implementing SUSTAINABILITY
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO
STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2016
introduction

The Strategic Plan identifies ten implementation priorities of the Municipal Development Plan. The implementation of these priorities will be supported by departments’ strategies, actions and initiatives as identified in departmental business plans of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

The priorities of the Strategic Plan were developed through a process of Council input, public engagements and a consolidation of previous studies conducted by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The Strategic Plan balances priorities against opportunities and challenges, while supporting the principles of community sustainability. The goal of the Strategic Plan is to guide the responsible use of resources, effectiveness and efficiency in municipal service delivery and accountability to citizens, Council and stakeholders.

background

In 2011, the Municipal Development Plan was undertaken by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The result of thousands of public consultations was a comprehensive plan that will guide the Municipality over the next twenty years on key issues that affect quality of life and sustainability in the region. The Municipal Development Plan was developed to outline a strategic path forward for managing growth. The Plan provides integrated direction to the urban area, our distinct rural communities, and the region’s vast tracts of hinterland. The Plan addresses issues on a variety of scales, while outlining a path forward to harness Wood Buffalo’s abundant opportunities. The MDP does not directly identify individual capital projects or infrastructure spending, nor does it provide specific zoning requirements. Rather, it is a guide for both short and long-term decision making at the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The time horizon of the Municipal Development Plan is 20 years, compared to five years for the Strategic Plan and three years for departmental business plans.

Following Council’s endorsement of the Municipal Development Plan, the Strategic Plan was developed to help the Municipality prioritize the many areas of the MDP. By setting direction, desired outcomes and a monitoring process, the Strategic Plan focuses the efforts of the Municipality and its departments on continually improving the quality of life of citizens now and in the future. The Strategic Plan will be revisited on a regular basis to ensure responsiveness to new opportunities and challenges, and as a guide for future corporate plans and initiatives.
This Strategic Plan follows a process similar to that of the Municipal Development Plan. The process is based on the cycle Plan, Action and Review. This cycle ensures that informed decisions are made that respond to the interests of Council, citizens and stakeholders.

**ENABLING**
Identify Strategic Priorities to focus actions towards achieving the Vision of the Municipality

**COMMUNICATING**
Ongoing communication and education on the strategies, actions and initiatives undertaken by the Municipality

**INITIATING**
Identify and undertake strategies, actions and initiatives necessary to implement the Strategic Plan (Business Planning)

**MONITORING**
Establish and monitor our performance measures and provide annual progress reports

**process**

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term and scope of the strategic plan

The strategic plan is intended to guide and inform the actions of the Municipality, with goals that reflect the priorities of Council, citizens and stakeholders. The Plan will be adjusted as new issues, challenges and opportunities emerge over the planning horizon of the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan will be used in the following ways:

**Align all Municipal planning decisions**
All Municipal actions will be guided by the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan. The Municipal Development Plan, Council’s evolving priorities and other corporate initiatives will provide the inputs to the revision of Strategic Plan priorities and actions.

**Provide direction for departmental business plans and budgets**
The Strategic Plan will guide departmental business planning and budgeting efforts. The strategies, actions and initiatives of departments, along with departments’ budgets will be aligned to achieve the priorities of the Strategic Plan.

**Continually monitor progress towards desired outcomes**
The priorities of the Strategic Plan and departmental strategies, actions and initiatives in support of the Strategic Plan, will be monitored to gauge our success. This will be achieved through the establishment of performance indicators and targets that best represent the key issues being addressed. Performance results will serve to evaluate our progress and the next cycles of decision-making.
Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be
guided by the core principles of the Regional
Municipality of Wood Buffalo which are listed
below. These core principles include Our
Vision, Mission, Success Factors, Values and
Council’s Pillars of Accountability. Much of the
success of this strategy depends on the way the
Municipality does business, and will need to
work to enhance the following areas. This is also
reflected in the last priority regarding corporate
responsibility and governance.

