2015-18
Department Business Plan

Utilities

STRATHCONA COUNTY

I am pleased to introduce Utilities' 2015-18 Department Business Plan. The goals capture four main areas where Utilities will contribute to making Strathcona County Canada's most livable community.

The first goal relates to infrastructure and represents initiatives aimed at ensuring our infrastructure is ready, reliable and safe. Initiatives in this section require cooperation and coordination with a variety of County departments particularly within the Infrastructure and Planning Services Division. Almost all of our services rely on infrastructure in some way. In any given year we have a range of capital projects on the go. For 2015 to 2018, we will focus on utility servicing requirements for Ardrossan and North of Yellowhead.

The second goal relates to the programs and services that our residents expect to be delivered in the most effective and efficient manner possible. Many of the programs and services are public health oriented, and are subject to regulatory mandates. A key initiative for waste services will be the implementation of waste diversion programs for multi-tenant facilities. In water and wastewater services we will continue to set, measure and improve operational targets that support services detailed in this plan.

The third goal speaks to the importance of continuous improvement to meet the service level expectations of our customers. Continuous improvement has served us well in the past and will continue to be a strategic asset. Over the coming years, Utilities will rely more heavily on GIS data and continue to leverage the strength of our asset management system. Utilities will be part of a corporate initiative to improve customer service request tracking. By seeking and implementing continuous improvement, the department is able to minimize rate impacts on customers and ensure the financial viability of the services provided.

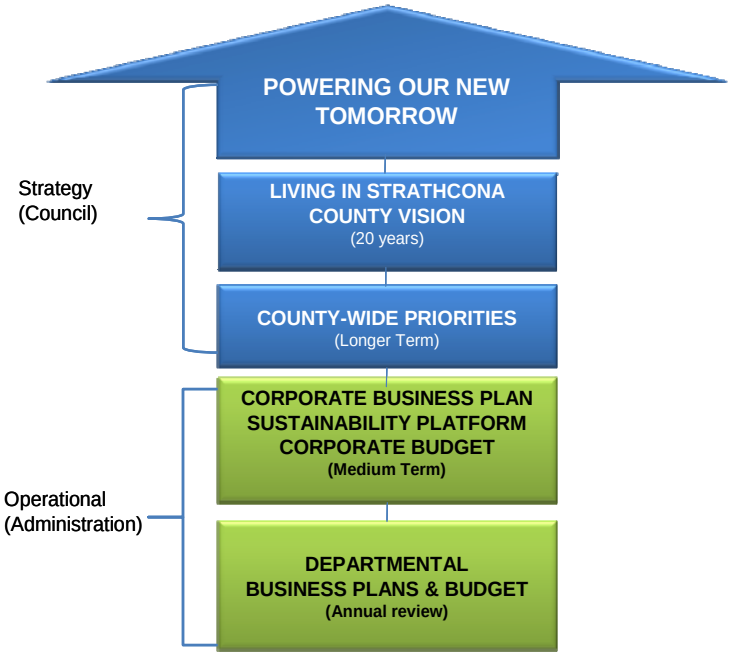
The fourth goal speaks to the importance of staff. All forms of public service require exceptional staff and this certainly applies to Utilities. We will continue to emphasize a strong commitment to occupational health and safety, practice positive leadership, and provide learning opportunities for staff. We have lots of room to grow; specifically, in the area of internal communication. By making our work environment a priority, we will produce benefits for our staff and our customers.

The business planning process has provided a great opportunity to articulate our core services clearly, identify key initiatives for the coming time frame, and establish clear measures of success. This exercise was a critical component of a move to priority-based budgeting. The end result should be more focused services, communicated to customers and key stakeholders more clearly.

Jeff Hutton
Director, Utilities

Strathcona County Council created a strategic plan which outlines their vision for the County in 20 years, and the priorities and strategic goals to achieve that vision.

