



Advocacy Framework



What is Advocacy?

There are many definitions of advocacy and many ways that individuals and groups can advocate for their causes or issues.

At the City of Lethbridge, we view advocacy as seeking support for something such as a cause, policy or initiative. This support could include specific changes to policy that would benefit our municipality or funding for City programs and initiatives.

Effective advocacy requires a strategic and coordinated approach where elected officials and municipal administrators work in tandem to move community priorities forward. These efforts could be directed towards other levels government (Indigenous, Provincial and Federal), municipal partners and groups (Alberta Mid-Sized Cities Mayors' Caucus, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Alberta Municipalities, etc.), or even the public.

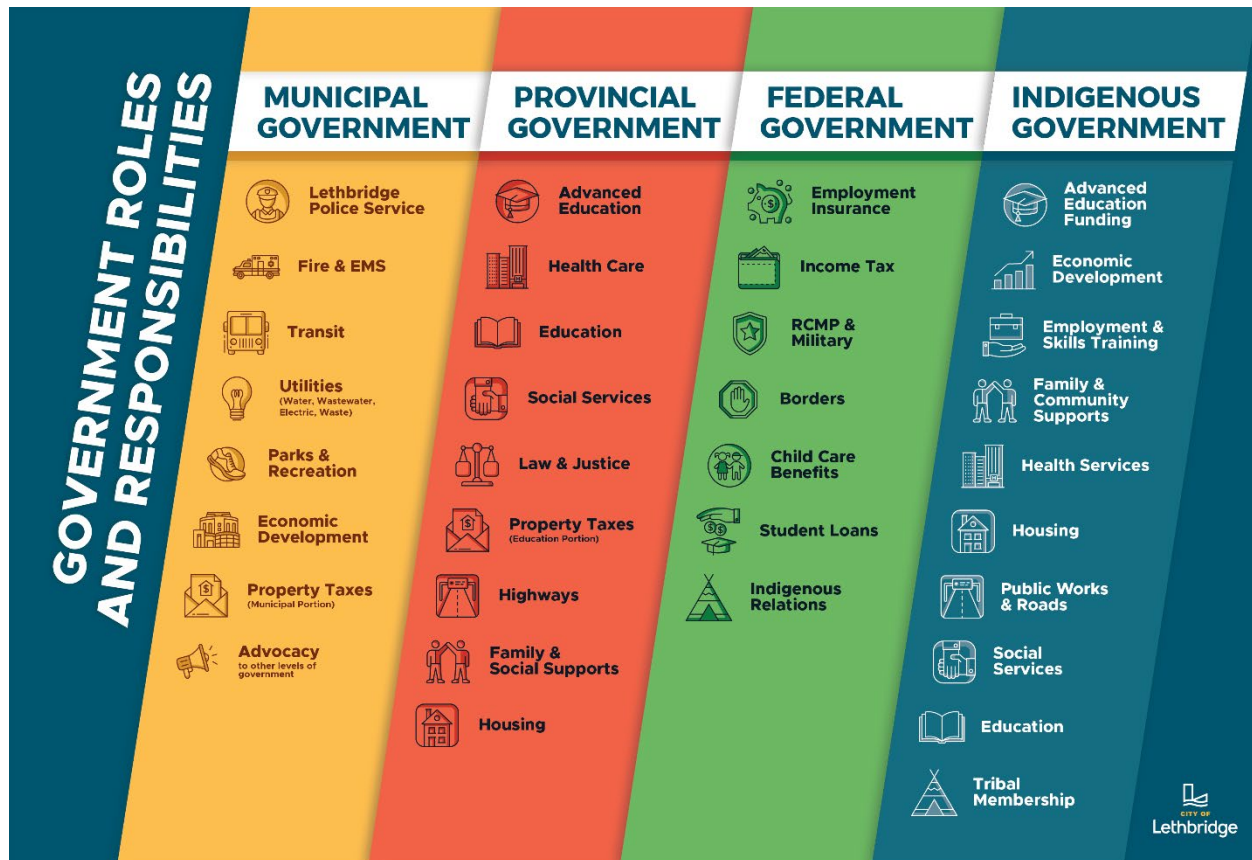
Relationships are the Key

Developing working relationships between the City of Lethbridge and other levels of government is essential to gain support for municipal initiatives requiring their approval or funding. It is therefore critical that members of City Council develop relationships with local Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), Members of Parliament (MPs) and Ministers.

Advocacy is not just for our elected officials; it is equally important that our City Manager and Senior Administrators build relationships with Deputy and Assistant Deputy Ministers provincially and federally to enhance administrative engagement.

Key Ministries Related to City Advocacy:

- Infrastructure
- Municipal Affairs
- Transportation & Economic Corridors
- Public Safety & Emergency Services
- Mental Health & Addictions
- Health



