

AGENDA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, March 6, 2024 @ 6:00 PM
Council Chambers, 1 Parklane Drive, Strathmore AB

Page

1. CALL TO ORDER

- 1.1. Traditional Land Acknowledgement for the First Meeting in March (Sa'aikisom)

2. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

3. DELEGATIONS

Members of the public and community organizations are welcome to attend a Regular Council Meeting as a delegation to present an item to Town Council for consideration. If you are interested in attending as a delegation please fill out the Delegation Request form that can be located on the Town's website and submit it to: lsadmin@strathmore.ca by noon the Wednesday before a Regular Council Meeting.

- 3.1. Delegation - Wheatland and Area Hospice Society

[Request for Decision - RFD-24-044 - Pdf](#)

4 - 17

4. CLOSED MEETING

- 4.1. Strategic Plan Discussion - Advice from officials - FOIP S. 24(1)(a)
- 4.2. Strathmore Affordable Housing Society - Advice from officials - FOIP S. 24(1)(a)
- 4.3. Board Appointments - Advice from officials - FOIP S. 24(1)(a)
- 4.4. Land Item - Advice from officials - FOIP S. 24(1)(a)
- 4.5. Council/CAO Dialogue - Advice from officials - FOIP S. 24(1)(b)(i)

5. PUBLIC HEARING

None.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Members of the public are welcome to provide comments regarding items on the agenda in person during the Council meeting, virtually, or in writing. Should you wish to provide public comments virtually or in writing, please fill out the Request to Speak at a Council Meeting form that can be located on the Town's website and submit it to: lsadmin@strathmore.ca by the end of the day on the Sunday before the Council meeting. In order to ensure procedural fairness, Council requests that the public refrain from speaking on items that have been or will be heard through a public hearing process.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

- 8.1 Regular Council Meeting Minutes - February 21, 2024
- 9.3 Letters of Support Policy No. 1109
- 9.4 Wheatland and Area Hospice Society - Letter of Support
- 9.5 Skills for Success - Letter of Support
- 9.6 Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation - Thank You Letter
- 9.7 Library Board Auditor
- 11.2.1 Strathmore Library Board - Organizational Meeting Minutes - January 16, 2024
- 11.2.2 Strathmore Library Board - Regular Meeting Minutes - January 16, 2024

12.1	Letter regarding palliative care space at the Strathmore District Health Services site - includes 91 signatures	
8.	CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES	
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9.2.	2024 Recreation and Cultural Needs Assessment Request for Decision - RFD-24-030 - Pdf	59 - 62
9.3.	Letters of Support Policy No. 1109 Request for Decision - RFD-24-039 - Pdf	63 - 72
9.4.	Wheatland & Area Hospice Society - Letter of Support Request for Decision - RFD-24-034 - Pdf	73 - 78
9.5.	Skills for Success - Letter of Support Request for Decision - RFD-24-035 - Pdf	79 - 82
9.6.	Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation - Thank You Letter Request for Decision - RFD-24-038 - Pdf	83 - 87
9.7.	Library Board Auditor Request for Decision - RFD-24-032 - Pdf	88 - 90
10.	BYLAWS None.	
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11.2.1.	Strathmore Library Board - Organizational Meeting Minutes - January 16, 2024 01.16.2024 Strathmore Library Board Organizational Meeting Minutes	91 - 93
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11.4.	ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRIES	
11.5.	NOTICES OF MOTION	
11.5.1.	Cemetery Bylaw Amendments - Councillor Wiley Notice of Motion - Cemetery Bylaw Amendments - January 31	97 - 99
12.	CORRESPONDENCE	
12.1.	Letter regarding palliative care space at the Strathmore District Health Services site - includes 91 signatures Letter regarding palliative care space at the Strathmore District Health Services	100 - 101

[site - includes 91 signatures](#)

13. ADJOURNMENT



Request for Decision

To: Council

Staff Contact: Veronica Anderson, Legislative Services Officer

Date Prepared: February 27, 2024

Meeting Date: March 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Delegation - Wheatland and Area Hospice Society

RECOMMENDATION: Information for Council.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Affordable
Housing



Climate
Resiliency



Community
Development



Community
Wellness



Economic
Development



Financial
Sustainability

HOW THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE MET:

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SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

GENERAL:

Dr. McNeely has requested to come speak to Council on behalf of the Wheatland and Area Hospice Society.

ORGANIZATIONAL:

N/A

OPERATIONAL:

N/A

FINANCIAL:

N/A

POLICY:

N/A

IMPLEMENTATION:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

On February 5, 2024 Dr. Joni McNeely put forth a request to speak to Council in order to provide an update on the progress and future plans for a hospice.

KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S):

N/A

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

N/A

COMMUNICATIONS:

N/A

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment I: WAHS Update](#)

Kara Rusk, Director of Strategic, Administrative, and Financial Services

Approved
- 29 Feb
2024

Kevin Scoble, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved
- 29 Feb
2024



Wheatland & Area Hospice Society

Update

Municipal and County Councils
Feb-Mar, 2024



Overview

Our progress:

- Current fundraising state
- Floor plans for facility

Our next steps:

- Sustainable annual operations funding

Our ask:

- Letter of support to GoA
 - WC Budget 2025 consideration
-



Progress—Building Fundraising

Broad Community Support

- Event revenue
- Donations

Committed Donors

- Capital campaign 3.0
- Furnishings, fixtures, and equipment campaign





Progress—Building Design

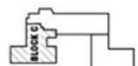
100% Design Development Stage

- Furniture, fixtures, and equipment
- WHMB design TBA

Hospice, Not Just Beds

- This is NOT beds at the end of the hallway.
- WHMB partnership





<div>  <p>berry architecture +associates</p> </div>	<div>SEALS</div>
	<div> <p>6 THIS IS A COPYRIGHT DRAWING AND SHALL NOT BE REPRODUCED OR REPILED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION OF BERRY ARCHITECTURE</p> </div>
<div>KEY PLAN</div>	
<div> <p>REVISIONS + ISSUES</p> <p>ISSUE 01: 01/2020 DESIGN TEAM APPROVED</p> <p>ISSUE 02: 01/2020 DESIGN TEAM APPROVED</p> </div>	
<div> <p>PROJECT TITLE</p> <p>WHEATLAND LODGE</p> </div>	<div> <p>ENLARGED MAIN FLOOR BLOCK C</p> </div>
<div> <p>SCALE: AS INDICATED</p> <p>DRAWN: E/BJ/TE</p> <p>CHECKED: T/VM</p> <p>MARCH 20 23-092</p> </div>	<div> <p>A3.8</p> </div>
<div> <p>PROJECT TITLE</p> <p>STRATHMORE, AB</p> </div>	





Next Steps

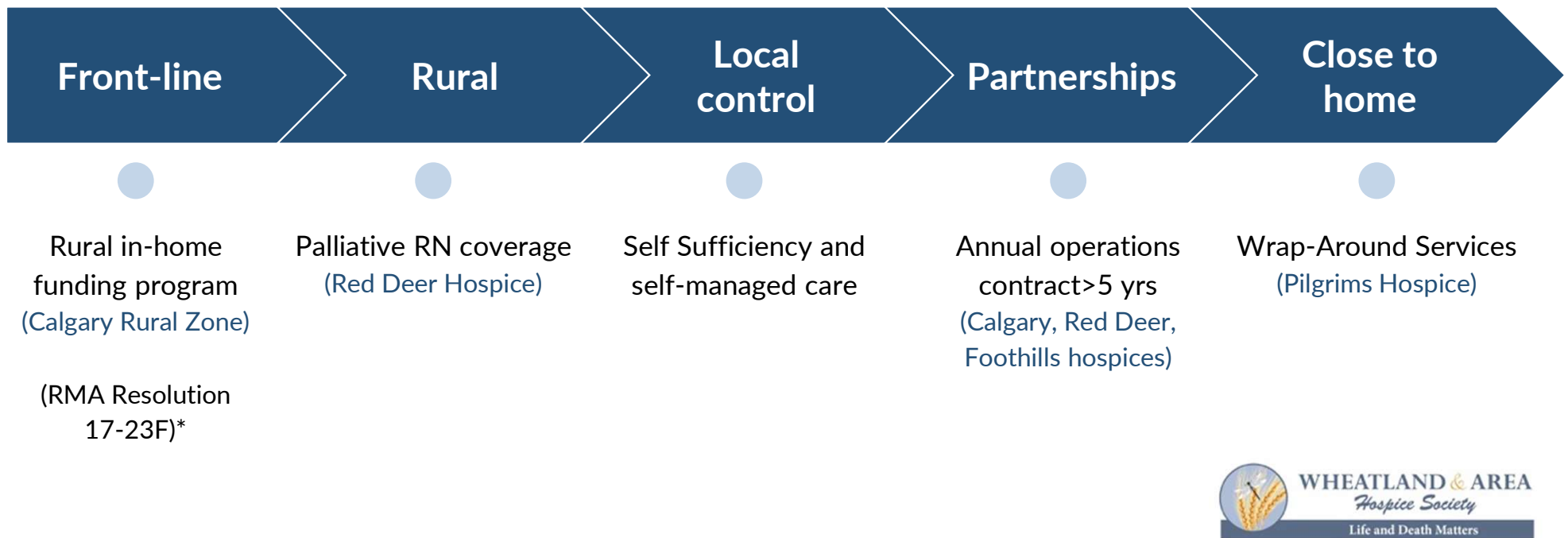
Operations funding

- Approx. \$800K annually
- No standing commitments prior to AHS dissolution

Aligning with the GoA

- Restructuring provides new opportunities
- Expanding frontline services
- Focus on rural Alberta

Delivery Opportunities





Timing is everything...

