



**2020 - 2023**  
**DEPARTMENT**  
**BUSINESS PLAN**  
Communications

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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

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Strathcona County's communications needs are met by a network of communications, marketing and design professionals, residing within a corporate Communications department, as well as individual operational departments.

Together, we provide strategic communications planning and advice, and enhance the County's communications products and services. Most recently, this has included growing our social media presence, planning and implementing award-winning campaigns, and expanding our use of technology.

Over the next business planning cycle, corporate Communications will work with department partners to clarify our respective roles. This will strengthen collaboration and improve our overall efficiency. In the process, we expect to increase the impact of our communications to the public.

We have begun to address a long-standing gap in internal communications. We launched a new intranet in October 2019, based on employee feedback, building the site on the Office 365 platform to ensure consistency and facilitate greater integration with internal systems. We will continue to enhance this site's usefulness in the coming years.

Recruiting a position dedicated exclusively to internal communications has provided much-needed focus on large and important internal-facing initiatives occurring across the organization. Implementation of an organization-wide internal communications strategy in 2020 will further advance our efforts in this important area.

Launch of the Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel (SCOOP) to enhance resident engagement has generated more requests for service. Challenged to keep pace with service demands, the team launched survey central to manage the volume, and offered training to improve the quality of surveys being developed. An online discussion forum, to be launched in 2020, will enable SCOOP participants to explore topics in detail and exchange ideas. We plan to revisit the requirement of a second research analyst position moving forward.

Many thanks to the talented communications professionals working within the department and elsewhere for their dedication to delivering quality results. My appreciation as well to my colleagues on the leadership team, for their continued support and for bringing us interesting, challenging projects on which to work.

Carmen Herbers  
Director, Communications

# PLANNING FOUNDATION

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## STRATHCONA COUNTY VISION

### Living in Strathcona County

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.

Becoming Canada's most livable community

## CORPORATE MISSION

We are committed to working collaboratively, efficiently and effectively to provide quality service delivery to citizens, business, and industry alike.

## CORPORATE VALUES

Our values help to form our organizational identity and define our culture.

<b>Integrity</b>	We demonstrate ethical standards and behaviours We display honest behaviour at all times We do what we say we will do
<b>Respect</b>	We treat others with care and dignity We pay attention to each other We welcome a variety and diversity of ideas
<b>Safety</b>	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
<b>Fairness</b>	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
<b>Cooperation</b>	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 STATEMENT

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In support of Strathcona County's strategic direction and business goals, the Communications department advances the reputation and positive image of the organization through open, transparent and meaningful stakeholder communication and engagement.

## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

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The Communications department is made up of 15 professionals, who operate independently as a team of specialists, and in partnership with other internal and external resources.

Communications' functions are governed and guided by all policies, practices, acts and plans (and any related procedures) to ensure professional and ethical conduct, and alignment with other corporate requirements.

Of specific interest to Communications are the following:

- Public Engagement Policy (GOV-002-025)
- Communications Policy (GOV-002-029)
- Social Media Policy (GOV-002-028)
- Visual Identity Guidelines
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

# DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS

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## COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTATION, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Provide strategic communication direction, consultation and training for client departments, executive and elected officials. Assess communications needs, develop communications plans and messaging, determine best approaches to communications challenges, and measure results of campaigns.

### 2020 – 2023 FORECAST

The department still has plans to review how communications services are delivered through an organization-wide lens. A one-enterprise approach will promote a longer-term strategic focus for this work and; potentially, gain efficiencies through current (and possibly future) skill sets that aim to reduce costs through shared resources. We also anticipate that this approach will support a more even distribution of resources across the County and reduce siloes and message clutter.

## STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

Foster positive working environments with internal and external stakeholders to meet strategic direction and business goals. Advance the organization's reputation and enhance stakeholder understanding of the organization's priorities, programs and position. This Communications program is responsible for monitoring the environment (traditional and social media), issues management, and for preparing the organization to respond. Other areas of focus include internal communications and emergency and crisis communications (filling the Public Information Officer position as part of the Emergency Operations Centre).

### 2020 – 2023 FORECAST

Communications provides strategic advice and services that respond to the varied needs of its organizational stakeholders, adhere to best practice and meet the organization's business requirements.



The department will continue to leverage its new internal communications position to address a long-standing gap in the provision of internally facing communications strategy and service.

Large, corporate and change management projects require coordinated, concentrated and ongoing internal communications focus. There is a need for more effective ways to reach Strathcona County's offsite and remote workforce, and we will continue to investigate and implement appropriate solutions.

Working in partnership with internally facing departments, our internal communications position is applying best practice to develop and deliver focused, accurate and consistent messages to our internal audiences, creating more feedback channels and enhancing two-way communications with staff. In the coming year, the focus will turn to gaining support for an overall strategy and approach.