OUR VISION
A balanced future with opportunity for all

OUR MISSION
To continually improve quality of life within our communities
by acquiring resources to provide valued services

OUR SUCCESS FACTORS
Engage our citizens
Champion innovation
Collaborate effectively
Empower our people
Deliver Best Value

OUR VALUES
Our People
Sharing Information
Working Together
Accountability
Integrity

COUNCIL’S PILLARS OF ACCOUNTABILITY
Leadership and Empowerment
Professionalism and Respect
Supportive and Unified
Communication Excellence
Effective Decision Making
In addition to the core principles outlined on page 7, the Strategic Plan will be guided by the additional principles of Sustainability, Opportunity and Inclusivity.

**SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainability is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The Municipality is committed to being a world leader in promoting and activating sustainable solutions, one that recognizes the role of innovation and decisive action in advancing our global understanding of this concept. We not only plan for a sustainable future, we will measure our progress over time to ensure that we are continually and steadfastly taking the actions necessary to build a model sustainable region.

Sustainability is community-driven and partners are needed to help us move towards that ultimate outcome. To this end our region will need to adapt and respond to evolving situations. The guidance and direction contained within this Strategic Plan will help to support coordinated service delivery that achieves our vision, while balancing and managing inherent opportunities and risks.

**OPPORTUNITY**

Wood Buffalo is a region of opportunity for reasons that go beyond natural resources. In addition to the important benefits derived from the oil sand industry, the region provides opportunities for individuals and families who invest in our region and call Wood Buffalo home. The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is a community to live, work, move and play.

Through the Municipal Development Plan and this Strategic Plan, Council and the Municipality we will address quality of life priorities in health, safety and social support. Well-designed communities that are affordable and attainable, and connect us to amenities will be promoted. To ensure opportunity for all, communities and transportation systems will be designed to protect our natural, cultural and heritage features, and provide options in how we move around the region. As a community we will be innovators and leaders not only in the economic realm, but in all aspects of environmental stewardship, and cultural and social vitality.

**INCLUSIVITY**

The oil sands industry that underlies economic development in our region requires a vast labour force to meet industry demands. This demand for workers has led to in-migration from around the world, including different cultural and age diversity needs. In response, Council, residents and diverse groups of stakeholders collaborate as partners and teams to enhance this socially unique area where the needs, values and aspirations of all our citizens are valued and prioritized.

Along with the diverse demographics of our region, our citizens reside in different parts of the region. Although most residents live in Fort McMurray, many of our region’s citizens live in our rural communities or project accommodations. From highly transient and mobile workforces to deeply rooted Aboriginal groups, we are home to a population that has diverse levels of attachment to the region. Our challenge is to deliver inclusive programs, services and opportunities throughout the region that connect with our diverse and multicultural population.
priorities

The Municipal Development Plan is the Municipality's guide for long-term growth and sustainability in our region. It is therefore imperative that we align decision-making, business planning and budgeting processes to the MDP and the implementation priorities of Council and citizens. This Strategic Plan will ensure that the immediate priorities of Council and citizens are acted upon. Regular revisions to the Strategic Plan will ensure responsiveness to emerging priorities as we move to achieve the desired outcomes of the MDP.

The ten priorities for implementation that are identified in this document were identified through a process of Council and public input, and are the key issues that Council and Administration of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo will focus on in the coming years. Each priority is accompanied by a listing of Key Issues, a statement of Desired Outcomes and a listing of Priority Actions. An Action Plan (Implementation Strategy) and Performance Indicators and Measures will be developed soon after the release of this document.
implementing the Municipal Development Plan
The Municipality effectively and efficiently invests resources in the development of the region. The Municipality knows how fast and where it is growing, where it wants to enhance communities and areas that it wants to protect. Land is released in a timely manner and an updated Land Use Bylaw, new secondary plans and other guidelines support the development of sustainable, complete communities. Development is also linked to the implementation of a sustainable mobility network.
1

DIRECT RESPONSIBLE GROWTH IN THE REGION

KEY ISSUES
- The integration of land use, transportation and infrastructure planning
- Land availability
- Infrastructure capacity
- Identifying new development areas and intensification areas
- Establishing development reserves and conservation areas
- The updating of current standards to meet the desired form and function
- Alignment of bylaws with secondary and supporting plans
- Rural water and sewer servicing

