious, the lack of businesses. There are quite a few empty buildings. 2. Safety. I often am disconcerted by the presence of some individuals downtown and have seen some events and issues that make me feel as though I don't want to walk there alone at night. 3. While I do value the history, there are many areas of downtown that look rundown and shabby. This is not going to help attract patrons to shop there.
- Few businesses (empty lots look bad), building exteriors are visibly not appealing, lack of streetlights (LED) in most areas.
- Empty, dilapidated buildings. Needs a face lift!
- few unique stores (only thrift stores and Chinese food restaurants) 2) nothing for youth to do (once you outgrow the playground, there is nothing for teenagers to do. This is a contributing factor to our population loss) 3) no reason to go downtown other than to go to a specific store (people only go to one store, they don't window shop, they don't visit other stores aside from the specific one they want to go to)
- No businesses open past 6pm
- Run down & vacant buildings Garbage on sidewalks Interesting stores. Enough used, liquor and smoke shops
- Vacancies, garbage, and vacancies

What opportunities exist or should be undertaken or further explored with regard to Downtown revitalization in Ponoka?

- Reducing the # of for lease spaces Improve public confidence in safety at night
- making sure that all empty buildings are filled with necessary stores for shoppers
- There are many retail offerings that are missing in the downtown. A menswear store, shoe store, hobby store> Another flower store wouldn't hurt the either. I cant imagine any one foolish enough but a sporting store is needed. Please no more liquor stores or second hand stores. This reflects poorly on the ability to attract unique businesses. It seems to illustrate the problems that the downtown core of Ponoka presents to visitors from other communities. Its kind of a sad statement when visitors from other communities love the unique offerings that the merchants in the downtown core and comment about how they wish this was their hometown but our local shoppers do not share the same attitude I remember walking down the street with Jean Collette when he had his jewelry store. Either he waved and talked to everyone walking or driving by or they did

the same to him. That was a learning experience that stuck with me 25 yrs.

- Establish a regular occurring event that involves downtown Ponoka businesses (concerts with shop booths or something like that). 2. Parking lots on 50th street across from theater, brick etc. should either be paved and turned into more professional looking parking lots or the property should be sold to the private sector to create more economic opportunities.
- Fun events such as live music, art shows, etc.
- Let in some bigger name stores
- I think this group is doing a great job, hopefully the action plan will give both the group and the town a place to start and more of the community will get involved.
- Bringing affordable shopping back into ponoka.
- I would love to see more clothing shops and specialty shops to bring in some interesting shopping options. Would be new entrepreneurs are complaining that the price of rent is too high to make a living.
- Relocation of the royals housing for low income people closer to the ahp. Very sad how run down Main Street is. Lots of vacant and abandoned buildings.
- Building cleanup/facelifts Important services to attract more people
- Make it more welcoming with flowers, trees, benches and the right businesses, like coffee shops, unique stores and different restaurants that aren't chain restaurants. Keep downtown clean
- Why rent a new space for central services? What will we have in 30 years. A lot of taxpayers dollars gone forever and not even owing the property to rebuild on if necessary.
- Restoring heritage buildings and tearing down buildings that can't be restored Putting in a park with benches, tables and trees--potentially on the site of the former town office.
- The Town needs to encourage business to come here and give them a good to be here reason whether through tax breaks or other incentives. We cannot maintain the "we have the Stampede we don't need anything else" attitude. This world is too big to be narrow minded
- Try signage on hiway 53 directing traffic to downtown, signage and beautification like Millet has, fix the land where elevators were
- Cute coffee shop, pubs, and cute shops.
- Town wide wifi!
- YOU NEED TO WORK ON WHAT WE HAVE. EVERY WEEKEND FROM JAN TO NOV NEW GROUP OF PEOPLE COME TO CAL NASH AG CENTRE. YOU NEED TO ADVERTISE AT CENTRE TO PROMOTE THE PEOPLE TO COME DOWN TOWN.ALSO AT STAMPEDE TIME OVER 100,000 PEOPLE COME TO PONOKA. PROMOTE THEM TO COME DOWNTOWN!
- Legislation and bylaw enforcement for building owners who choose to leave their buildings in poor repair and in turn can not find tenants. Don't waste tax dollars on a small portion of in town business.

