

Strathcona County
Community Consultation 2002
Discussion Group Sessions
Feedback Report

Prepared for:
Strathcona County

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INTRODUCTION

This report documents the results of a series of six public consultation sessions held in Strathcona County as part of the *Community Consultation 2002* project. The sessions were designed to bring county residents together to discuss some specific concerns and issues through participation in facilitated feedback sessions. Four focus topics were selected based on the results of the community surveys. A number of discussion points were presented to each group for consideration. The four discussion topics were:

■ Growth

- What aspects of growth concern the community?
 - List advantages and disadvantages of growth.
 - What should the county do to manage growth more effectively?
- When Sherwood Park reaches capacity, how should the County accommodate future growth?

■ Population Density

- Residents have indicated that they would like to see an increase in housing for seniors and young couples, yet the results of the survey suggest that residents oppose many affordable housing options. How should the County resolve this conflict in direction?

■ Environment

- What do we really mean when we raise concerns about the environment?
- What should the County do in relation to concerns about the environment?

■ Traffic

- The survey results indicated that roads/traffic are a prime concern to residents. What are the specific issues that have led people to this response?
- What are some strategies to deal with these concerns?

In addition to the above structured topics, attendees were each given the opportunity to share a final personal thought regarding the future of the county. They were then asked as a group to provide a single piece of advice to the County.

Four types of sessions were held for this part of the public consultation process:

- **Invitational Sessions**—Attendees at these sessions were people invited based on a random selection of Strathcona County residents. Demographically, the attendees matched the makeup of the County's population, with the majority of people residing in Sherwood Park.

- **Open House (Sherwood Park)**—Attendees at this session chose to attend in response to advertisements placed by the County.
- **Business Session**—A number of county business people attended this session in response to requests and advertisements placed by the County.
- **Open House (Ardrossan)**—Attendees at this session chose to attend in response to advertisements placed by the County.

The feedback from each of the four types of sessions is presented in this document; one section for each type of session. The information presented is by definition anecdotal. While the facilitators worked with the attendees to draw out feedback and prioritise where possible, they were specifically instructed not to bring their own opinions or suggestions to the table. The intent was to have the groups prioritize their responses to several questions, but the acceptance of this requirement varied greatly across the groups. The grouping of the responses serves as a general guide rather than specific priorities.

The resulting responses reflect the nature of the groups, the priorities of the attendees, the time available for discussion, and the differences of opinion that characterize any diverse group of this nature.

1 INVITATIONAL SESSIONS

The invitational sessions, held on September 12 and September 16, were well attended and represented the largest consultation group. A total of 80 residents attended and were divided into nine facilitated sub-groups of eight or nine people each. For the purposes of presenting feedback, these two sessions have been combined. These nine sub-groups have arbitrarily been assigned group numbers G1 through G9.

1.1 GROWTH—INVITATIONAL SESSIONS

WHAT ASPECTS OF GROWTH CONCERN THE COMMUNITY?

List advantages and disadvantages of growth.

This question was asked to help broaden participants' perspectives in terms of growth to ensure that they were not focused on a single aspect of the topic. It was also an open-ended question to help get the groups talking and working together. Exhibit 1-1 illustrates the key advantages to growth identified by each subgroup.

Exhibit 1-1 Advantages to growth identified by sub-group

Identified advantages	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Commercial services —Growth results in increased choices for shopping, services, etc.	?	?	?	?	?	?	?		?	8
Stronger business base —More jobs and opportunities in the county.	?		?	?		?	?	?	?	7
Public services/Recreation —Growth can make better public services possible, such as recreation facilities, parks, etc.	?	?	?		?	?		?		6
Economic/Tax base —Growth expands the tax base of the county, both residential and commercial.	?	?		?				?	?	5
Public services/Medical —Growth can make better public services possible, such as medical services, medical centre, ambulance, etc.	?		?				?			3
Public services/Education —Growth can make better public services possible, such as schools.	?		?				?			3
Political —Growth can mean more clout and increased representation with provincial government.		?						?		2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other factors mentioned as advantages to growth included better policing, increased diversity (age, ethnicity, culture) and more arts/culture opportunities.

Exhibit 1-2 illustrates the key disadvantages to growth identified by subgroup.

Exhibit 1-2 Disadvantages to growth identified by sub-group—invited public

Identified disadvantages	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Socio-demographic /Crime — Increased crime, police enforcement and gang related concerns.	?	?	?	?	?		?	?	?	8
Infrastructure/Traffic —Growth can lead to increased traffic volume that stresses infrastructure, clogs streets and makes it tougher to get around.	?		?		?	?	?	?	?	7
Environmental/Less green space — Growth results in a loss of green space, less agricultural land, reduced buffer zones to industrial areas, fewer trees, etc.		?		?	?	?	?	?		6
Infrastructure/Transit —Public transit can't keep up with the growth.	?	?				?			?	4
Services/Education —Growth results in crowded/overcrowded schools, need more schools.					?	?		?	?	4
Services/Healthcare —Growth stresses existing health care facilities and services.	?	?		?				?		4
Environments/Pollution —Growth contributes to more air/water/noise pollution.			?		?		?			3
Socio-demographic/Culture — Danger of loss of small town feeling/identity/culture that defines the community today.		?	?		?		?		?	3
Infrastructure/Cost —Growth requires expensive infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.							?	?	?	3
Economic/Cost of services —Extra services will cost more to provide, potentially increasing taxes.			?				?		?	3

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other factors mentioned as disadvantages to growth included increased housing costs, unsightly buildings, poor design, and urban sprawl.

What should the county do to manage growth more effectively?

This question was asked to help the participants start to focus on solutions and ensure that the sessions did not develop a negative atmosphere.

Exhibit 1-3 illustrates the key responses to this question by subgroup.

**Exhibit 1-3
Strategies to manage growth more effectively by sub-group—invited public**

Identified approaches	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Planning/Process —Need to develop long-range plans and stick to them. “Don’t let the developers run the show”.	?	?		?		?		?	?	6
Infrastructure/Planning —Need a long term infrastructure plan, particularly for roads.	?	?			?		?	?		5
Roads/Planning —Consider impact on roads when planning/approving developments.		?			?		?	?	?	5
Planning/Input —Planning processes need to seek, accept and respect more citizen input.	?	?		?		?			?	5
Zoning & Development/Management —Stick to the plans once the community agrees to them.				?		?		?	?	4
Infrastructure/Growth —Need to ensure that the infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, schools, healthcare, etc.) keeps up with the growth.	?		?			?	?			4
Zoning & Development/Developers —Need to set stringent /specific terms & conditions with developers around plans, green space, density, type of housing, etc.	?			?		?	?			4
Services & Facilities —“Catch up” with needed services and facilities before growing more (i.e., schools, medical facilities etc.) Need to work with the prov. government, school boards, etc.			?		?	?		?		4

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

What should the county do to manage growth more effectively?