PRIORITY ACTIONS
- Establish the Urban Development Sub-Region (USDR)
- Establish land acquisition and disposition policies
- Rural communities will experience improved levels of service
- Create and implement Fort McMurray Growth Study
- Complete and adopt rural Area Structure Plans
- Update the Land Use Bylaw
- Develop a Land Authority
- Undertake the next Municipal Census
- Establish partnerships with other levels of government
DESIRED OUTCOMES
Create a shift in the region’s transportation modes and ensure there are viable choices to enable residents to move within communities and throughout the region.
DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY CHOICES

2

KEY ISSUES
• The integration of land use, transportation and infrastructure planning
• The creation of a Multi-modal transportation network
• Implementation of Rapid transit
• Mobility reliability and efficiency
• Urban form that supports multimodal options
• Active transportation

PRIORITY ACTIONS
• Develop and implement a Mobility Study
• Ensure policy and bylaw enforcement
• Invest in Capital Infrastructure Network Development
• Support the Airport Expansion
• Develop active transportation and transportation alternatives
• Establish Transportation Authority
• Develop rapid transit system
• Develop Transit-Oriented-Design Guidelines
• Develop Complete Streets Standards
“Our City Centre will be built on the foundation of our significant cultural heritage and natural beauty. We will grow to become a model of an intelligent, sustainable and vital 21st century city. Our City Centre will be an active, vibrant and quality urban environment that provides opportunities to work, live, and play”
3
REVITALIZE THE CITY CENTRE

KEY ISSUES
• Certainty for investment
• Opportunities for intensification and growth accommodation
• The lack of a ‘centre’ or ‘focus’ for the region
• Economic diversification
• Design and aesthetics that promote a world class city

PRIORITY ACTIONS
• Develop City Centre Action Program
• Implement Phase 1 of the City Centre Action Program
• Update the Land Use Bylaw
• Update the Engineering Servicing Standards
• Ensure Servicing Requirements and Infrastructure Coordination
• Develop the Entertainment District/Performance Arena
• Develop the Civic Centre
• Support the MacDonald Island Master Plan (Expansion)
• Develop in the Snye and Clearwater River
• Establish a Downtown Development Authority
DESIRRED OUTCOMES
Existing and new communities are sustainable, attractive, safe and accessible. Residents are able to access a number of services and amenities required for their daily needs in close proximity to their homes and are serviced by various modes of transportation.
KEY ISSUES
• Definition of “complete community”.
• Community health, accessibility and safety issues
• A comprehensive approach for new and existing communities
• Appropriate levels of service for urban and rural communities
• Integrating sustainability and urban design

PRIORITY ACTIONS
• Develop and implement Area Structure Plans and Area Redevelopment Plans
• Ensure policy and process implementation
• Develop Community Threshold Study (identification of facilities, amenities, etc)
• Develop supporting guidelines (Urban Design, safe communities, FireSmart, etc)
• Invest in capacity and infrastructure
• Implement Emergency Management Plans
DESIREO OUTCOMES
The Municipality supports the innovative development of green initiatives and is a leader in sustainable business practices. This includes working in partnership with stakeholders throughout the region.
5

PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEN INITIATIVES

KEY ISSUES
• Green initiatives development
• Implementing green technologies and building practices
• Achieving a global model for sustainable living
• Support for best practices and opportunities for innovation

PRIORITY ACTIONS
• Support Municipal Green Initiatives (i.e. Community Gardens, procurement, etc)
• Develop a Zero Waste Facility
• Develop a Green Procurement Policy
• Investigate alternative energy sources – Wind, Solar, Co-generation, etc
• Update policies (i.e Land Use Bylaw, Engineering Servicing Standards)
• Develop Municipal Green Building Policy
The Municipality is a leader in climate change adaptation and mitigation, and is the global model for sustainable living in the north.
6
DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION

KEY ISSUES
- Identification of benchmarks and targets
- Development of policies regarding climate change
- Responding to negative global images of the region