- Health care restructuring provides opportunity
- Impending End-of-Life service changes
- Community need and understanding more service is required

Why WAHS in 2024

1. Highly visual pilot
2. Long term sustainability model
3. GoA alignment
4. Closer to home
5. Less caregiver burnout
6. Quality end-of-life journey

Our Ask:

- Letter of support
- Budget 2025

Questions





Request for Decision

To: Council

Staff Contact: Veronica Anderson, Legislative Services Officer

Date Prepared: February 21, 2024

Meeting Date: March 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Regular Council Meeting Minutes - February 21, 2024

RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council adopt the February 21, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as presented in Attachment I.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Affordable
Housing



Climate
Resiliency



Community
Development



Community
Wellness



Economic
Development



Financial
Sustainability

HOW THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE MET:

N/A

SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

GENERAL:

Pursuant to Section 208(1)(iii) of the *Municipal Government Act*, the minutes of the February 21, 2024 Regular Council Meeting are given to Council for adoption.

ORGANIZATIONAL:

N/A

OPERATIONAL:

N/A

FINANCIAL:

N/A

POLICY:

N/A

IMPLEMENTATION:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

N/A

KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S):

N/A

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

N/A

COMMUNICATIONS:

Once signed, the February 21, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes will be posted on the Town's website.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

1. Council may adopt the recommended motion.

2. Council may provide further direction regarding the Regular Council Meeting Minutes.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment I: REGULAR COUNCIL - 21 Feb 2024 - Minutes](#)

Claudette Thorhaug, Legislative Services Officer

Approved
- 23 Feb
2024

Johnathan Strathdee, Manager of Legislative Services

Approved
- 26 Feb
2024



MINUTES

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

6:00 PM - Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Council Chambers, 1 Parklane Drive, Strathmore AB

COUNCIL PRESENT:

Mayor Pat Fule, Deputy Mayor Melissa Langmaid, Councillor Debbie Mitzner, Councillor Jason Montgomery, Councillor Denise Peterson, Councillor Richard Wegener, and Councillor Brent Wiley

STAFF PRESENT:

Kevin Scoble (Chief Administrative Officer), Jamie Dugdale (Director of Infrastructure, Operations, and Development Services), Mark Pretzlaff (Director of Community and Protective Services), Kara Rusk (Director of Strategic, Administrative, and Financial Services), and Johnathan Strathdee (Manager of Legislative Services)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Fule called the February 21, 2024 Regular Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Resolution No. 029.02.24

Moved by Councillor Langmaid

THAT Council adopt the February 21, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Agenda as amended:

Deletion:

9.1 Economic Development Action Plan

Addition:

3.2 CAO Evaluation – Confidential evaluations – FOIP S. 19(2)

Resolution No. 030.02.24

Moved by Councillor Peterson

THAT Council amend the motion to include the following:

Addition:

3.3 WADEMSA Report – Advice from officials – FOIP S. 24(1)(b)(i)

FOR: Mayor Fule, Councillor Langmaid, Councillor Mitzner, Councillor Montgomery, Councillor Peterson, Councillor Wegener, and Councillor Wiley

AGAINST: None.

CARRIED

Resolution No. 029.02.24

Moved by Councillor Langmaid

THAT Council adopt the February 21, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Agenda as amended:

Deletion:

9.1 Economic Development Action Plan

Addition:

3.2 CAO Evaluation – Confidential evaluations – FOIP S. 19(2)

FOR: Mayor Fule, Councillor Langmaid, Councillor Mitzner, Councillor Montgomery, Councillor Peterson, and Councillor Wegener

AGAINST: Councillor Wiley

CARRIED

3. CLOSED MEETING

Resolution No. 031.02.24

Moved by Councillor Peterson

THAT Council move In Camera to discuss items related to sections 24(1)(b)(i) and 19(2) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* at 6:04 p.m.

FOR: Mayor Fule, Councillor Langmaid, Councillor Mitzner, Councillor Montgomery, Councillor Peterson, Councillor Wegener, and Councillor Wiley

AGAINST: None.

CARRIED

3.1. Council Dialogue – Advice from officials – FOIP S. 24(1)(b)(i)

3.2 CAO Evaluation – Confidential evaluations – FOIP S. 19(2)

3.3 WADEMSA Report – Advice from officials – FOIP S. 24(1)(b)(i)

Resolution No. 032.02.24

Moved by Councillor Peterson

THAT Council move out of Camera at 9:20 p.m.

FOR: Mayor Fule, Councillor Langmaid, Councillor Mitzner, Councillor Montgomery, Councillor Peterson, Councillor Wegener, and Councillor Wiley

AGAINST: None.

CARRIED

Mayor Fule reconvened the February 21, 2024 Regular Council Meeting at 9:24 p.m.

4. PUBLIC HEARING

None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

6. DELEGATIONS

None.

Councillor Wiley left the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution No. 033.02.24

Moved by Councillor Langmaid

THAT Council adopt the recommendations of the following agenda reports by an omnibus motion:

8.1 Regular Council Meeting Minutes – February 7, 2024

12.1 Letter regarding Strathmore High School Annual Graduation Pow-wow.

FOR: Mayor Fule, Councillor Langmaid, Councillor Mitzner, Councillor Montgomery, Councillor Peterson, and Councillor Wegener

AGAINST: None.

CARRIED

8. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

8.1. Regular Council Meeting Minutes – February 7, 2024

The following motion was adopted by the consent agenda:

THAT Council adopt the February 7, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as presented in Attachment I.

9. BUSINESS

None.

10. **BYLAWS**

10.1. **Land Use Bylaw Amendment No. 24-02 (318 First Avenue, Strathmore)**

Resolution No. 034.02.24

Moved by Councillor Peterson

THAT Council give first reading to Bylaw No. 24-02, being a bylaw to amend Land Use Bylaw No. 14-11;

AND THAT Council direct Administration to schedule a Public Hearing for Bylaw No. 24-02 on March 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

FOR: Mayor Fule, Councillor Langmaid, Councillor Mitzner, Councillor Montgomery, Councillor Peterson, and Councillor Wegener

AGAINST: None.

CARRIED

10.2. **Land Use Bylaw Amending Bylaw No. 24-01 (1016 Westridge Road)**

Resolution No. 035.02.24

Moved by Councillor Peterson

THAT Council give First Reading to Bylaw No. 24-01, being a bylaw to amend the Land Use Bylaw No. 14-11;

AND THAT Council direct Administration to schedule a Public Hearing for Bylaw No. 24-01 on March 20, 2024 at 6:10 p.m. in Council Chambers.

FOR: Mayor Fule, Councillor Langmaid, Councillor Mitzner, Councillor Montgomery, Councillor Peterson, and Councillor Wegener

AGAINST: None.

CARRIED

11. **COUNCILLOR INFORMATION & INQUIRIES**

11.1. **QUESTIONS BETWEEN COUNCILLORS AND COUNCIL STATEMENTS**

None.

11.2. **BOARDS AND COMMITTEES REPORTS**

None.

11.3. **QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD**

None.

11.4. ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRIES

None.

11.5. NOTICES OF MOTION

11.5.1. Cemetery Bylaw Amendments – Councillor Wiley

Resolution No. 036.02.24

Moved by Councillor Langmaid

THAT Council defer 11.5.1, Cemetery Bylaw Amendments, to the next Regular Meeting of Council on March 6, 2024.

FOR: Mayor Fule, Councillor Langmaid, Councillor Mitzner, Councillor Montgomery, Councillor Peterson, and Councillor Wegener

AGAINST: None.

