

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

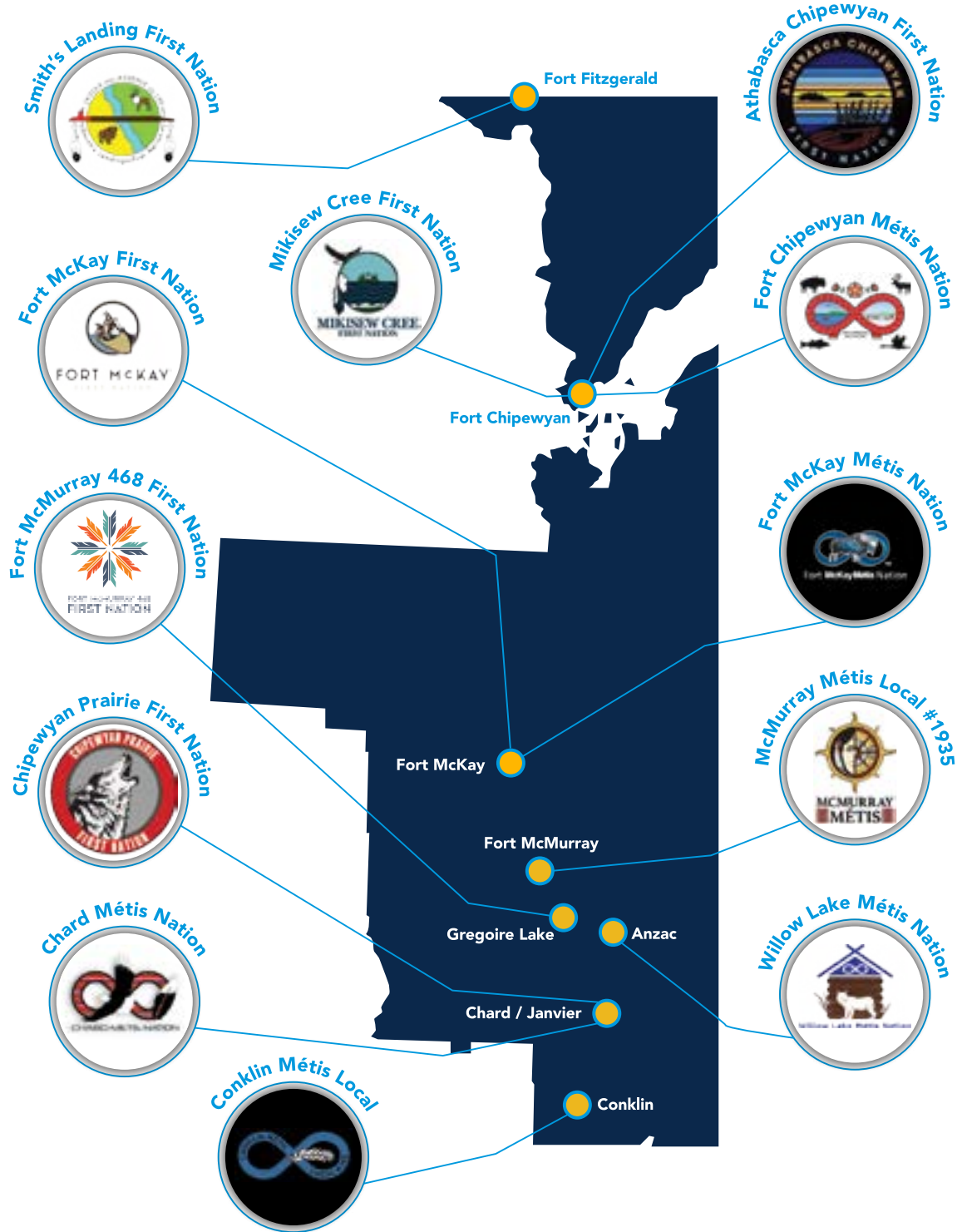
September 2024

BYLAW NO. 24/105



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF **WOOD BUFFALO**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



With gratitude, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo acknowledges this land is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, and the unceded territory of the Métis people.

THE REGION



33 YEARS OLD

The average Wood Buffalo resident is 9 years younger than the average Canadian



630,000 KM²

of land makes up the Regional Municipal of Wood Buffalo

Wood Buffalo of tomorrow will be built on its greatest strengths today

Wood Buffalo is a place like no other with tremendous community spirit, incredible economic opportunities, limitless natural wonder, multiculturalism rarely found anywhere else in the world, and rich Indigenous cultures and history.

