2015-18
Department Business Plan

Planning and Development Services

Updated June 2017

STRATHCONA COUNTY

As Director of Planning and Development Services, I'm extremely fortunate to work with an amazing group of individuals who are responsible for overall land use planning and development activity in Strathcona County. Through community engagement and consultation, Planning and Development Services (PDS) seeks to understand the values of the community and reflect those values through the implementation of development policies, programs, bylaws, and standards. We maintain alignment with our corporate values by ensuring construction practices within the County are performed in general conformance with the standards and regulations, and we strive to ensure service is delivered uniformly to all residents, builders and contractors who live and work within Strathcona County.

PDS' involvement in intermunicipal planning and the Capital Region Board assists the County in maintaining effective working relationships with the federal and provincial governments, as well as neighbouring municipal governments. Through our participation and involvement, we are cultivating an active role as a leader and contributor in regional initiatives.

As identified within the Business Plan, the first goal for PDS is to ensure that new neighbourhood development is thoughtfully planned and realized through sustainable funding. To realize this goal, we will need to continue working collaboratively with the land development industry on creative and innovative cost-sharing strategies.

The second goal for the department is to ensure our stakeholders are informed, engaged and satisfied with our service. We can accomplish this goal through initiatives such as improving information accessibility, standardizing and simplifying land development processes, and educating our stakeholders on reasoning behind standards and our decision-making processes. Innovative technologies, refined processes, meaningful interactions, clear communication, concise information and staff expertise will allow us to continue to provide first-rate service to all our stakeholders.

Our third goal is to ensure all growth is well managed, while maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of County residents. Through initiatives such as maintaining bylaws and policy documents, PDS will strive to meet the strategic direction of Council by providing effective plans and policies that will continue to guide the corporation and the community.

Our fourth goal is to ensure industrial lands are identified to meet the diverse needs of prospective industries. Through implementing recommendations within the County's Industrial Land Strategy, PDS will do its part in helping to accommodating prospective industrial business, thereby supporting the County's strategic goal of increasing and diversifying the petrochemical business.

Our fifth and final goal outlined within our business plan is to ensure the department has a positive working environment that values employee contributions. We will continue to encourage members of our team to set personal development goals that will increase their ability to contribute to the success of Strathcona County. Keeping our team well-trained and as current as possible will not only build confidence within the PDS team, and help the organization realize the County's ultimate vision of being Canada's most livable community.

Stacy L. Fedechko
Director, Planning and Development Services

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	We demonstrate ethical standards and behaviours; We display honest behaviour at all times; We do what we say we will do.
Respect	We treat others with care and dignity; We pay attention to each other; We welcome a variety and diversity of ideas.
Safety	We consistently demonstrate safe work practices; We build an environment of openness and trust; We make it safe for each other to voice opinions or concerns.
Fairness	We consider how our actions might affect others; We treat everyone impartially and equitably; We are willing to share the reasoning behind our thinking and decisions.
Cooperation	We support, assist and learn from each other; We give credit to others for their contributions; We compromise when needed to achieve common goals.

Department mission

Planning and Development Services is committed to ensuring Strathcona Country remains a safe and healthy community by balancing urban and rural land uses, natural environment and economic prosperity, all through the use of innovative and sound planning concepts and expertise.

Department overview

PDS is comprised of a team of individuals, who are passionate and skilled professionals, helping to create a community of choice by design.

The department is guided by federal and provincial legislation and municipal policies such as:

- Municipal Government Act
- Alberta Safety Codes Act
- Capital region growth plan
- Municipal Development Plan (2007)
- Statutory plans
- Land Use Bylaw
- Design and construction standards
- Municipal bylaws and policies

PDS performs under the following five core business functions. These functions play a key role in achieving our mission, specifically ensuring a safe and healthy community and balancing the natural environment and economic prosperity. Each core function is aided and enabled by the above documents to support all business sectors in Strathcona County.

Land development planning

The Land Development Planning Branch (LDP) leads effective land use planning review and approval processes that contribute to Strathcona's livability and sustainability. LDP helps define the way our community is planned and developed in accordance with provincial legislation, the County's Municipal Development Plan, other statutory plans, the Land Use Bylaw and various County policies.