Strathcona County Administration has developed a corporate business plan to create a bridge between the long-term, high-level goals and priorities outlined by Council in its strategic plan, and the short to medium-term operational goals and priorities of the organization and its departments. Business plans will include measures so we can report how we are doing in implementing Council's strategic plan, as well as achieving department and corporate goals.



Vision and values

Strathcona County, located in the heart of Alberta, is an energetic and thriving community. A leader in North America's petroleum industry and a champion for advancing diverse agricultural business, we use our energy to power our new tomorrow.

We are a specialized municipality, and work cooperatively with our urban and rural residents to govern as a single municipality. Proud of our distinct governance model, we promote and demonstrate our achievements.

We are a welcoming place to live and attract people of all ages, cultures and walks of life to join us. Families thrive in our dynamic, caring and safe community.

We strive to be a model of ecological integrity, protecting our environment and preserving our agricultural heritage. Investment in infrastructure, quality services, cultural and recreational programs and facilities is a priority and sets us apart.

We are Canada's most livable community.

Corporate values

Integrity	Be honest and transparent; Demonstrate ethical standards and behaviors; Display courage of convictions.
Respect	Build an environment of trust; Value other peoples' strengths and ideas; Treat others with care and dignity.
Safety	Follow safe standards of practice; Maintain a safety conscious workplace for ourselves and each other; Ensure a safe community for our residents.
Fairness	Create equal opportunities to learn and grow for all employees; Demonstrate approachable leadership; Strive to communicate with purpose and clarity.
Cooperation	Encourage collaborative relationships and unique partnerships; Strive for innovation and efficiency by being open-minded; Freely share information and ideas to contribute to Strathcona County's ongoing excellence.

Department mission

Through positive leadership, continuous improvement, planning and stakeholder communication, we manage and operate municipal utility infrastructure to provide reliable services; to promote and support a sustainable environment and healthy community.
Our motto: Building a foundation for our community to thrive and prosper.

Department values

Utilities supports all corporate values of the organization in addition to having defined department values:

Integrity We clearly identify and stand by what we believe in. We are accountable for our actions and responsible for our outcomes. We are transparent, honest and sincere.

Continuous and competent improvement
We commit to education and training, to create efficiencies through planning and innovation. We provide opportunities for professional and personal growth as an investment for our future success.

Positive attitude We are optimistic, open minded and take pride in serving our community.

Leadership We inspire, empower and support others. We demonstrate positive influence on behalf of those we work with and for. We provide an encouraging environment to take risks and influence positive change.

Trust We form relationships of mutual respect, commitment and understanding to build a team that has faith in its members and is constant and dependable.

Department overview

Utilities currently has 91 full time equivalent positions that support six core business functions to manage and operate municipal utility infrastructure, providing reliable service to County residents. Our core business functions are designed to ensure the department contributes to a sustainable environment and healthy community. The Utilities Department is financially self-sufficient and does not use municipal property taxes to support operational or capital requirements, except for recycling stations and enviroservices.

Federally and provincially, the Utilities Department is required to comply with Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development's regulations and acts when providing service to County residents.

Regulatory

- Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA), including responsible member requirements, and the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET)
- Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

    - Codes of Practice
    - Water Act
    - Environmental Protection & Enhancement Act
    - Water Diversion Licensing
- Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC)
- Canada Health Act
- Canadian Energy Pipeline Association (CEPA)
- Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA)
- Environment Canada
    - Navigable Waters Act
    - Fisheries Act

Bylaws and Polices

- Bylaw 26-92: Commercial Water Hauling
- Bylaw 31-2011: Sewage System
- Bylaw 30-2011: Water System
- Bylaw 41-2013: Waste Management

Waste management services

Waste collection services (Green Routine) from Strathcona County include a curb side recycling program, organics collection and roll-out collection carts. Many recycling programs are also available to all residents of Strathcona County to help divert the amount of waste sent to the landfills through community recycle stations.