CARRIED

12. CORRESPONDENCE

12.1. Letter regarding Strathmore High School Annual Graduation Pow-wow.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Fule adjourned the February 21, 2024 Regular Council Meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Mayor

Director of Strategic, Administrative
and Financial Services



Request for Decision

To: Council

Staff Contact: Angela Groeneveld, Economic Sustainability and Investment Officer

Date Prepared: February 8, 2024

Meeting Date: March 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Economic Development Action Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Information for Council.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Affordable
Housing



Climate
Resiliency



Community
Development



Community
Wellness



Economic
Development



Financial
Sustainability

HOW THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE MET:

Council has prioritized Economic Development in the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. The Town of Strathmore has embarked on a transformative journey, engaging InnoVisions & Associates to conduct a comprehensive Business Needs Assessment and develop an Economic Development Action Plan. This Action Plan takes into account the six Strategic Priorities set by the Council, including affordable housing, financial sustainability, intentional community development, climate resiliency, economic development, and community wellness. The Plan aligns with community goals and addresses the challenges identified by businesses, such as workforce shortages, housing issues, supply chain disruptions, broadband limitations, and high real estate costs.

This Economic Development Action Plan is a practical, impactful resource designed for implementation over the next twelve months and strategic goal-setting for the next three years. The outcomes of the Business Needs Assessment and Economic Development Plan are ambitious, aiming to establish a baseline of business needs, facilitate well informed decision making, and develop a three-year framework supporting local businesses and attracting new investments.

SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:

This strategic initiative aims not only to identify local business needs, challenges, and opportunities, but to provide a clear roadmap for fostering existing businesses and positioning Strathmore for new investments and sustainable growth.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

GENERAL:

The plan emphasizes the importance of a gap analysis, strategically identifying disparities between the current state of the local economy and the desired optimal state, by highlighting the need to address infrastructure costs, commercial and industrial land deficits and housing needs, updating growth plans, supporting the current Municipal Development Plan update, and assessing broadband connectivity improvement opportunities to enable attracting and sustaining investment and being “investment ready.” These objectives will be enabled by strategic partnerships, housing initiatives, utilizing the Strong Towns fiscal management approach, development of a land strategy, supporting regional workforce initiatives, ensuring reliable and adequate energy supply and being climate resilient.

ORGANIZATIONAL:

The goal of the plan is to execute the recommended strategies to best utilize community assets and advantages to support the existing business community and encourage new business investment.

OPERATIONAL:

N/A

FINANCIAL:

There are no financial implications at this time, other than staff time needed to write this report. A subsequent report with further financial information will be brought forward in March for Council's consideration.

POLICY:

N/A

IMPLEMENTATION:

Ongoing work

BACKGROUND:

N/A

KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S):

Council will review the Strathmore Economic Development Action Plan 2024-2026.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

The Economic Development Action Plan is a valuable resource that provides a detailed understanding of the current state of businesses. It empowers Council and Senior Management to make informed decisions regarding policies, programs, and processes that support local businesses. Community support is crucial for businesses to thrive, creating a collective opportunity for all Strathmore residents to work together to retain existing businesses and attract new ones.

COMMUNICATIONS:

N/A

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment I: Strathmore BNA Action Plan - Council 2024.01.19](#)

Kara Rusk, Director of Strategic, Administrative, and Financial Services

Kevin Scoble, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved
- 29 Feb
2024
Approved
- 01 Mar
2024



Business Needs Assessment & **Strathmore** **Economic Development** **Action Plan 2024-2026**

INNOVISIONS
— & ASSOCIATES —

Town Council
January 19, 2024

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PROPRIETARY NOTICE

This Business Needs Assessment and Economic Development Action Plan was prepared by InnoVisions *and Associates* (InnoVisions) for the Town of Strathmore. The professional opinions within this document are based on information and conditions that existed at the time the work was completed. This document relies on the accuracy of existing Town and Wheatland County documents supplied by the Administration, as well as subjective content gleaned through interviews with individual businesses and community residents. In some instances, InnoVisions could not, and therefore did not, verify information supplied by others. If the information seemed reasonable, it has been added to the document. Where possible, every attempt to verify information was made. Neither InnoVisions nor its subcontractors shall be responsible for actions taken by the Town based on the information provided herein.

Note: The business cases, working examples and proposals stated within this document are concepts which are used to exemplify recommendations or proposed activities. They are not, in and of themselves, professional recommendations from InnoVisions.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strathmore stands out as more than a just a town - it's an East-Central business and residential hub, located in the heart of the Calgary region. Businesses can thrive in a supportive local community, while residents enjoy the best of both worlds – the charm of small-town living and access to urban market opportunities.

The Town of Strathmore has embarked on a transformative journey, engaging InnoVisions & Associates to conduct a comprehensive Business Needs Assessment and develop an Economic Development Action Plan. This strategic initiative aims not only to identify local business needs, challenges, and opportunities, but to provide a clear roadmap for fostering existing businesses and positioning Strathmore for new investments and sustainable growth.

Unlike previous community economic development studies that revolved around conceptual discussions, this Action Plan is a practical, impactful resource designed for implementation over the next twelve months and strategic goal-setting for the next three years. The outcomes of the Business Needs Assessment and Economic Development Plan are ambitious, aiming to establish a baseline of business needs, facilitate well-informed decision-making, and develop a three-year framework supporting local businesses and attracting new investments.

Strathmore's unique location is a key value proposition, offering a blend of rural charm and urban amenities. Positioned as the region's hub, the town provides a competitive advantage to businesses with access to major centers, a larger market, and robust community support. Proximity to the thriving City of Calgary, situated just 40km away, is a major asset. This presents opportunities for a diverse talent pool and an enhanced quality of life for residents. Additionally, Strathmore's strategic location along major transportation routes including the TransCanada Highway, and close proximity to rail and air transport further accentuates its appeal. Despite these advantages, barriers such as housing options, workforce shortages, and real estate limitations impede the town's ability to attract new investments.

To address these challenges, the Economic Development Action Plan is a valuable resource that provides a detailed understanding of the current state of businesses. It empowers Council and Senior Management to make informed decisions regarding policies, programs, and processes that support local businesses. Community support is crucial for businesses to thrive, creating a collective opportunity for all Strathmore residents to work together to retain existing businesses and attract new ones.

Stakeholder engagement, conducted through focus groups, interviews, and surveys, has shaped the Action Plan based on community desires. The community envisions the plan to deliver more jobs, housing options, education opportunities, and increased business presence, along with attracting more visitors to the town. With close to 100 local business owners actively engaging in the Business Café and one-on-one interviews, the process provided a solid snapshot of the current state of business. The business community wants

information on Town economic development processes and the next steps to support them. They are concerned about the lack of results from previous engagements.

The Action Plan takes into account the six Strategic Priorities set by the Council, including affordable housing, financial sustainability, intentional community development, climate resiliency, economic development, and community wellness. The Plan aligns with community goals and addresses the challenges identified by businesses, such as workforce shortages, housing issues, supply chain disruptions, broadband limitations, and high real estate costs.

The plan emphasizes the importance of a gap analysis, strategically identifying disparities between the current state of the local economy and the desired optimal state. The Town of Strathmore faces critical gaps in economic development, hindering its capacity to sustain and attract investment. Infrastructure costs for some of the approved Area Structure Plans (ASPs) pose a substantial risk, potentially burdening the town with millions in debt. Lack of commercial or industrial land further impedes investment readiness. The absence of a municipal growth strategy within the Municipal Development Plan, there is a critical housing shortage and an immediate need for a housing plan and the issue of inconsistent broadband must be addressed. Strategic solutions involve partnering with industry, addressing housing shortages, reviewing the Strong Towns –fiscal management approach, utilizing the Town’s existing lots creatively, fostering eco-friendly initiatives, and supporting regional workforce projects, all with comprehensive planning.

Beyond the initial analysis, the Action Plan redefines economic development by focusing on reshaping perspectives, restructuring systems, and leveraging existing assets. It recognizes the need for a novel approach, concentrating on greenfield and brownfield land utilization for infrastructure development. The primary strategy revolves around retaining local businesses and residents, enhancing their overall capacity for success. As the community becomes more investment-ready, the plan envisions attracting new businesses.

With over 30 recommendations, the consultants have provided a detailed framework with short-term and long-term activities within the Economic Development Action Plan. The detailed worksheet includes recommendations, corresponding action items, resources, and key performance indicators. The key priorities for the first year (2024) include finalizing the Municipal Development Plan, which includes developing a Community Growth Plan, incentivizing innovative community development, stimulating intentional community-wide development, completing a Broadband Strategy, and facilitating an Economic Development Investment Platform. The plan advocates for streamlining processes, increasing cross-departmental and regional interaction between the Town and its existing business base, will support the capacity to retain and attract new investment and when to **ACT** – advocate, champion and team-up for projects.

In essence, the Economic Development Action Plan for Strathmore is a positive, forward-looking initiative that positions the town for growth and resilience. It leverages community strengths and assets, envisions ambitious investments, and emphasizes collaboration and innovation. This plan is not just a document; it is a dynamic tool for Senior Administration and the Business Community to partner on, fostering a thriving residential and business community for Strathmore.