The responses to this question are continued from Exhibit 1-3 on the previous page.

**Exhibit 1-3
 Strategies to manage growth more effectively by sub-group—invited public
 (continued)**

Identified approaches	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Zoning & Development/Green spaces —Zoning and planning should preserve aspen forests, water sheds, lakes, etc.				?		?	?			3
Planning/Leadership —Need leadership in articulating a vision for the county. The plans can then support that vision.		?				?		?		3
Planning/Skills —Need better planning skills/staff to for this modern, growing county.		?				?				2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included limiting growth, developing more of a downtown core, and developing “transition” style communities (i.e., commercial bordering on medium density that borders on low density). A strong undercurrent to these discussions was a sense that developers are “running the show” or “getting away with too much”. Specific examples of changes in development plans, increases in density creating parking problems, etc. were evident in several groups.

WHEN SHERWOOD PARK REACHES CAPACITY, HOW SHOULD THE COUNTY ACCOMMODATE FUTURE GROWTH?

Participants were informed that the planned capacity for Sherwood Park is approximately 70,000 people and that this population would probably be reached in about 15 years based on the current growth rate and the existing population of approximately 50,000. This question was designed to solicit ideas and gain some insight into residents’ thinking about the choices that face the county. Exhibit 1-4 provides responses to this question by subgroup.

**Exhibit 1-4
Future growth strategies by sub-group—invited public**

Identified approaches	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Reduce/Control growth —Slow or stop growth in Sherwood Park. Grow slowly and orderly.	?	?	?	?			?			5
New centre(s) —Encourage development to alternate centre (Ardrossan) and/or other hamlets in the county.	?			?	?			?	?	5
Increase density —Encourage development of more townhouses and low-rise apartments, ideally planned and distributed throughout Sherwood Park.	?				?		?		?	4
Expand boundaries —Expand the boundaries of Sherwood Park..	?					?			?	3

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

These discussions were characterized by a desire for more information. “Why is that the capacity?” and “Who decided the capacity?” were common questions.

1.2 POPULATION DENSITY—INVITATIONAL SESSIONS

RESIDENTS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN INCREASE IN HOUSING FOR SENIORS AND YOUNG COUPLES, YET THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY SUGGEST THAT RESIDENTS OPPOSE MANY AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS. HOW SHOULD THE COUNTY RESOLVE THIS CONFLICT IN DIRECTION?

This question was designed to explore the contradiction between wanting more affordable housing options and the desire to maintain the low-density residential developments that characterize most of Sherwood Park.

Exhibit 1-5 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

Exhibit 1-5 Population density/affordable housing ideas by sub-group—invited public

Identified approaches	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Apartments —Small, low rise apartments, but spread them around and provide parking.			?		?	?		?	?	5
Zoning —Zone for smaller, well planned, more affordable housing, low rise apartments, etc.					?	?		?	?	4
Affordable housing —More affordable housing is needed, particularly entry level and for seniors.			?	?	?		?			4
Apartments —Allow some high rise apartments situated near commercial or major roads.	?						?			2
Low Density —Stick to low density, single-family homes on traditional lots.		?						?		2
Basement suites —Allow basement suites, but set rules (i.e., parking), limit the number in a given area, etc..					?				?	2
Subsidized housing —Government subsidized housing should be developed for low income and seniors' needs.				?			?			2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Responses to this question reflect the wide diversity of opinions of attendees. Generally residents think that more affordable housing options are a good idea, but they are very unsure as to how such options can fit into Sherwood Park. Individual opinions ranged from “high rises are okay” to “reduce the density we already have”. Other ideas included buffer zones between multi-family and single family, transitional zoning from higher density to lower, and development of satellite communities to provide more affordable options.

1.3 ENVIRONMENT—INVITATIONAL SESSIONS

WHAT DO WE REALLY MEAN WHEN WE RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

This was an open-ended question designed to encourage participants to explore the idea that the environment is more than just air pollution or recycling. Exhibit 1-6 presents the responses to this question by sub-group.

Exhibit 1-6
Ideas defining “the environment” by sub-group—invited public

Identified concerns	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Green space —Need to plan, create and preserve parks, trees, trails, open land and buffer zones.	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	9
Air quality —Primarily concerns about industrial pollution, but also degraded air quality from vehicles.	?		?	?	?	?	?	?	?	8
Water quality —Concerns about water quality, quantity, and testing.	?		?	?		?		?	?	5
Waste management —Concerns focus on how good a job is being done with garbage, recycling and (to a lesser extent) composting.	?	?		?	?				?	5
Wildlife —Wildlife is seen as part of the park-like nature of the County, although density of deer population can lead to problems.	?						?	?	?	4
Herbicide and pesticide use —Concerns over the use of these chemicals.					?				?	2
Oilfield industry —Oil exploration and development is perceived as impacting the environment of the county.							?		?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Participants also mentioned noise pollution, watershed protection, ground water quality, power lines, and safety as environmental factors.

WHAT SHOULD THE COUNTY DO IN RELATION TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

Having developed some ideas as to what was meant by “the environment”, this question was included to solicit ideas for the county in responding to environmental challenges and concerns. Exhibit 1-7 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

**Exhibit 1-7
 Environmental strategy ideas by sub-group—invited public**

Identified strategy	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Green space/Developments — Proactively plan for green space and protect it. Development plans should explicitly protect green space.	?	?	?		?		?	?		6
Air quality/Control —County needs to push for better standards and monitoring region-wide.	?		?	?	?	?			?	6
Waste management —Improve recycling services and programs in the county.	?	?		?			?		?	5
Air quality/Communications — Improve communications and education about air quality issues, monitoring results, etc.	?			?	?	?				4
Wildlife/Protection —Protect wildlife through measures such as wildlife corridors, wetland preservation, roadside reflectors, etc..			?				?	?	?	4
Green space/Urban —Build more parks, plant more trees.			?				?		?	3
Air quality/Transportation —Reduce air pollution with improved transit system (schedule, reach, options), car pooling, etc.				?	?			?		3
Green space/Farmland —Protect agricultural land base from development.		?					?			2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included better management of the deer population, an outright ban on oil and gas exploration, and increased policing as measures that could contribute to a healthy environment. A common thread in the discussions was the concept that the county needs to be an open, honest agent of change proactively working at both the county and regional level, particularly with respect to air pollution.

