



# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

**JUNE 2009**

**June 18, 2009**



## **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**

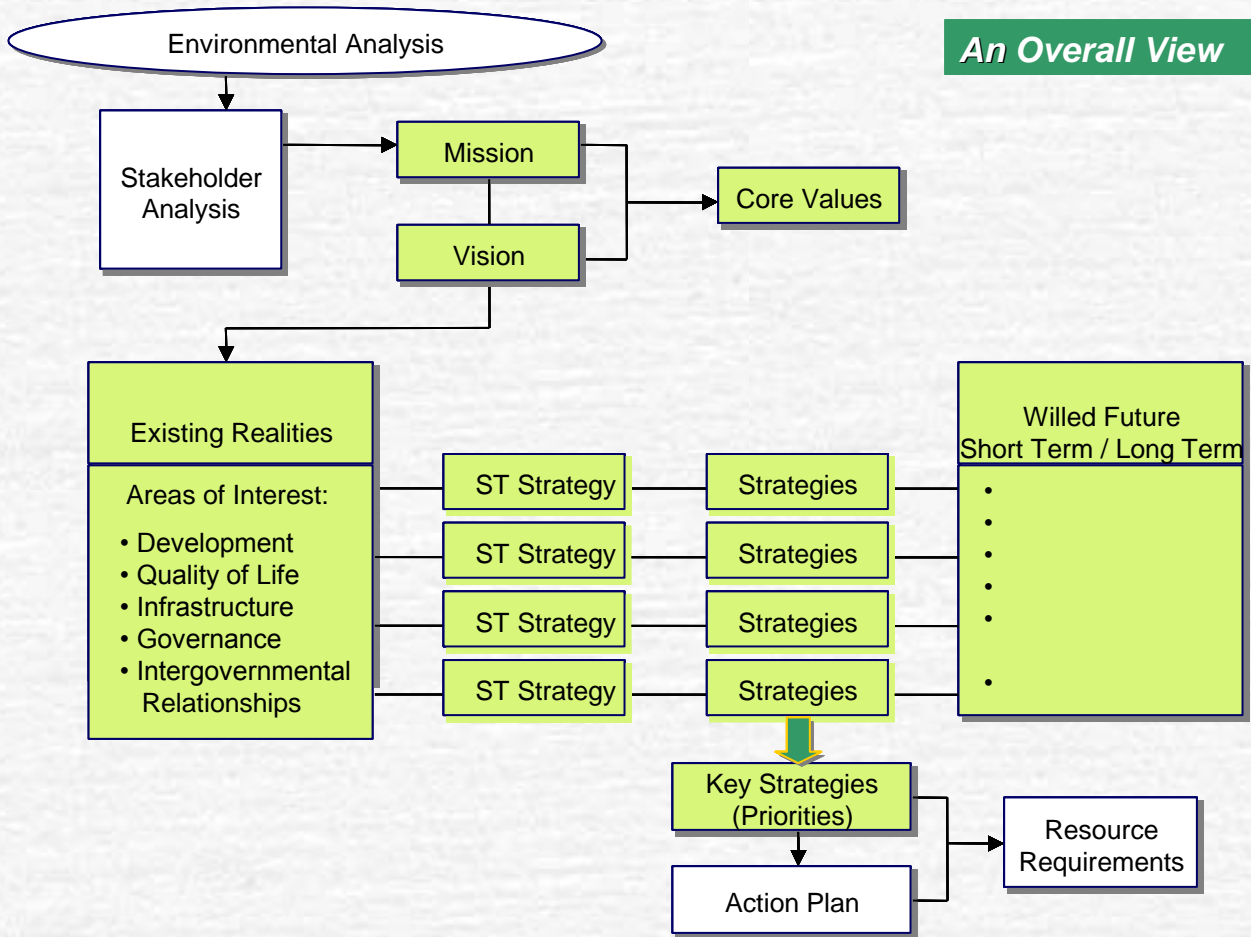
The next page provides an overview of the framework that was used to prepare and update the Strategic Plan. The Reeve and Councillors presented issues and concerns of residents and other key stakeholders. These became the Stakeholder Analysis that served as the background to the discussions. The Vision, 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 Statement:**

