

CLEARWATER COUNTY

Council Strategic Plan

2022 – 2026

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clearwatercounty.ca

**This strategic plan was created by
Clearwater County Council,
in consultation with Administration
and 13 Ways Inc.
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There's Always A Way

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR COUNCIL

The municipal election in the fall of 2021 created a beautiful blend of fresh ideas and smart experiences on Clearwater County Council. A two-year pandemic created challenges for our communities and our citizens, but it also created new opportunities. People have been seeking out quality places to live, where they can connect with their community and their neighbours. All the communities in our region offer exceptional quality of life, connections to nature, and unsurpassed business opportunities.

That is why our new strategic plan will continue to build upon the economic development agenda, while adding new dimensions focused on enhancing our quality of life and protecting our natural environment and assets. This will require us to make important strategic investments, build new relationships with our neighbours and our partners, and maintain a focus on the future while taking advantage of current opportunities

Achieving the milestone of building authentically whole communities across our region requires working together, which is why your feedback was so valuable and is reflected in this document. Moving forward, we will continue to work with you, our neighbours, and our partners to build places that attract investment, as well as people who appreciate the quality of life Clearwater County offers all who come.

With Appreciation,
Your Clearwater County Council



Left to Right: Jordon Northcott, Sydney Graham, Neil Ratcliffe, Daryl Lougheed, Bryan Cermak, Gennifer Mehlhaff, Michelle Swanson

“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.”

INTRODUCTION

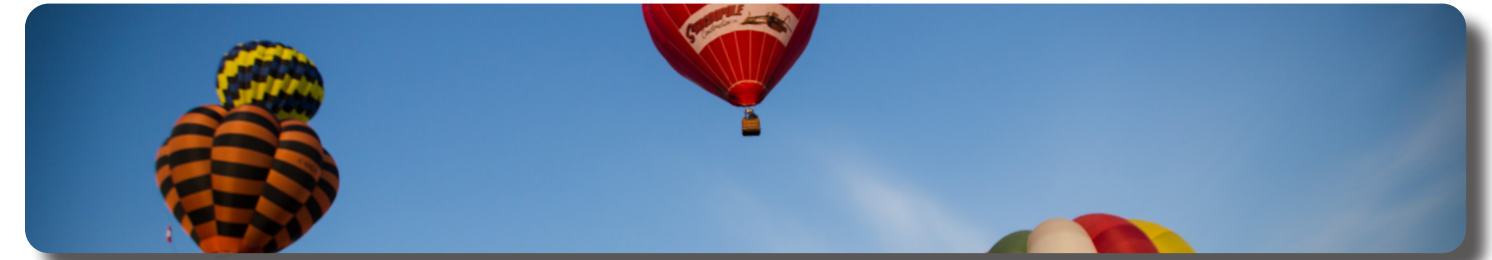
A strategic plan is essential to ensure Council and Administration and the Public have a shared Vision for the municipality and its communities. It also ensures Council and Administration remain focused and aligned on the Mission and Milestones to be achieved over the course of the four-year term. This document is designed to provide residents, businesses, volunteer organizations, and our various other partners and stakeholders with an understanding of the community we are building, together.



STRATEGIC PLAN vs. MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Governance role of Council is to provide strategic direction for the Municipal Corporation. This high-level plan helps the administration build its own operational plans, such as Capital and Asset Management Plans, Economic Development Plans, Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks, and Municipal Development Plans, which lay out details of how to bring the strategic direction to life.

OUR STORY



There are few regions more renowned than Clearwater for our richness and diversity in natural beauty, resources, and culture. Famed explorer David Thompson introduced our region to the world over 200 years ago, and his adventurous and entrepreneurial spirit forged our modern-day community. We have grown by attracting those looking for natural, authentic lives where they can connect to the land, to their neighbours, and to their own souls. The clarity and connectedness Clearwater provides has historically been the driving attraction to people from around the world. That allure still draws people to our communities, today.

Much has changed in the past century with the addition of growing communities, globally connected transportation nodes and networks, bustling business opportunities, and innovative industries. Yet, we still retain and protect our natural attractions and cultural treasures. Clearwater offers up world class fishing and hunting, yet our wilderness areas and ecological reserves transition beautifully into our beloved Banff and Jasper National Parks to the West. Our traditional natural resource industries are changing and innovating with new diversified agriculture businesses and environmentally friendly energy production, while also ensuring we maintain plenty of room for residents and tourists alike to enjoy our unique natural beauty and heritage.