1.4 TRAFFIC—INVITATIONAL SESSIONS

THE SURVEY RESULTS INDICATED THAT ROADS/TRAFFIC ARE A PRIME CONCERN TO RESIDENTS. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC ISSUES THAT HAVE LED PEOPLE TO THIS RESPONSE?

This question was included to more fully explore the areas of concern with respect to roads and traffic. Exhibit 1-8 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

Exhibit 1-8 Road/traffic issues identified by sub-group—invited public

Identified issues	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Traffic/Flow —Too many lights, synchronization of lights is poor.	?	?				?	?	?	?	6
Traffic/Congestion —Traffic congestion, particularly at peak hours, makes it difficult to get around in Sherwood Park.	?					?	?	?	?	5
Traffic/Urban safety —Safety on roads within Sherwood Park, particularly on thoroughfares like Baseline, Wye, etc.	?		?		?	?	?			5
Traffic/Enforcement —Not enough enforcement of speed limits, traffic lights & stop signs (particularly rural stop signs).	?			?	?			?		4
Traffic/Speed limits —Speed limits are too low/too high/inconsistent.						?	?	?	?	4
Traffic/Rural safety —Safety on rural roads, including road width, respect for stop signs, etc.			?		?	?				3
Roads/Capacity —Some roads have outgrown their capacity and need to be improved (i.e., Hwy 21, Whitemud, 522, etc.).	?	?							?	3
Roads/Design —Roads, particularly around new commercial developments (access, turning lanes, lights, signage) are poorly designed, and “fixes” don’t work.					?		?		?	3
Traffic/Noise —Noise from high volume traffic, noise from evening/weekend traffic (i.e., teenagers in noisy cars), etc.			?	?						2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included the unfinished Whitemud Freeway, lack of a route around Sherwood Park, the traffic circle and the lack of service roads for new commercial developments.

WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH THESE CONCERNS?

This question was intended to solicit ideas for the county in responding to the road/traffic concerns identified within the groups. Exhibit 1-9 presents the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

Exhibit 1-9 Road/traffic strategy ideas by sub-group—invited public

Identified issues	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Traffic/Flow & Safety —Improve synchronization of lights, use more flashing yellows, left turn signals, etc.	?	?	?		?	?	?	?		7
Traffic/Transit —Improve transit system to reduce growth in traffic, particularly within and across Sherwood Park (higher frequency, more service options).	?	?		?	?		?	?		6
Traffic/Enforcement —Increase policing to enforce speed limits, stop signs, traffic lights, etc.	?			?	?			?		4
Roads/Maintenance —Improve/maintain road surfaces, including rural areas.	?			?	?		?			4
Traffic/Speed limits —Improve traffic flow by selectively raising speed limits, removing “slow down” areas with inconsistent speed limits (i.e., 60kph zone on Wye).						?		?	?	3
Roads/Capacity —Improve major routes that are at or over capacity (i.e., Hwy 21, Whitemud, 522, overpass at Hwy 21 & 522, etc.).	?	?							?	3
Roads/Plan for bicycles —Include bicycle lanes in plans to improve safety and encourage use.			?				?		?	3
Roads/Design —Do traffic studies to improve planning and design (for master plan and for fixing specific issues)		?				?	?			3

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included removal of the traffic circle, installing speed bumps in school zones, and development of a diversion/ring road strategy so that all rural traffic bypasses Sherwood Park.

1.5 LAST WORD—INVITATIONAL SESSIONS

FINAL THOUGHTS—SHERWOOD PARK INVITED PUBLIC

Near the end of each session, participants were given the opportunity to provide a final thought regarding the future of Strathcona County. Exhibit 1-10 tabulates some of the common themes that were raised by discussion groups.

Exhibit 1-10

Final thoughts—common themes by sub-group—invited public

“Final thought” themes	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	Total Mentions
Health Care —Work to improve health care services, particularly a 24-hour trauma facility.	?			?	?	?	?	?	?	7
Identity —The County needs to develop a strong vision and identity.		?	?		?		?		?	5
Planning —More planning with open processes that welcome and respect resident input.		?		?			?	?		4
Schools —Need more schools.	?				?	?	?			4
Leadership and development —The County needs to be strong and needs to make sure the developers aren’t “running the show”.		?	?						?	3
Growth —Manage growth better, slow it down, let services and infrastructure catch up.		?			?	?				3
Communications —Council needs more open, two-way communication with the community.			?	?					?	3
Senior housing —The County needs more affordable housing for seniors.			?	?						2
Safety —Public safety needs to be a priority.			?		?					2
Taxes —“Keep the lid on taxes”. Ensure that the tax system is fair.				?				?		2
Green space —Preserve the trees. Keep the “Park” in Sherwood Park.				?	?					2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included planning for a ring road around Sherwood Park, the need for strong leadership, the requirement for a continuing focus on air quality, the desire to maintain the “small town” feel, maintenance of the low-density nature of Sherwood Park and the desire for more large stores.

FINAL ADVICE—SHERWOOD PARK INVITED PUBLIC

At the end of each session, participants were asked to formulate a key piece of advice that their group would give the County as it moves forward. The advice statements from the groups are as follows:

- Keep Sherwood Park as safe and attractive as it has been for the last 35 years and don't get bought off by residential and commercial development.
- Consult with the community on the big decisions.
- Slow down growth, manage it better and listen to the community.
- Listen to the community and respond with plans and timelines.
- Ask for input, listen to the citizens, respect their advice, and manage development to preserve the nature of the county.
- Slow down growth by looking at the big picture before building more, and catch up on the current community needs.
- Show strong leadership on behalf of the residents of the County by hiring a qualified, sophisticated, and experienced planner (firm, group) to develop a clear and specific vision for growth and a detailed plan.
- Use forward thinking and planning and develop a vision for the County.
- Listen to your constituents and develop a draft 10-year plan that can be presented, debated, and refined in a public forum. Use that plan to develop strategies and 2-3 year operating plans. Then stick to the plans!
- Serve the citizens, not the developers.

2 OPEN HOUSE SESSION—SHERWOOD PARK

The open house session held on September 14 was well attended with a total of 24 residents participating. These participants were divided into four facilitated sub-groups. These four sub-groups have arbitrarily been assigned group numbers S1 through S4. Attendees at this session included a mix of interested residents, but some individuals came with very specific agendas with respect to schools, the environment, or specific neighbourhood concerns.

