

Tara Veer - High-cost alternative financial services

1. What would you do to protect citizens from predatory financial services?

Our Council past term adopted a formal advocacy position with respect to payday lending, resulting in legislative changes Provincially.

2. If you are elected, how will you address the density of fringe financial service providers in specific neighbourhoods in Red Deer?

The next Council will likely need to have a discussion on local zoning for uses such as (but not limited to) the above, specifically regarding proliferation and/or distances.

3. What would you do to remove barriers for low income citizens who require City services, such as utilities, to meet their basic needs?

I am a strong proponent of protecting the affordability of living in and doing business in Red Deer. One of the primary ways we can do so is to keep tax and utility rate increases to a minimum. Over the past couple of years we have also reduced the fixed component of utility fees, therefore giving utility customers more direct control over their utility rates by reducing consumption and therefore reducing personal charges. In my 2017 platform, I also identify the price elasticity challenge of City services such as recreation and transit as a key issue the next Council needs to address. In my view, access to City services has been diminished because they have become cost prohibitive for many.

4. What is the role of the municipal council in the development of financial literacy initiatives?

The City has both a direct and indirect role in financial literacy. From a fiduciary perspective, the City is responsible for providing accessible and transparent financial information delivered in citizen friendly language. Indirectly, however, the City supports financial literacy by supporting community efforts as governed by the Social Policy Framework. Community agencies are in the strongest position to deliver these services, however, the City has a formal role in financial adjudication through entities such as FCSS, for example, in support of services provided by the community.