



## **SHAPING BLACKFALDS' FUTURE:**

**A Recommendation from the  
2019 Brand Development Committee  
to Undertake Community Branding in 2020**

*Presented to Town of Blackfalds Council  
Monday, September 16, 2019*







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# Executive Summary

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**B**rands have the power to connect deeply with people and bring about change. They can influence the direction of the larger culture and make an impact on the way the Town of Blackfalds thinks and operates.

The Town of Blackfalds' corporate brand will communicate the look and message of our organization and the essence of the community. Our brand will be our story and it will achieve the goal of aligning perception with reality.



*Brands have the power to connect deeply with people and bring about change.*

The Town's brand may include a logo, tag line, primary and secondary colour palettes, images and supporting messaging. Currently, these municipal assets are not being governed by brand guidelines and standards and are therefore not being used consistently.

This report presented by the Brand Development Committee to the Town of Blackfalds Council recommends a progression of the current 2019 branding exploration with brand project highlights including:

- » Fall 2019 preparation for brand project launch in 2020
- » Engagement to identify current brand and define desired future direction



- » Design options for visual representation of future direction
- » Public selection of brand direction and Council adoption
- » Develop brand guidelines and standards
- » Internal brand roll out
- » Unveil new visual identity externally
- » Ongoing external brand roll out and assessment

The 2020 budget required for this undertaking will not exceed \$35,000, as most of the work will be done by the Brand Development Committee, along with in-house resources.

Costs in future budget years will include approximately \$5,000 in revisions to the Town website in 2021 and ongoing life-cycle replacement of a variety of items on an as needed basis. For example, when more business cards or print stationery / envelopes are required, ones with the new visual elements will be ordered.

Logo replacement for vehicles and equipment may also be done over time, with a quoted cost of about \$13,000 for the existing municipal fleet and machinery items. Similarly, replacement of or revisions to facility signage can be phased in. Stand alone facility signage is estimated to run about \$15,000 each and logo replacement and / or smaller mounted signage will likely be under \$5,000 each.

# Background



Pre-1991 logo



2008 refresh



2014 refresh

**R**ecent research has uncovered that the current Town of Blackfalds logo and slogan were created in 1991. A refresh of the logo, which modified the shades of blue, green and yellow used in the shield was done in 2008. A second refresh of the logo took place in 2014 and at the same time the approved logo options were outlined in the Logo and Corporate Branding Policy – 112.14.

Since the 2014 logo refresh and the adoption of the Logo and Corporate Branding Policy, the Town has participated in several assessments and projects that incorporated an evaluation of our municipal brand. These include:

## 2016 Visitor Friendly Assessment

This assessment stated that the Town’s logo and slogan “are generic and do not serve as a differentiating brand.” The consultants’ first-hand experiences were that our community is young, active, and modern and has excellent recreation amenities, which should be reflected in our logo / slogan / brand.

## 2017 University of Waterloo Economic Development Program - Integrated Community Marketing Course

Noted that the visual image / logo depicts a community that appears slow paced, pastoral, religious, with older, quieter residents – seems like a desirable municipality for businesses that provide services for seniors, i.e. denture clinic. The logo does not reflect the most recent federal census data that reports Blackfalds to be Canada’s fastest growing community and one of the country’s youngest.

## 2017 Investment Readiness Assessment

The logo was found to be “dated.” It was recommended that the community consider re-branding along with development of its 2020-2025 Economic Development Strategy.

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*It is a challenge to place the current municipal logo on various promotional items.*

The imprint areas on these items are often small – clips, pens, tire gauges, etc. and as such, it is often not feasible to apply the full logo. This is because there are too many details in the logo for them to be displayed clearly when sized to fit on a small item. For that reason, the wordmark is being used on its own far more frequently.

Local suppliers of promotional items, corporate apparel, and stationary (Tom Bast Sports, Minuteman Press, and Grand Central Stichin') and their design staff have recommended that the Town consider transitioning to a cleaner logo that could be applied more professionally to a variety of materials.

In November 2018 the Town of Blackfalds Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) expressed interest in having the Town of Blackfalds undertake a rebrand / refresh.

The Economic Development Officer (EDO) was asked to compile a report and provide background on the current municipal logo and brand and to make a recommendation to Standing Committee of Council (SCC) to consider re-branding. The EDO brought the Municipal Re-branding report to the SCC on January 14, 2019, on behalf of EDTAC. The motion to accept EDTAC's recommendation to Council to undertake further research and learning on re-branding in the 2019 year and possibly commence municipal branding in 2020 *(with initiatives to be undertaken this budget year as determined through initial phased processes, including learning opportunities and workshops, information gathering and ad hoc committee formation)* was carried unanimously.

The Municipal Re-branding recommendation was then brought to the January 22, 2019 Regular Council Meeting. At this time a phased approach was recommended.



# Background cont'd

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**Phase One:** activities proposed to take place in Spring / Summer of 2019 included:

1. Free learning opportunities
  - videos on branding from the Destination Development Association - to be viewed by Council, Administration, EDTAC, and community stakeholders
2. Research and resource gathering
3. Host facilitated workshop for Council and key stakeholders

The motion for Council to approve the undertaking of these Phase One preparations for a Town of Blackfalds re-brand commencing in Spring 2019 was carried unanimously.

Opportunities to learn about branding, why it may be beneficial, and the steps for successfully implementing a branding initiative were provided.

Over 110 community stakeholders were invited to attend a series of video and discussion sessions between March 4, 2019 - May 16, 2019. In total, nine of these branding sessions were held for 110 attendees. Along with hearing participants perceptions of the community and developing a shared understanding and appreciation of branding, attendees were asked to complete questionnaires to further

guide the branding exploration process.