**Clearwater will be viewed by residents and visitors alike as a progressive, well planned, safe, clean and active municipality. It will be a desired place to live, work, raise a family, retire or establish and operate a business.**

### **Mission Statement:**

**Clearwater County will provide high quality local government services to all its residents and corporations, by protecting and enhancing living environments and business development opportunities, while maintaining competitive municipal tax rates. The County will maximize opportunities to achieve efficiencies and higher levels of service by cooperating with its urban neighbors, the Town of Rocky Mountain House and the Village of Caroline.**

**A high regard will be paid to protecting the extensive natural beauty of the County. Opportunities to explore and enjoy this significant asset will be developed and provided to local residents and other Albertans in cooperation with other governments and the private sector. Industry and all users of land will conduct their affairs in a responsible manner complementing environmental protection and enhancement objectives of the Vision.**



## **Our Guiding Principles**

### **Core Values:**

- 1. The affairs of the County will be conducted in an open, honest and respectful manner. Openness will only be limited as required by legislation or sound business practice. A high degree of integrity will be exhibited by all County officials and staff.**
- 2. All County officials and staff are accountable for their actions and decisions. Councilors are accountable to the electors, and staff is accountable through management to Council. All decisions are expected to be made in the best long term interests of the whole municipality.**
- 3. The County recognizes that our staff is a valuable resource.**
- 4. The continued financial well being of the County is of primary importance, and will be monitored and protected.**
- 5. The County recognizes that it is not an island and will work aggressively, with local and regional municipalities, and provincial and national associations, to protect and improve local economic opportunity and the living environment for all its residents.**
- 6. The County recognizes and supports the Town of Rocky Mountain House and the Village of Caroline as independent local governments and will maximize opportunities to share and enhance service responsibilities wherever practicable for the benefit of all residents of each municipality.**

## 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 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.

### *2009 Edition of the Strategic Plan*

*The Strategic Plan has been reviewed and updated by Council as promised in the 2008 version of the Plan. Additions, deletions and changes have been made to the plan and are presented in italics for ease of identification.*

*In addition, Strategies that will be emphasized in the coming year are identified with a preceding star (★).*



# The Strategies

## Development

### Summary of 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 roots.

- The growth has led to new challenges in managing the expectations and desires of residents, industry and agriculture
- 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
- Not all areas of the County are the same and we need to plan to each area's strengths
- Our competitive tax structure is a strength but demands of increased services and level of service will likely have some impact
- The Rocky-Nordegg Trail represents a significant economic development opportunity
- 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.



# The Strategies

## Development

### Three-Year Willed Future

1. Agreement in place for recreation management in west county.
2. Rocky-Nordegg Trail construction underway, Horburg to Nordegg.
3. There will be a development plan in place for Nordegg.
4. A new Municipal Development Plan will be in place that is more comprehensive than the existing Plan.
5. We will maintain a competitive tax rate in relation to municipal services provided and with comparable municipalities.
6. We will have an effective, technology based, mechanism for dealing with inquiries and complaints on a timely basis.
7. The AG Fieldhouse will be built or nearing completion.
8. The access road for the North Saskatchewan River Park will be built.
9. The Land will be in place and the facilities nearing completion for the Caroline Recreation Facility.
10. Leslieville Fire Hall + Public Works Building will be completed.
11. Nordegg ES Building will be renovated and operational.
12. We will have performed an impact assessment of the Land Use Framework and prepared a response.

### Ten-Year Willed Future Willed Future

1. Rocky-Nordegg Trail will be centre-piece of recreation management program in West County.
2. The Hamlets in the County will be growing and viable.
3. We will have a rationalized development plan among Rocky, Caroline and the County.
4. We will have taken advantage of the Land Use Framework and made it work for the benefit of the County.