2.0 BUSINESS NEEDS ASSESSMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

2.1 Project Overview

The Town of Strathmore is taking a proactive approach to support local businesses, foster economic growth, and enhance community development through the launch of the Business Needs Assessment & Action Plan. The desired outcome is an Economic Development Action Plan that is a timely, relevant and workable plan for the Town based on the existing business environment within the Town of Strathmore. This Action Plan considers both the short and long term and provides direction on when to **ACT** – advocate, champion and team-up with other departments within the town or work with businesses and regional partners to support business growth and vitality.

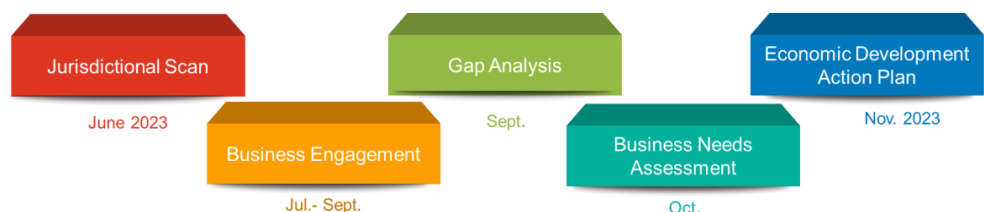
The Economic Development Action Plan identifies core goals, strategies to reach those goals and action plans to best utilize community assets and advantages to support the existing business community and encourage new business investment.

2.2 Process

InnoVisions (the consultants) started with a jurisdictional scan, which includes the review of existing Town foundational documents and studies. These documents affirmed Strathmore as a business and residential hub, supplying local residents and workforce with options for housing, education, health and employment in the broader region. The next step was business engagement; in early July 2023, a Business Café was facilitated to hear first-hand from businesses. 45 participants attended, and shared a range of business challenges and opportunities. From July to September, an additional 50 businesses were interviewed and provided their first-hand experience on doing business in Strathmore. The consultants then completed a gap analysis, identifying issues that were impacting businesses' profitability and considering what resources are available or needed to effectively support businesses.

The final steps of the project included a Business Needs Assessment as a 'What We Heard' report identifying key issues and opportunities, and an Economic Development Action Plan – a 12-month plan that will assist the Town in providing targeted support and contribute to the economic development of the community.

Figure 1: Business Needs Assessment and Economic Development Action Plan Process



2.3 Objectives

The project objectives *and outcomes* are as follows:

1. Raise awareness within the business community that economic development is a Council Priority;
2. Ensure that the Town of Strathmore is a great place to do business, and prepare for future investment;
3. Support and retain existing businesses by addressing current issues and challenges, thereby creating a healthy economic environment;
4. Help businesses expand, thrive and contribute to the overall economic prosperity of Strathmore;
5. Connect business to existing resources to support their growth success;
6. Create a baseline understanding of business challenges and opportunities (who is doing what, products, services, partnerships, and short/long-term needs); and
7. Create an action plan, involving all administration departments and business resources, to provide the best support for local business success.

2.4 Aligning with the Community's Goals

The Town Strathmore have completed a number of studies over the last ten years. Community stakeholders have actively engaged in the process. There are many similarities between these other studies to the Action Plan processes including surveys, interviews and key findings from stakeholder engagement. What is missing in many of the documents is an action plan which Council accepts and then directs Administration to allocate staff, budget and resources to implement. It is also important that there be adequate help for Administration from community champions who help to implement the plan. A strategy without resources, or the capacity to implement it, will remain a dusty document on the top shelf – which has been the case with the majority of other studies.

As part of the Economic Development Action Plan process, the Consultants reviewed foundational documents to create a framework to link the various previous recommendations (where applicable) and integrate them into the larger Ec. Dev. Action Plan. This provides the Council and community leaders with options to designate staff to focus efforts, resources, policies, and programs that coordinate and leverage activities. Doing so will achieve a common vision to benefit the *entire* business community in the town *and* in Wheatland County.

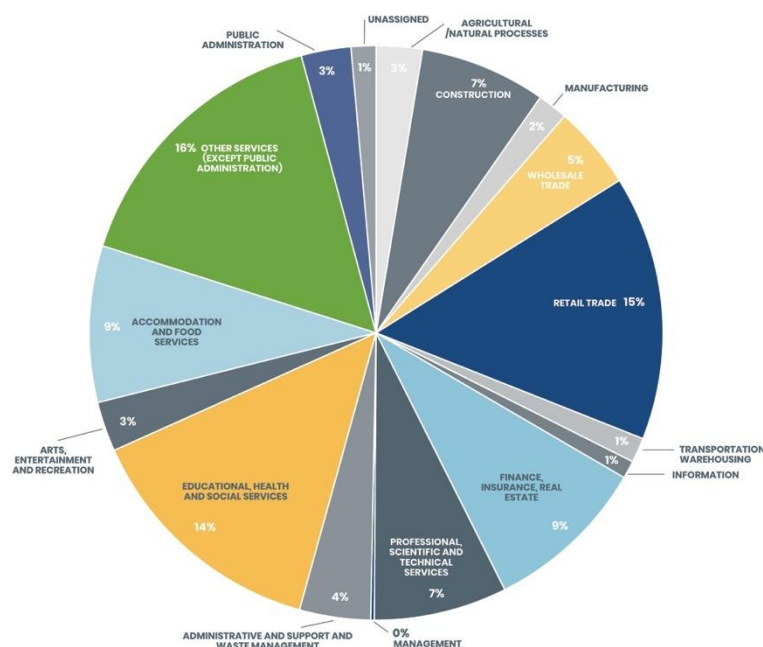
Table 1: Town Documents with Ties to Economic Development

DOCUMENT REVIEW	TIES TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN
Strathmore Social Needs Assessment (2023)	Highlights the need for collaboration among stakeholders to address ongoing and emerging social issues that affect residents, newcomers and workforce.
Town Business License (2023)	Business licenses are a resource to gather business intel about products, services, employees, certification, etc.
Strathmore & Area Housing Needs Assessment: Technical Report & Analysis (2023)	A detailed, data driven study to understand housing, homelessness, and housing needs in Strathmore and Wheatland County.
Develop Permit Applications (2023)	Planning applications. Links to MDP/LUB, etc.
Economic Development Update to Council (Feb. 15, 2022)	Results of a business outreach program where 400 businesses were engaged in a survey and interviews. Core needs identified.
2022-2025 Council's Priorities	Six priorities were identified: affordable housing, financial sustainability, and intentional community development, climate resiliency including environmental stewardship, economic development, and community wellness.
Town Land and Asset Inventory (2022)	The Town Planning Department's review of Town-owned properties. It is estimated that between 10-15 have some (limited) potential to develop. Each will require a strategy.
Town of Strathmore Strategic Plan (2021-2023)	Priorities for a revitalized, resilient and intentionally planned community positioned for growth.
Intermunicipal Plans – ICF & IDP (Ongoing – 2024)	Strathmore and Wheatland County are to collectively develop an Intermunicipal Plan Framework (ICF) and Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). Through Municipal Affairs via the MGA, they are mandated to develop a collaborative agreement.
SWOT Analysis and Review of Emerging Opportunities (2019)	Focused on growth and development. The MDP process including beautification and signage needed for downtown, provide business incentives, regional sharing of essential services. E.g. fire services, etc.
Town of Strathmore Triage BR+E (2019)	Business-identified concerns – internet, zoning restrictions, affordability of lease space, local roads, etc. Opportunities – availability of post-secondary, permit process, availability of workforce training options.
Economic Development Priorities and Implementation Considerations (2015)	Focused on increased economic development capacity, 45 distinct initiatives. E.g. business investment website, business visitation program, amenities online, accelerate downtown revitalization, improve public transportation, etc.
Strathmore Municipal Development Plan ([MDP] 2014); Land-use Bylaw ([LUB] 2014) & amendments	The MDP is in the process of being updated 2020-2024. The ties to economic development include the capacity for business retention, expansion, investment attraction, marketing Strathmore, workforce housing, infrastructure, etc.
Area Structure Plans (ASP) (2010-2018)	A high-level review of the eight existing, and approved ASPs which ties to housing, transportation, infrastructure needs, and workforce.

3.0 CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

Strathmore has a rich agricultural history dating back to its settlement by CPR in 1883. Today, this vibrant community of nearly 15,000 residents offers the best of both worlds – the tranquility of country living and the convenience of town services (including high-quality health, education and recreational facilities). Businesses can thrive with local community support while also benefitting from access to the workforce, services and market in Calgary, plus the over 1.6 million residents located on the Eastern-trade corridor (the TransCanada highway).

Figure 2: Strathmore locally-owned licensed businesses by industry



Source: Environics custom-data file using NAICS coded business categories. 577 (2023)

While the focus of the Economic Development Action Plan (Ec. Dev. Action Plan) is primarily focused on the Town of Strathmore, it is important to note that businesses operate in trade regions and are not restricted by geographic or electoral boundaries. There are over 577 (as of 2023) locally-owned and operated businesses in Strathmore, and Wheatland County has an estimated 215 businesses (a figure more difficult to capture as there is no business licensing program in the County.)