2.1 GROWTH—SHERWOOD PARK OPEN HOUSE

WHAT ASPECTS OF GROWTH CONCERN THE COMMUNITY?

List advantages and disadvantages of growth.

This question was asked to help broaden participants' perspectives in terms of growth to ensure that they were not focused on a single aspect of the topic. It was also an open-ended question to help get the groups talking and working together.

Exhibit 2-1 illustrates the key advantages to growth identified by each subgroup.

Exhibit 2-1

Advantages to growth identified by sub-group—open public

Identified advantages	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total Mentions
Economic/Tax base —Growth expands the tax base of the county, both residential and commercial.	?		?	?	3
Commercial services —Growth results in increased choices for shopping, services, etc.	?		?	?	3
Stronger business base —More jobs and opportunities in the county.		?		?	2
Public services/Recreation —Growth can make better public services possible, such as recreation facilities, parks, etc.	?			?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other factors mentioned as advantages to growth included a stronger case for increased schools and a hospital, increased “clout” with the province, and more arts/culture opportunities.

Exhibit 2-2 illustrates the key disadvantages to growth identified by subgroup.

Exhibit 2-2
Disadvantages to growth identified by sub-group—open public

Identified disadvantages	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total Mentions
Infrastructure/Traffic —Growth can lead to increased traffic volume that stresses infrastructure, clogs streets and makes it tougher to get around.	?	?	?	?	4
Environmental/Less green space —Growth results in a loss of green space, less agricultural land, reduced buffer zones to industrial areas, fewer trees, etc.		?	?	?	3
Services/Education —Growth results in crowded/overcrowded schools, need more schools.	?		?	?	3
Economic/Cost of services —Extra services will cost more to provide, potentially increasing taxes.	?		?	?	3
Socio-demographic/Culture —Danger of loss of small town feeling/identity/culture that defines the community today.	?	?	?		3
Environments/Pollution —Growth contributes to more air/water/noise pollution.		?		?	2
Infrastructure/Cost —Growth requires expensive infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.		?		?	2
Services/Healthcare —Growth stresses existing health care facilities and services.	?			?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other factors mentioned as disadvantages to growth included increased crime, unsightly buildings, poor design, and urban sprawl.

What should the county do to manage growth more effectively?

This question was asked to help place the participants' start to focus on solutions and ensure that the sessions did not develop a negative atmosphere.

Exhibit 2-3 illustrates the key responses to this question by subgroup.

Exhibit 2-3
Strategies to manage growth more effectively by sub-group—
open public

Identified approaches	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total Mentions
Zoning & Development/Developers —Ensure developers stick to County zoning, plans, and bylaws. Legislate green space with developers.	?	?		?	3
Growth management —Need to slow growth in Sherwood Park and direct development to other parts of the County (the hamlets).	?		?		2
Infrastructure/Planning —Need a long-term infrastructure plan, particularly for roads. Upgrade existing roads (i.e., Whitemud) to handle needs from growth to date.	?			?	2
Services & Facilities —“Catch up” with needed services and facilities before growing more (i.e., schools, medical facilities etc.) Need to work with the prov. government, school boards, etc.		?		?	2
Density —Increase density to reduce consumption of land and urban sprawl.	?	?			2
Planning/Process —Need to develop long-range plans and stick to them. Plans should include a master plan for each hamlet. Master plan(s) should be kept current.	?		?		2
Planning/Leadership —Need leadership in articulating a vision for the county. The plans can then support that vision.			?	?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included managing the type and quality of businesses opening on the County, developing new approaches to sustainable communities, defining Sherwood Park and hamlet boundaries more clearly, and ensuring a diversity of housing choices available throughout the County. Several of these discussions also carried the tone noted in the invitational sessions, reflecting a feeling that developers are “running the show” or “getting away with too much”.

WHEN SHERWOOD PARK REACHES CAPACITY, HOW SHOULD THE COUNTY ACCOMMODATE FUTURE GROWTH?

Participants were informed that the planned capacity for Sherwood Park is approximately 70,000 people and that this population would probably be reached in about 15 years based on the current growth rate and existing population of approximately 50,000. This question was designed to solicit ideas and gain some insight into residents’ thinking about the choices that face the county.

Exhibit 2-4 provides responses to this question by subgroup.

**Exhibit 2-4
 Future growth strategies by sub-group—open public**

Identified approaches	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total Mentions
Reduce/Control growth —Slow or stop growth in Sherwood Park. Don’t grow past sustainability. Let infrastructure catch up.	?		?	?	3
Improve transportation planning —Plan transportation corridors in advance, develop/build them sooner, consider interconnections, consider impact on residents near corridors.			?	?	2
Increase density —Encourage density of development, trade off for more green space.	?		?		2
New centre(s) —Encourage development to alternate centre (Ardrossan) and/or other hamlets in the county.			?	?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Also discussed was the need for different rules in different parts of the County. An interesting question was raised with respect to growth: Growth is driven by demand, but how do you manage demand?

2.2 POPULATION DENSITY—SHERWOOD PARK OPEN HOUSE

RESIDENTS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN INCREASE IN HOUSING FOR SENIORS AND YOUNG COUPLES, YET THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY SUGGEST THAT RESIDENTS OPPOSE MANY AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS. HOW SHOULD THE COUNTY RESOLVE THIS CONFLICT IN DIRECTION?

This question was designed to explore the contradiction between wanting more affordable housing options and the desire to maintain the low-density residential developments that characterize most of Sherwood Park.

Exhibit 2-5 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

Exhibit 2-5 Population density/affordable housing ideas by sub-group— open public

Identified approaches	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total Mentions
Zoning —Zone for smaller, well planned, more affordable housing, low rise apartments, etc.		?		?	2
Apartments —Need apartment buildings, but spread them around, intermix with single-family dwellings, and ensure parking is provided.			?	?	2
Affordable housing —More affordable housing is needed, particularly entry level and rental. Should be spread throughout the community versus concentrated in a few areas.			?	?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Also discussed was the potential for allowing (but controlling) basement suites and building high-rise apartments near commercial centres or major roads.

2.3 ENVIRONMENT—SHERWOOD PARK OPEN HOUSE

WHAT DO WE REALLY MEAN WHEN WE RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

This was an open-ended question designed to encourage participants to explore the idea that the environment is more than just air pollution or recycling.

Exhibit 2-6 presents the responses to this question by sub-group.