Highlights of the questionnaire responses included:

- » After the first series of sessions, 75% of attendees indicated that starting a community branding initiative should be a priority for Blackfalds now and that they would like to learn more about implementing community branding

After the second series of sessions:

- 80% of attendees recommended the formation of a **Brand Development Committee (BDC)** for the purpose of further exploring community branding
- 67% of attendees indicated a desire to have community input on brand development take place in 2020.
- Over 56% of attendees recommended that the community consultation and subsequent data analysis to drive the brand direction could be done entirely with in-house resources. 60% of attendees then thought that a consultant be acquired to assist with the development of proposed versions for the visual look and feel for the brand.





Following the video and discussion sessions, it was announced that a BDC would be formed for the purpose of undertaking additional research on community branding, attending an in-depth workshop on public sector branding along with Council, and forming a recommendation to Council on how to proceed with a branding initiative in 2020. An email was sent to all the session attendees on June 7, 2019 advising of the composition of the BDC.

On July 8 and 9, 2019 members of the BDC and Council participated in a 1.5-day *Challenges of Public Sector Branding & Positioning* workshop facilitated by the Centre of Excellence in Communications. The 18 attendees were all led together through the learnings and exercises on the following outline.

# Background cont'd

Town of Blackfalds Branding & Positioning Workshop Agenda Day 1	
8:45 - 9:10	Introductions and Workshop Overview
9:10 - 10:30	<p>Branding Basics</p> <p>What is a brand and branding? What does it mean in a municipal context? What are the main issues and challenges in municipal branding? Branding and communications. Differences between the municipal and private sectors. Developing and sustaining a brand image. The benefits and challenges of branding municipalities.</p>
	Mini Exercise - Branding Quiz
10:30 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - 12:15	<p>The Municipal Branding Process</p> <p>Branding as a goal and a process. Essential steps, challenges and solutions. Key implementation issues. Getting started - The "Elevator Pitch".</p>
	Group Exercise
12:15 - 13:15	Lunch
13:15 - 2:45	<p>Building a Municipal Brand Strategy</p> <p>Key elements of a branding strategy: SWOT analysis, branding objectives, architecture, brand promise and positioning, segmentation and messaging, tactics, internal brand, sub-brands, co-branding, monitoring and evaluation, critical success factors, risk assessment. Canadian municipal sector branding experiences. Lessons learned. Developing the plan. Working with and without outside consultants.</p>
	Group Exercise

2:45 - 3:00	Break
3:00 - 4:15	<p>The Importance of Positioning for Municipalities</p> <p>What is positioning and why is it important to branding? The strategic planning context. The positioning process. Developing a positioning statement. Linkages between positioning, messaging and branding. The importance of audience segmentation.</p>
	Group Exercise
4:15 - 4:30	Day One Wrap-up: Questions and Answers

## Agenda Day 2

8:45 - 9:15	Day One Review
9:15 - 10:30	<p>Brand Audiences</p> <p>Approaches to segmenting audiences in the context of municipal branding. Importance of internal audience and "employee branding". Messaging around a brand. Developing and living the "Message Pyramid".</p> <p>Group Exercise</p>
10:30 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - 12:15	<p>Brand Implementation Process: Getting it Right</p> <p>Key challenges in implementing a municipal sector branding strategy and action plan. Developing the plan. Understanding brand management tools. Asking the right questions.</p> <p>Group Exercise</p>
12:15 - 12:30	<p>Questions and Answers</p> <p>Workshop Wrap-up and Evaluation</p>

# Background cont'd

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*Summary notes from the July 8-9 workshop were compiled and shared with the BDC for review at the group's first meeting on July 29, 2019.*

Themes that emerged included:

- » Desire to build consensus on direction for the future of Blackfalds
- » Interest in identifying internal and external perceptions of the community
- » Elevator Pitch - Branding Blackfalds will give us the opportunity to share a consistent story that portrays the personality of our community. Having unified messaging will create strong community identity and civic pride for residents, foster a prosperous business climate, and attract visitors and new investment to town
- » Community Personality Traits: youthful, playful, vibrant, active, family-friendly
- » Importance of public education to answer the "whys" of community branding and to address the reasons that residents / community members should be invested.
- » It will be more fun and rewarding to brand now - we can build on the momentum and enhance what is already working
- » Branding will help to focus all municipal decisions. It is the connective tissue for all plans, including the - Municipal Sustainability Plan (MSP), Facilities Master Plan, Social Needs Assessment, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, etc.
- » Top reasons for brand failure:
  1. Key Stakeholders not given the information that they need / lack of champions and ongoing support from the top
  2. Rushing - we must take the time to ensure adequate processes and cultivate fertile ground



# Branding Definitions

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Branding is a nebulous term. Even those in the marketing and communications (MarCom) industry cannot always agree on its meaning and scope. As such, the tendency to lock onto something concrete and tangible – like a logo – is no surprise. The disconnect occurs when the cost of a branding initiative is wholly attributed to the development of a logo. This is rarely the case. Done properly, logo and tagline development are simply a step in the process, and most dollars are allocated to getting the new identity and messaging out into the market.

**Brand** The perception and / or reputation of a company, place or organization in the minds of a target audience, that impacts how they feel about you and your products / services.

It is all attributes associated, both tangible and intangible. It includes your logo, your promise and your ability to deliver on it, your programs and services, your name and more. It is what you stand for, what you do, what you say, and what you look like. It is the beacon that will incite people to join forces with you and make your cause their own.

**Brand Position** What differentiates your company, place or organization from others and provides key psychological reference points in the minds of target audiences. i.e. Chick-Fil-A has positioned themselves as the “Christian fast food place” and this permeates everything that they do from being closed on Sundays to who they argue with on Twitter.

**Brand Audit** The process to review and assess a brand’s strengths and weaknesses

**Logo** A symbol that identifies the company, place or organization

**Visual Identity** The entire graphic system – including the logo, slogan, fonts, standards, colours, etc. – that is used to identify a company, place or organization.



