

Summary of Public Written Submissions

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Strathcona County

Submitted by:
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1 BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

As part of the Strathcona County Community Consultation 2002, various organizations within the County were invited to submit written public submissions to assist the County in its medium and long-term strategic planning efforts. The invitation was extended by Mayor Hartwell via a May 24, 2002 letter.

In the Mayor's letter, he stated that this overture to community leaders had a two-fold purpose. First, was to solicit that organizations priorities and view on the pressing issues as Strathcona County moves forward. Second, the letter was also an urging for these leaders to encourage their membership to participate in one of the many avenues afforded by Community Consultation 2002. Submissions were received up until July 2, 2002.

Approximately 85 organizations were contacted by mail. Eleven submissions were received. A listing of the organizations invited to participate is as follows:

- 2733 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps
- Alberta Injured Bird Society
- Alberta Retired Teachers Association
- Alberta Teachers' Assoc. - Elk Island
- Anne Brown—Heartland Citizens' Coalition
- Ardrossan Baseball Assoc.
- Ardrossan Community Theatre
- Art Society of Strathcona County
- Birch Bay Ranch
- Broadmoor Business Ladies Golf Association
- Broadmoor Men's Golf Club & Society
- Broadmoor Tennis Club
- Cadets – Air Canadian Forces Base
- Cadets – Sea
- Cooking Lake Aviation Academy
- Cooking Lake Saddle Club
- Cooking Lake Sailing Club
- County Clothes-Line Foundation
- Ian McCormack—Chairman—Strathcona County Municipal Library Board
- Jack Skinner—Chairman—SAFE Place Board
- Jim Seutter—Superintendent—Strathcona Christian Academy
- Jim Wilson—President—Strathcona Industrial Association
- Josephburg Choral Society
- Junior Forest Wardens/Sherwood Park Timber Trekkers
- Larry Billings—President—Festival Place Board of Directors
- Larry Wall—Executive Director—Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association
- Louise Gibson—Chair—Urban Development Institute
- Marion Zerr, Chairman—Board of Directions—Information & Volunteer Centre
- Maureen Towns—Chair & Board of Trustees—Elk Island Public Schools
- Meals on Wheels
- Ministerial Association
- Sherwood Park Fish & Game Association
- Sherwood Park Minor Hockey Assoc.
- Sherwood Park Minor Softball Association
- Sherwood Park Mixed Slowpitch
- Sherwood Park Music Festival
- Sherwood Park Newcomers Club
- Sherwood Park Outlaws Rugby Club
- Sherwood Park Rangers Soccer Club
- Sherwood Park Salto Gymnastics Association
- Sherwood Park Silver Tide Swim Club
- Strathcona Arabian Horse Assoc.
- Strathcona Bingo Association
- Strathcona Country Fair
- Strathcona County Crime Watch Assoc. R.C.M.P.
- Strathcona County Food Bank
- Strathcona County Heritage Foundation—c/o Reg Gray

- David Onuczko—Executive Director—Northeast Capital Industrial Association
- Don Neil—President—Sherwood Park & District Chamber of Commerce
- Doug Aitkenhead—Superintendent—Elk Island Catholic Schools
- Friends of Elk Island Society
- Gary Millar—Chairman—Executive Committee Strathcona Exhibition Association
- Gerald Mykytiuk—Chairman & Board of Trustees—Elk Island Catholic Separate Schools
- Girl Guides of Canada
- Gus Rozycki—Executive Director—Bosco Homes
- Hasting Lake Pleasure Horse Association
- Home Business Organization
- Navy League of Canada Sherwood Park Branch
- Neil Wilkinson—Chair Capital Health Authority
- Home by Choice Assoc. of Alberta
- Nordic Ski Club
- Rob McPhee—Superintendent—Elk Island Public Schools
- Robin Hood Association
- Safe Community Coalition of Strathcona County
- Saisbury SaddleClub
- Scouts of Canada
- Sharon Bunnin—Chair—Strathcona County Community Health Council
- Sherard Musical Theatre Assoc.
- Sherwood Park Archery Club
- Sherwood Park Bowling League
- Sherwood Park District Soccer Association
- Strathcona County Museum & Archives
- Strathcona County Youth Justice Committee
- Strathcona Garden Club
- Strathcona Naturalists
- Strathcona Pony Club
- Strathcona Sexual Assault Centre
- Strathcona Shelter Society
- Strathcona Shooting Range
- Strathcona Skateboard Park
- Strathcona Special Olympics
- Toastmasters Bowmen Club
- Toastmasters Morning Challengers Club
- Wayne Kinsella—President—Greater Edmonton Home Builders' Association