Exhibit 2-6 **Ideas defining “the environment” by sub-group—open public**

Identified concerns	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total Mentions
Green space —Need to plan, create and preserve parks, trees, trails, open land and buffer zones.	?	?	?	?	4
Air quality —Primarily concerns about industrial pollution, but also degraded air quality from vehicles.	?	?	?	?	4
Water quality —Concerns about water and ground water quality.	?		?		2
Waste management —Concerns focus on how good a job is being done with garbage, recycling and (to a lesser extent) composting.	?			?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Participants also mentioned the protection of wildlife, differences in perspective between urban and rural residents, and the need for natural areas in both rural and urban settings.

WHAT SHOULD THE COUNTY DO IN RELATION TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

Having developed some ideas as to what was meant by “the environment”, this question was included to solicit ideas for the county in responding to environmental challenges and concerns.

Exhibit 2-7 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

Exhibit 2-7 Environmental strategy ideas by sub-group—open public

Identified strategies	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total Mentions
Green space/Urban —Build more parks, plant more trees. Maintain buffer zones.		?	?	?	3
Green space/Developments —Proactively plan for green space and protect it. Development plans should explicitly protect green space.		?		?	2
Green space/Natural areas —Preserve more “natural” spaces in both urban and rural areas.			?	?	2
Air quality/Control —County needs to push for better standards and monitoring region-wide.	?	?			2
Waste management —Improve recycling services and programs in the county.	?			?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included protection of wildlife habitats, open and honest communication with respect to air monitoring results and air pollution, finding the right balance between industrial development and environmental protection, and being national leaders in reducing the use of chemicals (i.e., pesticides and fertilizers).

2.4 TRAFFIC—SHERWOOD PARK OPEN HOUSE

THE SURVEY RESULTS INDICATED THAT ROADS/TRAFFIC ARE A PRIME CONCERN TO RESIDENTS. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC ISSUES THAT HAVE LED PEOPLE TO THIS RESPONSE?

This question was included to more fully explore the areas of concern with respect to roads and traffic.

Exhibit 2-8 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

Exhibit 2-8

Road/traffic issues identified by sub-group—open public

Identified issues	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total Mentions
Traffic/Enforcement —Not enough enforcement of speed limits, traffic lights & stop signs (particularly rural stop signs).		?	?	?	3
Traffic/Congestion —Traffic volume and congestion.		?	?		2
Traffic/Safety —Safety on roads within the County, particularly at rural intersections and around schools.	?			?	2
Traffic/Flow —Too many lights, poor synchronization of lights. Roads don't match flow patterns.		?		?	2
Roads/Linkages —Need to make it easier to travel within Sherwood Park, since "you have to move around to get anything done".	?		?		2
Roads/Design —Road design, particularly around new commercial developments seems poor, slows down traffic on major arterial routes. Few service roads.	?	?			2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included noise pollution from traffic, bicyclist safety and the need for better public transit.

WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH THESE CONCERNS?

This question was intended to solicit ideas for the county in responding to the road/traffic concerns identified within the groups.

Exhibit 2-9 presents the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

**Exhibit 2-9
 Road/traffic strategy ideas by sub-group—open public**

Identified Strategies	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total Mentions
Traffic/Transit —Improve transit system to reduce growth in traffic, particularly within and across Sherwood Park (higher frequency, more service options).	?	?		?	3
Traffic/Enforcement —Increase policing to enforce speed limits, stop signs, traffic lights, etc.	?	?			2
Traffic/Flow & Safety —Improve traffic light synchronization. Improve signage and sign visibility, particularly at rural intersections..		?		?	2
Roads/Capacity —Improve major routes that are at or over capacity (i.e., Clover Bar Road, interchange at Hwy 16 & Sherwood Drive).		?	?		2
Roads/Plan for bicycles —Improve bicycle routes, connect bike routes, build more bike paths, and link to river valley trails.			?	?	2
Roads/Service roads —Include service roads in commercial developments to reduce impact on through streets.	?	?			2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included reversible lanes to handle additional rush hour traffic, encouragement of car-pooling and ride sharing, and planning for proper sound barriers.

2.5 LAST WORD—SHERWOOD PARK OPEN HOUSE

FINAL THOUGHTS—SHERWOOD PARK OPEN HOUSE

Near the end of each session, participants were given the opportunity to provide a final thought regarding the future of Strathcona County.

Exhibit 2-10 tabulates some of the common themes that were raised by multiple discussion groups.

Exhibit 2-10 **Final thoughts—common themes by sub-group—open public**

“Final thought” themes	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total Mentions
Culture —Plan communities to retain “friendly” nature and attitude. Protect quality of life and sense of community.	?		?	?	3
Planning/Processes —More planning with open processes that welcome and respect resident input.		?	?		2
Planning/Growth —Plan ahead for growth instead of accommodating it after the fact. Plan proactively, review often, and stick to the plan.		?	?		2
Communications —Council needs more open, two-way communication with the community.		?	?		2
Identity —The County needs a strong vision and identity for the County as a whole. The vision needs to be developed with community input. The image needs to be protected and communicated.	?		?		2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included the controlling urban sprawl, keeping developers under control, and reducing reliance on the petrochemical industry.

FINAL ADVICE—SHERWOOD PARK OPEN HOUSE

At the end of each session, participants were asked to formulate a key piece of advice that their group would give the County as it moves forward. The advice statements from the groups are as follows:

- Listen to the people in the community, take their advice, and maintain our quality of life and identity.
- We need strong leaders that stick to long-term plans, and we need to keep quality of life and small town nature as core values that drive planning.
- Listen to the people. You have asked for their input and received their concerns and suggestions. Now build the quality of life and community values that address these issues.
- Better manage growth, taking into account and balancing infrastructure to create a “holistic” community.

3 BUSINESS OPEN HOUSE

The open house for business people held on September 17 was the least attended of all of the discussion group sessions. With only seven participants, a single group discussion was held. The feedback from this session is presented in a similar format to the other sessions, but the small sample size makes it difficult to identify themes. For the purposes of Community Consultation 2002, the results of the mail survey for the business community are considered more statistically representative of the County's business community than the results of this session.

3.1 GROWTH—BUSINESS OPEN HOUSE

WHAT ASPECTS OF GROWTH CONCERN THE COMMUNITY?

List advantages and disadvantages of growth.

This question was asked to help broaden participants' perspectives in terms of growth to ensure that they were not focused on a single aspect of the topic. It was also an open-ended question to help get the groups talking and working together. Exhibit 3-1 illustrates the key advantages to growth identified.