The goal is an informed, engaged workforce that more fully understands and supports organizational goals, and lives organizational values and desired culture.

## DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Manage development, evolution and ongoing maintenance of County websites (external and internal), and proactively monitor the industry for trends, opportunities and challenges. Develop, advise and oversee standards for corporate websites. Administer, oversee, and provide training and support for corporate communications applications (event calendar, survey and electronic newsletters, Digital Asset Manager, social media tools). Provide consultation on web analytics, online marketing, web usability, accessibility, and custom website applications.

### 2020 – 2023 FORECAST

Strathcona County's external website serves as the hub of Communications' programming, with all marketing and communications efforts pointing back to the County's external site. The team continues to explore opportunities and to implement site improvements that enhance our visitors' experience. Recent examples include the application of accessibility and usability principles and standards.

Over the next year, we will evaluate the suitability of SharePoint as an appropriate interface for the County's digital resources – photographs and images. Centralizing these resources within SharePoint will bring all our assets onto one platform and save the cost of an additional software license.

Most recently, digital communications' work focused on enhancing the functionality of its internal site, The Insider. A new site was launched on the Office 365 platform in October 2019.

Strathcona County's intranet supports approximately 2,000 staff with varying levels of technology expertise, devices and connections. Based on employee feedback, the new site ensures all staff have equal, easy access to relevant, timely information and tools required to do their jobs. Site enhancements included an improved search function, better overall user experience and a streamlined editing interface for the organization's 100+ editors.

Moving forward, the team will work on adding all staff access through personal email logins; implementing a new solution for a staff bulletin board, and facilitating personalized content targeting for pages, files and news.

A new cross-departmental Social Media Committee was formed in 2019 to provide advice, recommendations and guidance on the County's use of its social media platforms. The committee will continue to enhance organizational understanding of the benefits, implications and risks in using social media, and take steps to ensure our use is aligned with the existing plans, priorities, corporate values and policies, as well as providing a good fit with business and communication/marketing plans and objectives.

## BRAND MANAGEMENT

Oversee and preserve the integrity of the Strathcona County brand, which includes developing standards, monitoring application and evaluating results. Brand elements include the logo, typeface, messaging and overall tone of communication. Application of the brand spans all communications, from advertising, to printed and digital materials, signage and social media. Program area includes oversight and coordination of the design and placement of the organization's advertising.

### 2020 – 2023 FORECAST

Communications works with department communicators, designers and administrative staff to facilitate correct and consistent application of brand elements – from messaging to the logo. Most recently, we revised the visual identity manual to clarify previously misunderstood aspects of logo use, and to incorporate new features requested, such as an expanded colour palette. A new section on signage has also been added.

Communications will continue to work with internal staff and external vendors to ensure brand integrity.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Guide public engagement efforts at Strathcona County, based on the Public Engagement Policy and Framework, which outline a process for planning, implementing and evaluating these activities. Provide guidance, analysis and advice on corporate and department surveys, coordinate the annual public satisfaction survey, and provide reporting and analysis for census. This program also manages the online research panel.

### 2020 – 2023 FORECAST

The importance of well executed public engagement (PE) to inform and drive good decisions is undisputed and forms an important aspect of Strathcona County's business practice.

The team celebrated the first full year of operation of SCOOP (Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel) in the fall, implementing a survey central database to manage the growing volume of surveys. Training provided across the organization, combined with a new directive and procedures to further guide department work, is helping to improve the quality of surveys being developed at the County.

An online discussion forum, to be launched in 2020, will enable SCOOP participants to explore topics in detail and exchange ideas.

# DEPARTMENT ANNUAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

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## DEPARTMENT SUPPORT ROLES (ANNUAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS)

This table illustrates the initiatives that this department will be expected to support during the 2020 – 2023 Business Plan timeline. Lead departments are responsible for providing clear plans to support departments. These plans are to advise support departments on particulars of the support required and timing.

INIT/AUTO #	Annual capital improvement	Description	Department lead	Timeframe
AUTO 1309 1310 1311 1312 1313	Annual Information Technology Corporate Infrastructure Replacement Program - Municipal	To support computer and technology infrastructure components remain current and able to deliver on services and reduce risk of service interruptions.	Information Technology Services	Ongoing
AUTO 1284 1285 1286 1287 1288	Annual Facility Capital Lifecycle Program	To maintain safe, functioning and operating County facilities.	Facility Services	Q1 2019 - ongoing

# DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

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## ENTERPRISE-WIDE COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW (INIT 26)

Across the organization, overall expenditures on communication resources continue to grow, with little corporate oversight related to the skill sets being acquired (mix of marketing, design and communications professionals), or the scope and focus of these skills (project, program, department). This approach has led to questions related to roles, and in some instances to inconsistent messaging, and competition for attention (message clutter). A lack of role clarity can lead to incongruent products, lost communication opportunities, competing priorities and rushed timelines.