Of the 577 licensed businesses, the three largest sectors are: retail trade (15%); education, health and social services (14%); and accommodation and food services (9%).

Major employers include both public and private organizations such as the Golden Hills

School Division & Holy Cross Collegiate; Strathmore District Health/Alberta Health Services; the Town of Strathmore; Co-op Food and Gas; Canadian Tire; and Walmart.

Business community support. There is a designated economic development department within the Town, and an economic development officer. There is also the Strathmore & District Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures Wildrose that support business events, research and regional economic development. Both Siksika First Nation and Wheatland County have designated Economic Development Officers. The opportunity to collaborate and effectively work together to support regional businesses along the Eastern Trade corridor has substantial potential. There is also an emerging opportunity to more actively engage with Calgary Economic Development (CED) as they actively pursue regional partnerships and projects. Calgary is a key asset for businesses around workforce, housing, supply chain, etc.

3.1 Factors Influencing the Business Retention and New Investment

Infrastructure. The Town has ample water and waste water infrastructure to grow. According to the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) scan completed in 2020, and the Economic Study conducted by HOK, 2018, the water and wastewater system, inclusive of water rights, will support a community of up to 32,000 residents. However, there is the need to review water capacity and/or water needs of businesses in not only the Town but Wheatland County. Wheatland County operates several potable water plants and sewage facilities, but has limited industrial water capacity at this time.

Existing Real Estate – Land Use. The majority of commercial development is located along the Trans-Canada Highway (TCH) and the downtown core. The industrial land is primarily located south of the TCH. It is important to note that there are eight approved Area Structure Plans (ASPs) for privately-owned land, and three are in the process of building. Several of the approved ASPs are from decades ago, and may include outdated infrastructure, zoning conflicts or development concerns that could put a financial strain on the community to provide housing infrastructure and Town services. There are a number of private developers who own property in the town and are actively looking for support from the municipality to market the properties; while this is an opportunity, consideration must be given to the support needed from the Town to service the land/developments.

Shovel-Ready Land – Greenfield. The town has very few municipally owned parcels of property, limiting any commercial and/or industrial development. In 2022, an internal Town Parcel Inventory was completed which indicates that there are approximately ten sites that *could be* developed through innovative land-planning strategies to resolve challenges/barriers (such as no land title to the property, irregularly shaped property, utilities location impeding full land use, etc.) There appears to be capacity to ‘build up versus out’ in the downtown and retail corridors where existing infrastructure is already in the ground. A growth strategy to review the options for both brownfield and greenfield, and to devote resources to get investment-ready land into the market, is a priority. At this stage there was no brownfield inventory or strategy available.

Broadband. Strathmore has inconsistent internet throughout the community for residents and businesses alike. There are those who have adequate service and others who have reported issues for years. The existing provider, Shaw (now Rogers), conducted a service provision study and reported that internet was adequate. However, the business community strongly disagrees with this statement. Those negatively affected stated that inconsistent and inadequate broadband was impacting business operations. In the new digital economy, this factor will impact the Town’s ability to attract some new types of investment and limits any digital innovation for existing businesses.

Regional Municipality Economic Comparison. A high-level economic snapshot was completed with municipalities along the Eastern trade corridor of total property assessment in comparison to residential assessment. It was noted that Wheatland County has almost double the industrial property assessment, in comparison to the Town. While this snapshot does not include all factors relevant to economic stability (e.g. municipal budget/costs, etc.) this data, and the cost of providing water, utilities, housing infrastructure is key when working with neighbouring partners on critical agreements such as the Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) and the Intermunicipal Collaborative Framework (ICF).

Table 2: Regional municipality economic comparison snapshot (2022)

Indicators* 2022	Strathmore	Wheatland County	Siksika 146	Chestermere	Brooks
Population	15,189	8,738	3,559	24,649	5,389
Mill rate (non-residential-munc.)	8.34%	8.62%	N/A	7.24%	14.44%
# Businesses*	577*	215~	206	713	672
Property Assessments	\$1.9B	\$4.4B	\$3.9B	\$1.3B	N/A
Residential Share of Property Assessments	83.3%	32%**	N/A	95.2%	76.8%

Source: The Alberta Regional Dashboard, "Compare Municipalities". Nov. 10, 2023.

* Note: The Alberta Regional Dashboard indicated that there were 500 businesses in Strathmore, whereas Environics Data suggest there are 577 locally owned, licensed business.

** Wheatland Assessment, Jamie Kramble, Economic Development Officer, Wheatland County. Nov. 24, 2023.

Comparable Urban Centres – Mill Rates. At the present level of mill rates in 2022, Strathmore is the second-lowest millrate in comparison to ten other Alberta urban centres with a population between 10 and 20 K residents as well as similar amenities, recreational facilities and infrastructure. It is important to consider the amenities, especially those that are substantial community investments such as recreation facilities, swimming pools, etc. There have been discussions around increasing the Strathmore mill rate by 5%; if this is supported by Council, that would place Strathmore at the second-highest level in comparison to other similar municipalities. Of note, mill rate comparison on a regional basis using larger centres, e.g. the City of Airdrie, at 85K residents is not comparing apples-to-apples in the municipal assessment and taxation space.

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Table 3: Urban centres comparable to Strathmore based on population and amenities

Municipality	Population	Munc. Mill Rate	Property Assessments
Blackfalds	11,962	10.8	\$1.3B
Morinville	10,498	8.77	\$1.3B
Brooks	14,623	14.44	\$1.3B
Hinton	10,087	9.37	\$1.8B
Lacombe	14,229	9.73	\$1.9B
Strathmore	15,189	8.34	\$1.9B
High River	14,448	8.4	\$2.0B
Cold Lake	15,546	12.78	\$2.1B
Canmore	14,530	7.18	\$8.4B
Stony Plain	18,567	8.16	\$2.7B

Source: The Alberta Regional Dashboard, "Compare Municipalities". Nov. 10, 2023.

Location is One of Strathmore's Leading Competitive Advantages

The town of Strathmore's location in the region, and the community's proximity to key transportation corridors, are leading competitive advantages. A rural residential and business hub, the town is the largest municipality in the area. Strathmore is a commercial centre with over 15,189 residents, and increased in population by 2.6% in 2021. The trade population is key when analyzing how to support economic growth and community sustainability.

An even greater opportunity exists to position for new investment when considering the Town's proximity to Calgary, a metropolitan centre with over 1.6 million residents. Strathmore is just 35 km east of the Calgary International Airport and located on the TransCanada Highway. Strathmore can position itself as a rural hub in the region, and as a key location on the eastern trade corridor in the heart of the Calgary region. There are over 100K residents within 25 km of Strathmore.

Table 4: Strathmore's trade population (2020)

	Local Population (2022)	Within 25 km. of Strathmore	Within 50 km. of Strathmore
Strathmore	15,189	~102,000K residents in the trade population*	~1.5 M residents in the trade population including a portion of Calgary
Wheatland County and hamlets*	9,536		
Siksika #146	3,559		
Total	28,284		

Source: Alberta Dashboard. *6 communities within 25 km of Strathmore including Wheatland County, Rockyview, Chestermere, Siksika and portions of Vulcan County. Adapted from Statistics Canada, regional population (custom data request (Nov. 15, 2023). Website: <https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/customregion/12738/#/>

* Wheatland County's population is 8,738, and includes the following: Gleichen Chancellor Rosebud Cheadle, Cluny, Carseland, Lyalta, Namaka and Nightingale as well as the independent hamlets of Hussar. The independent municipalities of Rockyford and Standard are approximately 892 residents, bringing the combined total to ~9,536. The population of Wheatland County increased 2.35% year-over-year, and increased 4.95% in the last five years.

Connectivity to Market and Logistics. Access to market is important for business to sell their goods and services. The Town is well connected to roads and is in close proximity to runways and rails. The Town benefits from being on Highway 1, the TransCanada high-load corridor with between 14,000 and 15,000K vehicles passing by each day. To the west, the TransCanada intersects the Queen Elizabeth Hwy 2 which connects in Strathmore to the CANAMEX/North-South Trade Corridor, linking Canada to the United States and Mexico. This busy corridor saw an estimated 98,000 trucks and 145,000 passenger vehicles cross through the Coutts, Alberta, to Sweetgrass, Montana, border.

Carway Border Crossing, above Montana, USA, is approximately 267.8 km SW of Strathmore. The **Vancouver Seaport** is approximately 1,000 km to the west of Strathmore. Access to air travel, commercial freight and passenger flights are available through the **Calgary International Airport** (53 kms.). An underutilized but valuable asset in the region is the **Strathmore (D.J. Murray) airport** (15.4 kms) northwest of Strathmore in Wheatland County.