Exhibit 3-1 **Advantages to growth identified—open business**

Identified advantages

Economic/Tax base—Growth expands the tax base of the county, both residential and commercial.

Commercial services—Growth results in increased choices for shopping, services, etc.

Stronger business base—More jobs and opportunities in the county.

Public services/Recreation—Growth can make better public services possible, such as recreation facilities, parks, etc.

Exhibit 3-2 illustrates the key disadvantages to growth identified.

Exhibit 3-2

Disadvantages to growth identified—open business

Identified disadvantages

Less green space—Growth results in a loss of green space, less agricultural land, reduced buffer zones to industrial areas, fewer trees, etc.

Housing—Lack of affordable housing.

Infrastructure/Traffic—Growth can lead to increased traffic volume that stresses infrastructure, clogs streets and makes it tougher to get around.

Infrastructure/Cost—Growth requires expensive infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc).

Services/Healthcare—Growth stresses existing health care facilities and services.

Services/Education—Growth results in crowded/overcrowded schools, need more schools.

Lack of consensus—Increased diversity introduces competing interests and reduces consensus and makes management more difficult.

What should the county do to manage growth more effectively?

This question was asked to help place the participants' start to focus on solutions and ensure that the sessions did not develop a negative atmosphere. Exhibit 3-3 illustrates the key responses to this question.

Exhibit 3-3

Strategies to manage growth more effectively—open business

Identified approaches

Planning/Representation—Need public representation on planning board, open communication and transparency in planning.

Planning/Process—Need open communication and transparency in planning .

WHEN SHERWOOD PARK REACHES CAPACITY, HOW SHOULD THE COUNTY ACCOMMODATE FUTURE GROWTH?

Participants were informed that the planned capacity for Sherwood Park is approximately 70,000 people and that this population would probably be reached in about 15 years based on the current growth rate and existing population of approximately 50,000. This question was designed to solicit ideas and gain some insight into residents' thinking about the choices that face the county. Exhibit 3-4 provides responses to this question.

Exhibit 3-4

Future growth strategies—open business

Identified approaches

Affordable housing—More affordable housing is needed, particularly entry level and for seniors.

Increase density—Encourage development of more townhouses and low-rise apartments, ideally planned and distributed throughout Sherwood Park.

New centre(s)—Encourage development to alternate centre (Ardrossan) and/or other hamlets in the county.

3.2 ENVIRONMENT—BUSINESS OPEN HOUSE

WHAT DO WE REALLY MEAN WHEN WE RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

This was an open-ended question designed to encourage participants to explore the idea that the environment is more than just air pollution or recycling. Exhibit 35 presents the responses to this question.

Exhibit 3-5

Ideas defining “the environment”—open business

Identified concerns

Green space—Desire for parks, trees, etc.

Air quality—Provincial issue, but requires information and communications.

Chemicals—Pesticide use on roads.

WHAT SHOULD THE COUNTY DO IN RELATION TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

Having developed some ideas as to what was meant by “the environment”, this question was included to solicit ideas for the county in responding to environmental challenges and concerns. Exhibit 3-6 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

Exhibit 3-6

Environmental strategy ideas—open business

Identified strategy

Developments—Development plans must consider environmental issues.

Air quality/Control—County needs to ensure that provincial/regional regulators know community concerns..

Waste management—Sort out potential garbage is sue.

3.3 TRAFFIC—BUSINESS OPEN HOUSE

THE SURVEY RESULTS INDICATED THAT ROADS/TRAFFIC ARE A PRIME CONCERN TO RESIDENTS. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC ISSUES THAT HAVE LED PEOPLE TO THIS RESPONSE?

This question was included to more fully explore the areas of concern with respect to roads and traffic. Exhibit 3-7 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion group.

Exhibit 3-7

Road/traffic issues identified—open business

Identified issues

Roads/Speed—Too many speed zone changes.

Roads/Traffic lights—Traffic lights are not well synchronized.

Traffic/Transit—Difficult to improve service/increase ridership with low-density nature of Sherwood Park.

Roads/Design—Road design, particularly around new commercial developments could have been done better.

WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH THESE CONCERNS?

This question was intended to solicit ideas for the county in responding to the road/traffic concerns identified within the groups. Exhibit 3-8 presents the ideas raised by the discussion group.

Exhibit 3-8 **Road/traffic strategy ideas by sub-group—open business**

Identified issues

Traffic flow—Increase speed limits..

Transit—Improve transit system to reduce growth in traffic. Need higher frequencies and more direct routes.

3.4 LAST WORD—BUSINESS OPEN HOUSE

FINAL THOUGHTS—BUSINESS

Near the end of each session, participants were given the opportunity to provide a final thought regarding the future of Strathcona County. Exhibit 3-9 presents the thoughts that were raised by the group.

Exhibit 3-9 **Final thoughts raised by business group—open business**

“Final thoughts”

Protect against annexation by Edmonton.

Eliminate vested interests among county staff members.

Listen to and value the business community.

Council must demonstrate leadership with the administration.

Seek and respect consultation. Sometimes there is no “right” decision.

Develop land compatible with use.

Cost the impact of slower growth.

FINAL ADVICE—BUSINESS

At the end of each session, participants were asked to formulate a key piece of advice that their group would give the County as it moves forward. The advice statement from this group was:

- If we stop or slow down growth, we need to increase taxes to make up for smaller tax base. How much are people willing to pay?

4 OPEN HOUSE SESSION—ARDROSSAN

Sixteen residents attended the open house session held on September 18 in Ardrossan. These participants were divided into three facilitated sub-groups of five or six people each. These sub-groups have arbitrarily been assigned group numbers A1, A2 and A3. Attendees at this session included a mix of interested residents with diverse opinions.

4.1 GROWTH—ARDROSSAN OPEN HOUSE

WHAT ASPECTS OF GROWTH CONCERN THE COMMUNITY?

List advantages and disadvantages of growth.

This question was asked to help broaden participants' perspectives in terms of growth to ensure that they were not focused on a single aspect of the topic. It was also an open-ended question to help get the groups talking and working together.

Exhibit 4-1 illustrates the key advantages to growth identified by each subgroup.

Exhibit 4-1 Advantages to growth identified by sub-group—Ardrossan

Identified advantages	A1	A2	A3	Total Mentions
Economic/Tax base —Growth expands the tax base of the county, both residential and commercial.	?	?	?	3
Stronger business base —More jobs and opportunities in the county.		?	?	2
Public services/Recreation —Growth can make better public services possible, such as recreation facilities, parks, etc.		?	?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other factors mentioned as advantages to growth included increased property values, more commercial services, and upgraded infrastructure.

