



STRATEGIC PLAN

JUNE 2011

June 6, 2011



Our Strategic Plan

Clearwater County's Strategic Plan presents the blueprint for how the County will achieve its vision and mission over a period of the next number of years. Council has crafted a three year view of the future and a ten year view that will be addressed by a series of initiatives, programs and policies.

Why we have a Strategic Plan

A Strategic Plan provides a glimpse of what the future can be and how Clearwater County can achieve that future. Similarly a Strategic Plan provides a measuring stick to assess the progress and performance of Council towards the measurable objectives laid out in the Plan.

The process we used

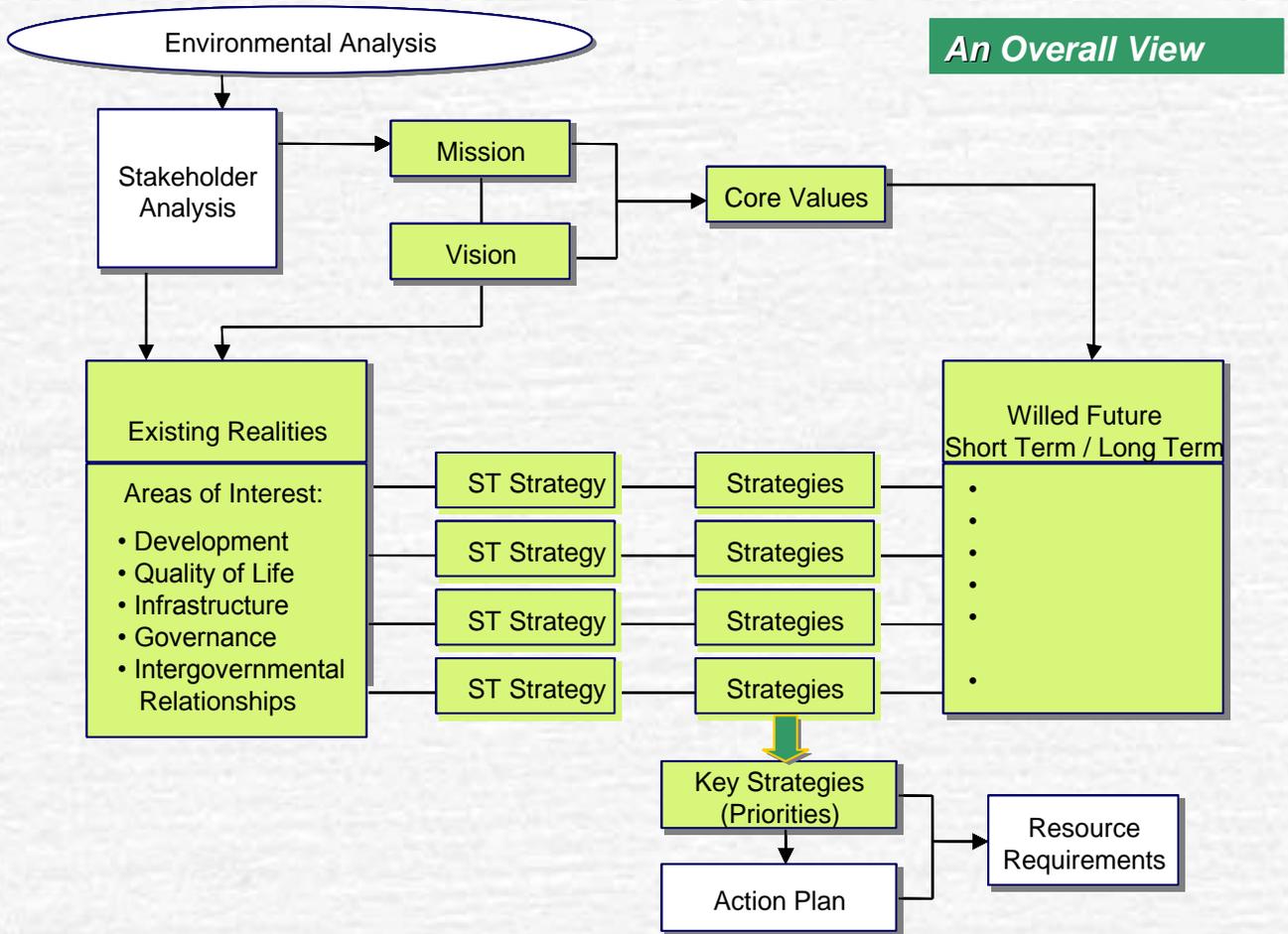
The next page provides an overview of the framework that was used to prepare and update the Strategic Plan. The Reeve and Councillors presented issues and concerns of residents and other key stakeholders. These became the Stakeholder Analysis that served as the background to the discussions. The Vision, Mission and Core Values were revisited to ensure that they reflected the commitment of the current Council. They are intended to drive decision making over the next few years.

