



2020 - 2023
DEPARTMENT
BUSINESS PLAN
Economic
Development and
Tourism

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STRATHCONA
COUNTY

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



The Economic Development and Tourism department has a dedicated team of professionals. We are passionate about enabling the success and growth of business and industry in Strathcona County.

Our primary objective is to increase the total prosperity, revenue and assessment in Strathcona County. We are focused on attracting further investment, especially the value-added components of the hydrocarbon and petrochemical industry, while building and growing the agri-business, commercial/retail and small business sectors. We do this through business attraction, retention, expansion, development attraction and entrepreneur support. We also undertake tourism marketing and product development initiatives that enhance quality of place.

Our efforts for 2020-2023 include development of a formal Strathcona County tourism strategy and implementation plan, which will support agri-tourism, agriculture sector development, sports tourism, and meeting, festival, and convention attraction to support our hospitality and accommodations industry. We will work closely with Edmonton Global, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region's economic development entity, to advance the development of several critical sectors, and to collaborate on other projects of shared importance.

Emerging sectors such as transportation and logistics will continue to be explored. Our team will continue both formal and informal business visitations, small business education and one-on-one support services. We continue to support a positive working environment and opportunities for learning and growth. Our team benchmarks our projects by participating in peer-based award programs. We continue to leverage strategic partnerships creating opportunities for sustainable growth. The department enjoys excellent working partnerships with the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce, Strathcona Industrial Association, and Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association to name a few. Our Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee provides additional insight on the business and development goals to the department, while encouraging implementation of creative solutions to identified challenges at the speed of business.

Gerald Gabinet, B. Comm, Ec.D. HLM EDA Alberta

Director, Economic Development and Tourism

PLANNING FOUNDATION

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.

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 STATEMENT

Economic Development and Tourism is committed to enabling the success and growth of business and industry in Strathcona County. We do this through business and investment attraction, business retention and expansion, and entrepreneurial support. Our mission supports a strong, diversified and resilient economy, contributing to advancing quality of life and place.

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Economic Development and Tourism's professionals operate collaboratively to enable a business climate that is conducive to business success. We do this through leadership, knowledge exchange, referrals, education, research, coaching and providing assistance to businesses on many levels. We provide free and confidential assistance to businesses of all sizes.

EDT works with internal and external resources to encourage business and employment growth in the community and the region. The department focuses its efforts to support a strong and balanced economy while adapting to ever-changing customer needs.

The department is guided through many higher level strategic documents including the Municipal Development Plan, Strathcona County Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Retail Market Study, Foreign Direct Investment Strategy, Diversification Review, and Industrial Land Use Strategy.

The department works closely with regional stakeholders to advance the economic development and tourism interests of the community. These stakeholders include Edmonton Global, Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association, Strathcona Industrial Association, the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, Economic Developers of Alberta, Economic Developers of Canada, International Economic Development Council, International Council of Shopping Centers, Travel Alberta, Economic Development, Trade and Tourism and Energy ministries at the Government of Alberta and other stakeholders including the Federal Government.

DEPARTMENT CORE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS AND PROGRAMS

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economic Development and Tourism provides support to key investors in order to grow the economy. This includes commercial, industrial and land development investors. Support includes opportunity assessments, attraction to the community, data provision, mapping, information about the community, facilitating regulatory and development permitting processing, and providing detailed information to assist business decisions. Our work to support investors is done to spur on business growth, increase the overall tax base through increased revenue generation, and to diversify the local economy while providing employment options for our citizens. The Priority Based Budget programs under the Economic Growth core function are:

- Industrial Attraction
- Commercial Attraction
- Development Attraction

2020 – 2023 FORECAST

A significant investment of time and resources will be allocated to liaising with international and national business investors in the petrochemical sector. This resource allocation is in alignment with the foreign direct investment strategy. This work references goal 3 of the overall strategic plan: to cultivate economic diversification within the petrochemical industry and beyond, through a business friendly environment. Investment attraction and retention will focus on downstream, value-added industry. Our activities will also align with initiatives from the Government of Alberta's Economic Development, Trade and Tourism Ministry to encourage companies to utilize the investment attraction programs including the petrochemical diversification program and partial upgrading program. Initiatives and strategy will continue to be coordinated with the Alberta Industrial Heartland Association.

Promotional and marketing activities of an international scope inclusive of trade shows, coordinated trade missions with provincial and regional trade partners, custom publications and online resources to attract industrial investment will contribute to the long term financial viability of our specialized municipality.