# What are the Benefits of Municipal Branding for Blackfalds?

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The benefits of using branding to enhance our economic development efforts and our community's competitive advantage include:

1. Helping to further put Blackfalds on the national and global map by distinguishing our selves from others
2. Better communicating our story – who we are, where we are going, and why it matters
3. Increasing our sense of local identity, well-being and civic pride
4. Building upon and improving our already strong reputation
5. Attracting new businesses, investments and events and drawing in new populations with a diversity of skills and talents
6. Encouraging more tourism
7. Achieving a more modern and professional image
8. Capturing our personality of place to enable all our stakeholders to provide consistent compelling messaging and support for local development efforts and to deliver on our community's brand promise
9. Providing a flexible visual identity system for the future
10. Enhanced engagement of community members, stakeholders, and businesses
11. Create a legacy and future for the municipality

# Branding Processes

## Best Practices

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1. Begin with a brand audit to evaluate your current brand. How is it perceived? Is it well-defined? Ensure that internal stakeholders / employees are engaged
2. Essential to have buy-in and support from leadership early in the process and keep them involved and engaged
3. Assign a dedicated leadership / core team for the project
4. Ensure significant meaningful public engagement
5. A brand's energy must be focused on building a reputation in one narrow category. Choose one thing that you're the best at and focus your resources
6. Be honest. You must be prepared to live the brand and make sure that your brand promise rings true otherwise it will be perceived to be only a new look
7. Branding must be derived from the core economic development strategy, which in turn is built on the strengths and ambitions of the municipality
8. As branding is a cultural change, it needs to start on the inside first. Staff / internal stakeholders are needed to deliver the brand experience
9. Create an internal branding and change communication plan that addresses:
  - a. How leadership can model and reinforce the desired brand behaviour
  - b. Rationale, research, expectations, and behaviours of brand initiative
  - c. Available training, tools, and support, including message map, recommended channels and tips, etc.
  - d. Quick tangible wins that build momentum - engage staff in coming up with ideas on how to deliver on the brand experience
  - e. Celebrate progress and highlight success stories
10. Launch the brand externally when you can deliver an authentic brand experience
11. Establish benchmarks - internal shift in behaviour, shift in audience perceptions, and impact on goals / key performance objectives
12. Give it time. Building brand equity and relevance does not happen overnight.
13. Evaluate and be Flexible. Monitor the effectiveness of your brand and be prepared to change when needed
14. Formally commit when direction takes route and establish a Community Brand Council Policy

# Why Should Blackfalds Undertake Branding Now?

**T**he community of Blackfalds has undergone significant change in the past three decades since the current logo and tag line were adopted in 1991. This prompts the questions of “who were we as a community 30 years ago?” and, “What kind of a legacy will we want to provide for the community that we will become 30 years from now?”

When we think back to life in 1991 (those of us who are seasoned enough to have recollections from that time), we recall that this was a time before cell phones, before the Internet, and before separate area codes in the province, making it a very different world indeed.

Folks that lived in Blackfalds at that time were among the 1,770 residents to call the community home (Source: Statistics Canada - 1991 Federal Census). They may have lived in a home that represented the average property assessment value of \$55,000 or they may have been looking to purchase a brand-new townhouse or house on a lot by the new community centre along Womacks Rd. for between \$61,000 - 89,000. They would have seen the water tower come down in 1991, would have received most of their municipal information via the portable sign downtown or

in the monthly hand-typed and photocopied paper newsletter, and may have been involved in ongoing efforts to construct a larger library, a seniors development, and a multi-purpose arena.



Like now, the typical household was comprised of adults in the 25 - 35 age range with children under the age of 15. However, since then Blackfalds has seen staggering growth with over six times the number of residents and households reported in the 2018 municipal census and a moderate increase in population in the 45 - 65 - year old age bracket. With a population of over 10,000 persons, Blackfalds is now poised to declare city status when it chooses to do so!





*Did your current home or neighborhood exist back in 1996 when this aerial photo of Blackfalds was taken?*

Given all these changes to the world and the community and the tremendous success and growth that Blackfalds has experienced prior to the recent slow downs in the economy and residential development, now is the ideal time to envision the community's full potential – who we are and who we want to be.

By branding now we can correct any misconceptions about Blackfalds and align the goals and objectives from municipal plans (2020-2025 Economic Development Business Plan, Municipal Sustainability Plan, Communications Plan, etc.) with the new brand. Doing so will help Blackfalds to attract and retain new untapped audiences – visitors, potential residents, and investment and industry as well as assist with successful recruitment and retention of municipal staff.

Implementing brand strategy now will help to create a stronger and more meaningful organizational culture, which will lead to aligned and inspired leadership and higher levels of employee engagement, productivity, creativity, and innovation. Having key people on the same page, sharing the same vision and plan for getting there will give the community the momentum to continue to advance and establish a legacy for the future.

# Pitfalls & Success Stories: Case Studies

## Main Difficulties of Place Branding:

- » Thinking branding is just a logo, tag lines or marketing – when it is really about economic development and public governance
- » Not realizing that place branding takes time
- » Getting government leaders to involve key stakeholders and share the development of their place
- » Not engaging the right people at the right times to get buy in
- » Not supporting the brand with ongoing communication
- » Failing to seek employee input

There are ample recent municipal case studies in community branding that Blackfalds can learn from, both in terms of what to be aware of and how to best mitigate potential risks and what to attempt to emulate in the hope of achieving similar success.

## Devon, Alberta - Bike Town Alberta



Devon started exploring community branding in 2010. The process was initiated by community businesses and supported by many residents and youth in the community as well as individuals throughout the region and beyond, as evidenced by the formation of the Devon Bike Association. In the early days the brand was fully supported and there were champions in municipal administration as well as on Town Council.

Significant investment in infrastructure (trails and bike park) and new businesses that supported the brand were realized and large-scale cycling events, such as the Tour of Alberta, were attracted. Banners and wayfinding signage were also implemented. However, the municipal election in 2017 resulted in a dramatic shift in government, which resulted in the brand losing its focus and purpose. Subsequently, some of the municipal staff champions, including the EDO, who was the project lead, sought employment elsewhere.