*(Note: The Urban Development Institute expressed interest in participating. However, they misinterpreted the Mayor's letter as an opportunity to **meet** with KPMG Consulting. They placed a call to the KPMG switchboard, not knowing who to ask for and regrettably, the call never made it through. We learned of this from the letter that the UDI sent back to Strathcona County. We followed up immediately with the Executive Director, but the UDI was not in position to get their Board of Directors together in time to endorse a written submission within the time-frame.)*

2 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

HEARTLAND CITIZENS' COALITION (STURGEON CHAPTER)

Heartland Citizens' Coalition identified issues that fall into three categories.

1. CONCERN ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- The requirement for highways that safely meet current and future traffic demand.
- Recognition of the threat of continued industrial growth on agricultural land. Creation of a "Dispute Resolution System".

2. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Industrial development leaves property virtually unmarketable. Residents need to be compensated for the loss of value and quality of life due to industrial expansion. This would include funding, county, provincial or industrial, being allocated to relocate people negatively affected by industrial development (noise, odours, lights).

3. PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

- Despite the fact that the responsibility of monitoring and establishing environmental guidelines is under provincial jurisdiction, the County should take the initiative and make protecting the environment a long-term priority. The coalition cites the group "Pollution Watch" which lists Strathcona County as currently ranked seventh in Canada and second in Alberta on the "National Pollutant Release Inventory" in amounts of chemicals released into the environment.

HOME BY CHOICE ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

The Home by Choice Association of Alberta has recognized two priorities.

1. CULTURE

- Strathcona County needs to increase support and fostering of culture and the arts, in terms of both facilities and programming. An increased focus on culture and less on sports is necessary. More funding needs to be allocated for cultural and heritage endeavours.

2. LOW-RENT FACILITIES

- A facility is needed that could offer low-rent to non-profit organizations. Every year many non-profit organizations must reapply for the space to run their programs.

BROADMOOR MEN'S GOLF CLUB

The Broadmoor Men's Golf Club has identified concerns that fall into four distinct areas.

1. TAX COLLECTION

- The County is in need of a more reasonable method for collecting municipal taxes for maintenance of schools, roads, and the library, to name a few. This could be implemented through "user fees", a "head tax" or a "payroll tax".

2. TRANSIT

- The cost of parking and driving is rising and citizens are looking for alternatives to driving. The County should reserve land for an above ground LRT route from downtown Edmonton to Sherwood Park, that way when funding becomes available the land will already be reserved.

3. HOSPITAL

- Strathcona County needs a hospital. It is unacceptable for people to have to drive 10-15 kms to get to a hospital. St. Albert has had two hospitals in the past 25 years.
- The industrial base in Sherwood Park generates revenue for the province and Sherwood Park does not seem to be getting their share. This money should be used to fund a hospital.

4. IMPROVED GOLF FACILITY (AT BROADMOOR GOLF CLUB)

- Broadmoor Golf Facility needs a fence on the west side of the course to stop the public from using the main area as a shortcut, to keep children from being hit with balls, and to help decrease vandalism.
- There is also a need for an improved practice facility, new change rooms, new locker facilities, an on-site banquet facility and an increased supply of water.
- The completion of the Master Plan to rebuild the North nine holes should be done as soon as possible. There are about 40,000 rounds of golf played at the Broadmoor each year and its current location does not allow much room to grow. Perhaps it is time for the constructions of another golf course.
- Currently the golf course is the only county owned recreation facility that makes a profit.

HEARTLAND CITIZENS' COALITION (LAMONT & BRUDERHEIM CHAPTER)

The Heartland Citizens' Coalition has indicated there is need to look into issues that fall into three categories.

1. INFRASTRUCTURE (SPECIFICALLY ROADS)

- The County needs to change its allocation of funding to reflect an increased volume of traffic.

2. GROWTH

- The County should not allow expansion in areas containing prime agricultural land.