Commercial attraction for new retail and offices developments will continue with an emphasis on filling existing vacancies (business retention and expansion). In addition, supporting small infill, greenfield developments and approved future growth projects will ultimately assist the development community.

DIVERSIFICATION AND INNOVATION

Businesses and economies must explore diversification and seek new opportunities. By strengthening our local economy, we are more resilient to economic change. The department supports and encourages entrepreneurs that have a passion for innovation and creative ideas. As examples, we provide business mentorship services, start-up coaching, statistics and demographics, location services, a formal and informal business visitation program, information on new markets, information sessions on exporting, connection to innovation focused provincial supports among others. We are focused on retention and expansion as well as foreign direct investment efforts within the department. We also encourage existing businesses to diversify their markets and expand their operations. Through attraction, retention and expansion efforts, we seek companies that can fill gaps in our local and regional market place. An ongoing commitment to professional development allows the team to consistently remain at the forefront of innovation resulting in better service delivery for our clients. The Priority Based Budget programs under the Diversification and Innovation core function are:

- Sector Development
- Business Mentorship

2020 – 2023 FORECAST

Strategic partnerships will be leveraged through strong business networks to create opportunities for growth in the County. Sector specific industry connector events and educational opportunities for business will be planned and implemented with an anticipated target of six educational workshops/sessions per year. Sector examples include microbrewery development, energy supply chain, and tourism.

Staff within the department will continue to be trained to provide the best referral services possible, known as “concierge services.” Costs associated with program delivery have been reflected in the four year operating budget forecast with inflationary adjustments included.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Business supports offered by the department include: seminars for small and medium-sized enterprises, one-on-one support, community events which are focused on business benefit, and business retention and expansion services among others. The business support function ensures long-term success of businesses in the County as well as provides support for expansion due to their success. Business success results in increases to the municipal tax base revenue, which in turn allows for continued service excellence for residents and business stakeholders alike. The department supports economic sector collaboration by working with organized business groups in various sectors including tourism. The Priority Based Budget programs under the Business Support core function are:

- Small Business Seminars
- Business Owners One-on-One Support
- Business Expansion Services
- Business Retention Services
- Community Events

2020 – 2023 FORECAST

A diverse selection of business seminar topics will be planned by EDT either in partnership with other stakeholders or independently as we strive to deliver a minimum of six sessions per calendar year. Examples may include Small Business Week, doing business with government, tourism, marketing and social media. The department will remain flexible in the type of seminar/workshops to remain flexible and responsive to business needs. Both appointments and walk-in clients are welcomed to discuss starting a business, marketing, real estate, demographics, mapping and more. EDT will continue to identify key businesses that may be struggling to stay in business or leave the community to identify how assistance can be provided. Business retention and expansion surveys will continue every three years at minimum.

In terms of community events, EDT will focus on events with the most tourism or visitor impact in partnership with other County departments. Festivals and events are a good tool for business retention as they support our existing commercial businesses and hotels.

In conjunction with Recreation, Parks and Culture, efforts to encourage new product development for privately run festivals and sports tourism events will continue. Ongoing efficiencies will be explored with various County departments

as it relates to the planning and execution of the CP Holiday Train and Christmas in the Heartland events at Bremner House, both of which draw local residents.

The annual Savour Food Festival will be explored for expansion opportunities as the event is well received and has been shown to attract visitors from Edmonton and area. Support for new events such as Ravenwood and the Highland Games will continue. EDT does recognize through priority based budgeting that new funding for community events is limited. There is also recognition that the visitation or tourism webpages on the corporate website will need to be enhanced to reflect current best practices to effectively communicate things to do, activities and benefits of taking a day trip or overnight stay within the County.

READINESS (RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION)

A key component of being able to see gains in an economy is readiness. The department strives to provide current quality market research to the business community. The department seeks to provide useful information such as a retail market analysis, information on future industrial land strategies, demographic information, custom maps and consumer expenditure data, business gap and sector analysis among other information pertinent for business strategy. We also provide business and development outreach by presenting appropriate information to the local community and the broader region about successes and opportunities in our community. Utilizing maps, data, geolocation analysis and systems we are able to provide a wide range of useful information to those who are considering business investment. The Priority Based Budget programs under the Readiness core function are:

- Market Research

2020 – 2023 FORECAST

Having key marketing data and research available to support industry decisions is fundamentally core to the services of EDT. An example of research is ensuring we work with regional partners to understand our labour force competitiveness in the region. Team members will need to understand and communicate the implications, risk and opportunities of such topics to industry and the impacts at the local level. An example of this is the various international and national trade agreements Canada has with other countries including knowledge of the current United States Mexico Canada Trade Agreement (former NAFTA), the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Ongoing training of staff related to Geographic Information System (GIS), data gathering and analysis will be critical for our success moving forward. Presentations to commercial and industrial brokerages, and attendance at key conferences and realtor association events will be fundamental in maintaining and developing relationships with the real estate and development community. Costs associated with program delivery have been reflected in the four year operating budget forecast with inflationary adjustments included.