Table 5: Distance and times to major markets

DISTANCE AND TIMES TO MAJOR MARKETS		
Calgary (YYC - International Airport)	Carway (US Land Crossing)	Vancouver (Seaport)
53 km	267.8 km	1,038 km
40 minutes	3 hours	11 hours

The **Calgary Intermodal Terminal Rail Yard**, near Chestermere is in close proximity to both Strathmore and the Calgary Airport. There are two proposed developments that could increase additional flow of goods, including a CN proposal looking to expand Calgary rail operations with another intermodal yard in Southeast Calgary and several sites for a short-line track being explored to the east between Hanna and Oyen.

The **Oyen Regional Rail Company** owns the local short-line rail. Located between Oyen and Lyalta, Alberta, the Oyen Logistics Yard has attracted a new multi-million dollar investment. In March of 2023, the province announced a million-dollar study on re-opening the 286 km link between Oyen and Strathmore.

Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) provides service that runs from east to west along the TransCanada Highway. There is a low-speed siding branch line located at Strathmore Station. Calgary has a major freight handling facility, with tracks connecting to all major markets.

Housing. The housing situation in Strathmore is dire. Similar to the rest of Canada, there is a shortage of affordable housing, and housing options. From the recent Housing Study done in 2023, the report indicated that there was a need for all housing options in the community. Of the 5,989 dwellings within Strathmore, over 58% are single-family homes and the vacancy rate is at the critical levels. These factors are influencing business owners and residents alike who seek any-level of housing.

Table 6: Dwelling units – vacancy rate (2022)

Indicators 2022	Strathmore	Wheatland County
Housing/Dwelling Units	5,989	3,108*
Single Family Homes	58.6%	89.6%
Residential Vacancy	0.40%	N/A

Source: Alberta Regional Dashboard – Compare Municipalities. Search dated Nov. 10, 2023.

*Housing figures for Wheatland County provided by Jamie Kramble, Economic Development Officer, Nov. 17, 2023.

Labour Force. Housing and labour force are integral components that contribute to the overall success, growth and sustainability of businesses. A well-supported workforce, coupled with suitable housing options, creates a positive business environment.

The terms labour force, participation rate, unemployment rate, and employment rate are key indicators used to analyze the current labor market. An important indicator to consider is how many businesses are looking for workforce or will need workforce in the next one to five years. Below is a definition of each category:

- *Labour force* – the total number of people both employed and unemployed, who are working, actively seeking work or capable of working
- *Participation rate* – the percentage of the working-age population who are either employed or actively seeking employment
- *Employment rate* – the percentage of the working-age population that is employed
- *Unemployment rate* – the percentage of the working-age population that is unemployed and actively looking for work

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Strathmore has a moderate labour force participation rate and a somewhat higher unemployment rate compared to the provincial average. Whereas Wheatland County exhibits a higher participate rate and lower unemployment rate in comparison to Strathmore.

Table 7: Strathmore's & Wheatland County's Labour Market

2021*	Strathmore	Wheatland	Alberta (2022)
Labour Force	7,335/14,339	4,295/8,738	2,530.7/3,648.8
Participation Rate	65%	71%	69.4%
Unemployment Rate	10%	7%	5.4%
Employment Rate	59%	66%	65.6%

Source: Alberta Regional Dashboard – Compare Municipalities. Search dated Nov. 10, 2023.

*Note – these figures were during COVID (2021)

Demographics. Strathmore's population has had limited growth in the last ten years, creating one of the biggest barriers to business – a very limited labour pool. The median family income in 2021 is **\$106,000**, compared to the provincial average of **\$105,960**. The median age in Strathmore in 2022 was **41.1** years, meaning that the Town's population is slightly older than the provincial median of **38.0** years of age.

Table 8: Strathmore's Average Age and Income

Indicators (2022)	Strathmore	Alberta
Median Age - Years	41	38
Median Family Income	106,000	105,960

Source: Alberta Regional Dashboard – Compare Municipalities. Search dated Nov. 10, 2023.

4.0 BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Business engagement was challenging at first – largely due to the high number of surveys and interviews that have been conducted in the last five years. This fact altered the number of businesses engaged as part of the Business Needs Assessment (BNA). Initially the consultants were going to facilitate several business cafes and complete dozens of interviews. This methodology was adjusted when the jurisdictional scan was completed and it was discovered that multiple economic development studies, SWOT analysis, business retention and expansion studies and strategic plans had already been completed between 2015 to 2022. There has been considerable business engagement over the years, with over 700 participants responding to interviews, surveys or strategic planning sessions. Unfortunately, the result is that businesses are ‘survey fatigued’. Instead, more time was devoted to analyzing past findings, making recommendations and completing a current gap analysis.

As a starting point in the process of completing a Business Needs Assessment, then a 12-month Economic Development Action Plan, the Consultants (via the Economic Development Department) reached out to and engaged the business community. Overall, an estimated 95 or 18% of Strathmore’s 577 local businesses participated in the Business Needs Assessment. Input was gathered during a Business Café with 45 individuals participating. Additional input was gathered through one-on-one meetings with 50 individuals.

The primary goal of the **business engagement process** was to capture business owners’ perspectives on the opportunities and challenges of operating a business in the region. The questions asked were both quantitative and qualitative.

Figure 3: Strathmore Business Café (Jul. 2023)

Due to the high level of previous engagement, many expressed frustration in being asked to participate. The business community was very clear that they wanted a follow-up after the outreach, to share what the collective business community shared and what Senior Administration was going to do with the information as there has never been any follow-up from previous years.



5.0 BUSINESS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Engaging business owners and investors in a Business Needs Assessment provides a valuable starting point. While their firsthand input is subjective, it provides crucial insights into the challenges and requirements of their operations, offering a unique perspective from those directly involved in business.

5.1 'What We Heard' – Challenges

While there were dozens of challenges identified, the top six were consistently identified by the majority of the participants. **Workforce shortages** and **skills gaps** prevail across both public organizations and private business, hindering business operations, profitability and service provision. **Critical housing shortages** further compound these challenges, affecting workforce attraction and retention. **Supply chain disruptions** were very diverse, ranging from lack or loss of suppliers, to logistics and distribution issues. The disruptions are causing inventory challenges, production delays and customer service issues. **Broadband service** was also frequently mentioned as a business challenge – inconsistent supply and slow internet speeds impede business productivity, create e-commerce challenges and hinder the businesses' competitive capacity and the adoption of new technology. **Limited local training and development options** are creating losses in productivity, increasing training costs and impacting businesses' ability to offer career mapping as an employee attraction resource; however there was a very low level of awareness of or initiative to access the wide range of workforce and training development tools that are already available.

Finally, businesses reported struggling with the ability to 'reasonably' buy or lease commercial space, or acquire land to development commercial property. **The high cost of existing real estate and leasehold options** hampers development; this will lead to businesses exiting the community to source property.

Figure 4: 'What we Heard' – Challenges as identified by the business community



Source: Extracted from the Business Café held in Strathmore and business interviews with close to 100 participants

5.2 'What We Heard' – Opportunities

Businesses have identified various opportunities, with a focus on workforce retention and attraction, regional collaboration, and marketing local businesses and the community to investors. Workforce-related opportunities include local training programs, collaboration with other businesses and industries for training initiatives, innovative academic partnerships, and engagement with local schools for mentoring students in exploring career paths. Regional collaboration, especially concerning workforce development, was a consistent theme. Marketing opportunities involve B2B/B2C strategies, regional collaboration, and supporting shop local initiatives. Downtown revitalization and signage were also noted. Businesses expressed interest in co-marketing, particularly when combined with shop local programs. Addressing the need for effective resource sourcing was recognized as a solution to share resources, reduce input costs, explore new supply chain options, and access new markets. Additionally, businesses sought more tools and resources for attracting, retaining, and integrating employees beyond traditional salary incentives.

Figure 5: 'What we Heard' – Opportunities as identified by the business community



Source: Extracted from the Business Café held in Strathmore and business interviews with close to 100 participants

5.3 Gap Analysis

Understanding the disparities or “gaps” between the current state of the local economy and the optimal state the community desires requires a plan. Such a plan must work strategically to minimize or eliminate business challenges while positioning the community to pursue opportunities.

A gap analysis is a strategic tool used to identify the existing economic conditions. With a gap analysis, it is possible to outline goals for Senior Leadership, Council and the business community and then develop targeted strategies. The outcome of the work is a better quality of life and more opportunities for residents and businesses alike.