We identified Existing Realities in five areas of interest:

- Development
- Quality of Life
- Infrastructure
- Governance
- Intergovernmental Relations

We then described where we thought Clearwater County should be in three years time with respect to each of the areas of interest and then where the County should be in ten years time.

These milestone descriptions then allowed us to develop strategies to move from where we are today to the future we want to create.





Our Guiding Principles

Vision and Mission Statements, Core Values and the roles of Council and Administration:

In January of this year Council met to review the existing Plan and to determine if there were ways of getting more value out of the Strategic Planning process. At that time Council also committed to revisit the Vision and Mission Statements and the Core Values prior to the June Strategic Planning Session.

The Vision, Mission and Core Values presented here reflect those efforts.

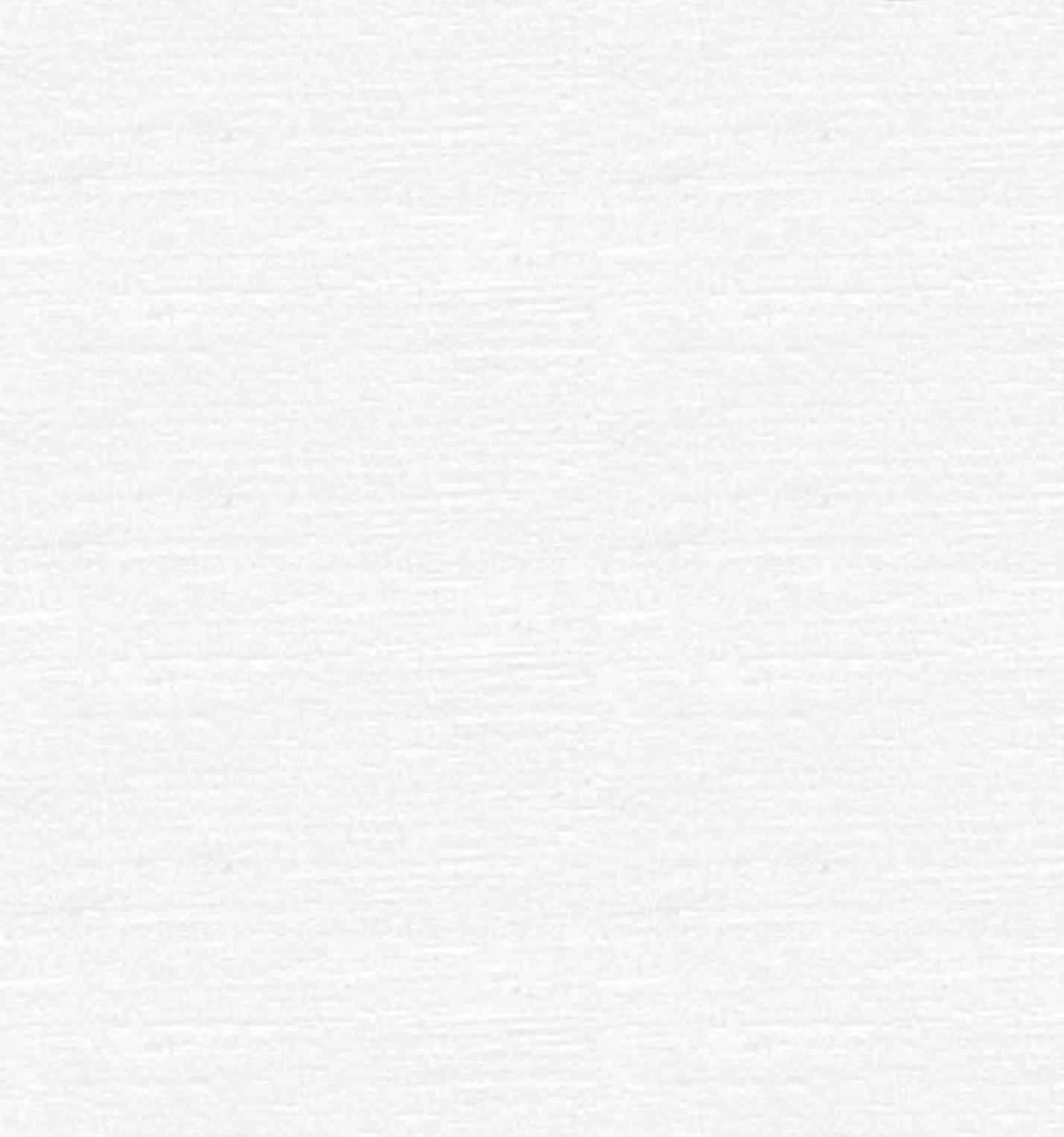
Council also decided that the roles of Council and Administration should not change, but that Administration, in the form of the Directors, should participate in the drafting of this year's Plan.