Clearwater truly offers prosperity at your own pace. As the perfect backyard destination with endless recreation and proximity to urban centres, we continue to draw in visitors. But more and more those visitors wish to become residents. Everyone has a reason to love here, but now they are finding their way to live here. They are excited by new innovations in traditional industries that help protect our pristine environment while also creating jobs, entrepreneurs, and sustainable prosperity. They feel like they belong in our diverse communities where they are welcomed like it has always been their home. Clearly, opportunities abound in Clearwater, where we grow and live and prosper, together.



VISION & PURPOSE

WE ARE HERE BECAUSE WE LOVE OUR COMMUNITY AND TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE MORE.



VISION STATEMENT

Our communities are connected by our appreciation for, and stewardship of, our natural beauty, our economic prosperity, our quality living, and the diversity of our wonderful people.

A Vision Statement is a description of what the community should be a generation from now. The Municipal Corporation comprised of the Council and Administration is not the only entity responsible for making the vision become a reality. It takes all elements of the community contributing and working together. As such, the Vision Statement is intended to be shared with the whole of the community and may be adopted by any other organization.



PURPOSE STATEMENT

Through proactive municipal leadership and regional partnerships, we will invest innovatively to generate and support economic and population growth that positions Clearwater County for a sustainable, prosperous future.

A Statement of Purpose is meant to identify how the organization will contribute towards that community vision. Each organization within the community may articulate its own purpose and the contribution it will make to supporting a successful community. In this case, the Statement of Purpose articulates the overall strategy the Clearwater County Municipal Corporation will invoke to contribute towards realizing the Vision Statement.

WE BELIEVE IN BUILDING AND GROWING A WHOLE COMMUNITY, TOGETHER



We believe people want to live in a connected whole community. They want good jobs and business opportunities, while protecting the natural beauty and maintaining the quality of life that attracts so many to live here. To attract new families, new business, and new industry we need to invest strategically and responsibly, but in a way that also ensures we are resilient, adaptable, and prosperous. We need focused regional marketing that shares our amazing story and opportunities with the world, and our citizens, to celebrate what we offer.

WHAT WE VALUE TO MOVE OUR COMMUNITY FORWARD

Economic Prosperity

Grow our population and economy by attracting people, investment, businesses, and industry. This will be done through bylaw and policy reviews to ensure alignment and efficiencies that support businesses relocating and growing here, encouraging agricultural and green investments and innovations to grow and diversify our economy, and working collaboratively with our partners and stakeholders to leverage our resources successfully.

Cooperative Alliances

Council and Administration will work with our neighbours, our partners, and our communities to find ways to leverage taxpayer dollars, encourage economic growth, enhance our quality of life, and celebrate what makes us amazing. This will include modernizing old agreements, building new relationships and partnerships between our communities and volunteer organizations, and advocating with other levels of government about our unique needs.

Environmental Stewardship

Responsibly maintain the physical spaces, on and below ground, within and surrounding County limits. This will include designating places and spaces for housing through clearly articulated Area Structure plans for growth hamlets, and identifying and protecting quality agriculture lands, while also securing land for recreation, industry, and agriculture.

Community Social Growth

Ensure the health and well-being of our communities and its residents. This will include supporting improved access to important amenities like mental health, while also facilitating vibrant activities and events that enhance our quality of life, which will also attract visitors who can become residents thanks to innovative housing development opportunities.

Fiscal Responsibility

Reduce the fiscal burden of future Councils, as well as the community, for generations to come. This will be done by ensuring infrastructure investments are offset by a restricted surplus, spending strategically to encourage and support future growth, working with neighbours to leverage every taxpayer dollar efficiently and effectively, and producing a full business case for the broadband initiative.



MILESTONES

WHAT IS A MILESTONE?

Milestones are important to strategic planning because they help ensure a focus on getting results. The Milestones identified on the next page serve as markers on the road to success. They help us measure our progress and allow us to report back to citizens and stakeholders about what we have accomplished.

“You can only know you succeeded if you know what it looks like when you get there.”

WHAT ABOUT STRATEGIC ACTIONS?