- Capital Region Board – Land use planning applications
- Municipal Development Plan and Land use bylaw
- Statutory plan application review
- Land Use Bylaw amendments, preparation and review
- Conceptual schemes – Preparation and review
- Subdivision application review
- Long range planning

Land development engineering
Land Development Engineering (LDE) works with the development industry to coordinate and facilitate logical and balanced development and servicing of land. LDE administers the municipal infrastructure servicing requirements from start to finish, beginning with review of engineering designs to final acceptance of constructed infrastructure.

- Development agreements
- Offsite levies
- Municipal and private land development engineering review
- Construction completion and final acceptance

Permitting, inspections and customer services
The Permitting, Inspections and Customer Service Branch (PICS) is responsible for decisions on all development, building, and safety codes applications to ensure compliance with the Land Use Bylaw and Alberta Safety Codes Act. This includes conducting next day inspections on all new installations, buildings, and structures as outlined in our Quality Management Plan for each discipline (building, electrical, plumbing, and gas). The branch provides front counter customer service and information and technical support on all PDS processes.

- Customer process facilitation
- Application review, permit issuance and code compliance for development, building, plumbing, electrical and gas
- Compliance letters and file searches
- Safety codes inspections
- Land Use Bylaw enforcement
- Civic addressing and naming
- Technology and data management

Environmental planning
Environmental planning is responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable legislation, policy and regulations. EP coordinates and provides environmental management, monitoring and assessment for internal and external clients. Environmental Planning also supports the Beaver Hills Initiative.

- Environmental planning and review
- Environmental policy development and implementation
- Environmental monitoring and assessment
- Environmental management
- Beaver Hills Initiative

Land management services

Land Management Services (LMS) is responsible for the delivery of all real estate and leasing programs and activities to support the delivery of corporate programs. LMS oversees complex negotiations for acquisitions, dispositions and exchange agreements as well as administration of contracts for appraisals, land agents and other consultants. LMS is also responsible for developing policies and procedures to ensure property transactions and business of municipal government align with fair practices.

- Corporate property acquisition and disposition
- Encroachments
- Land licenses and leases
- Crossing agreements
- Easements and utility right-of-way agreements
- Unauthorized use of County land

Department core functions and programs

Land Development Planning

- Capital Region Board – Land use planning applications
- Municipal Development Plan and Land use bylaw
- Statutory plan application review
- Land Use Bylaw amendment, preparation and review
- Conceptual schemes – Preparation and review
- Subdivision application review
- Long range planning

Land Development Engineering

- Development agreements
- Offsite levies
- Municipal and private land development engineering review
- Construction completion and final acceptance

Permitting, Inspections and Customer Service

- Customer process facilitation
- Application review, permit issuance and code compliance for development, building, plumbing, electrical and gas
- Compliance letters and file searches
- Safety codes inspections
- Land Use Bylaw enforcement
- Civic addressing and naming
- Technology and data management

Environmental Planning

- Environmental planning and review
- Environmental policy development and implementation
- Environmental monitoring and assessment
- Environmental management
- Beaver Hills Initiative

Land Management Services

- Corporate property acquisition and disposition
- Encroachments
- Land licenses and leases
- Crossing agreements
- Easments and utiltiy right-of-way agreements
- Unautorized use of County land

Department goals

Goal 1: New neighbourhood development is thoughtfully planned and realized through sustainable funding.

Outcome: The sequence of growth and funding are defined.

Linkages:

Strategic Plan (prioritized):
- Goal 1: Strategically manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure.

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.

Municipal Development Plan

Initiatives:

Continue to work collaboratively with land development industry on creative and innovative cost sharing strategies

Encourage developers to front-end infrastructure through development agreements to minimize debenture impacts to levy rates and reduce financial risk to the County

Ensure an adequate and suitable land base exists to accommodate growth needs as indicated by Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation quarterly updates and the Industrial Land Strategy

Complete Bremner and Colchester Growth Management Strategies by March 2016

Complete Mature Neighbourhood Strategy

Key Performance Indicator and Measures	Benchmark	Target
Residential growth into the Urban Service Area (urban service area/growth to rest of the County)	80/20 (2014)	80/20 (2018)
Residential densities in the Priority Growth Areas (PGA)	30-40 du/nrha in PGAs (2015) 2 du/grha in CCRA-S (2015)	30-40 du/nrha in PGAs (2018) 2 du/grha in CCRA-S (2018)

Goal 2: Stakeholders are informed, engaged and satisfied by our service.

Outcome: Planning and Development processes are consistent, timely and efficient.