Responsibility lies on the building owners and business that choose to be located downtown. Towns job to enforce.

- we need more family doctors, walmart
- I think Ponoka would be wise to look at other communities that have revitalized their down town successfully and draw from their positives; communities like Barrhead, Stony Plain, etc Ponoka has a huge opportunity with the Stampede to draw people from all over to our town and potentially bring them back other times of the year. Right now there is nothing to draw people from the stampede back to our town for any other reason but the rodeo
- Higher density and mixed residential/commercial buildings 2. Invest heavily into beautification. 3. Provide more activities and entertainment (i.e., music festivals, kids days, etc). Side note: the new craft brewery on hwy 14 is very exciting and creating a ton of buzz among business professionals in Ponoka, it's too bad that it wasn't happening in the downtown because that would draw a lot of people.
- just start somewhere...I feel there is a lot of talk but people only get enthusiastic about something when they see things taking shape.
- The town should build their new town office and library on the old town office site so that the employees will utilize the downtown restaurants and businesses. To desert the downtown area would be another nail in the coffin of our downtown and to change locations would be a huge mistake.
- Getting new business to come to town, I miss SAAN or Fields. Getting sick of this

second hand stores. People wonder why no one shops in town.

- I would love the town to explore the option of styrofoam facades for the exterior of buildings. I saw this in Europe. It is a quick and affordable way to give a building a whole new style. European style architecture would look amazing to some of the buildings. Please consider this.
- council should be investing in industrial development land so future growth is possible.
- Parking and lighting
- Chipman avenue should be a closed off street, with strictly patios, pubs and restaurants. It should be a place for our community and visitors to gather. It would create a different dynamic for the communities residents.
- I don't know as I gave up on shopping here.
- encourage food trucks out door music, make it a place to take full advantage of summer, out door markets. Make downtown part of the stampede, not ignored like it is now.
- It looks run down and needs upkeeping
- A nice pedestrian only street with patios for lunch or coffee well maintained establishments
- Different business need to support and build each other up. A feeling that makes it feel more friendly and familylike. Look at other towns that have been successful in doing this. Lacombe has cilantro and chive always talking about sweet capones,

primrose and the blindman brewery. We need fun.

- Please take out the brick sidewalks (heaving problems, constant maintenance, problems shovelling) and put the regular concrete sidewalks back. They are the only ones that work in our climate. Please remove the big corners with lightposts so that our bigger pickups and maybe even a trailer could get around a corner anywhere. We don't live in the city where we drive small cars. Please set our streets up to handle the traffic we have here. Please add parking for some bigger rigs somewhere and encourage business here with that to start with. Bring the rural people in to play and shop. Be a one stop town.
- Full court press to obtain the Provincial Building, turn it into a Town Hall and Library with large main floor foyer, develop a Family Friendly park across the road to the south. The north end of town is not in downtown enough to be a hub and it should be a hub.
- give whatever support it needs-lower rent, help with advertising (one page ad of many businesses showcasing specials or sales), or help them get online with web pages/facebook to advertise. Gypsy Fringe understands this and does it well. Learn from thriving businesses-what are their secrets.
- Turn the old empty buildings into shops and stuff.
- exploring what businesses could have an impact on the community. Keeping shopping local. Right now there isn't much here for families with kids to draw from. I think back to when I was growing up and we had those types of places (shoe store,

clothing stores, sporting good, toy store) we desperately NEED those back in the community to get it thriving again

- Maybe turn the empty lot the town hall was on into a walking park with benches and picnic tables and trees and flowers. -Need a good coffee shop (specialty coffees)
- A public square 2. Tax incentives for businesses that open in downtown core
- Get public washrooms. Make it appealing for business owners to start a business here in Ponoka.
- Somehow making the available retail spaces more attractive to new business, and coming up with incentives to keep business local and increase success of those businesses.
- Continue with free parking. Take Christmas lights down right after the season.
- Expanding on Chipman ave decor.
- Bring in more businesses catering to health and wellness.
- Incentives for business owners to beautify at spruce up their buildings.
- I believe that some of the space downtown Ponoka could be used for a cafe or somewhere for its community members to hangout, especially for its younger generation. There has been an ongoing fight with the youth for hangout areas that have resulted in having to put up loitering signs due to the massive amount of littering. I think that the youth could benefit from having a casual hangout place such as a cafe. I think there should be a store that sells reasonably priced clothing for all community members, it is difficult for many

community members, such as our seniors, to find transportation to Red Deer or Wetaskiwin.