Currently, the Bike Town brand still exists ([www.ridedevon.ca/](http://www.ridedevon.ca/)) and the Town of Devon uses the logo that was created (see [www.devon.ca](http://www.devon.ca)), but the focus on biking is now watered down with promotion of all the other things that are also available to do in Devon.

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### Learnings from Devon Case Study:

- Political will is crucial to branding efforts
- A brand must pinpoint what is unique and special about the community to stay relevant – cannot be all things to all people
- Necessity of continuity of process and exit strategy given possible change in governance

## St. Albert, Alberta - The Botanical Arts City

This community started exploring branding in 2008 and unveiled its brand in 2010. Prior to this the City was well known for having the highest taxes in Alberta and it wanted to be perceived as more than a bedroom community to Edmonton.

The former Mayor, Nolan Crouse, who was a longtime member of Council and a 3-term Mayor until 2017, was an absolute champion of the brand. He wrote one thank you note to an employee each week and five thank you letters to community members per week to acknowledge those in the City who were serving as brand ambassadors. Efforts to promote “green” or “art,” such as beautiful yards, Christmas decorations, transit, cycling, and more were recognized.

A dedicated brand team was also in place for several years. Team members were strong advocates for the brand and over half of the team members participated from the very beginning and throughout the life



of the group. The brand permeated all aspects of the municipal culture from the colours of uniforms and corporate vehicles to the furnishings in the Mayor's office. The Mayor saw himself as the brand role model and aligned his speaking and support for initiatives (financial and other) with the brand direction.

The benefits that St. Alberta has realized in the past decade since undertaking the branding initiative, include attracting targeted green businesses, enhancing arts in the community, winning a variety of awards, and attaining high rankings across the country for best City to live in.

# Pitfalls & Success Stories: Case Studies cont'd

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## Learnings from St. Albert Case Study:

- Some leadership, especially the Office of the Mayor is needed to champion the brand
- Continuity in project leadership is beneficial
- Takes time to gel - according to the former Mayor, "now the machine cannot be turned around - St. Albert is the botanical arts city." [www.stalbert.ca](http://www.stalbert.ca)

## Whitby, Ontario

Whitby commenced its branding initiative in the fall of 2017. It undertook a three-phase, multi-year approach with research and public engagement on brand direction being done in Phase 1, design and public engagement on logo development in Phase 2, and brand implementation in Phase 3.

In June 2019, Town Council unanimously approved Brand Direction A as the Town's new brand. In the coming months, brand guidelines and standards will be developed to support the launch of the new brand, which is expected to take place in January 2020.





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It was important to Whitby to have significant public engagement and communication throughout their branding project. As such, the established a designated web page - [www.whitby.ca/en/townhall/corporate-rebrand-project.asp](http://www.whitby.ca/en/townhall/corporate-rebrand-project.asp) to keep the public apprised of the steps that had been completed and to advise on the upcoming steps.

The branding initiative took slightly longer than initially proposed as additional public engagement after the logo design phase was added. Initially, it had been deemed enough to engage community members once to determine the brand direction and then the intent was to have the visual components designed to suit the recommended brand direction. However, the initial visual components were not well received and so two additional sets of design components

were created, and the public was once again engaged and asked to select the visuals that they felt best represented their community.

The budget for the engagement undertaken in Phase 1 was \$25,000 and it is estimated that the combined costs for Phases 2 and 3 will be \$150,000. The implementation will be phased in over several years.

#### **Learnings from Whitby Case Study:**

- Significant upfront public engagement will produce the best overall brand direction and visual components and assist with community buy-in in both the short-term and the long-term
- Two-way communication and transparency of process facilitates investment from community and eventual project buy-in

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## **Mississauga, Ontario**

In 2012 City Council accepted a key recommendation from the Communications Master Plan to develop a strong, unified brand reputation for the municipality.

Like the Town of Whitby, Mississauga also included significant public engagement in their re-branding process, created a designated web page to communicate project

information - [www.mississaugabrand.ca](http://www.mississaugabrand.ca), and after an approximate 2-year time frame adopted a brand and logo and visual identity without a tagline.

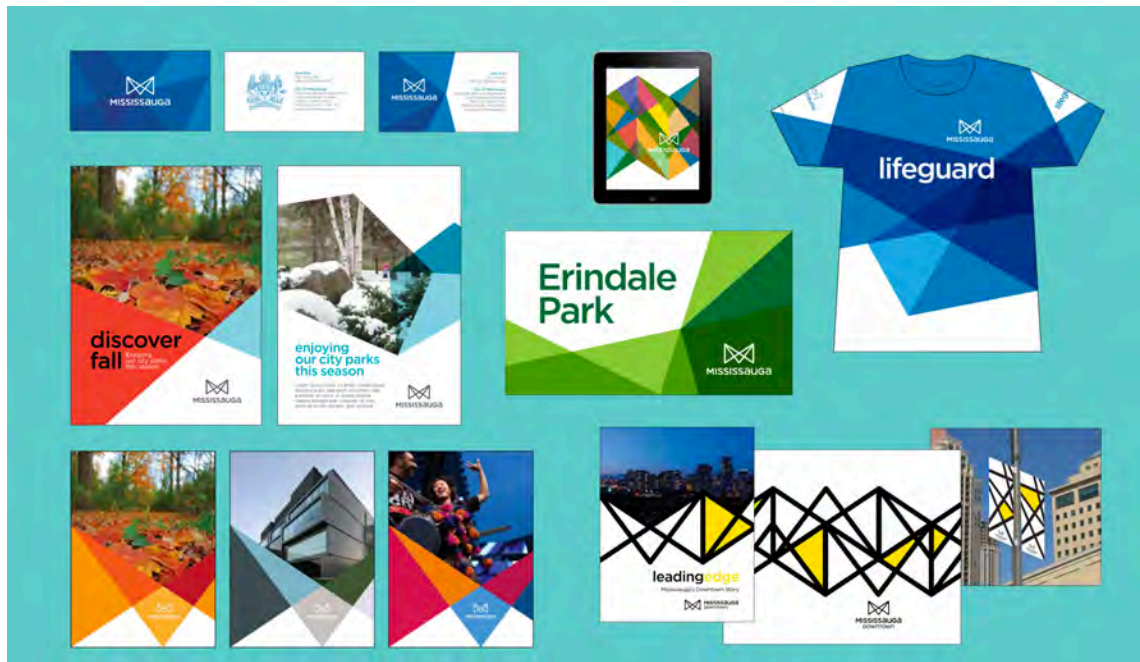
In addition to the similar project steps used by Whitby, Mississauga chose to launch their process with a brand audit to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their former brand and logo. This step allowed for testing