Through this initiative, we will review the structure of communications services through an organization-wide lens. A one-enterprise approach will promote a longer-term strategic focus for this work and; potentially, gain efficiencies and reduce costs through shared resources. Such an approach will also support a more even distribution of resources across the County and reduce silos and message clutter.

### **Linkage to corporate business plan organizational excellence goal and result(s):**

Goal 9: Continuously improving the way we work, as one organization, in an agile and sustainable manner

- Supports continuous improvement
- Supports integrated planning
- Communicates to stakeholders about County programs and services
- Collaborates with departments

### **Department role:**

Lead: Communications

Support: All departments

### **Timeframe:**

Start time: Q1 2021

End time: Q4 2021

## DEPARTMENT SUPPORT ROLES (IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES)

This table illustrates the initiatives that this department will be expected to support during the 2020 – 2023 Business Plan timeline. Lead departments are responsible for providing clear plans to support departments. These plans are to advise support departments on particulars of the support required and timing.

INIT/AUTO #	Improvement initiative	Description	Department lead	Timeframe
AUTO 1003	Strathcona County Business Transformation (SCBT) Program	To transform and align people, process and technology in four of the County's core Business functions of finance, human resources, procurement and contract management. Included in process and technology are utility billing and property tax. Included in technology is corporate asset management.	Corporate Planning	Q3 2017 – Q3 2020
INIT 90	Enterprise Strategic Portfolios Implementation	To operationalize enterprise strategic portfolios to ensure corporate -wide management oversight and decision-making accountability.	Corporate Planning	Q2 2018 – Q4 2022
INIT 30	Digital Workplace Program	To establish a single, integrated, modern electronic content and collaboration technology platform that will replace several isolated software applications that exist today.	Information Technology Services	Q1 2019 – Q4 2021
INIT 79	Sustainable Rural Roads Master Plan (SRRMP) Update	To develop a new Sustainable Rural Roads Master Plan in support of an effective and efficient rural road network.	Transportation Agriculture Services	Q1 2019 – Q3 2020
INIT 66	New Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Legislation Implementation	To be fully compliant with the new OHS legislation coming into effect June 1, 2018.	Human Resources	Q1 2019 – Q1 2023
INIT 89	Performance Measurement Maturity Improvements and Service Level Review	To improve the County's performance measurement maturity and to review service levels.	Corporate Planning	Q1 2019 – Q4 2022



<b>INIT/ AUTO #</b>	<b>Improvement initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Department lead</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
INIT 86	Corporate Inclusion and Diversity Training	To develop staff skills and knowledge to help create and maintain an inclusive work environment and promote inclusion within the community through citizen interactions.	Human Resources and Intergovernmental Affairs	Q1 2019 – Q4 2022
AUTO 1823	OHS / Disability Management Technology Project	To create a digital workflow system to address information on the County's OHS and DM areas.	Human Resources	Q2 2019 – Q3 2021
INIT 63	Succession Planning Strategy	To develop a succession planning strategy.	Human Resources	Q3 2019 – Q4 2022
INIT 82	Transportation Tactical Asset Management Plan	To manage, invest and plan for sustainable transportation asset operations by developing a department Tactical Asset Management Plan that will align under the Corporate Asset management Plan (2019).	Transportation Agriculture Services	Q4 2021 – Q4 2023
INIT 14	Enterprise Risk Management Program	To develop an enterprise risk management program.	Corporate Finance	Q1 2021 – Q4 2023
INIT 8	Business Expense Policy Review and Update	To review and update the Employee Business Expense Policy.	Corporate Finance	Q1 2021 – Q4 2021
INIT 32	Program Based Budgeting and Reporting Framework	To develop and / or transition to a program-based budgeting framework.	Corporate Planning	Q3 2021 – Q4 2024
INIT 104	Municipal Emergency Management and Business Continuity Management Systems Integration	To properly interconnect and update department business continuity and municipal emergency response plans.	Emergency Services	Q1 2020 – ongoing
INIT 38	Corporate Payment Options Review	To complete a comprehensive review of the different payment options offered to customers in various Departments.	Corporate Finance	Q1 2022 – Q4 2022

## DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

### DEPARTMENT SUPPORT ROLES (STRATEGIC INITIATIVES)

This table illustrates the initiatives that this department will be expected to support during the 2020 – 2023 Business Plan timeline. Lead departments are responsible for providing clear plans to support departments. These plans are to advise support departments on particulars of the support required and timing.