- Update and up keep them
- Move the Farmers Market downtown and have it open from 10 - 5 . The stall holders have to learn to c
- moving the Farmer's market down town. Bringing more people traffic. More main street events on Saturdays. Close off the street for foods trucks or scheduled entertainment. Music on main street.
- I think Carlen Chorney has some amazing ideas with helping out homeless people. I think that needs to be addressed. The rebrand program is amazing, helping the youth find better jobs. I think the program should expand.
- Ensure wheelchair accessibility.
- Tax cuts to bring in more businesses and industry. You need to bring in industry to attract people to move here
- Repair original brickwork on downtown businesses
- Provincial historical grants 2. Using western heritage as a focus - theme - grants around this - put into permits for example when renovating 3. long term taxation to help with revitalization
- anywhere worth going to in Ponoka exists along the highway axes. There is no reason to actually go downtown. What about attracting some of those big name or chain stores into the core into one of those old buildings with an attractive taxation and retention package? A starbucks or something or frankly anything downtown

would drive traffic. What truly exists in the core? No drugstores, grocery stores, coffee shops, or any day-to-day needs of the people. Just an overabundance of dollar stores and liquor stores and a bunch of boarded up shops and unattractive flea market type wares. hardly the stuff of "lets go wander around downtown and see whats there".

- I believe all businesses should ensure their buildings are clean, restored and welcoming.
- Clean up business storefronts for more curb appeal, build in empty lots, and demolish empty buildings that haven't had businesses in them for a long time (the old pool hall for example).
- Fix up old buildings, don't build new to just leave empty spaces!
- There are many open storefronts on 50th st and 50th ave. Put unique stores in them. Add things for youth to do. If you can get teenagers to hang out downtown rather than at Tim Horton's, you have more potential customers in the area. Perhaps a street festival, or moving the farmers market to downtown could bring business to stores in the area. Once there are stores, of course. Bring business to Ponoka. People move away because of two reasons: the first being that there is nothing to do, the second being that there are no real jobs. Bring jobs to Ponoka, and you will bring people to Ponoka. Bring things to do, places to go, and people will stay.
- Not sure
- I'd like to see more street-fair type events that encourage community gathering

downtown like the chili cook off and

downtown garage sale do.

What do you imagine a successful Downtown Ponoka to be like in 25 years?

- A place where the younger demographic would want to go hang out walk around. Cool coffee shops, restaurants, a classic more bustling place to be
- A place filled with every service that citizens need, lots of bustling people shopping
- Ponoka is an amazing community with lots of benefits to offer that are not recognized. Through the privilege of having Alberta Hospital in Ponoka, people accept those of us that may beat slightly to a different drummer. That attitude then carries on to our interactions with each other. Ponoka accepts and welcomes each person for their uniqueness. Also the rural attitude of welcoming your neighbor or a complete stranger into our community makes a huge difference.
- Similar to what it is now but modern and updated with more competition and choices between businesses.
- More trees, patios, friendly hangouts.
- A clean attractive busy business area full of history and leisure/ celebration areas. A truly inviting area for all ages .
- In 25 years Ponoka will be just a ghost town with senior citizens in it. Right now there is nothing to attract anyone to come and live in our once thriving farming town.
- A clean attractive busy business area full of history and and leisure/ celebration areas. A truly inviting area for all ages.
- A beautiful inviting busier downtown with lots of fun and interesting shops
- Not very appealing for young families. Just starting to catch up and create newer facilities for kids. People live or use facilities outside of ponoka due to the poor quality and poor management of their facilities, ex,the pool.
- ?
- A successful downtown to me would be sitting outside a coffee shop in the summer months enjoying the beautiful view of flowers and historical buldings all in the company of family ,friends, and other positive thinking ponokians. In 25 more years I would love to be able to do all my shopping right here in beautiful downtown Ponoka. For Ponoka to be successful we have to have on ongoing positive approach.
- The downtown will not exist if we don't start thinking about the future. Don't continue giving the future away.
- All stores open for business and community events to draw people to our downtown
- If it continues at this place a ghost town
- Trees, benches, coffee/pub, outdoor activities