- Green Routine residential waste collection and diversion program (25,000 tonnes per year)
- Community recycle stations (7,000 tonnes per year)

Community energy services

Community energy is a system that delivers heat to a number of buildings from a central source. Strathcona County's system uses hot water heated by boilers in the energy centre, delivered through underground insulated pipes to heat individual buildings. The hot water is currently heated by natural gas.

- Centre in the Park Community Energy System (heat only) (9.8 million kWh per year)

Water

Strathcona County Utilities supplies water to many customers in the County, including Sherwood Park, rural hamlets and country residents. Utilities operate three types of distribution systems: high pressure underground pipe system, bulk truck fill, and a trickle system. The department also works with regional partners to ensure safe water distribution in the region.

- Transmission and distribution (22 million litres per day) (560 km of water pipes)
    - Water quality sampling, preventative maintenance, emergency repairs, line locates and service connects

- Fire Protection
  - Storage, fire pump maintenance and hydrant servicing
- Bulk water truck fill stations
  - Preventative maintenance and emergency repairs
- Regional water management
  - Supply forecasting, system and emergency response planning, demand management and rate negotiations for the regional water customer group
  - Operation and management contracts for other municipalities and commissions

Wastewater

Strathcona County Utilities operates and maintains all underground sewer systems for Sherwood Park, Ardrossan, Josephburg, Collingwood Cove, Half Moon Lake, Antler Lake and South Cooking Lake. This includes infrastructure serviced by low-pressure sewer systems from the property up to and including the lift station and lagoons.

- Wastewater Collection (388 km of wastewater pipes)
  - Preventative maintenance, emergency maintenance, over-strength wastewater monitoring, line locates and contract services for other municipalities and commissions
- Wastewater Treatment (17 million litres per day)
  - Transfer station and lagoon management

Stormwater

The stormwater management system gathers rainfall and surface water runoff, and helps reduce the possibility of flooding and property damage in Sherwood Park and Ardrossan. The Sump Pump Retrofit Program consists of an underground piping system that collects water discharged from the sump pump and diverts it directly into the stormwater drainage system.