# Pitfalls & Success Stories: Case Studies cont'd

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that confirmed that the visual identity created over 25 years prior no longer adequately represented the community that Mississauga had become and that a refresh of the brand and logo was required.

Much of the work done in the two-phase re-branding project was completed by internal staff, a project team, and Council with assistance from a consultant when needed. The overall re-branding project costs were \$170,000; however, this included the creation of a “Downtown Brand Story” along with the overall municipal brand and logo.



## Learnings from Mississauga Case Study:

- Value of conducting a “brand audit” to support undertaking a re-branding project
- Ability to conduct much of branding initiative processes using internal staff – great examples of processes already out there to follow. Only bring in outside expertise on limited basis, as needed

## Bruce County, Ontario

This rural municipality adopted its new brand in December 2016 following 12 months of extensive consultation, research and creative exploration. In addition to engaging local public and stakeholders, Bruce County also extended the opportunity to provide input out to external partners and potential visitors across the province of Ontario.

The brand project was managed by a cross-functional team comprised of staff members from various County Departments along with team members representing other historical and cultural entities in the region.

While the development of the branding and visual identity was completed in one year, the implementation is to be done over a three-year time frame with initial substantial focus on internal building of culture followed by a slow systematic external roll out that is to be reviewed annually to allow for continuous improvement. In recognition of the importance of the internal culture and brand implementation, Bruce County has also established a Brand Implementation Team to provide help with using the brand and has developed a comprehensive set of tools, including specific Design & Communication Style Guides, to aid County staff, businesses, municipalities, and other relevant stakeholders.

### Learnings from Bruce County Case Study:

- Importance of internal engagement and culture shift
- Necessity of resources and tools to assist with training and brand implementation



# Branding Project Proposal

**T**he Brand Development Committee is proposing that Blackfalds Town Council commence with a brand initiative in 2020. As such, the following preparatory steps may be advanced in the Fall of 2019:

## Step 1: Organizing Ourselves for Success

- » Approval of proposed project budget in the municipal 2020 budget
- » In-house design of brand audit and public engagement tools
- » Development of a dedicated web page for communicating brand project information (to be launched in late 2019)
- » Appointment of a Council champion to the Brand Development Committee to form an ongoing Brand Leadership Ad Hoc Committee (BLC)
- » Using the tools / resources provided by the Centre for Excellence in Communications following the July workshop, develop facilitation skills of BLC members for purpose of leading engagement sessions
- » Creation of communication pieces on the Brand Project to be issued in late 2019. These may include articles in the Town email newsletter and social media posts, a video conversation with the Mayor, etc.
- » Review of all municipal plans – Municipal Sustainability Plan, Communications Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Social Needs Master Plan, and Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan, etc. to ensure that the new brand is built upon a foundation that reflects the Town’s strategic direction and aligns with and supports the vision and promises outlined.
- » Market research as deemed necessary





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## Step 2: Discovering Our Current Brand

One of the biggest dangers of brand management is to assume that you know what people currently think and feel about your community. It is a best practice to undertake a process of investigation in order to better understand where the community currently sits in the minds of our stakeholders. A brand audit will provide a “warts and all” picture of our current brand that may provide us with a strong motivator to make progress and improvements.

Beginning in January 2020, the BLC will lead several processes including:

- » A detailed brand and marketing material audit that will assess the extent of continuity of Blackfalds visual identity and messaging across all corporate channels and marketing and communications programs.
- » Testing of the current logo and tag line with residents, businesses, internal employees and other stakeholders to see if these resonate with them and represent the Blackfalds of today. This will be undertaken through various means including online surveys, social media, pop up booths at local events when they occur, open houses, one on one interviews and focus groups, etc.



- » Additional market research, as required
- » Analysis and distillation of the information collected: interview notes, focus group findings, survey results, along with website enquiries, media clippings, and Internet extracts, etc.

At the same time the Brand Project web page will be kept up to date and relevant and timely communications in the project will be issued.

A report highlighting the data collected will be created and presented to Council for information. It will also be available on the Branding Project web page along with all other relevant project updates.

Should the findings from Step 2 confirm that the Blackfalds brand and visual identity benefit from enhancements and updating, then the BLC will progress to further public engagement to define the desired Blackfalds brand direction.

# Branding Project Proposal

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### Step 3: Defining Blackfalds Desired Brand Direction

It is anticipated that this phase of the brand project would commence in approximately March of 2020. The BLC will lead the processes of further research and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Similar avenues for engagement that were used in Step 2 will be employed again, with the intent of reaching the largest possible cross-section of residents, businesses, community organizations and key stakeholders.

The information being sought in this step of engagement will include:

- » Define the essence or personality of Blackfalds – both the current and the future ideal
- » Identify the unique community attributes that represent the essence of the community and compile these for use as the foundation for brand development

All the gathered input will be compiled and analyzed by the BLC to establish the possible brand directions. A report highlighting the data collected will be created and presented to Council for information. It will also be available on the Branding Project web page with all other relevant project updates.