Vision Statement:

Clearwater County will be a diverse, well planned, safe, clean and active municipality. Through innovation and leadership, it will be a highly desired place to live, work or operate a business.

Mission Statement:

Clearwater County will provide high quality local government services to all residents and businesses, by supporting safe and viable communities while maintaining competitive municipal tax rates.



Our Guiding Principles

Core Values:

1. The affairs of the County will be conducted in an open, honest and respectful manner. A high degree of integrity and approachability is expected of all County officials and staff.
2. All County officials and staff are accountable for their actions and decisions. Councillors are accountable to the electors, and staff is accountable through the Chief Administrative Officer to Council. All decisions are expected to be made in the best long term interests of the municipality as a whole.
3. Clearwater County staff are valued. The County endeavours to be an employer of choice and encourages personal and professional development.
4. The financial well-being of the County is of primary importance, and will be monitored and protected.
5. The County will be proactive in developing efficient and effective relationships or partnerships that provide benefit for residents and businesses.
6. The County recognizes and supports the Town of Rocky Mountain House, the Village of Caroline and the Summer Village of Burnstick Lake as independent local governments and will strive to share and enhance service responsibilities wherever practical for the benefit of residents of each municipality.
7. The County recognizes the three First Nations governments (Sunchild, O'Chiese and Bighorn) and the importance of fostering ongoing relationships.
8. A high regard will be paid to environmental education and stewardship. Opportunities to explore and enjoy natural assets will be developed and provided to local residents and other users in cooperation with other governments and the private sector. Industry and other users of the land will be expected to conduct their activities in a responsible manner.

Roles and Responsibilities

Council's Role:

Clearwater County Council must make important decisions regarding service delivery and service levels on behalf of the municipality in order to balance the needs and wants of County residents in a financially responsible manner. Through the implementation of the strategic Plan Clearwater County Council will:

- **Create a short term and long term Vision for the County and lead County priorities**
- **Be responsive to current affairs, priority needs and best approaches by maximizing citizen engagement, as well as by acquiring information and recommendations from Administration**
- **Ensure the strategies set out in the Strategic Plan are achieved**
- **Continue to be engaged in annual strategic planning exercises to ensure goals and strategies are consistent with the future municipal landscape**

Administration's Role:

Clearwater County Administration must understand and predict demand, as well as plan sufficient capacity to deliver municipal services as established by Council. Through the implementation of this Strategic Plan, Clearwater County Administration will:

- **Implement and maintain service levels/standards as set out by Council**
- **Develop and maintain supporting processes such as the annual business plan and municipal budget that complement the Strategic Plan**
- **Provide Council the information necessary to meet their role and responsibilities set out in the Strategic Plan**



The Strategies

Introduction

In the following sections we have summarized our vision of the future under the headings of Three-Year Willed Future and Ten-Year Willed Future.

To achieve this vision we have prepared a series of strategies that vary in complexity and in the time and resources that will be needed to carry them out effectively.

It is our intention to measure Council's performance in achieving this vision for the County and will endeavour to publish a report of our progress as we update the Strategic Plan each year.

Format of the Strategic Plan Strategies

Council's individual strategies are arranged under the Areas of Interest identified earlier.