In examining the current state of economic development in the Town, a number of significant risks that need to be addressed. Currently, Strathmore has limited capacity to sustain the existing population of residents, and there is no ability to grow or attract significant investment. The gaps/risks identified are:

1. **The financial/fiscal tax burden of development must be calculated and communicated in advance of approval of subdivisions!** This includes the infrastructure cost for the approved Area Structure Plan (ASP) – future development. The unfunded Town costs of the ASPs present a substantial risk to the Town. With the preliminary estimate completed by municipal staff, it appears the cost of infrastructure development for a subdivision could put the Town in the millions of dollars of long term debt. There is a varying level of understanding as to what this exact cost is by the different departments. It should be approached and communicated in a strategic manner.

The unknowns or assumptions become a critical risk when the Town considers the number of large businesses that are moving into the area and therefore the need for housing. A few of the existing developers are already in position and marketing their approved subdivisions to the large employer’s employees.

- Potential solutions could include working with large industry to discuss partnering around designed neighbourhood and housing plans, revenue sharing agreements with Wheatland County, and/or leveraging infrastructure grants and loans programs through the Canadian Infrastructure Bank (CIB), etc.
- A consideration is for Town staff to review the ‘Strong Towns Process and Certification’ program. Strong Towns as an economic development tool advocates for financially resilient and sustainable communities through a bottom-up, community-driven approach. The process suggests small, adaptable projects, financial resilience over rapid growth, and adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure. The principles include creating walkable neighbourhoods, encouraging local decision-making, prioritizing infrastructure maintenance, seeking diverse revenue streams, fostering affordability and inclusivity, being adaptable to change, and prioritizing public spaces. This approach aims to depart from conventional top-down models, relying on local wisdom and practical, common-sense strategies to build resilient, sustainable and people-focused communities.

2. **Strathmore needs commercial or industrial land for development.**

Economic development is stated as a priority of Council. Council's Strategic Plan states:

"Strathmore is well-positioned to encourage commercial and industrial economic development with a focus on sustainable growth. The key activity is a revitalized, resilient and intentionally planned community positioned for growth". However, there is very little publically or privately owned industrial or commercial land available. Nor is Strathmore investment ready.

Strathmore lacks the essential foundation of shovel-ready land to facilitate this expansion. The population base has grown minimally over the last five years (6% compared to double-digit growth in neighbouring communities), there has been a 5% decrease in building permits in 2022, and there has been a steady decline of licensed business since 2019. This can largely be attributed to the absence of readily available land for development; the high cost of real estate; limited options to buy or lease property; and the housing shortages.

This gap analysis underscores the misalignment between the Town's development goals and the present infrastructure, emphasizing the urgent need to address this deficiency. Bridging this gap requires strategic planning, collaboration with stakeholders, and the formulation of policies to identify, prepare and designate suitable land for development. Without a proactive approach to establish shovel-ready land, the Town risks impeding its economic growth potential and thwarting opportunities for attracting new businesses and residents essential for a thriving community.

- Possible solutions to explore are the Town's existing lots. Of the Town-owned properties, an estimated ten lots could be developed. These parcels are all 'awkward', with a range of issues from utility placement to oddly proportioned shapes. Potentially the Town could have a 'Creative Spaces Contest' or low cost project to spur innovative thinking amongst architects and developers to consider options for these challenging lots.
- Launch as investment platform to market what properties the Town and local investor have available. An example used was the Connect 4 Commerce platform, an online tool that connects to Alberta Real Estate Boards and it also provides options for private properties to be placed on the platform.
- Encourage eco-friendly or green energy houses, developments and commercial spaces. Look at various 'green' incentives. These incentives could be financial or non-financial for developers who incorporate sustainable practices or energy-efficient technologies in their projects. Additionally, streamlined permitting processes and reduced fees could be introduced for eco-friendly initiatives. By collaborating with local utilities, the Town could establish rebate programs for businesses and residents adopting green energy solutions. Public recognition and certification for environmentally conscious developments may also serve as incentives, creating a positive image for businesses and attracting environmentally aware consumers. Furthermore, fostering partnerships with green technology providers and offering support for research and development in sustainable practices could contribute to a more eco-friendly economic landscape. These incentives aim to motivate developers and businesses to prioritize environmental sustainability, ultimately fostering a greener and more energy-efficient community.

Green initiatives could offset utility costs, there are numerous grants and incentives for eco-friendly projects and this process aligns with Council's strategic priorities.

3. **The Town needs a municipal short-or long-term growth strategy.** While plans are underway to update the Municipal Development Plan in 2024, there is no indication of a fulsome growth strategy to be included in the MDP update. A growth strategy would include: a guide to the physical, economic and social development of the Town including but not limited to infrastructure development, zoning and land-use planning of designated commercial and industrial zones (those privately and owned by the municipality); consideration of residential housing, a housing strategy that includes more live, work, stay and play options; a plan for innovation in a well-rounded community within the eight pre-approved Area Structure Plans (ASPs); and environmental sustainability with consideration of sustainable growth practices and the promotion of eco-friendly practices.

- A community growth strategy could/should also include a housing plan, not just neighbourhood by neighbourhood, but a community-wide plan. Consider options such as Agri-hoods (planned neighbourhoods that tie to food production), environmental practices, and real estate performance measures. Agri-hoods could also support social needs programs within the community.
- The community growth strategy should also look at options for a Downtown Area Revitalization Plan (DARP). A DARP would serve to strategically guide the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown area. The primary goal would be to stimulate investment and create a more vibrant and attractive urban core by increasing foot traffic, commerce and usage of the area. Strathmore could focus on more multi and mixed-use developments, enhanced pedestrian accessibility, and creative use of spaces through placemaking strategies.

4. **Regional collaboration is challenging when it comes to joint agreements.**

The business community, developers and investors may not be aware of the progress that is required for the Town of Strathmore and Wheatland County to formalize an Intermunicipal Collaborative Framework (ICF) and Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). The ICF is a strategic plan mandated by the Municipal Government Act (MGA) where both municipalities allocate resources to provide local services for local residents and businesses (e.g. water, wastewater, transportation, emergency services, recreation, etc.). Regional collaboration is required to a higher degree.

- A key point around regional collaboration with neighbouring communities – Wheatland County, Siksiika and focus on including the City of Calgary. Calgary Economic Development (CED) is devoting considerable effort and budget into regional partnerships. CED will soon announce a designated person to coordinate regional strategies. Large businesses will leverage Calgary for workforce, housing and supply chain.

5. **Strathmore needs a community-wide housing plan.** Focus on more than just Land Use Bylaw (LUB) amendments or interim fixes in a neighbourhood. There are no housing options, or few options along the housing continuum. This gap is impeding business and will turn away investors. Strathmore does not have a housing plan. Businesses need workforce; workforce needs housing. Strathmore needs housing all along the housing continuum, from emergency housing to market value housing.

Figure 6: What Workforce Needs



6. **Broadband issues need to be resolved.**

This is an exceptionally sensitive issue within the business community. In previous business visits and community engagements, the issue of inconsistent and unreliable broadband has been constant. Broadband is considered a critical resource in our digital economy, as important as any of the core utilities of power and water. Broadband and high-speed internet is fundamental for the modern business environment. It facilitates efficient communication, supports remote work, enables data-intensive processes, and contributes to overall business agility and competitiveness.

- The Town plays a key role in advocating for consistent broadband access to support local businesses. The Town has more power to negotiate with service providers than would a singular business or business organization.

7. **The Town lacks incentives to stimulate innovative design. This ties to a growth strategy.**

- Community planning and economic development can collaboratively address housing and commercial space shortages by streamlining bylaws to encourage progressive and innovative development. The focus should be on multipurpose development that encompasses various housing types, retail and commercial spaces, and serves as a strategy to stimulate development.
- Recognizing developers as pivotal partners in shaping the community by offering efficient and clear bylaws will provide an environment conducive to investment. By balancing profit aspirations with community needs, the approach seeks a win-win scenario.

8. **Economic Development is a priority**

The Town serves two clients – residents and businesses. As with most any community, a municipality will focus more on the residential needs. However, the business community as investors and developers have ‘skin’ in the game. As taxpayers and employers, they are key to the long-term stability and sustainability of the community. At least 20% of those interviewed indicated that as a business community they did not feel valued or listened to by the Town. While interviews are opinion based and therefore subjective, the opinions still have merit.

- Develop a Business Concierge Service – integrate a streamlined, one-window approach in the Town Administration office that fosters relationships with businesses right from the initial contact. Assign the EDO the role of dedicated liaison, project manager and quarterback for businesses in need of assistance.
 - It is noted that the planning department has worked hard to turn around new development permits within short time frames. Various businesses have reported excellent customer service and support from the planning department.

Recommendations on how to address or at least mitigate these challenges have been provided in the Economic Development Action Plan derived from a gap analysis. This analysis provides actionable insights for the economic development plan to help the municipality to address specific challenges and seize opportunities. The analysis serves as a guide for strategic decision-making, resource allocation and the creation of a conducive environment for businesses to thrive. Ultimately, a plan based on the analysis contributes to the overall growth and attractiveness of the municipality for new investment.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section includes the three core goals, strategies and the corresponding recommendations to support the implementation of the Economic Development Action Plan. Note – all three goals and the corresponding strategies are to be developed and implemented consecutively based on internal capacity, budget, resources and/or accessing of external resources to complete the action items. The following is a framework which provides direction. At the present time, Senior Leadership is discussing ways to further expand the Corporate Business Plan to include the Economic Development Plan.