3. COUNTY BYLAWS OR PLANS

- The County should implement the following bylaws related to industrial plant expansion:
 - Fair compensation should be offered for the loss of value, safety, and quality of life of the areas affected.
 - A “Dispute Resolution System” should be in place for affected parties to utilize, should an agreement not be forthcoming.

INFORMATION AND VOLUNTEER CENTRE

The Information and Volunteer Centre has identified concerns regarding the pace of growth within the County.

1. GROWTH

- As an implication of growth there is a strain on services, not only for the Volunteer Centre but also for other community agencies, organizations and County departments.
- The County needs to continue to support services such as the Information and Volunteer Centre and be aware of the overall growing demands on services provided by agencies and departments. The County needs to plan to provide funding and/or support staff as required to assist these organizations.

COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS

The Community Health Councils have acknowledged the following issues.

1. GROWTH

- The County should put a limitation on the boundaries of Sherwood Park in order stop growth.
- The County should focus on improved planning of the location of services – shopping, health –in order to allow transportation to link them so that they are more accessible.
- There is need for a more defined city centre. Currently the shopping within the commercial area is quite spread out.

2. HEALTH

- Capital Health Authority is aware of the need for extended hours for health services.
- The results of the Capital Health Study that will be released this month should be considered as part of the strategic plan. The Health Council and County need to continue to work together.

3. TOURISM/MARKETING

- Marketing of “Sherwood Park” should focus on attracting people after they have made the decision to look at the “Edmonton Region”. While considering the big picture, Strathcona County should jointly market with the “Capital Region”.
- There are many oppourtunities in the county for tourism as the County is a link to a National Park and has many acreages. Activities in the small communities are great oppourtunities for city dwellers to take day trips. There needs to be an increased focus on marketing of the County to people in Edmonton as a tourist destination.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE

- Due to the large amount of manufacturing done within the region, highways and road systems should be invested in, in order to move goods in/out of the region.

5. COUNTY ISSUES

- In order to avoid confusion there only needs to be one joint website for the County and Economic Development.
- The County needs a mission statement and an automated waste collection system.
- The Rural area is often overlooked. There have been reductions of service in rural areas and an increase in Sherwood Park. The County should maintain a certain percentage of its employees/administration are from the rural areas.
- The County should look at beautifying its entrances. They are unattractive due to unsightly signs and weeds.

SHERWOOD PARK & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Sherwood Park & District Chamber of Commerce has identified issues that fall into four categories.

1. TAXES

- Businesses pay 35% more in taxes than residents. Unlike homeowners though, businesses do not have the choice to downsize without substantial cost.

- If Strathcona County wants to continue to create quality, high paying jobs there must be an affirmation to have the lowest effective commercial property tax rate in Western Canada and the neighbouring states.
- The County needs to continue to encourage business investment. Business investment translates into a greater commercial property tax for the County; money from this improves the quality of life for all Strathcona residents.
- The County must help struggling agricultural producers by keeping their taxes lower than other jurisdictions, this may only be accomplished through a growing base in other tax assessment areas (commercial, linear, machinery etc.).

2. ECONOMY

- Economic diversification will reduce the local dependency on the cyclical nature of primary and secondary products. The expanding economy will help the County through any bad times it may see.

3. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SURVEY

- The Chamber of Commerce is considering conducting a “business friendliness” survey for developers and business owners to rate their local government. Depending on the specific results the Chamber would like to work with the County to implement suggestions or create change.

4. VISUAL APPEARANCE

- An area of improvement is the visual appearance of entryways and gateways through the County. The County’s planning department should consider whether to add a reasonable bylaw or development plan in order to improve this issue.
- While it is unreasonable for the County to impose restrictions on current operations, there is potential for the County to work with the businesses to jointly improve (co-fund) both the private property and public rights of way that front to highways or roads.

GREATER EDMONTON HOME BUILDERS’ ASSOCIATION

The Greater Edmonton Home Builders’ Association has identified its vision for Strathcona County in 2020.

1. VISION FOR STRATHCONA COUNTY (2020)

Strathcona County is a diverse community

- All ages live in a supportive manner with many cultures and ethnic groups providing a cosmopolitan nature in the community.

Strathcona County is a place to live, work, play, and learn

- Job oppourtunities are available for youth and educational oppourtunities exist. Family is a core value.
- Recreational and cultural oppourtunities attract valuable skilled resources.