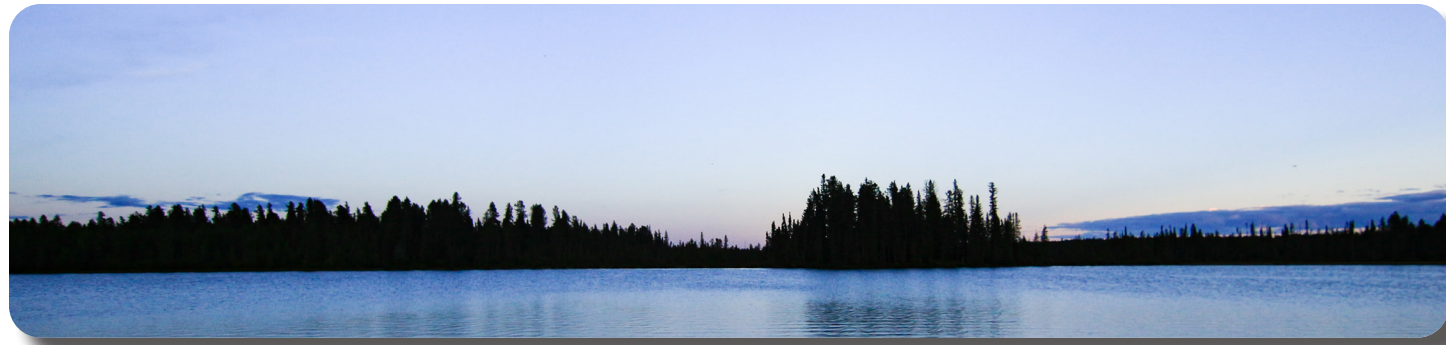
Getting results requires taking action. Finding success requires taking action in a way that mitigates challenges and takes advantage of developing circumstances. New opportunities, unforeseen challenges, and changes going on in our region, the province, the country, and the world requires us to be nimble and adaptable in our Strategy. Though we have outlined planned Actions we will undertake to achieve the Milestones we set for ourselves in the coming years, this is not meant to be an exhaustive or prescriptive list of Actions.

OUR MILESTONES GROWING DESIRABLE COMMUNITIES



COUNCIL PRIORITIES

GROWING DESIRABLE COMMUNITIES



These are actions we identified to help us achieve our vision and make our story come true:

Milestone 1: Building Partnerships and Relationships

Actions:

1.1 Regional Growth and Service Initiatives

- 1.1.1 Common Ground Document
- 1.1.2 Modernize Existing Shared Service Agreements
- 1.1.3 Joint Development Area(s)

Actions:

1.2 First Nation Relationships

- 1.2.1 TRC Discussions and Engagement
- 1.2.2 Indigenous Cultural Partnerships

Actions:

1.3 Provincial and Federal Government Advocacy

- 1.3.1 Grow/Expand Corridor Routes
- 1.3.2 Broadband Investment
- 1.3.3 Improved Health Supports – including mental health and end-of-life care

Actions:

1.4 Local Community Organization Partnerships

- 1.4.1 Artistic
- 1.4.2 Historic
- 1.4.3 Cultural

Milestone 2: Growing and Diversifying our Economy

Actions:

2.1 Economic Development Strategy

- 2.1.1 Diversified Agriculture Investment and Attraction
- 2.1.2 Agricultural and Sporting Events Centre
- 2.1.3 Joint Development Area(s)
- 2.1.4 Customer Service Focus – “How Can We Help”

Actions:

2.2 Nordegg Growth Initiatives

- 2.2.1 Transition Plan - Commercial Core and Residential Housing
- 2.2.2 Unique Tourism Marketing Initiative
- 2.2.3 Business Attraction Initiative

Actions:

2.3 Brand and Story Outreach

- 2.3.1 Ambassadors Program
- 2.3.2 Nuanced Local Brand Approach

Milestone 3: Innovative Planning and Development

Actions:

- 3.1 Agriculture Master Plan
- 3.2 Commercial and Industrial Development Master Plan
- 3.3 Area Structure Plan for each Growth Hamlet
- 3.4 Municipal Development Plan Review

Milestone 4: Financial Stewardship

Actions:

- 4.1 Restricted Surplus Policy Development
- 4.2 Asset Management Policy
- 4.3 Operational Capacity Review

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

CONCLUSION

This strategic plan provides a clear Vision and Purpose for Clearwater County over this term of office, and far beyond. This plan was developed to ensure we continue to build a strong and healthy community that offers ample long-term economic opportunities in a way that also secures our exception quality of life, our land, and our environment for generations to come.

We commit to using this document as a guide to a prosperous future, but we also commit to reviewing it at regular intervals to ensure our Actions align with the Story of who we are and who we are becoming. The path to success is not set, nor is it assured, yet, if we remain adaptable and resilient, and remain committed to the Vision, we can create a pathway to success, together. Let's get started.



CLEARWATER COUNTY COUNCIL

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