Exhibit 4-2 illustrates the key disadvantages to growth identified by subgroup.

Exhibit 4-2
Disadvantages to growth identified by sub-group—Ardrossan

Identified disadvantages	A1	A2	A3	Total Mentions
Environmental/Less green space —Growth results in a loss of green space and natural areas.	?	?	?	3
Socio-demographic/Culture —Danger of loss of small town feeling/identity/culture that defines the community today.	?	?	?	3
Environmental/Less agricultural land —Growth results in a loss of agricultural land.		?	?	2
Environments/Pollution —Growth contributes to more air/water/noise pollution.	?	?		2
Socio-demographic /Crime —Growth can lead to increased crime.		?	?	2
Infrastructure/Traffic —Growth can lead to increased traffic volume.	?	?		2
Infrastructure/Cost —Growth requires expensive infrastructure (roads, schools, etc).	?	?		2
Economic/Cost of services —Extra services will cost more to provide, potentially increasing taxes.		?	?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other factors mentioned as disadvantages to growth included the potential clash of values between urban and rural lifestyles, threatened wildlife and wildlife habitat, and increased trespassing on private (rural) property.

What should the county do to manage growth more effectively?

This question was asked to help place the participants' start to focus on solutions and ensure that the sessions did not develop a negative atmosphere.

Exhibit 4-3 illustrates the key responses to this question by subgroup.

**Exhibit 4-3
 Strategies to manage growth more effectively by sub-group—
 Ardrossan**

Identified approaches	A1	A2	A3	Total Mentions
Zoning & Development —Ensure developers stick to County zoning, plans, and bylaws. Enforce restrictive covenants and conservation easements. Preserve natural areas. Notification of zoning changes earlier versus after the fact. More transparency on rezoning. More local input to zoning decisions.		?	?	2
Development/Expansion —Continue to develop in “clusters”. Use innovative approaches (i.e., Boag Lake). Create a new hamlet/expand existing hamlets. Improve commercial services in hamlets.		?	?	2
Farmland —Protect existing farmland. Legislate into reserves or purchase outright.		?	?	2
Infrastructure/Planning —Upgrade existing roads (i.e., widen rural roads) to handle needs from growth.		?		1
Residential services —Ensure new developments have water and sewer services.		?		1
Density —Maintain low rural density through larger acreages, five acre parcels, etc. Increase density in urban areas.	?		?	2
Planning/Process —Need to develop long-range plans and stick to them.		?	?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included ensuring that all new developments (urban or rural) have water and sewer services, improving and widening rural roads to improve safety, and developing a vision for the county that can provide the basis for future planning.

WHEN SHERWOOD PARK REACHES CAPACITY, HOW SHOULD THE COUNTY ACCOMMODATE FUTURE GROWTH?

Participants were informed that the planned capacity for Sherwood Park is approximately 70,000 people and that this population would probably be reached in about 15 years based on the current growth rate and existing population of approximately 50,000. This question was designed to solicit ideas and gain some insight into residents’ thinking about the choices that face the county.

Exhibit 4-4 provides responses to this question by subgroup.

**Exhibit 4-4
 Future growth strategies by sub-group—Ardrossan**

Identified approaches	A1	A2	A3	Total Mentions
Grow across the County —Expand hamlets and/or create new hamlets. Provide more services in hamlets. Distribute growth around the County.		?	?	2
Stop or redirect —Stop growth, redirect to St. Albert or Fort Saskatchewan. Don’t expand Ardrossan.	?	?		2
Increase density —Encourage density of development in Sherwood Park. Expand to NE and/or infill, but contain growth.		?	?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Opinions on this question were highly divided, highlighting the variety of positions held by the attendees.

4.2 POPULATION DENSITY—ARDROSSAN OPEN HOUSE

RESIDENTS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN INCREASE IN HOUSING FOR SENIORS AND YOUNG COUPLES, YET THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY SUGGEST THAT RESIDENTS OPPOSE MANY AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS. HOW SHOULD THE COUNTY RESOLVE THIS CONFLICT IN DIRECTION?

This question was designed to explore the contradiction between wanting more affordable housing options and the desire to maintain the low-density residential developments that characterize most of Sherwood Park.

Exhibit 4-5 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

Exhibit 4-5 Population density/affordable housing ideas by sub-group— Ardrossan

Identified approaches	A1	A2	A3	Total Mentions
Urban —Increase urban densities to allow more affordable housing options (i.e., condos, co-ops).	?	?	?	3
Rural —Keep rural density low, increase minimum acreage size to five acres. Value and protect agricultural land and encourage niche farming (i.e., 5-10 acres, berries, chicken, market gardens)	?	?		2
Affordable housing —More affordable housing is needed in Sherwood Park, particularly entry level.		?		1

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Also discussed was the need for more affordable, entry level housing in Sherwood Park, the concept of somehow protecting good farmland from development, and ensuring that people moving to rural areas understand that they don't get urban level infrastructure (i.e., water, streetlights, etc.).

4.3 ENVIRONMENT—ARDROSSAN OPEN HOUSE

WHAT DO WE REALLY MEAN WHEN WE RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

This was an open-ended question designed to encourage participants to explore the idea that the environment is more than just air pollution or recycling.

Exhibit 4-6 presents the responses to this question by sub-group.

Exhibit 4-6 **Ideas defining “the environment” by sub-group—Ardrossan**

Identified concerns	A1	A2	A3	Total Mentions
Green space —Need to protect and preserve tracts of natural land. Areas like Blackfoot, Cooking Lake and Moraine are vulnerable.	?	?	?	3
Air quality —Primarily concerns about industrial pollution, but also degraded air quality from increased vehicle traffic.	?	?	?	3
Water quality —Concerns about water and ground water quality (septic seepage, oil well contamination, storm water in Oldman Creek etc.)	?	?	?	3
Water management —Including water quantity. Concern over depletion of the aquifer due to too many wells from small parcels of land.	?	?	?	3
Soil quality —Concerns about polluted runoff, chemical use, etc.		?	?	2
Wildlife/Natural areas —Need healthy wildlife population. Concern that development is breaking up natural wildlife corridors and encroaching on habitat.	?		?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Participants also mentioned noise pollution, visual “clutter” (power lines, signs, etc.), refinery accidents and waste management.

WHAT SHOULD THE COUNTY DO IN RELATION TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

Having developed some ideas as to what was meant by “the environment”, this question was included to solicit ideas for the county in responding to environmental challenges and concerns.