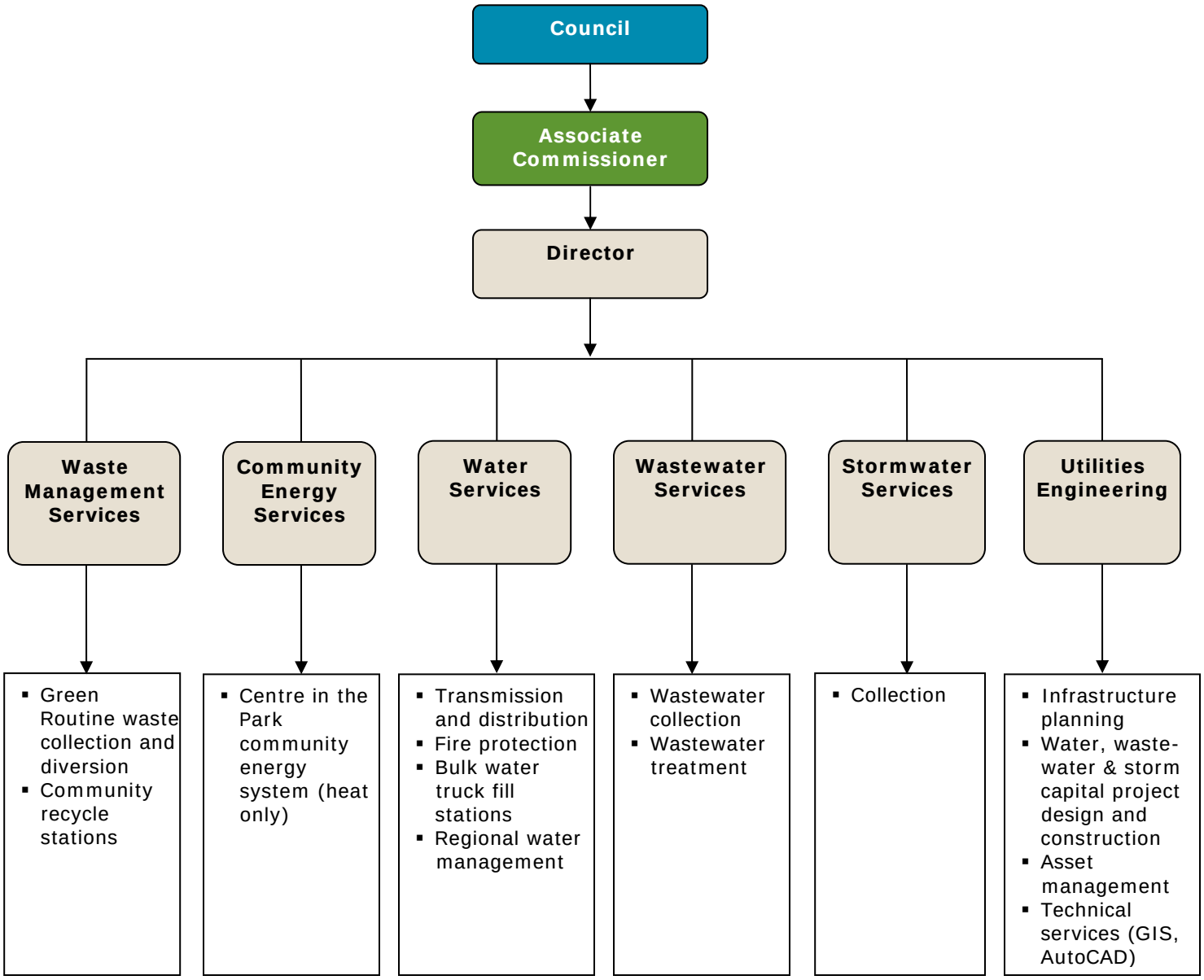
- Collection (388 km of stormwater pipes)
  - Preventative maintenance, emergency repairs, camera inspections and sump pump collector retrofit program

Utilities engineering

Utilities engineering effectively plans, designs and manages the construction of safe and sustainable water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure that promotes public health and safety.

- Infrastructure planning (including design & construction standards)
- Water, wastewater & storm capital project design & construction (over $125 million of ongoing construction)
- Asset management (over $1 billion of underground infrastructure maintained)
- Technical services (GIS, AutoCAD)

Department organizational structure



Department goals

Goal 1: Water, wastewater, stormwater and community energy infrastructure promotes public health and safety and mitigates impacts on the environment.

Outcome: Our utility infrastructure meets the needs of current customers and is prepared to serve our growing community over the life of the assets.

Linkages:

Strategic Plan (prioritized):

Goal 1: Strategically manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure.

Goal 9: Improve the efficiency of resource usage; minimize the volume of waste and its impact on the economy.

Corporate Business Plan:

Goal 1: Strathcona County has planned for long-term financial sustainability in support of service delivery and infrastructure asset management.

Municipal Development Plan

Sustainability Frameworks

Initiatives:

Develop performance measures and reporting framework for infrastructure maintenance programs

Plan and execute capital projects to support growth for North of Yellowhead and Ardrossan

Complete overall utility master plans, including servicing strategies for future development areas

Advance Utilities' asset management by developing a long-term infrastructure strategy and implementation plan

Continue work on current state assessment of utility infrastructure

Increase customer connections to maximize the use of the Centre in the Park Community Energy System

Key Performance Indicator/Measures	Benchmark	Target
Stormwater management facilities providing 1:100 year flood protection	17 of 20 (2014)	20 of 20 (2018)
County water mains with risk assessments	0% (2013)	100 (2018)
County stormwater mains with condition assessments	44% (2013)	50% (2018)
County wastewater mains with condition assessments	74% (2013)	100% (2018)

Goal 2: Programs and services allow for a healthy and thriving community while protecting the environment.