READINESS (BUSINESS LOCATION INVENTORIES)

The timing of finding a suitable location for a business is very important to business leaders. This requires the culmination of property and building availability, proper zoning and the necessary insights regarding these properties to be able to take advantage of the opportunities as they arise. To be successful at taking opportunities to fruition, the County has to be financially competitive with other marketplaces. EDT works with the development, real estate, and regulatory officials to ensure we have a balanced supply of properties to meet the market demand and remain competitive within a variety of sectors.

- Business and Development Outreach

2020 – 2023 FORECAST

Enhancing products that are web and GIS-based for our business clients and giving them the tools to succeed is vital. Projects such as the business directory, property locator tool, business and investment intelligence tool, use of the Customer Relationship Management Software, website, broker visitation program and presentations to outside groups and service clubs will continue and be enhanced. Such high level reviews of the retail market study and industrial land study will be updated when deemed appropriate and in collaborating with other departments.

DEPARTMENT ANNUAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

DEPARTMENT SUPPORT ROLES (ANNUAL CAPITAL 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 #	Annual capital initiative	Description	Department lead	Timeframe
AUTO 1309 1310 1311 1312 1313	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	Ongoing

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
AUTO 1828	County Hall Main Floor Restacking - Phase II	To bring the building up to current building code / standards and to consolidate public counters.	Facility Services	Q1 2019 – Q1 2021
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 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
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

INIT/ AUTO #	Improvement initiative	Description	Department lead	Timeframe
INIT 63	Succession Planning Strategy	To develop a succession planning strategy.	Human Resources	Q3 2019 – Q4 2022
INIT 34	Corporate Geographic Information System (GIS) Evolution	To further utilize and extend the return on investment on Enterprise GIS.	Information Technology Services	Q1 2020 – Q4 2021
INIT 8	Business Expense Policy Review and Update	To review and update the Employee Business Expense Policy.	Corporate Finance	Q1 2021 – Q4 2021
INIT 26	Enterprise - Wide Communications Review	To conduct an enterprise - wide review of communications services.	Communications	Q1 2021 – Q4 2021
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 14	Enterprise Risk Management Program	To develop an enterprise risk management program.	Corporate Finance	Q1 2021 – Q4 2023
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 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

TOURISM STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION (INIT 21)

Promoting a community as a destination provides economic and social opportunities. It can raise the community profile, bring in new business and attract and retain employees through quality of life and place. This strategic initiative supports the need for enhanced tourism opportunities in Strathcona County. Public and stakeholder engagement with tourism operators and other groups will assess the need in the first phase and a second phase will implement specific action plan items identified over the next decade with the strategy being reviewed in five years.

Linkage to strategic goal(s) and result(s):

Goal 3: Cultivate economic diversification, within the petrochemical industry and beyond, through a business friendly environment

- Growth opportunities increase through regional brand and economic development strategies

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

- Accessible community and cultural events, entertainment, shopping and dining opportunities

Department role:

Lead: Economic Development and Tourism

Support: Recreation, Parks & Culture, Transportation and Agriculture Services, Communications, Procurement Services, and Family and Community Services

Timeframe:

Start time: Q3 2019

End time: Q3 2020

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 develop the design of the facility, constructions documents, acquire permits, complete tender process and fund ongoing operational costs of the facility.	Transportation and Agriculture Services	Q4 2017 – Q4 2023
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
INIT 37	Broadview Park and Bison Meadows Area Structure Plan Updates	To update the development concepts of the existing Area Structure Plans for Broadview Park and Bison Meadows.	Planning and Development Services	Q1 2021 – Q4 2021
INIT 149	Community Broadband	To produce a plan to validate and pursue the findings included in the Community Broadband strategy report.	Information Technology Services	Q1 2020 - Q4 2020

APPENDIX 1: STRATHCONA COUNTY GOALS AND RESULTS

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