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#### Step 4: Design of Visual Components of Proposed Brand Directions

A common reaction to a new municipal logo is “my kid could have done that.” Perhaps. But what you are really paying for is the expertise and training that comes with hiring a professional firm.

Most people wouldn’t blink twice at receiving a bill for hundreds of dollars from a dentist for an hour or two of work. The reality is that with the right set of pliers you can get a tooth pulled for much less than that. The result is the same – your tooth is out – but you get what you pay for. It is the dentist’s training, expertise and skill that makes the service provided worth more.

The same holds true for branding professionals. It is true for logo development and it is true for the subsequent execution and roll-out of the brand strategy.

When the possible brand directions data has been compiled, it will be included with a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Design of Visual Components. It is anticipated that the RFP will be publicly issued in April 2020 with a closing date of late April 2020 or early May 2020.

The RFP specifics will not be known until such time as the brand direction data is complete, but the intent is

to request the design of visual components for three potential brand directions, which would then be put out for public feedback.

The maximum cost for the design work will be capped at \$25,000, all inclusive of taxes and any additional consultant expenses of food or travel, etc.

A smaller sub-committee of the BLC will create the RFP and vet it through the larger group along with a weighted scoring system for reviewing the proposals received. The same smaller sub-committee will undertake the proposal review and select the successful proponent.

The successful proponent will work under the guidance of the subcommittee and provide the three requested visual component designs for the possible brand directions by late June or early July 2020.



# Branding Project Proposal

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### Step 5: Public Engagement on Three Possible Brand Directions

Community members, municipal employees, businesses, internal and external stakeholders will all be invited to provide input on the possible brand directions. Respondents will be given the opportunity to voice their vision for Blackfalds in the future, including preferred keywords and visual imagery. Samples of the three proposed brand directions will be displayed and respondents will be asked which direction is best aligned with their vision of the community. Respondents will also be asked for their overall impressions of the brand directions by providing various ratings

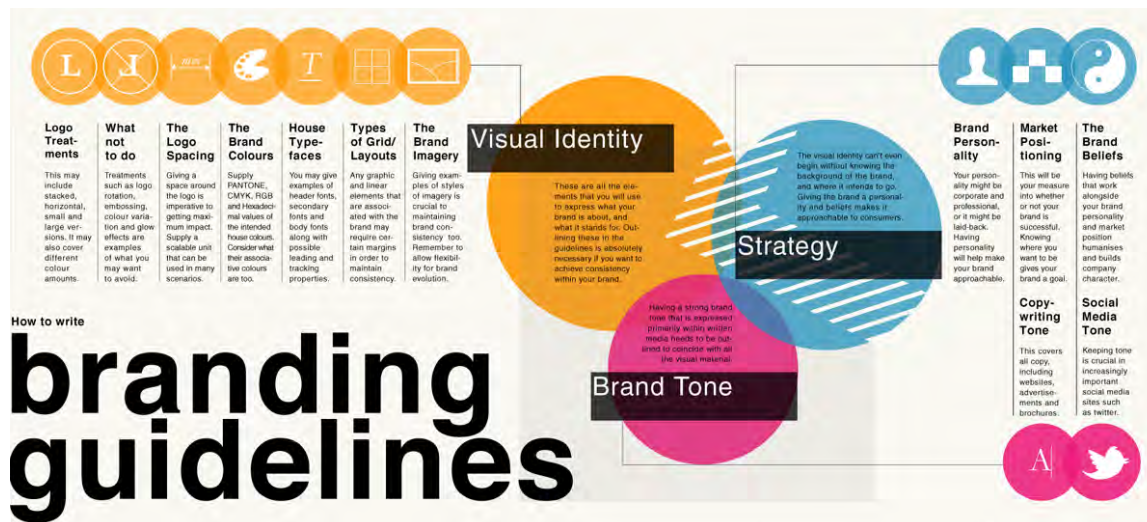
and descriptions for each direction.

This engagement will be led by the BLC and will be done primarily through an online survey during the month of July 2020, making it accessible to community members who may be away on holidays, etc. Pop up tables at community events and markets will also be available to assist those who would like assistance in completing the survey.

The survey results will be tabulated and a report making a recommendation on the final brand direction will be brought to Council by the BLC no later than September 2020. The brand project web page will also be updated accordingly.







## Step 6: Development of Brand Guidelines and Standards and Internal Brand Launch

Once Council has approved the Town's new brand, Marketing and Communications staff will lead the development of brand guidelines and standards and other internal training tools including an internal branding and change communication plan to support the launch of the new brand in 2021.

This work will be done through the fall of 2020 and into Winter 2021 and will include training sessions for municipal employees on living the brand and delivering on the brand promise.

Much of the branding activities undertaken in 2021 will focus on rolling out the brand internally and engaging with the internal stakeholders / employees of key local businesses and organizations - i.e. those affiliated with the BLC.

The importance of internal branding is about telling your story and driving the desired internal behaviours to deliver on your brand promise. To do that you need to connect employees to the organization, to help them understand who you are, where you're headed, and how they fit in and contribute. You want to tell a story to instill employee pride in good work, and you want to drive the most critical behaviours that will reinforce and deliver on your brand promise.



# Branding Project Proposal

## cont'd

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Examples of internal brand roll out initiatives that will take place in 2021 include:

- » Website updates to include new visual identity elements
- » Revisions to internal electronic documents and email signatures, etc.
- » Development of a Marketing and Communications Brand Strategy
- » Commence using new brand story messaging and new visual identity elements in reports and publications
- » Begin using the new visual identity elements for corporate apparel and promotional items



### Step 7: External Unveiling of New Visual Identity

The primary exception to focusing on will be the unveiling of the new master logo and primary colour palette on the expanded Multi-Plex Arena and Library at the Grand Opening event in May 2021. The new visual identity components will be provided to the company who is awarded the exterior signage contract after Council approves the new brand direction in September 2020, so that the signage may be designed and built in time for the Grand Opening. There will be no additional expense in incorporating the new logo into the signage at this expanded facility as the need for new signage has already been factored into the capital expansion project expenses.