PRIORITY ACTIONS
- Develop Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Plan
- Establish carbon footprint
- Set targets for reducing carbon footprint
- Set targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Increase waste diversion
- Reduce water consumption
- Reduce electricity consumption
- Increase transit use
DESIRED OUTCOMES
Investors perceive Wood Buffalo as a great place to develop commercial ventures, resulting in a more diverse economy with reduced leakage of local spending. Local educational opportunities enable residents to study and work here in the long term.
7

INCREASE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

KEY ISSUES
• Affordability of commercial space
• Employee recruitment and retention
• Economic diversification
• Local education and skills development and retention
• Information and data to support investment decisions
• Affordability of rural services
• Rural municipal land availability

PRIORITY ACTIONS
• Undertake Economic Leakage and Gap Study
• Promote economic development opportunities
• Ensure commercial and retail space and development
• Establish development Incentives
• Promote rural economic development
• Promote local skills and development
• Support the development of an innovation centre for education, research and development
• Support the development of business and industry incubators
• Support the expansion of post-secondary educational opportunities
• Promote the image of the Municipality
The region has affordable and attainable housing, which enables people of all demographics to live in the region. Ensuring affordability also supports the development of small and medium businesses, and arts and culture development.
ADDRESS HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND ATTAINMENT

KEY ISSUES
- The Municipality’s role in addressing affordability
- Housing affordability and attainment
- Diversity in housing
- Land availability and cost
- Retention of residents and workers

PRIORITY ACTIONS
- Explore flexible application of regulatory measures
- Update Land Use Bylaw
- Develop and implement ASPs/ARPs or other supporting documents
- Establish stronger coordination and partnership with Wood Buffalo Housing
- Explore land dedication and bylaw requirements
- Undertake Housing Affordability and Attainment Study
- Explore incentives to attract development affordability, such as funding and grant opportunities
The region provides a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation and culture facilities, programs and activities for all ages of the population. Residents also have access to a variety of green spaces, connected through an extensive network that supports biodiversity, historical and cultural priorities.
INVEST IN ARTS, RECREATION AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

KEY ISSUES
Recreation
• Waterfront Development
• Planning on a regional, rural and urban scale
• Green network connectivity and mobility
• Biodiversity maintenance, protection and enhancement
• Facilities requirements for communities (urban and rural)
• Preserve areas of natural and cultural significance
Culture
• The lack of public places for social interaction
• Affordability of space for arts and culture development
• The desire for cultural facilities and programming
• Investment in social programs

PRIORITY ACTIONS
• Develop the waterfronts along the Snye and Clearwater River
• Explore development of a major cultural facility
• Invest in cultural programming and public art
• Establish community per capita requirements (Threshold Study for urban and rural)
• Develop an outdoor recreation plan
• Establish program for Welcoming Newcomers
• Explore off highway vehicle staging opportunities
• Identify and develop new recreational lakes
DESIRED OUTCOMES

The Municipality has the tools required to successfully implement corporate plans, such as the MDP and implementation efforts are purposeful, directed and consistent. The Municipality monitors its progress and adapts to change, ensuring that they are also transparent and accountable to the public for their actions.

Information is easily accessible, and residents of the region are well informed of Municipal undertaking and interaction is consistent and effective. This ensures that the Municipality has a strong, positive regional and global image.
10
ENHANCE AND IMPROVE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY & GOVERNANCE

KEY ISSUES
• Decision-making and priority setting processes
• Alignment and implementation of corporate plans
• Transparency and accountability
• Managing, utilizing, storing and accessing data
• Developing benchmarks and targets
• Reporting on progress
• Engagement practices, public education and awareness
• Information sharing

PRIORITY ACTIONS
• Develop a Strategic Plan
• Establish strategic Implementation Working Group
• Ensure alignment of priorities to Business Planning and Financial Planning
• Develop data warehouse and monitoring tool
• Collaborate on Community Indicators development
• Enhance coordination between municipal departments and stakeholders
• Develop an Annual Municipal Report Card
• Develop comprehensive public engagement guidelines (rural and urban)
• Ensure continual public participation and awareness
• Ensure strategic alignment of messaging
• Create strategic processes and partnerships to improve communication
implementing SUSTAINABILITY