

An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood with a winding river. The sun is setting in the background, creating a warm, golden glow over the landscape. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The river flows through the center of the image, reflecting the sunlight. Houses and trees are visible along the banks of the river.

COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2025



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF **WOOD BUFFALO**

OUR STORY

We are often thought of as a young city that was born out of the discovery of the Athabasca Oil Sands, but the shared history goes much further back. The rivers of the region proved important trade and transportation routes for the Cree, Dene, and Métis who lived a sustainable lifestyle in harmony with the land. Upon the arrival of European explorers at the end of the 18th century, the region became a vital link in the growing fur trade with both the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company building multiple competing forts. The population in the region was small but actively engaged in the fur trade for a century, and sustainably living on the land for thousands of years.

Indigenous Peoples used the tar that seeped from the banks of the rivers to waterproof canoes. Now, hundreds of years later, those deposits have been recognized as one of the largest reserves of oil in the world. The entire region grew at an unprecedented rate through the second half of the 20th century, from a few hundred residents to thousands, and official city status in 1980. We experienced the highs and lows that came with the rise and fall of oil prices, but at the beginning of the 21st century the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and its communities remain the burgeoning centre of Canada's oil industry, drawing in people from around the world who embrace hard work, entrepreneurship, and economic opportunity.

Population trends show that people are choosing to make the region their permanent home. **The incredible array of amenities, services, businesses, and social opportunities are unparalleled thanks to strategic investments in initiatives and infrastructure that support a great quality of life.** But we continue to be more than that. Celebrating the cultural diversity, actively embracing, advocating and supporting Truth and Reconciliation, and growing our connections to nature and the environment is helping us to prepare for the future without forgetting the past. The boundless opportunity and prosperity is actively leveraged to better the people, the communities, and our home.

VISION

Communities connected to the environment, the future, and each other to create an enduring prosperity.

MISSION

To ensure communities continually grow more inclusive, and embody a sustainable source of healthy living and enduring prosperity for residents, newcomers, and visitors alike.

WHAT GUIDES US

COMMUNITY: We support and trust one another, and work to ensure room for growth, security, and sharing our stories.

COLLABORATION: We are inclusive, working together to achieve common goals and we celebrate our differences.

ENGAGEMENT: We listen to, and involve, all residents with different backgrounds, histories, and stories, from the youngest residents to seniors and Elders, and embrace new methods to engage them in civic life. We also listen and engage with our municipal employees as they are the core to any successful community.

CONFIDENCE: We make informed, evidence-based decisions, take initiative to search for better solutions, follow-through on our commitments, and take responsibility for our actions.

RESPONSIBLE: We manage tax dollars and other revenue in a strategic, coordinated, and deliberate way to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the region.



WHAT WE VALUE

FISCAL MANAGEMENT: Our world is changing. The revenue we enjoy to provide services will not last forever. It is critical that we build our community and its future upon policies and investments that are fiscally, environmentally, and socially sustainable and enduring. Developing a long-term fiscal budget and strategy will ensure sustainable growth and high-level quality services.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: We recognize there is value in working together. We welcome insight and appreciate collaboration from all groups and stakeholders in order to bring together elements that will help ensure communities continue to grow into the homes we love and homes which welcome others.

RURAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS: Our future cannot be separated from our past. As we grow communities into sustainable prosperity we need to learn from and work with local Indigenous partners and communities who have lived in a sustainable way with nature and the environment since time immemorial, as well as forge new relationships that make us leaders in building kinder, more supportive, and more understanding communities.

LOCAL ECONOMY: We have the potential to make the region a destination of choice for economic development and quality of life by supporting growth of the local business community and to improve services to residents.

DOWNTOWN VISUALIZATION: The downtown has struggled over time with indecisions, rapid changes in decision, and natural disasters for too long. It is time to choose what downtown will be, and lay out a plan for redevelopment and disaster mitigation, and carry on with implementation.

MILESTONES AND ACTIONS

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

1. In consideration of the health and well-being of our valued employees, we will:
 - 1a. Evaluate and implement an organizational review
 - 1b. Invest in the health and safety of our employees
2. Create a Council covenant to include leadership norms, summary of commitments and best practices to be applied in alignment with Council's Code of Conduct
3. Direct the implementation of a community resilience strategy
4. Confirm and/or develop service standards through strategic budget workshops
5. Ensure government grants are fully utilized

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

1. Host or attend regular meetings throughout the region
2. Participate as Council in meetings with Indigenous leaders and communities
3. Establish an anti-racism bylaw and policy
4. Actively work together with large industry to share information, focus on regional priorities, develop infrastructure and cultural project partnerships
5. Confirm best practices for consistent communication and feedback between Council and Administration
6. Support opportunities and community partnerships that help promote a positive image of Wood Buffalo

RURAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

1. Create and enhance reconciliation spaces
2. Continue to advance the Municipality's response to Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S+) and Missing or Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples (MMEIP)
3. Commemorate, document, and raise awareness to ensure significant events impacting relationships with Indigenous Peoples are recognized, remembered and honoured
4. Honor, acknowledge and commemorate residential school confirmations of gravesites, survivors, and their families

LOCAL ECONOMY

1. Establish reporting metrics for economic development and tourism to ensure maximum accountability, transparency and clarity for Council and taxpayers
2. Support development of a rural tourism engagement strategy
3. Establish a Business Advisory Committee
4. Advocate and partner with all levels of government to deliver consistent and accessible broadband services
5. Deliver a pro-business environment for businesses with attention to excellence in customer service (red tape reduction)

DOWNTOWN VISUALIZATION

1. Support the creation of a strategy for downtown that identifies and coordinates municipal investment and improvements
2. Ensure a review and update of the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan is completed
3. Support the creation of detailed land map for future downtown planning that guides the public and businesses on the vision for downtown
4. Approve, enhance, and enforce bylaws and beautification standards
5. Incentivize private investment in the downtown
6. Conclude flood mitigation infrastructure investments
7. Complete waterfront beautification



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