2011 Edition of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan has been reviewed and updated by Council as promised in the 2010 version of the Plan.

There are a variety of changes in this year's Plan due in part to the changing environment in which the County exists and due to the valuable contribution made by members of Administration who actively participated in the Plan's preparation.



The Strategies

Development

Existing Realities

We are a rural municipality that is undergoing transition to a rural-urban community. We want to capitalize on our growth and at the same time maintain our rural heritage.

1. The growth has lead to new challenges in managing the expectations and desires of residents, industry and agriculture
2. In the past we have deliberately avoided creating development hurdles to keep the process simple. We are now facing the need to put into place mechanisms (for example; Area Structure Plans) that will minimize conflicting development aspirations
3. Our competitive tax structure is a strength but demands of increased services and level of service will likely have an impact
4. The West Country in general and The Rocky-Nordegg Trail in particular, represent a significant economic development opportunity.
5. The Province's introduction of a Land Use Framework may potentially have significant impacts on where and how development will take place in the County
6. Industrial assessment has fallen and is likely to continue to fall
7. The Municipal Development Plan has been delivered and there is a learning curve for everyone.
8. "Water-for –Life" initiative of the Provincial government has significant potential impact on where and how development takes place in the County.
9. The County recognizes that there is a need to diversify the economic base of the County.

The Strategies

Development

Willed Future

Three-Year Willed Future

1. Agreement in place with the Province for recreation management in west county.
2. Rocky-Nordegg Trail construction underway, Horburg to Nordegg.
3. We will maintain a competitive tax rate with comparable municipalities.
4. The Land will be in place and the facilities nearing completion for the Caroline Recreation Facility.
5. Condor and Leslieville Fire Halls will be rationalized and a plan in place to put the facility(s) in place.
6. We will have performed an impact assessment of the Land Use Framework and prepared a response.
7. There will be an IDP with the Village of Caroline
8. We will have completed growth/development studies for all hamlets and for Caroline, done cooperatively with the Village.
9. We will have some form of cost share arrangement with the Province to develop areas that have the greatest potential e.g. Pinehills Golf Course area lands, the nodes, etc.
10. There will be a mutual recognition of the various segments of our community and their competing needs

The Strategies

Development

Willed Future

Ten-Year Willed Future

1. Saunders-Alexo & Rocky-Nordegg Trail will be the centre-piece of recreation management program in West County.
2. Nordegg will be the economic development hub in The West County.
3. The Hamlets in the County will be growing (amended 2010)
4. We will have a rationalized development plan among Rocky, Caroline and the County.
5. We will have taken advantage of the Land Use Framework and made it work for the benefit of the County.
6. We will have taken advantage of the “Water-for-Life” initiative and made it work for the benefit of the County.
7. The AG Fieldhouse will be built or nearing completion.
8. We will have evaluated the potential of exploiting our sand & gravel resources (super-pit reference)

The Strategies

Development

Strategies

Short Term 3 - year:

1. Develop a Management plan, in concert with the Province, for operation of the Rocky-Nordegg Trail .
2. Lobby and convince the Province to support the Rocky-Nordegg Trail and West County development.
3. Provide funding for implementation of the Nordegg development plan.
4. Annually monitor tax rate(s) of comparable municipalities (Brazeau, Wetaskiwin, Lacombe, Red Deer, Mountainview and others) as well as pertinent statistics available through Municipal Affairs' "Municipal Profiles" reporting.
5. Maintain leadership role in development of the AG Fieldhouse.
6. Complete Land purchase and commence working with community groups to complete design and development of Caroline Recreation Facility; Include expansion of arena/recreation complex in plans.
7. Reeve's Summit on economic Development
8. Have recommendation from Regional Fire Committee regarding strategy for Leslieville/Condor.
9. *Prepare Impact Assessment and response to Land Use Framework.*
10. *Develop more industrial land, County will identify locations and needs in consultation with the Town and Caroline.*
11. *Develop a strategy to be "friendly" to small businesses that are involved in Tourism – lobbying for a split mill rate.*

Continued . . .