As a dynamic and ever-changing place, Wood Buffalo has seen tremendous growth over the past several decades and the population is projected to increase with approximately 99,000 to 155,000 permanent residents calling Wood Buffalo home in 2044.

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) provides a framework for future land use, development, transportation systems, and services and programs to meet the needs of residents, businesses and partners. The plan includes six goals, strategic directions, policies and action items to collectively achieve the vision for Wood Buffalo. The goals are highlighted on the pages ahead and you can find all the directions, action items and additional details in the [full MDP](#).

For more information about the MDP and to read the full version, please visit rmwb.ca/MDP.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the plan in more detail, you can reach out to the Municipal Planning and Development team through Pulse at 780-743-7000 or online at rmwb.ca/pulse.

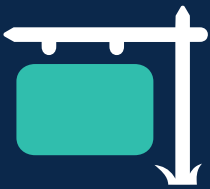
HOME AND BELONGING



>100
Social profit
organizations in
Wood Buffalo



7 IN 10
Wood Buffalo
residents feel a
sense of belonging



TOP RANKED
Fort McMurray recently
ranked most affordable
housing market globally
and in Alberta

Enhancing livability, community safety, and health and wellness

The needs of a growing population must be met while creating a strong sense of place, safety and belonging. This will be done through key initiatives and actions, including:

- Integrating safe, high-quality, human-scaled public spaces into new development
- Improving Downtown connectivity and throughout the region by developing an Active Transportation Master Plan
- Encouraging more recreation and social opportunities year-round by implementing a Four Seasons Strategy
- Improving accessibility in all four seasons by implementing a Safe Mobility Plan and establishing region-wide design guidelines with a focus on accessibility
- Supporting more diverse and attainable housing choices while developing a new Long-Term Housing Plan
- Encouraging more mixed-use development by revising the Land Use Bylaw
- Creating a more lively, vibrant downtown by launching pilot programs to allow businesses to use streets and sidewalks
- Making communities more inclusive through initiatives like implementing an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for the region
- Enhancing assistance and support to people in need

Find more action items, strategic directions and additional details under the Home and Belonging goal in the full MDP starting on page 52.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INNOVATION



\$208,372

Median Household Income
in 2021. 185% greater
than the National median



97%

of Canada's oil comes
from the oil sands 96% of
which are in Wood Buffalo



\$1.9 B

annual domestic
revenue from Indigenous
tourism in Canada

Empowering economic development and local innovation

While the oil sands will continue to be the backbone of the local and national economy well into the future, now is the time to focus on diversifying the local economy, enhancing supports for local businesses and promoting innovation and professional skill development. This will be done through key initiatives and actions, including:

- Diversifying the regional economy through actions like prioritizing development approvals for new and expanding businesses Downtown, and ongoing collaboration with Indigenous communities, oil sands industry and economic stakeholders
- Supporting local businesses and attracting new ones by implementing an Ease of Doing Business Plan
- Responsible natural resource development
- Promoting tourism in the region through ongoing collaboration with local businesses, organizations and economic development agencies and indigenous communities
- Enhancing local professional growth opportunities through ongoing collaboration with post-secondary institutions and community organizations
- Supporting local innovation through actions like enhancing supports for Indigenous entrepreneurs and building employment networks to increase their visibility

Find more action items, strategic directions and additional details under the Economic Growth and Innovation goal in the full MDP starting on page 67.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Answering the Calls to Action and building relationships while celebrating Indigenous cultures and honouring the past

Prioritizing collaboration and meaningful relationship building with local Indigenous Partners and communities is central to the MDP and how Truth and Reconciliation will continue to move forward in Wood Buffalo. This will be done through key initiatives and actions, including:

- Addressing and reporting regularly on the Calls to Action the Municipality can implement and influence
- Working towards implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework to advance Truth and Reconciliation
- Building strong government relations, including developing and upholding protocol agreements with the local six First Nation and six Métis communities
- Honouring the past by working with Indigenous partners on public education programs and events, including mandatory Indigenous awareness training for all Municipal staff
- Recognizing and incorporating Cree and Dene languages on new signs, infrastructure and other items
- Continuing to support the Elder-in-Residence program and reducing barriers to encourage more participation from Indigenous Peoples in all Municipal initiatives

Find more action items, strategic directions and additional details under the Truth and Reconciliation goal in the full MDP starting on page 83.