Exhibit 4-7 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

**Exhibit 4-7
 Environmental strategy ideas by sub-group—Ardrossan**

Identified strategy	A1	A2	A3	Total Mentions
Water management —Improve water management practices (runoff, wells, conservation, etc.), water conservation.	?	?	?	3
Leadership —County should take a visible role. Public education regarding conservation, environmental issues, etc.	?	?		2
Air and water quality —County needs to push for better standards and monitoring region-wide.	?	?		2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included creating dedicated areas for snowmobiles/trail bikes to reduce their impact county-wide, developing cross country ski trails, developing a bike trail from Elk Island to Sherwood Park, protecting natural areas, banning deep injection wells, increasing the minimum acreage size and maintaining the lake management plan. The desire for improved recycling options and programs in rural areas was also discussed.

4.4 TRAFFIC—ARDROSSAN OPEN HOUSE

THE SURVEY RESULTS INDICATED THAT ROADS/TRAFFIC ARE A PRIME CONCERN TO RESIDENTS. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC ISSUES THAT HAVE LED PEOPLE TO THIS RESPONSE?

This question was included to more fully explore the areas of concern with respect to roads and traffic.

Exhibit 4-8 tabulates the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

Exhibit 4-8 Road/traffic issues identified by sub-group—Ardrossan

Identified issues	A1	A2	A3	Total Mentions
Traffic/Safety —Safety on roads within the County, particularly at rural intersections, around schools, and at rural school bus stops.	?	?		2
Traffic/Flow —Too many lights, synchronization of lights is poor. Speed limits are inconsistent.	?		?	2
Traffic/Enforcement —Not enough enforcement particularly at rural stop signs.		?	?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included the need for better public transit, poor design of Baseline Road (changing a thoroughfare and commuter route into a commercial and residential street), truck routes, and the lack of bicycle lanes.

WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH THESE CONCERNS?

This question was intended to solicit ideas for the county in responding to the road/traffic concerns identified within the groups.

Exhibit 4-9 presents the ideas raised by the discussion groups.

Exhibit 4-9
Road/traffic strategy ideas by sub-group—Ardrossan

Identified issues	A1	A2	A3	Total Mentions
Traffic/Enforcement —Increase policing to enforce speed limits, stop signs, traffic lights, etc.	?	?		2
Traffic/Education —Educate the public, encourage driver training, graduated licensing.		?	?	2
Traffic/Flow & Safety —Improve traffic light synchronization. Improve signage and sign visibility, particularly at rural intersections. Create truck routes.	?		?	2
Roads/Capacity —Improve major routes that are at or over capacity, improve access at high traffic areas, add cloverleaves.	?	?		2
Roads/Plan for bicycles —Improve bicycle routes, connect bike routes, build more bike paths, and link to river valley trails.	?		?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other ideas included improving the transit system, planning for LRT connection, encouraging car-pooling, and creating designated commuter lanes.

4.5 LAST WORD—ARDROSSAN OPEN HOUSE

FINAL THOUGHTS—ARDROSSAN

Near the end of each session, participants were given the opportunity to provide a final thought regarding the future of Strathcona County.

Exhibit 4-10 tabulates some of the common themes that were raised by multiple discussion groups.

Exhibit 4-10
Final thoughts—common themes by sub-group—Ardrossan

“Final thought” themes	A1	A2	A3	Total Mentions
Planning/Processes —More planning with open processes that welcome and respect resident input. Be visionary. Develop a master plan and stick to it. Don’t let the developers drive the plan.	?		?	2
Culture —Plan communities to retain “friendly” nature and attitude. Protect quality of life and sense of community.	?		?	2
Leadership and development —The County needs to be strong and needs to make sure the developers aren’t running the show.	?	?		2
Leadership and development —Do what’s best for the whole community. Don’t cater to small, vocal groups.		?	?	2

? Indicates this item was mentioned by the group

Other final thoughts touched on slowing down the growth, making health and safety a priority within the county, educating the residents with respect to the layout and needs of the county as a whole, increasing the minimum acreage size to five acres and ensuring that the environment is a higher priority before development starts.

FINAL ADVICE—ARDROSSAN

At the end of each session, participants were asked to formulate a key piece of advice that their group would give the County as it moves forward. The advice statements from the groups are as follows:

- Establish a long-range development plan that is driven by residents (not developers) and that preserves a high level of environmental integrity and promotes the chosen quality of life of Strathcona County residents.
- Make the plan, ensuring it is sustainable, addressing “holistic” needs and stick with it. Ensure that the plan expresses the uniqueness of Sherwood Park/Strathcona County.

5 SUMMARY

The discussion group sessions provided a valuable source of information for *Community Consultation 2002*. Specifically, the discussion group sessions:

- Added to the information learned from the earlier stages in the study.
- Validated information learned from other steps in the consultation process.
- Provided some suggested options for resolution and/or proposed solutions to address the identified issues. The wide range of such proposals reinforced the complexities facing the County in its future planning.
- Indicated overwhelming desire for strong leadership by the County, with more attention paid to resident concerns and less attention paid (and less influence given) to developers.
- Indicated a desire and a need for a transparent, strong and well-communicated long-range plan that is supported and followed by the County.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the information presented is by definition anecdotal. The resulting responses reflect the size and nature of the groups, the priorities of the attendees, the time available for discussion, and the differences of opinion that characterize any diverse group of this nature. With respect to the four discussion topics, some common themes did emerge:

- **Growth**—Residents recognized the value growth has had to the county, and they recognized disadvantages of growth as well. Growth was seen as somewhat inevitable, and residents were concerned with the pace of growth. Growth must be well planned and managed.
- **Population density**—Residents offered some support for increased density, but felt it must be carefully integrated into the community. Very little support was expressed for high density development. Some residents expressed opposition to any increase in density within the county.
- **Environment**—Residents expressed pride in the green spaces and park-like nature of the County. Discussions focused on green space and air quality as the primary areas of interest, followed by water quality and waste management.
- **Traffic**—Traffic problems were seen as a major negative outcome from growth. Discussions centred on congestion within the Sherwood Park road design (particularly around new developments), rural road safety, and traffic flow. Concerns around the enforcement of traffic laws with respect to speed limits, traffic lights, and stop signs (particularly rural stop signs) was another common area of discussion, with residents sharing the view that more enforcement is required.

In general the discussion groups were well-attended, thoughtful and productive sessions that brought clarity and added a qualitative perspective to *Community Consultation 2002*.