Linkages:

Strategic Plan (prioritized):

Goal 4: Increase public involvement and communicate with the community on issues affecting the County's future.

Corporate Business Plan:

Goal 2: Strathcona County priorities, successes and challenges are known.

Initiatives:

Refine the customer experience by engaging with customers in new and unique ways by leveraging online technology

Improve information accessibility for public

Standardize and simplify land development processes to be more effective and cost efficient

Educate public on reasoning behind standards and decision-making processes

Key Performance Indicator/Measures	Benchmark	Target
Engineering drawing review period for planning applications (ASPs, LUB amendments, etc) – 80% of engineering drawings	Under 5 weeks (2014)	Under 4weeks (2018)
Engineering drawing review period for development permits	22 days (2015)	20 days (2018)
Review time for decision on development permits 1) Permitted use residential permits issued 2) Discretionary use/variance residential permits issued 3) Major commercial/industrial permits issued	 1) Within 7 days (2014) 2) Within 20 days (2014) 3) Within 50 days (2014)	 1) Within 3-5 days (2018) 2) Within 15 days (2018) 3) Within 40 days (2018)
ePermit usage by contractors	60% (2014)	80% (2018)
Inspection of construction to ensure compliance of applicable safety codes	Within 24 hours of request (2014)	Within 24 hours of request (2018)
Environmental assessment and review period	Under 4 weeks (2014)	Under 3 weeks (2018)

Goal 3: Growth is well managed, while maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of County residents.

Outcome: Strathcona County is planned to serve the growing community.

Linkages:

Strategic Plan (prioritized):

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

Corporate Business Plan:

Goal 4: Informed decision making supports quality of life in the community.

Goal 5: We are efficient and effective in daily operations.

Municipal Development Plan

Initiatives:

Ensure all development and associated infrastructure meets policy standards

Maintain bylaws and policy documents, including updates to the Municipal Development Plan.

Continue long-range planning exercises such as area concept plans, subsequent to approvals of the growth management strategies

Continue long-range planning exercises that are not related to the growth management strategies

Develop and implement a climate resiliency plan to ensure service delivery, continued operations and protect and adapt infrastructure in the face of changing climate and extreme weather events by 2017

In alignment with Provincial Wetland Policy, meet obligations as per Alberta Environment and Parks, for recognition as a Wetland Restoration Agent.

Continue support of the Beaver Hills Biosphere

Conduct systematic sampling of water within our Storm Water Management Facilities (SWFM) and natural systems to monitor the health and resiliency of our manmade and natural aquatic systems.

Ensure municipal land requirements are adequate to meet both current and future operational land needs for Strathcona County

Key Performance Indicator / Measures	Benchmark	Target
Urban growth within priority growth areas accommodates various housing type needs 1) Low density residential 2) Medium density residential	 1) 70% (2014) 2) 30% (2014)	 1) 60% (2018) 2) 40% (2018)
Number of statutory plans reviewed per year to ensure they are in conformance with applicable plans (update the plan if necessary)	0 (2016)	2 (2018)

Goal 4: Industrial lands are planned to meet the diverse needs of prospective industries.

Outcome: Facilitate industrial development through proactive land use planning and implementation.

Linkages:

Strategic Plan (prioritized):

Goal 2: Increase and diversify the petrochemical business.

Goal 3: Advance the community's interests by developing and maintaining strong relationships with our neighboring municipalities and civic organizations to ensure long-term prosperity.

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

Initiatives:

Review applicable statutory plans to determine if new industrial development could be accommodated

Implement recommendations within the Industrial Land Strategy

Continue to work with industry on ensuring minimal impact on the environment with respect to industrial development

Continue to work with industry and regional partners to expand the air quality monitoring network for both compliance and community monitoring

Key Performance Indicator / Measures	Benchmark	Target
Number of industrial statutory plan reviews completed per year (if development is still possible, update the plan if necessary)	0 (2016)	1 (2018)

Goal 5: PDS has a positive working environment that values employee contributions.

Outcome: Job satisfaction among employees is high.

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:

Encourage staff to set personal development goals that will increase their ability to contribute to the success of Strathcona County

Document and refine processes to help with internal communication

Create team spirit and focus for PDS

Provide objective feedback that is effective in improving performance and effectiveness

Provide professional development in support of professional designations

Key Performance Indicator/Measures	Benchmark	Target
Percentage of department staff completing professional development training annually	39% (2016)	75% (2018)