The Strategies

Development

Strategies

Short Term (continued):

12. Take the initiative to develop the IDP with the Village of Caroline
13. Develop growth/development plans for all hamlets and Caroline to determine where to develop first
14. Lobby and negotiate with the Province regarding purchase or long term leases and the recovery of costs for the nodes
15. Assess and determine the best approach to maximize the benefits from sand & gravel resources
16. Charge the Agricultural Service Board with researching the issue of attaining mutual respect among different stakeholders in the West country – Clear Water LandCare Committee

The Strategies

Quality of Life

Existing Realities

We enjoy a high quality of life in Clearwater County, but there are certain issues that must be addressed as we evolve towards being a rural/urban municipality:

1. **Conflicting perspectives on ATV use**
2. **Emergency services and the level of service require the development of sustainable models as demands on these services grow**
3. **The number of seniors continues to increase and their service needs are a concern**
4. **Attraction and retention of QUALIFIED physicians continues to be an issue AS IS THE CONDITION AND THE SIZE OF THE HEALTH CARE FACILITY.**
5. **Increased pressure to provide expanded community policing ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS – THERE IS A NEED FOR INCREASED RCMP PRESENCE.**
6. **LACK OF Availability of residential building lots PUTS PRESSURE ON AG LANDS.**
7. **Provision of TARGETED recreational services and facilities FOR A CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC (SENIORS) AND THE CONTROL OVER THE DEVELOPMENT.**
8. **We have done a good job in protecting the environment in the County and continue to participate in initiatives that will sustain preservation.**
9. **The economic downturn has negatively affected many of our residents 2011 – THERE IS A NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS (NOT JUST BOOM & BUST)**
10. **The behavior of some users of the West Country verges on lawless – trespass ON PRIVATE LANDS is a problem**
11. **A balance between the needs and wants of residents and those who visit is required in the West Country.**
12. **These A is potential to lose residents out of the oil patch if we do not provide the quality of life they want and expect.**
13. **High speed Internet access is not readily available to all country residents.**

The Strategies

Quality of Life

Willed Future

Three-Year Willed Future

1. **THERE will BE a management body that will address recreational use of PUBLIC LANDS; including ATVs, hiking, etc. THAT THE COUNTY WILL BE THE SIGNIFICANT PLAYER IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.**
2. **Current levels (2008) of ALS, EMS, 1st responder, will be maintained.**
3. **We will work with the Town to maintain an adequately staffed medical clinic and current acute care facility.**
4. **We will have adequate policing defined by a review of policing needs – pending 2012 announcement by the province.**
5. **We will retain our current (2010) level of fire suppression service recognizing that it may cost more.**
6. **We will have explored the options for supporting universal access to high speed internet and selected a strategy to achieve a solution.**

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The Strategies

Quality of Life

Willed Future

Ten-Year Willed Future

1. We will continue to be an active participant in regional service delivery of emergency services *and explore opportunities to expand the services that are provided regionally.*
2. The level of emergency service will be appropriate to the needs of County residents.
3. Emergency Fire service will continue to be delivered by a competent contingent of volunteers.
4. Emergency equipment will be up to date and well maintained.
5. *We will assess the needs of seniors and develop a strategy to work with province in meeting these needs.*
6. *We will work with the Town to have an acute care medical facility staffed with adequately trained professionals.*
7. Condor rail properties will be developed and sold.

The Strategies

Quality of Life

Strategies - Short-term:

1. We will develop a strategy, in partnership with the province, to develop and implement a management authority for the West Country including the potential to apply for a Rural Development Grant for West Country development.
2. The County will be a strong advocate for emergency medical services being maintained at current levels.
3. We will continue to be an active member of fire services delivery model.
4. Take leadership role in developing business case for Life-Lease Initiative and the upgrading of Westview Lodge.
5. Active participation in Town-county committee to attract and retain physicians.
6. We will explore opportunity to work with the Town to Lobby the province for maintaining the current acute care facility and developing a new facility.
7. Conduct a review of policing needs to determine appropriate service levels, pending the 2012 province announcement - New – The county will demand a higher level of service for policing if cost increase.
8. Maintain our current models of quality of life service delivery as long as possible to preserve our current service levels.
9. Research and determine what Quality of Life services the County should or could be providing, through community feed back to council and administration assessment and survey.