INIT/ AUTO #	Strategic initiative	Description	Department lead	Timeframe
AUTO 1518	Multi-Purpose Agricultural Facility Development	To design the facility, construction documents, acquire permits, complete tender process and fund ongoing operational costs of the facility.	Transportation and Agriculture Services	Q4 2017 – Q4 2023
AUTO 1321	Broadway Boulevard and Broadview Drive Roundabout Construction Intersection Upgrade	To upgrade the Broadway Boulevard / Broadview Drive intersection to a single-lane roundabout, including storm upgrades, utility moves, and sidewalks at the roundabout with tie-ins to existing sidewalks in the area.	Transportation Planning and Engineering	Q1 2019 – Q4 2020
AUTO 1160	Wye Road Upgrade - Range Road 231, Wye Road to Hillshire Boulevard	To upgrade Range Road 231 from Hillshire Boulevard to Wye Road and the Range Road 231 / Wye Road intersection.	Transportation Planning and Engineering	Q1 2020 – Q1 2022
AUTO 1649	Wye Road Widening, Estate Drive to Clover Bar Road Widening Construction	To widen Wye Road from Estate Drive to Clover Bar Road to six lanes.	Transportation Planning and Engineering	Q1 2019 – Q4 2022
INIT 21	Tourism Strategy and Implementation	To provide a strategy to guide future tourism activities.	Economic Development and Tourism	Q3 2019 – Q3 2020
INIT 3	Event and Sport Tourism - Special Olympics Alberta Summer Games 2021	To host the 2021 Special Olympics Alberta Summer Games.	Recreation, Parks and Culture	Q1 2019 – Q4 2021



# APPENDIX 1:

## STRATHCONA COUNTY GOALS AND RESULTS

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### STRATEGIC GOALS (EXTERNAL COMMUNITY FACING)

#### **Goal 1: Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents**

- Opportunities for meaningful connections within communities
- Diverse and inclusive communities
- Appropriate access to the social service system through partnerships  
Affordable basic municipal services
- Programming meets the changing needs of residents
- Opportunities to be healthy and active

#### **Goal 2: Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure**

- Efficient and effective multi-modal transportation network
- Safe, reliable utility infrastructure
- Innovative “smart” infrastructure
- Accessible cultural, recreational and social infrastructure
- Accessible, reliable internet connectivity
- Partnerships enhance infrastructure investment opportunities

#### **Goal 3: Cultivate economic diversification, within the petro-chemical industry and beyond, through a business-friendly environment**

- Strategic partnerships promote business growth and retention
- Planning supports strategic development
- Critical physical and technology infrastructure supports business, industry, and agriculture
- Investment attraction and retention focus on downstream, value-added industry
- Strengths and innovation provide a competitive advantage, and support attraction and diversification

- Growth opportunities increase through regional brand and economic development strategies

**Goal 4: Ensure effective stewardship of water, land, air and energy resources**

- Appropriate and effective use of agricultural land
- Natural areas and resources balance value for current and future generations
- Municipal buildings deploy efficient technology where appropriate
- Growth and development balanced with recognition and protection of the biosphere (Beaver Hills)
- County uses best practice approach to waste management

**Goal 5: Foster collaboration through regional, community and governmental partnerships**

- Improved regional land use and resource management planning
- Regional assets leveraged for mutual benefit
- Innovation and lifelong learning opportunities occur through collaboration with educational institutions
- Community partnerships leveraged to expand the County's ability to respond to the changing needs of the community

**Goal 6: Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents**

- Connected, accessible multi-modal transportation network, including trails
- Available, accessible and affordable recreational opportunities
- Diverse, affordable neighbourhoods, amenities and housing opportunities
- Enhanced community interaction and connectedness
- Accessible community and cultural events, entertainment, shopping and dining opportunities

**Goal 7: Provide opportunities for public engagement and communication**

- Community is informed about County decisions
- Community – urban and rural – satisfied with opportunities to provide input

- Community is confident in how tax dollars are managed
- Public engagement efforts and information sharing mechanisms are innovative and accessible

**Goal 8: Foster an environment for safe communities**

- Law enforcement, emergency and social services respond to community risk
- Proactive safety education and community involvement
- Utility infrastructure provides safe, clean water, manages wastewater treatment, and provides effective storm-water management
- Citizens feel safe to express themselves in ways that represent their values, beliefs, and lifestyles
- Transportation network, including trails, allows people and goods to move safely and efficiently

**CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE GOAL (INTERNAL FACING)**

**Goal 9: Continuously improving the way we work, as one organization, in an agile and sustainable manner**

- Collaborates with regional, community and government partners
- Integrates information and technology
- Supports long term financial sustainability
- Supports infrastructure management
- Supports workplace culture that builds trust and promotes employee contribution
- Supports development of employee capacity through training and development
- Supports insight-driven/evidence-based decision making
- Supports continuous improvement
- Ensures compliance with regulations, laws, procedures and policies
- Supports integrated planning
- Leverages tools (i.e. technology, equipment) to assist in service delivery
- Engages stakeholders in decision making
- Communicates to stakeholders about County programs and services
- Collaborates with departments