- Busy constantly.
- IF YOU CAN GET MORE PEOPLE TO GO DOWNTOWN WITH MORE ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION MORE BUSINESSES WITH OPEN.
- Hustling busy business district
- Buildings replaced with modern architecture. The downtown vacancy and run down buildings will solve itself as in other communities.
- keeping the old buildings in good repair so they are still here in 25 years
- Businesses that make residents able to and want to shop in Ponoka, cafes, or restaurants to draw people in, flowers and esthetic appeal that draw the attention of others and makes Ponoka memorable
- A charming bustling town that draws locals and visitors alike. A place that is an attraction in and of itself, NOT just for stampede.
- a vibrant bubbly place that is proud of its heritage and embraces the future. Welcoming, safe and multicultural with opportunities for all, from young to old.
- Hopefully no empty businesses. But there would need to be some sort of incentives.
- Lots of good business to shop at, great green space. A good Summer farmers markets nothing like the arena that one is a joke or festival n Main Street.1 Stuff to bring people down town, and to come as a family. We have a great park by shoppers but we don't use it
- Colourful, clean and inviting with a variety of businesses.
- With no land available will be a continued decline in and lack of businesses.
- Updated country style appeal
- Completely changed. I worry that another 25 years will go by, and it will look the exact same as it has for the last 25.
- I wish for the best but I will most likely be dead before Ponoka has a great down town.
- business, restaurants(nice),
- Judging by the current state, another 25 years might not look any different from the previous.
- A place where you want to spend some time, unique shops mixing old and new that tell the history of our town. Mikes news stand was a cool old store that could be recreated with a new spin as a candy store with an Internet cafe.
- I would really hope that our town council can stop being political and just work for our town. We would like growth and an increase in business for everyone. I would like to see people coming to our town for every reason, one of them being to shop. Please encourage a variety of shopping in our downtown.
- Need to get the industrial park upgraded and developed which in turn will lead to a need for a vibrant downtown. Downtown services are there to support industry not the other way around.

- thriving, exciting to wander, not a repeat store every 3rd store (pet/liquor/consignment),
- Lots of things to do.
- Thriving businesses that are suitable for all members of the community
- I love the locally owned businesses, would want to continue to encourage that. Just working on filling storefronts.
- Prospering businesses, trees, easy access for walking, town square
- Have different stores so we don't have to go out of town , to many thrift stores is not really appealing for shoppers. To long nothing was done now people are finding their way in other towns to shop.
- A thriving downtown with a wide variety of local businesses, with a strong community support.
- Need a Walmart or Giant Tiger where you can buy most of the necessities for household instead of all the pit stops or travelling to Wetaskiwin which takes business away from Ponoka.
- Boutique shops. Safe nightlife, people with some disposable income left after taxes.
- A lot of residents gathering for regular healthy activities
- Modernizing without losing its charm, businesses that make it attractive for visitors to explore.
- I believe a successful downtown Ponoka would consist of thriving businesses that last longer then two months and actually meet community needs.
- More maintained buildings with green spaces and clean looking community.
- I can't imagine, The younger generation has already adapted to shopping in the big box stores of the bigger cities on a bi weekly basis and probably will not change , It;s progress so unless we can find a way to liven up down town i think it will just become office buildings and low rent apartments for low income residents.
- Clean, vibrant and beautiful. Nobody wants to look at graffiti covered rail cars on the train track. People spending a Friday or Saturday night downtown. Travellers making a special trip off Highway 2 to shop, dine or experience the local atmosphere.
- It should be a bustling centre with many new stores and activities to serve the people employed in the oilfield and other industries.
- Has enough of the basic of life plus gifty and entertaining and coffee shop style places to attract locals and out of towners, has one or more outdoor places to sit/have drinks and lunch/stop and chat, has plenty of bicycle parking as well as car parking, has some entertainment days on the street for a party atmosphere even if it's not stampede time, keeps the older heritage buildings even if the contents change or they need to be renovated for safety, with signs of the buildings origins, is very clean and has plants and clean business signs as well as tidy streets and sidewalks.
- More businesses as well as proper maintenance of buildings.