### Step 8: External Brand Roll Out

The roll out of the new brand and visual identity across municipal facilities, vehicles, signage and other marketing materials will be carried out through a cost-effective multi-year approach. This will allow for the leveraging of pre-scheduled initiatives such as life cycle replacement and take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

## Step 9: Ongoing Monitoring and Assessment of Brand

It will be important to implement continuous measurement of the brand implementation to evaluate its success and to chart return on investment for the endeavor. Benchmarks, key performance indicators (KPI) and milestones will be determined in consultation with stakeholders and the BLC. It is recommended that a measurement tool be used biennially and that potential KPI may include:

- » Increases in tax revenue
- » Enhanced staff engagement
- » Accelerated achievement of goals from MSP, etc.
- » Recruitment and retention of labour (both municipality and local businesses)
- » Attraction of targeted new business / industry

The results of this ongoing monitoring and assessment will be charted and periodic reports will be provided to Council for information, as well as shared with relevant community stakeholders.

It may be noted that the proposed time frame for project steps 1 through 5 is approximately one year. This is somewhat tighter than what has been undertaken by other municipalities that have been previously referred to in this report. However, as the initial expression of interest in branding that came from EDTAC came to be in Fall of 2018 and given that much of 2019 to this point has been spent engaging community stakeholders and exploring the possibility of a branding initiative, significant time and energy has already been dedicated to adhering to recommended processes and cultivating fertile ground for the branding project.



# Project Framework

Date	Initiative	Actions	Resources
<b>Fall 2019</b>	Step 1: Getting Organized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of brand project budget for 2020</li> <li>• Form BLC (Ad Hoc Committee)</li> <li>• In-house design of project tools, web page and communication pieces</li> <li>• BLC training</li> <li>• Review municipal plans</li> <li>• Market research, as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• BLC</li> <li>• MarCom</li> <li>• EDO</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	Max \$2,000 for training expenses: printing, provision of meals as needed, etc. <b>Staff time:</b> EDO - 25 hrs, MarCom - 35 hrs		
<b>January 2020</b>	Step 2: Uncover Current Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand audit</li> <li>• Test logo/ tagline</li> <li>• Market research, as needed</li> <li>• Communication: update web page and Council report</li> </ul>	BLC MarCom EDO
<b>Budget</b>	Max \$2,000 for training expenses: printing, provision of meals as needed, etc. <b>Staff time:</b> EDO - 25 hrs, MarCom - 35 hrs		
<b>March 2020</b>	Step 3: Define Desired Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Engagement</li> <li>• Communication: update web page and Council report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLC</li> <li>• MarComm</li> <li>• EDO</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	Max \$2,000 for engagement expenses: advertising, printing, booth rentals, snacks / beverages for open house, etc. <b>Staff time:</b> EDO - 25 hrs, MarCom - 35 hrs		

Date	Initiative	Actions	Resources
<b>April 2020</b>	Step 4: Design Visual Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create &amp; issue RFP</li> <li>• Shortlist, interview, award contract</li> <li>• Kick off meeting</li> <li>• Communication: update web page and Council report</li> <li>• Receive 3 brand direction options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLC</li> <li>• External Designer</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	Max \$25,000 <b>Staff time:</b> EDO - 25 hrs, MarCom - 35 hrs		
<b>July 2020</b>	Step 5: Proposed Brand Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• online survey</li> <li>• Results compiled by BLC</li> <li>• BLC makes recommendation to Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLC</li> <li>• MarCom</li> <li>• EDO</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	Max \$2,000 for engagement expenses: advertising, printing, booth rentals, snacks / beverages for open house, etc. <b>Staff time:</b> EDO - 25 hrs, MarCom - 35 hrs		
<b>Fall 2020-Winter 2021</b>	Step 6: Brand Guidelines & Internal Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce guidelines and standards</li> <li>• Staff training: municipal and key local stakeholder businesses</li> <li>• Revise web and documents</li> <li>• Begin using visual identity for apparel and promo items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLC</li> <li>• MarComm</li> <li>• EDO</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	Max \$2,000 for training expenses: printing, provision of lunch, etc. Max \$5,000 for Web revisions <b>Staff time:</b> EDO - 25 hrs, MarCom - 35 hrs, Staff training - 150 hrs		

# Project Framework cont'd

Date	Initiative	Actions	Resources
<b>Spring 2021</b>	Step 7: Unveil Visual Identity Externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grand Opening of expanded Multi-Plex and Library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BLC</li> <li>MarComm</li> <li>EDO</li> <li>CSD</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>Staff time only:</b> EDO – 25 hrs, MarCom - 35 hrs		
<b>Summer 2021 and Ongoing</b>	Step 8: External Roll Out of Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing life-cycle replacement* of signage for vehicles and facilities, etc.</li> <li>Determine KPI and milestones for future evaluation of brand success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BLC</li> <li>MarComm</li> <li>EDO</li> <li>Public Works</li> <li>CSD</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>Estimated Investment:</b> Stand Alone Signs – i.e. Community Centre, Civic Centre, Protective Services, etc. are \$15,000 each Logo only replacement on facility – i.e. Abbey Centre = \$5,000 each Logo replacement on fleet vehicles - \$175 for 2 logos - \$11,500 for 62 vehicles (Public Works, Community Services, CPO, Corporate) Logo replacement on CSD equipment – \$25 per logo with 16 items having 2 to 5 smaller logos per item \$1,500 There will be numerous other items that will be replaced on an as needed basis – branded floor mats, fitness centre equipment, gift cards, waste and recycling carts, etc.		
<b>2023 and Ongoing</b>	Step 9: Evaluation of Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measure benchmarks, milestones, KPIs and report on successes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BLC</li> <li>MarComm</li> <li>EDO</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>Staff time only:</b> EDO – 25 hrs, MarComm - 35 hrs		

**\*Note:** Life-cycle replacement expenses will not only be initiated as a result of branding, as many items need to be changed out on an on-going basis regardless of moving branding forward. i.e. the Community Centre sign currently needs to be replaced.