Outcome: Programs and services are compliant with health and safety regulations and residents are satisfied with services received.

Linkages:

Strategic Plan (prioritized):

- Goal 1: Strategically manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure.
- Goal 4: Advance the community's interests by developing and maintaining strong relationships with our neighbouring municipalities.
- Goal 8: Provide a climate of safety for individuals in homes, neighbourhoods and public places.
- Goal 9: Improve the efficiency of resource usage; minimize the volume of waste and its impact on the economy.

Corporate Business Plan:

- Goal 1: Strathcona County has planned for long-term financial sustainability in support of service delivery and infrastructure asset management.
- Goal 3: Economic opportunities are created through strategic partnerships.
- Goal 4: Informed decision making supports quality of life in the community.

Sustainability Frameworks

Initiatives:

Pursue partnership with the City of Edmonton for a jointly owned compost cure site

Increase frequency for Weekly Summer Organics Program

Continue to implement a multi-tenant residential waste diversion program

Obtain a water diversion license from the province

Engage residential and commercial sectors in water saving practices

Develop open cut construction crew for repairs to Strathcona County infrastructure

Key Performance Indicator / Measures	Benchmark	Target
Residential waste diverted from landfill	59% (2013)	70% (2018)
Customer satisfaction - Green Routine	74.4% (2012)	75% (2018)
Customer satisfaction - Water and Wastewater	62% (2012)	65% (2018)
Water quality testing to ensure safe potable water	100% (2013)	100% (2015)
Sewer overflows that impact natural body of water	0 (2013)	0 (2015)

Goal 3: Critical thinking and decision making are supported by integrated systems, processes and tools.

Outcome: Service delivery is efficient and effective and can be delivered on a sustainable basis.

Linkages:

Strategic Plan (prioritized):

- Goal 1: Strategically manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure.
- Goal 4: Advance the community's interests by developing and maintaining strong relationships with our neighbouring municipalities.

Corporate Business Plan:

- Goal 2: Strathcona County priorities, successes and challenges are known.
- Goal 4: Informed decision making supports quality of life in the community.
- Goal 5: We are efficient and effective in daily operations.

Initiatives:

Leverage technology to improve infrastructure planning, asset management, resource utilization and customer communication

Integrate current customer service practices with corporate service tracking system

Complete cost of service studies for wastewater and Utility Finance Policy

Collaborate with the Alberta Capital Region Wastewater Commission (ACRWC) on a Wet Weather Management Strategy

Complete stormwater study with the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the University of Alberta

Complete business process reviews for Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system related processes

Contribute to overall implementation of preferred ERP solution and lead implementation tasks related to the utility billing function

Investigate funding options for Community Energy System

Key Performance Indicator/Measures	Benchmark	Target
Operating costs per tonne of residential curbside materials collected	$23.50 (2013)	TBD (2018)
Operating costs per kilometer of water pipe	$40,040 (2013)	TBD (2018)
Operating costs per kilometer of wastewater pipe	$39,375 (2013)	TBD (2018)
Operating costs per kilometer of storm water pipe	$5,210 (2013)	TBD (2018)

Goal 4: A working environment with high staff satisfaction relating to internal communication, ability to innovate and opportunities for learning and growth.

Outcome: A work environment where staff engagement leads to extraordinary results.

Linkages:

Corporate Business Plan:

Goal 6: Strathcona County is an employer of choice attracting and retaining the best people in all aspects of municipal service delivery.

Initiatives:

Develop an internal communication strategy

Actively practice and encourage open communication, active listening and support

Provide timely and meaningful recognition and feedback

Increase emphasis on facilitation of career planning

Key Performance Indicator / Measures	Benchmark	Target
Employee engagement	75% (2014)	77% (2018)