- Businesses that are diverse and financially successful, eye-appealing. Places where you would want to take your family to on a weekend!
- Lots of shops, food places and community investment
- Department store, mutiplex.
- Aesthetically pleasing, vibrant, trees, lots of pedestrians
- More stores opening instead of boarding up. Seeing the local kids staying in town and opening their own business.
- Friendly / clean small town environment 2. Promotion of family fitness 3. Pride of Community -- Volunteer Program (children / adults) in conjunction with schools
- vibrant community with boutique shops, small retail and commercial business office. Also, cultural attractions / fesitvals
- I imagine a lot of locally owned and operated shops and little pubs/restaurants.
- Downtown Lacombe
- The buildings filled with retail/restaurants/pubs/coffee shops
Beautification of the buildings
- Lots of variety of stores. Not high end not low end midline stores. Family chain restaurant like Denny's that open early for breakfast. Better parking.
- To actually have easy access to close for families and seniors
- A town that has everything we need so we don't have to go to the city
- A place that offered a wide range of small retail businesses, that families can stroll and meet each other
- Tidy, with a lower vacancy rate. Thriving, especially if we bring the learning centre to Ponoka
- Be able to walk around and do your shopping without having to drive to the city
- More stores, a place where we can meet other people and build a strong community with all ages, a place where there's activities like music, or games, or kids green shack program, maybe community learning...
- Mixture of stores, offices, housing
- I see a totally unique area, where tourists will turn off highway 2, because they have heard of the interesting shops and store in the downtown. When Ponoka expands, it is likely a strip mall will be built on Highway 2A or between 2A and Queen Elizabeth..That is where the clothing and footwear stores would go. Clothing stores downtown would be different from the regular clothing stores..
- lots of boutique shops and cafes , people strolling along visiting
- I imagine population growing if Ponoka builds a Multiplex building and a Western Themed Downtown!! Sidewalks, storefronts all Western!!
- bustling
- Less liquor stores. No more dollar stores. Stop allowing the big Ponoka family names

to run our town. That's why Blackfalds is booming and we are not

- full buildings offering things that will accommodate all your needs at affordable prices - eliminating the need to go to larger centres
- coffee house boutiques parks
- Celebrating the past but recognizing that communities can embrace technology and still be inclusive ... Having unique places to shop, dine and play.
- double or triple the number of stores, more unique local stores, physically cleaned up and well kept
- Recreation facilities that are updated
- More options for shopping available so you don't have to leave town. Main street closed to traffic. filled with picnic tables plants and flowers. Restaurants without door eating. Maybe some art commissioned or fountain.
- It would be great to see the future of downtown be buzzing with busy shopping and services. Building not empty.
- More businesses. Clothing stores/ shoes? Buildings fixed up. More town activities, street days?
- Empty, unless major changes are made.
- Sidewalk cafe and benches
- Quaint shops, local business, gardens, rural atmosphere in a downtown centre
- A scenic, western heritage focus with respect to architecture, renovations, filled with varying levels of business/service agencies due to Ponoka's placement on the QE2 corridor.
- additional green space, stores with patios for casual dining or coffee shops, fruit and vegetable market spaces. Example: Why is the farmers market in the curling rink? Make it a vibrant weekly downtown event that draws traffic from outside town.
- I imagine a successful Ponoka to be one that is clean and bright, with full buildings of a variety of businesses.
- Businesses in every building and new buildings to replace dated ones.
- A few more coffee shops and boutiques that actually thrive!
- Less thrift stores, more places of employment, more unique stores
- Lot's of shopping, places to sit and relax, restaurants and/or pubs
- Busy, lots of local shoppers and more street-fair type events.

Appendix A: Graphic Submitted by Residents