# The Strategies

## Development

### Our Strategies

#### Short-term:

1. ✓ Management plan for operation of the Rocky-Nordegg Trail will be developed.
2. ✓ Lobby and convince the Province to support the Rocky-Nordegg Trail and West County.
3. ✓ Identify and garner support from Rocky-Nordegg Trail User Groups
4. ✓ Identify and secure funding for Nordegg development plan.
5. ✓ Put into place a process and prepare a plan and schedule to validate the time-frame to complete the Municipal Development Plan.
6. Monitor tax rate(s) of comparable municipalities (i.e. Brazeau, Wetaskiwin, Lacombe, Red Deer, and Mountainview) Additionally, Council will also consider as pertinent statistics available through Municipal Affairs' "Municipal Profiles" reporting.
7. ✓ Carry out a project to put inquiry and complaint system into place and make operational.
8. ✓ Maintain leadership role in development of the AG Fieldhouse.
9. ✓ 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.*
10. Complete process to have a signed construction contract in place by Dec. 1, 2008 for *Leslieville Public Works building & Fire Hall at a later date.*
11. ✓ *Prepare Impact Assessment and response to Land Use Framework.*
12. ✓ *Develop more industrial land, County will identify locations and needs in consultation with the Town and Village.*
13. *Develop a strategy to be "friendly" to small businesses that are involved in Tourism.*

#### Long-term:

1. The County will actively promote growth and sustainability in the Hamlets.
2. Continue to support development in the five recreation nodes.
3. ✓ We will develop and implement a Land Use Framework Maximum Benefit Strategy.

# The Strategies

## Quality of Life

### Summary of 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:

- Conflicting perspectives on ATV/OHV use
- Emergency services and the level of service require the development of sustainable models as demands on these services grow
- The number of seniors continues to increase and their service needs are a concern
- Attraction and retention of physicians continues to be an issue
- Increased pressure to provide expanded community policing
- Availability of residential building lots
- Provision of recreational services and facilities
- We have done a good job in protecting the environment in the County and continue to participate in initiatives that will sustain preservation.

### Three-Year Willed Future

1. We will have a management body that will address recreational use of County lands; including ATV/OHVs, hiking, etc.
2. We will monitor the Provincial provision of ALS, EMS, and 1st responder service toward the end of ensuring current levels are maintained.
3. We will continue to work through the regional fire service to ensure current fire/rescue service is maintained.
4. We will have a strategy in-place to address housing needs for seniors.
5. We will have an adequately staffed medical treatment facility owned by the Town and the County and managed by the physicians.
6. We will have adequate policing defined by a review of policing needs.
7. Condor rail properties will be developed and sold.

# The Strategies

## Quality of Life

### Ten-Year Willed Future

1. We will continue to be an active participant in regional service delivery of emergency services.
2. The level of emergency service will be appropriate to the needs of County residents.
3. Fire service will continue to be delivered by a competent contingent of volunteers.
4. Emergency equipment will be up to date and well maintained.

### Our Strategies

#### Short-term:

1. ✓ Apply for a Rural Development Grant *for West Country development.*
2. The County will be a strong advocate for emergency services being maintained a 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. Actively attempt to purchase clinic facilities from doctors to relieve ‘buy-in’ hurdle for new physicians.
6. Active participation in Town-county committee to attract and retain physicians.
7. ✓ Conduct a review of the County Peace Officer program to determine appropriate service levels.
- Evaluate the County’s participation in an enhanced policing (RCMP) model
1. ✓ Establish an economic development strategy.
2. Promote the sale of new residential property in Condor (i.e. rail land).

# The Strategies

## Infrastructure

### Summary of Existing Realities

- We are experiencing changing expectations regarding the quality of our roads and the management of dust.
- The availability of gravel resources requires action to avoid the necessity of making long hauls to service parts of the County.
- 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.
- Full occupancy in the Administration Building dictates that some form of expansion or re-development is required sooner rather than later.
- Solid waste management does not represent a significant issue at this time.
- 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.
- Internet access throughout the county is important and Council will be an advocate to actively enhance and expand the network.