Strategies - Long-term:

1. Establish an economic development strategy to promote the sale of rail-line land in Condor.

The Strategies

Infrastructure

Existing Realities

Summary of Existing Realities

1. We have differing expectations regarding the quality of our roads and the management of dust.
2. The availability of gravel resources requires action to avoid the necessity of making long hauls to service parts of the County especially in the north east part of the County.
3. The County has an extensive collection of buildings (halls, fire-halls,etc.), utilities (water, waste-water,etc.) and facilities (public works, administration,etc.) that require on-going maintenance and replacement.
4. Full occupancy in the Administration Building dictates that some form of expansion or re-development is required sooner rather than later.
5. Solid waste management does not represent a significant issue at this time.
6. Our support of the Airport facility will continue as we view this asset as being a significant benefit that will continue to support the growth of the County.
7. Internet access throughout the county is important to us and Council will be an advocate to actively enhance and expand the network.
8. The Province continues to download responsibilities – replacement and maintenance of bridges.

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The Strategies

Infrastructure

Existing Realities

Summary of Existing Realities

9. The Province has increased allowable axle weights in general and further increased weights for the timber industry – this is likely to lead to increased pressure on the County by other road users.
10. To take advantage of continued aggressive pricing by suppliers we have gone to tender earlier than usual on some large dollar contracts.
11. Through the MDP the County will be taking larger responsibility for water and waste water.
12. The federal government has increased the pressure of legislation surrounding water and waste water.
13. Going to on-line permitting as a response to prov initiative, may result in operators getting permit when the road is not suitable for travel – timing issue that may need to worked out.
14. We have an aging water and waste water infrastructure that will need to be addressed.
15. We an obligation to reclaim gravel pits and this obligation is growing.

The Strategies

Infrastructure

Willed Future

Three-Year Willed Future

1. Gravel road network will approach a level of quality that will address the needs of the road users.
2. We will have completed a service and service level assessment of our road network, including: road quality, pavement, etc.
3. We will have a formalized Road Network Plan in-place.
4. Black top overlay will be delivered at the rate of 25 kilometers per year.
5. We will have a decision on securing long-term leases for crown-land gravel resources sufficient to meet our needs for *100 years and with an eye to regional needs*.
6. We will have a definitive use for or a plan for the Currie land west of Town.
7. We will have addressed our long term Administrative space needs by having a plan in place.
8. All roads that are built, will be built to a ban free standard.(amended 2010)
9. We will have cooperated with other rural municipalities to explore possibilities of providing pavement on roads at our boundaries.
10. The Road Network Plan will identify what East – West road links (paved and gravel) are needed.
11. We will have a water and waste water strategy and financial plan in place.
12. We will have a gravel pit reclamation financial strategy in place for exhausted pits.

The Strategies

Infrastructure

Willed Future

Ten-Year Willed Future

1. Road network will reflect latest developments of road construction technology that is appropriate to our road network.
2. Re-surfacing will continue at the same level of service (25 kilometers per year).
3. We will have secured gravel resources for the County's *50 year needs in Strategic areas and 100 years needs elsewhere.*
4. A long term Administration Building solution will be in place.
5. We will have a solution in place for bridges.

The Strategies

Infrastructure

Strategies

Short Term:

1. *Enter into a dialogue with residents that will examine residents needs and expectations around the road network.*
2. **Build upon the current Road Priority List to develop a comprehensive Road Network Plan.**
3. **Explore options with other partners to meet administrative occupancy needs.**
4. **Explore options to address the needs of residents for high speed internet that may include the direct involvement of the County.**
5. **Take the initiative to work with the Counties of Ponoka County and Lacombe to get pavement into the north east sections of the County.**
6. **We will determine our position on Bridges prior to entering into negotiations and lobbying of the Provincial Government.**
7. **Develop a funding approach to address the capital cost of replacing aging water and waste water infrastructure and the new lagoon.**
8. **Develop a funding approach to address the outstanding financial obligation of re-claiming gravel pits.**

Long Term:

1. **Look at paving alternatives that use less oil.**
2. **Have a salt storage facility solution in place. This will likely drive looking at an new Administrative facility.**