12 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

six First Nations and six Métis communities in the Region are rich in collaborative spirit and historical, cultural, and economic importance



INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Recognizing and promoting Cree and Dene languages

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY AND CULTURE



> 60
countries are
represented by
Wood Buffalo residents.



22%
of Wood Buffalo
residents born
outside of Canada.



80+ LANGUAGES
spoken in Wood Buffalo

Promoting vibrant arts, celebrating multiculturalism, building regional pride and making meaningful community connections

Wood Buffalo is brimming with community pride, rich cultures and vibrant arts, which will continue to be celebrated to bring people together and build stronger community connections. This will be done through key initiatives and actions, including:

- Conserving and celebrating areas of cultural and historic significance
- Promoting community placemaking and beautification with a renewed focus on public space maintenance, repairs and horticulture
- Incorporating more art into public spaces and public-sector developments
- Encouraging more public art initiatives, community events and festivals
- Providing more options for youth to be involved in Municipal decision making by updating the Terms and References for RMWB Boards and Committees
- Promoting meaningful dialogue and participation through actions like exploring a Rural Advisory Committee and implementing strategies to increase participation in community engagements
- Supporting young talent in the region and organizations with a youth mandate
- Providing a welcoming environment for new residents through actions like developing a Welcome, Orientation and Engagement Plan in collaboration with community organizations

Find more action items, strategic directions and additional details under the Celebrating Community and Culture goal in the full MDP starting on page 97.

CONNECTING TO NATURE



> 99%
of the region
is crown land



TOP 10
Athabasca Lake in
Wood Buffalo is the 8th
largest lake in Canada



450+
hectares of
recreational space

Protecting healthy ecosystems, increasing outdoor recreation opportunities and enjoying the natural beauty of the region

Wood Buffalo's cherished wilderness, protected ecosystems, parks and waterfronts are deeply rooted in the identity of the region, beginning with the connections Indigenous Peoples have to the land and water. Together, we can preserve healthy ecosystems, increase outdoor recreation opportunities and nourish new ideas to strengthen the connection to nature for residents and visitors alike. This will be done through key initiatives and actions, including:

- Conserving waterfront areas, wetlands and natural ecosystems through actions like amending statutory plans, regulations and bylaws
- Creating a Green Network to connect multi-purpose trails and outdoor recreation areas throughout Wood Buffalo
- Creating a Blue Network to increase recreation opportunities along waterbodies and preserve the natural beauty of these areas while accommodating flood mitigation
- Exploring the establishment of a "cottage country" with the province through opening up Crown Land for private development of cabins
- Increasing access to parks and recreation opportunities, including developing an integrated Regional Recreation Strategy with local partners and organizations
- Protecting communities through actions like updating land use and development polices to reduce the impact of natural disasters and help protect high-risk areas
- Helping maintain clean air and water by best practice to meet regulatory requirements, reducing emissions that impacts air quality, and ensuring Water and Wastewater Management Plans reflect growth trajectory
- Finding innovative ways to reduce the carbon footprint of Municipal operations

Find more action items, strategic directions and additional details under the Connecting to Nature goal in the full MDP starting on page 119.

RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT



NATURAL DISASTERS

Mitigating disaster risk for wildfire, flood, and seismic hazards.



>50,000

the number of additional residents Wood Buffalo could accommodate

Growing the Urban Service Area and rural communities responsibly while preserving the natural beauty of the region and unique identities of each community

With an abundance of development-ready land throughout the region to meet the needs of a growing population, Wood Buffalo is strongly positioned to focus on responsible growth and investment to support vibrant, sustainable and desirably communities for all. This will be done through key initiatives and actions, including:

- Continuously monitoring the market demand for developable land and planning ahead to ensure opportunities are available and aligned with statutory plans and policies
- Prioritizing development in the Urban Service Area, including working with the Province to establish large-scale institutions in sectors such as healthcare, post-secondary education, the legal system and industry
- Prioritizing the unique needs of each rural community while respecting and celebrating the local identity and cultures
- Ongoing collaboration with Indigenous communities, businesses, economic development organizations and other partners to ensure responsible development and preservation of natural areas
- Supporting more diverse and attainable housing choices to meet the demand and different needs in communities
- Reducing the impact of wildfires, floods and other natural disasters by ensuring policy documents mitigate risk while guiding new developments
- Improving the mobility and accessibility throughout the region through actions like implementing the Transit Master Plan, exploring park and ride infrastructure and developing an Active Transportation Plan

Find more action items, strategic directions and additional details under the Responsible Development goal in the full MDP starting on page 137.



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