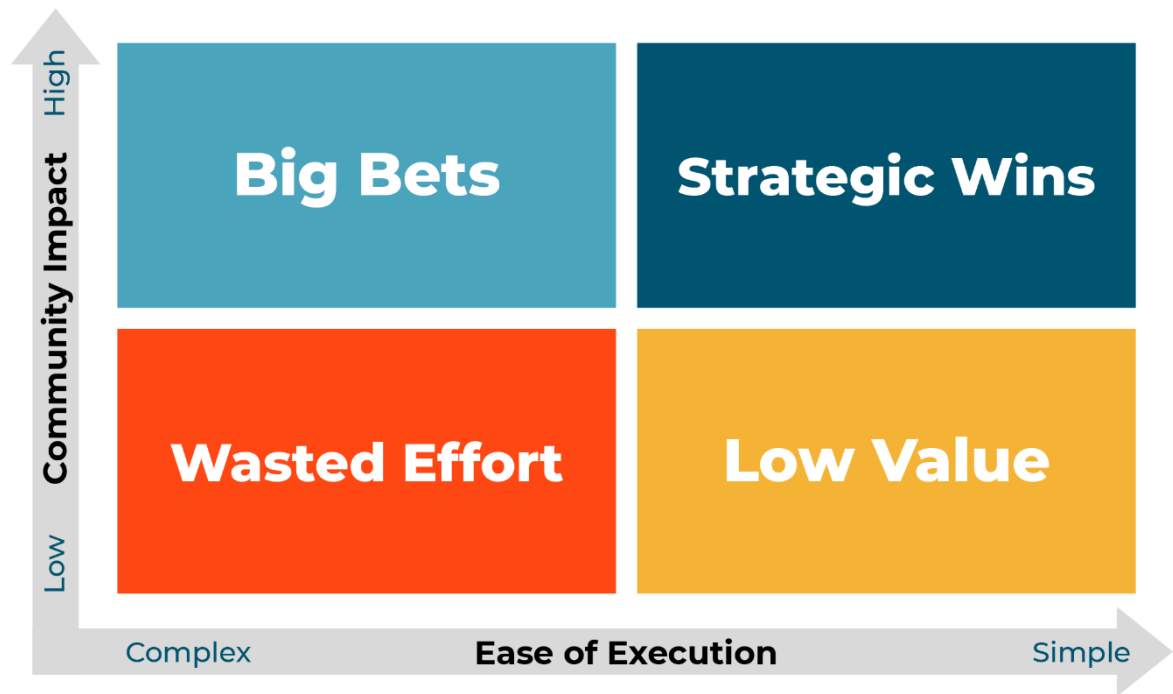
***Best Practice:** When working with provincial and federal representatives, it should always be elected to elected and administrative to administrative.*

***Best Practice:** When attending intergovernmental meetings regarding advocacy items, it often makes sense to include a colleague, subject matter expert or note taker to ensure a fulsome and meaningful conversation with appropriate follow-up.*

What to Advocate For?

Being thoughtful and strategic about our advocacy work is important to ensure that we maximize the community impact of our advocacy efforts.

To ensure maximum value for our advocacy efforts it is important that each advocacy activity is mapped comparing its community impact versus its ease of execution.



Strategic Wins – This is our primary area of focus where the outcome has high perceived community impact and the advocacy has a less complex execution.

Big Bets – Another area of focus where the outcome has high perceived community impact, however the advocacy is more complex which could mean higher costs, increased effort and a smaller likelihood of success.

Low Value – This advocacy is simple in nature but has low perceived community impact. We need to be careful to not put too much focus in this area at the expense of initiatives with higher community impact.

Wasted Effort – This advocacy is complex with low perceived community impact. We want to stay away from advocacy that falls in this area.

Community Impact:

- Is it an immediate pressing need?
- Does it benefit a significant portion of our population or only a select few?
- Does it help us achieve our long-term objectives?
- What is the economic impact?

Ease of Execution:

- What is the likelihood of success?
- How much effort and coordination is required?
- Does the City have the required resources?
- Do we have all the data and information required?

Additional Thoughts:

Ensure the advocacy is necessary:

Advocacy should only be initiated when needed and when the subject matter is important to the community. It takes a long time to build trust and relationships and we want to leverage these relationships for the areas of greatest need.

Be targeted with the ask:

A single ask is much more likely to succeed over multiple. We will focus on what is most important to our community and concentrate our efforts there. When needed, we will be strategic and sequence our requests.

Research and align the request:

The likelihood of success is higher when the request aligns with the mandates of the government in power. By doing our homework we will understand the goals and priorities of other levels of government to create benefit for our community.

How Do We Advocate?

Effective advocacy requires a strategy and a plan. Recognizing this, we will develop specific advocacy plans for identified strategic advocacy opportunities. These plans are an important tool used to map initiatives and assign appropriate advocacy tactics. They also ensure coordinated strategic communications to streamline intergovernmental efforts.

***Best Practice:** Aligning advocacy tactics with the desired change will lead to superior results. For example, if the desired change is increased awareness, a letter to a Minister or public awareness campaign would be appropriate. However, if the desired change is action on a specific initiative then a face-to-face meeting with a Minister or a resolution at Alberta Municipalities might work better.*

Protocols:

The Mayor is the principal advocate for the City of Lethbridge and the lead on City intergovernmental matters.

The Mayor, or Council collectively, may designate others to communicate certain intergovernmental issues. Councillors could represent the City with other levels of government through direct communication and participation on committees and in other official forums.

Mayor and Council, where possible, will:

- Promote messaging to intergovernmental stakeholders that is united and consistent with the City's advocacy plans
- Prioritize advocacy initiatives and educate stakeholders in accordance with this prioritization
- Avoid partisanship

City administration will strive to maintain open communication channels and positive relations with other government administrations to support the implementation of the City's advocacy plans.

Moving Forward

To ensure continuity, activities related to the execution of our advocacy plans need to be tracked and recorded. Our advocacy efforts should be reported on twice per year, in an in-camera workshop format, once in February and once in September.

The City's advocacy plans should be reviewed and updated annually and revised in connection with changing community priorities, updated strategic plans or changes in ministerial appointments.