The Strategies

Governance

Existing Realities

Summary of Existing Realities

1. We are experiencing changes in the expectations of our stakeholders.
2. Our traditional means of communicating with the public at large and individual stakeholder groups have served us well in the past but do require that we begin using alternative mechanisms to ensure we are sending the right messages on a consistent basis. (amended 2010)
3. In the past we have not measured our own performance as a Council and have used election time as the ultimate test.
4. We have entered into Strategic Planning as an 'event' rather than an integrated process that is tied to multi-year capital plans, annual business plans and the budget.
5. Our ownership of Council policies is inconsistently acknowledged but we are getting better.
6. Stakeholder expectations are growing
7. We require better and more effective means of communicating with our stakeholders
8. Strategic Planning is becoming an integrated process tied to other planning processes
9. Historically we have not lobbied Provincial Ministers directly but now see a need to do so
10. We continue to support the lobbying efforts of AAMDC on broad issues of general concern to rural municipalities

The Strategies

Governance

Willed Future

Three-Year Willed Future

1. We will have a communications strategy in place to keep our residents and stakeholders informed.
2. The process for preparing and up-dating of the strategic plan will be institutionalized.
3. There will be a long-term capital plan in place that address capital needs beyond the current budget time frame.
4. Annual Business Plans will be developed that are integrated to the budget and will reference the Strategic Plan.
6. We will have conducted an assessment of Council's performance.

The Strategies

Governance

Strategies

Short Term:

1. **Acquire communications resource to prepare strategy and address delivery of the County's messages.**
2. **Review the Strategic Plan on an annual basis to up-date the plan and to assess Council's progress and performance in achieving the Plan.**
3. **Bring together various plans and planning processes that involve capital items into one comprehensive capital plan.**
5. **Charge Administration with researching and recommending an approach to conducting a Council Performance Evaluation**
6. **Charge Administration with developing a framework to prioritize County initiatives that consume management resources and impact on the capacity and capabilities of these resources.**

The Strategies

Intergovernmental Relations

Existing Realities

Summary of Existing Realities

1. We have had a long and successful partnership with the Town of Rocky Mountain House and the Village of Caroline although we currently are experiencing difficulty in concluding agreements.
2. The CRC partnership has resulted in the development of shared services arrangements among the three municipalities.
3. A municipal airport is jointly owned and operated by the Town and the County.
4. Our council and staff are active participants in many Provincial Committees.
5. Our approach to dealing with the Province has not always been the most productive.
6. We have few dealings with the federal government but should do a better job in putting ourselves in line to receive support from the federal government.

The Strategies

Intergovernmental Relations

Willed Future

Three-Year Willed Future

1. We will continue to champion the CRC Partnership as an effective means of delivering regional services.
2. There will be more integrated service delivery on a regional basis with the Town and the Village as well as other local municipalities and near government bodies such as the Rocky REA and Gas Coops.
3. We will have lobbying strategies in-place for dealing effectively with the Provincial Government.(amended 2010)
4. We will have an increased presence on Provincial Committees to promote our point-of-view.
5. We will be successful in getting federal and provincial approvals.
6. We will have an increased profile with the Federal Government.
7. Identified opportunities to enhance / maintain relationships with neighbouring counties.
8. We will be viewed as an authoritative voice by the province in discussions concerning the Land Use Framework.
9. We will do a better job of informing federal MPs of our position on important issues
10. We will provide support to provincial officials who are lobbying the federal government on issues of importance to the County
11. We will have lobbying strategies in-place for dealing effectively with the provincial government.

The Strategies

Intergovernmental Relations

Strategies

Short Term:

1. Look at the list of CRC partnership opportunities and take the lead in making them happen.
2. Holding Joint council meetings with the Town and the Village and potentially with neighbours.
3. Make relationship building with The Town and the Village a priority.
4. Work with other municipalities and associations to influence government.
5. Encourage staff to pursue their provincial relationships.
6. Actively pursue the building of relationships with our Federal MPs and Provincial MLA.
7. Promote mutual aid agreements.
8. Participate in activities of neighbouring municipalities when invited to do so.
9. Actively pursue all avenues to positively influence the final version of the Land Use Framework.
10. We will make use of available resources to develop our skills at lobbying elected officials in other levels of government
11. We will make use of available resources to develop our skills at lobbying administrative officials in other levels of government.



Moving Ahead

This year marked several significant changes in the approach used by Council to prepare the Strategic Plan. The inclusion of senior administrative officials has improved the quality of the strategies and the adoption of Key Focus Areas and the application of a priority setting framework has greatly contributed to the direction provided to administration.

There are many challenges facing the County as we look into the future; this Strategic Plan will assist us greatly in focusing on what's important so that we may achieve the County's Vision.