Strathcona County has strong health care and other services

- Acute care, emergency services, family medicine and physical therapy facilities make Strathcona a regional service centre. Seniors care is available including long term care, assisted living, life lease, condos etc.

Affordable housing choices are available

- This includes apartments, townhouses, affordable single-family housing, units for single mothers, custom family housing, empty nester housing, seniors housing.
- Housing remains a highly responsive market based upon consumer choice with minimal government interference free from punitive taxes and unfair levies.
- Professional builders are rewarded for their work by lower enforcement costs, and fast track service.
- Effective consumer warranties support an efficient and trust building relationships between professional builders, consumers, and municipal agencies.

Transportation is key to Strathcona's growth

- Strathcona County has an excellent road system which integrates smoothly into Edmonton's main road system. Airport and train access is readily available.
- Public transit and school bussing exist. Right of ways for future LRT are planned and used for walk/bikes paths in the mean time.

Retail Choice and Opportunities Exist

- A revitalized town core exists with pedestrian access and includes parks, recreational activities, shops, retail merchants, and libraries.
- There is shopping near each neighbourhood.

Business and all three levels of government work together with the consumer to efficiently deliver services

- Developers and businesses are rewarded, not penalized when they provide services and amenities. Governments recognize that the consumer and taxpayer are one and the same.

2. OTHER

- Encourage privatization of the building permit system.

STRATHCONA EXHIBITION CORPORATION

The Strathcona Exhibition Corporation (StrathconaX) has identified the need for a new facility and increased support from the County.

1. NEED FOR AN EQUINE FACILITY

- The County needs a public facility to host local, regional, and national equine events.
- The facility would also be a driver for hospitality services including hotels, food and beverage, conferences, and conventions as well as products and services related to the equine industry.

2. NEED COUNTY SUPPORT

- The Strathcona Exhibition Corporation needs assistance in moving from a purely volunteer organization to one that would operate with a blend of staff supporting a volunteer base and managed by a volunteer board.
- What resources, services, and assistance can Strathcona County offer StrathconaX? StrathconaX would like to work with the County to share services where appropriate and cost effective. The proposed facility has many infrastructure needs including roads and community amenities. StrathconaX would like County assistance in maintenance of areas that may be of public usage (trails, parks, play areas). Strathcona County would need to ensure zoning bylaws support and facilitate the maintenance of the development
- An increased focus on tourism and promotion may be required should StrathconaX reach its full potential.

STRATHCONA LIBRARY BOARD

The Strathcona Library Board has identified issues fall into one of four categories.

1. LEADERSHIP ROLE OF COUNTY

- The County needs to play a leadership role in the Capital Region. The County should work with other municipalities to identify areas where economies of scale and cooperation would make joint service delivery a benefit.

2. NEED CENTRAL CULTURAL FACILITY

- The Library supports the need for a central cultural facility within the County that would include the Library as well as other cultural groups.

- Although the Library currently serves this function it will soon be too small (even after the November 2002 expansion). The Library must grow at a rate consistent with the growth in the County (in both urban and rural areas).
- The Library requires a building of 44,651 sq. ft. in order to serve 72,000 residents. This would include: collection space, user space, staff space, multi-purpose rooms and non-assignable space.
- An exploration of the library's role in the community and its position as a community centre will come to the forefront as the library's lease expires in 2008 and it reconsiders its location.

3. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

- As the community grows the Library will need an increased amount of funds to enable sufficient allocation of service dollars to the growing size of certain age groups. Continued support from the County is needed with regards to the Library and the information services it offers.
- As baby boomers retire the Library is predicting a possible shortage of skilled librarians. The Library needs money to invest in training staff so that they remain knowledgeable with regards to all information sources and new ways of delivering services.

4. REGULAR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- The county needs to ensure that it is aware of the community's needs through a regular public input process in order to fully understand the community and the issues various sectors face.

CAPITAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

The Capital Health Authority has identified two main issues.

1. TRANSPORTATION

- Improved transportation is needed for seniors and the disabled to allow them to carry out daily activities and engage in social and recreational activities. This could be achieved through public transportation, perhaps coordinated with City of Edmonton.

2. LOW COST HOUSING

- Most young adults and single parent families, to name a few, cannot afford to purchase a home. A broader range of housing options in the County would enable these residents to remain in the community without having to leave to seek more affordable housing.