# The Strategies

## Infrastructure

### Three-Year Willed Future

1. Bring pavement to within three miles of every County residence (90% of the time).
2. Gravel road network will approach a level of quality that will remove the necessity of imposing summer bans.
3. We will have completed a service and service level assessment of our road network, including: road quality, pavement, dust control, etc.
4. We will have a formalized Road Network Plan in-place.
5. Black top overlay will be delivered at an average rate of 17 kilometers per year.
6. 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.
7. We will have a definitive use for or a plan for the Currie land west of town.
8. We will be in the process of resolving our space/occupancy issue in the Administration Building.
9. All surfaced roads that are built, will be constructed and surfaced to a 90% *ban standard*.

### Ten-Year Willed Future

1. Road network will reflect latest developments of road construction technology
2. Re-surfacing will continue at the same level of service (17km 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. An Administration Building solution will be in place.

# The Strategies

## Infrastructure

### Our 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.     **Conduct an advisability study on acquiring crown property lease for gravel.**
4.     **✓ Conduct a Space Needs Assessment for the Administration Building.**
5.     **Examine potential of joint solution for administration space with the Town;(e.g. Joint occupancy, Town take-over of existing County space, etc.)**
6.     **✓ Look at reviving CRC Partnership to look at regional solutions to service delivery.**
7.     **Actively lobby existing providers for expansion and enhancement of wireless networks in the County.**
8.     **Provide front money to build towers for wireless internet network.**

#### Long-term:

1.     **Look at paving alternatives that use less oil.**

# The Strategies

## Governance

### Summary of Existing Realities

- We are experiencing changes in the expectations of our stakeholders.
- Our traditional means of communicating with the public at large and individual stakeholder groups have served us well in the past but may require that we begin using alternative mechanisms to ensure we are sending the right messages on a consistent basis.
- In the past we have not measured our own performance as a Council and have used election time as the ultimate test.
- 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.
- In recent memory we have not reviewed the performance of the CAO.
- Our ownership of Council policies is inconsistently acknowledged.

### Three-Year Willed Future

1. There will be a performance process in-place to effectively assess the position of Chief Administrative Officer.
2. We will have a communications strategy in place to keep our residents and stakeholders informed.
3. The process for preparing and up-dating of the strategic plan will be institutionalized.
4. There will be a long-term capital plan in place that address capital needs beyond the current budget time frame.
5. Annual Business Plans will be developed that are integrated to the budget and will reference the Strategic Plan.



# The Strategies

## Governance

### Our Strategies

1. ✓ Council will evaluate different models of senior management performance measurement and establish performance hurdles, evaluation criteria, etc.
2. ✓ Explore different communications strategies and models to deliver Council's messages and further, to develop mechanism (s) for evaluating the effectiveness of this communication.
3. 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.
4. Bring together various plans and planning processes that involve capital items into one comprehensive capital plan.

# The Strategies

## Intergovernmental Relations

### Summary of Existing Realities

- We have had a long and successful partnership with the Town of Rocky Mountain House and the Village of Caroline.
- The partnership has resulted in the development of shared services arrangements among the three municipalities.
- A municipal airport is jointly operated by the Town and the County.
- Our council and staff are active participants in many Provincial Committees.
- Our approach to dealing with the Province has not always been the most productive.
- 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.

### Three-Year Willed Future

1. We will have re-visited the CRC Partnership to revitalize the agreement.
2. There will be more integrated service delivery on a regional basis with the Town and the Village.
3. We will have a lobbying strategy in-place for dealing effectively with the Provincial Government.
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.

# The Strategies

## Intergovernmental Relations

### Our Strategies

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 neighbouring municipalities.
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 all avenues to positively influence provincial/municipal relations locally, regionally and provincially.
7.     Actively pursue the building of relationships with Blake Richards and Blaine Calkins.
8.     Promote mutual aid agreements.
9.     Participate in activities of neighbouring municipalities when invited to do so.
10.    ✔ Actively pursue all avenues to positively influence the final version of the Land Use Framework.



## **Moving Ahead**

**This is an ambitious plan that sets forth many specific objects and targets for Clearwater County to achieve in both the short and long term.**

**The next step in this process is for Administration to take this Plan and to build the business plans that will be necessary.**

**The long-term success of this initiative will be found in Council's (or in anyone else's) ability to track their performance against this Plan. Having a Strategic Plan is having a roadmap to the future with measurable milestones along the way.**