# Budget Summary

Year	Items	Estimated Investment
Fall 2019	Ad Hoc Brand Leadership Committee training expenses	\$2,000
2020	Public engagement expenses - \$8,000 Design expenses - \$25,000	\$33,000
2021 or after	Website updates - \$5,000 Commence life cycle replacement of standalone facility signs (Community Centre, Civic Centre, Protective Services, Cemetery) - \$30,000 Commence life cycle replacement of large logos on facilities (Abbey Centre) - \$5,000 Commence life cycle replacement of logos on vehicles - \$11,500	\$51,500
2022 or after	Commence life cycle replacement of logos on equipment - \$1,500 Further life cycle replacement of standalone facility signs (Protective Services, Cemetery) - \$30,000 Commence life cycle replacement of small logos and external signs on municipal facilities (Wadey Centre, transfer station, water reservoirs etc.) - \$8,000 Commence life cycle replacement of internal signage / logos in municipal buildings (FCSS, Civic Centre, Abbey Centre) - \$5,000	\$44,500
2023 and ongoing	Allocate annual sum for replacement of branded items as needed (floor mats, fitness centre equipment, gift cards, waste and recycling carts, etc.)	\$20,000
<b>5 Year Estimated Total Investment</b>		<b>\$151,000</b>

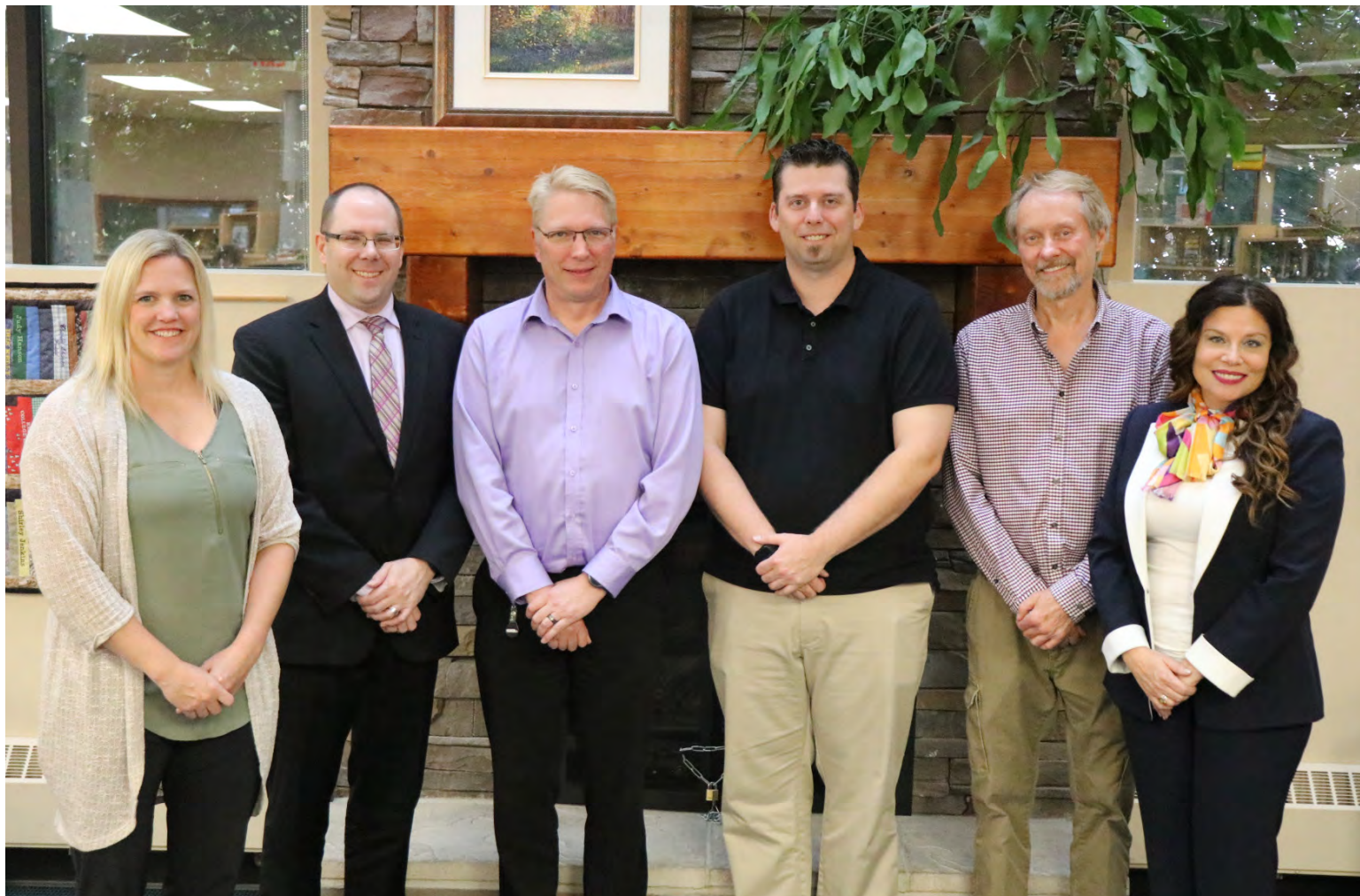


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## **Brand Development Committee (BDC) Members**

### **Community Members**

Chair, Heather Buelow  
Vice-chair, Ken Hubbard  
Glyn Evans  
Kevin Hallet  
Lana Hoover  
Brian Preston

### **Town of Blackfalds Staff Members**

Sean Barnes  
Miranda Cooper  
Jennifer Hartigh  
Jillian Spiess  
Myron Thompson

**BLACKFALDS**  
ALBERTA