1. GOAL #1: STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

- **Strategy:** Develop partnerships to address workforce issues and provide tools for industry to attract and retain employees.

Recommendations:

External

1. Team-up to support the Regional Workforce Strategy. Work to increase awareness and involvement from the business community in the implementation of the workforce action plan. Tie all activities to Strathmore's Business Outreach process.
2. Prioritize workforce initiatives, data gathering processes (business licenses) and working collaboratively with industry to tackle workforce shortages and skills gaps.
3. Champion a 'Strategic Futures – Industry Forum' or roundtable event. Bring industry together to discuss issues and solutions to industry challenges through a collaborative effort. Seek a champion from the forum that will lead an issues and opportunities task force.
4. Seek out partners to host job fairs, career development events and reverse trade shows to increase employer and employee matchmaking events. Leverage AR/VR technology to expand domestic and international reach.
5. Advocate and team-up to provide different options to deliver employer training on diversity, and how to create an employee attraction, retention and integration plan.
6. Increase academic partnerships to support more options for training and career development.

Outcomes: elevated economic viability across the region achieved through comprehensive solutions for workforce shortages and skills gaps. Businesses will experience improved and increased workforce retention, attraction, and integration through diverse training, education, and career mapping programs, addressing the evolving needs of the workforce. Businesses will become more resilient.

2. GOAL #2: ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S INVESTMENT READINESS TO ATTRACT NEW INVESTMENT

- **Strategy:** Foster sustainable economic development by improving community investment readiness and supporting Town planning, housing and workforce initiatives.

Recommendations:

External

1. Subscribe to an Investment Attraction Platform to showcase green and brownfield options for development and/or sale in Town.
2. Support a Creative Spaces Initiative – a developer/investor competition to stimulate development on Town-owned property.
3. Facilitate or participate in a Workforce Housing Taskforce as a sustainable housing initiative.
4. Strategically provide the economic development lens to the MDP revisions, encourage the inclusion of a Growth Strategy. Encourage developer/investor input.
5. Collaboratively with Planning, develop a menu of incentives to spur specific development.
6. Support the development of an Investment Ready Certificate.
7. Establish collaborative partnerships to support green energy to pilot or stimulate green energy projects.

Consider how the Town's unique parcels can be developed. Look at other processes to engage and 'gamify' and challenge architects, engineers and developers to come up with innovative development or site plans to build more housing options or multi-use buildings on the challenging parcels.

Figure 7: Town of Strathmore – Municipally-Owned Land Parcels



Source: Town of Strathmore Land Asset Inventory (2022)

GOAL #3: STRENGTHEN AND DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

- ***Strategy: Implement business retention, expansion and new investment initiatives to help businesses thrive and grow.***

Recommendations:**External**

1. Research options for a Town-owned or Public Private Partnership (P3) Broadband network. Leverage new and emerging technologies to provide businesses with the necessary infrastructure to thrive. Complete a Broadband Strategy that includes a ROI for the Town and/or partners.
2. Develop a 'BusinessBoost' Hub: Your Virtual Resource page for the Town website. Include the range of resources available for businesses, how to 'do business with the Town', etc.
3. Encourage small business and an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Designate time and budget to entrepreneur-led economic development activities to offer businesses life-stage training, mentoring and sector specific programs to build a resilient business community.
4. To ensure the growth and prosperity of Strathmore, the new Municipal Development Plan (MDP) must prioritize revisions that incorporate and encourage innovative community development strategies, diverse housing options, and multi-purpose developments. A fundamental part of the MDP should include the integration of a comprehensive Growth Strategy.
5. Economic Development, along with Planning, should strive to: incentivize housing development; foster more multi-purpose properties; encourage innovative planning for the existing Area Structure Plans; and maximize ways to offset the cost of development absorbed by the Town.
6. Conduct a formal business outreach program that tracks business interviews in a confidential CRM, and follow-up on red flags (closures, exiting the community, etc.) and green flags (expanding, new certification, products, etc.).

Outcomes: Enhanced understanding of the direct link between economic and community development results in streamlined, effective processes for business support. Partnerships serving as conduits for businesses, entrepreneurs, and investors to connect with resources. Incentivized development and prioritized growth strategies increase opportunities for business initiation and expansion across housing, retail, commercial, and industrial sectors and Town tax revenue. Detailed data is collected to make informed decisions including research and analysis around a Broadband Strategy.

7.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN: ONE-PAGE SUMMARY

The following is a high-level snapshot of the three goals, strategies to reach the goals and the corresponding economic development action plan.

Table 9: Economic Development Action Plan: One-Page

GOAL #1: STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY
<i>Strategy: Develop partners to address workforce issues and provide tools for industry to attract and retain employees.</i>
EXTERNAL 1.2 Team-up to Support Regional a Workforce Strategy 1.3 Participate in Workforce Development Events 1.4 Support Employer Retention and Attraction Program 1.5 Increase Academic Partnership to Support More Options for Training
GOAL #2: ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S INVESTMENT READINESS TO ATTRACTION NEW INVESTMENT
<i>Strategy: Foster sustainable economic development by improving community investment readiness and supporting Town planning, housing and workforce.</i>
EXTERNAL 2.2 Expand the Role of Economic Development in Community Planning 2.3 Subscribe to an Investment Attraction Platform 2.4 Participate in a Workforce Housing Initiative 2.5 Stimulate Strategic and Intentional Community Development - Creative Spaces Initiative 2.6 Partnerships to Support Green Energy Projects 2.7 Partner on Regional Community Economic Development Initiatives
GOAL #3: STRENGTHEN AND DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL BUSINESSES ECOSYSTEM
<i>Strategy: Implement business retention, expansion and new investment initiatives to help business thrive and grow.</i>
EXTERNAL 3.2 Research and Develop a Broadband Strategy 3.3 Develop a 'BoostBusiness' Hub: Your One-Stop Virtual Resource Page 3.4 Contribute to a Robust Entrepreneurial Ecosystem 3.5 Align Economic Development and Planning Efforts to Increase New Investment 3.6 Continue a Structured Outreach Program

Within the Appendices are the full, detailed Economic Development Action Plan Working Sheets. Within the 20-page Action Plan is more comprehensive direction on the action plan, resources to achieve the action plan, potential resources, a high-level budget, timelines and key performance indicators (KPIs). Note – the Action Plan is a working document, meant to be adjusted based on micro- and macro-economic factors as issues and opportunities arise, it is scalable based on staff capacity, experience and budget.

8.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the partnership between the Town of Strathmore and InnoVisions & Associates has led to a significant step forward in enhancing the town's economic landscape. The Business Needs Assessment and the resulting Economic Development Action Plan provide a strategic roadmap for addressing challenges, seizing opportunities, and positioning Strathmore for sustainable growth. Unlike previous initiatives, this plan is not just a collection of ideas but a practical, implementable guide for the town's development over the next three years.

The town's unique location serves as a significant advantage, acting as a rural hub with access to major centers, a supportive local community, and gateway to Calgary. However, barriers such as housing options, workforce shortages, and limited real estate strategies hinder new investments. The Economic Development Action Plan seeks to overcome these barriers by engaging the community, assessing business needs comprehensively, and fostering a collaborative environment.

Stakeholder engagement, including focus groups, interviews, and surveys, revealed the community's desires: more jobs, improved housing and education options, increased business presence, and a rise in visitor spending. The plan aligns with these goals, emphasizing the importance of community collaboration for sustained economic success.

By addressing challenges like workforce shortages, housing issues, broadband and supply chain disruptions identified through community engagement, the plan focuses on streamlining processes, fostering collaboration, and creating conditions for innovation. Additionally, the plan tackles disparities between the current and desired state of the local economy through a strategic gap analysis.

Identifying barriers beyond the immediate business landscape, such as the lack of a municipal growth strategy and stalled regional collaboration, the plan advocates for progressive changes. It emphasizes the importance of a novel approach, concentrating on greenfield and brownfield land for infrastructure development.

With over 30 recommendations, the Economic Development Action Plan advocates for increased focus on priorities in 2024 on becoming Community Investment Ready. What is key is to look to resolve the eight issues identified in the gap analysis, starting with exploring options to update the Municipal Development Plan and include a Community Growth Strategy, work with developers and industry to cost share the cost of developing and infrastructure costs, develop innovative options to stimulate development through creative spaces, incentivize multi-purpose, multi-use development and more housing options and green development and developing a Broadband Strategy.

In summary, the Economic Development Action Plan is a comprehensive and actionable guide that empowers the Town of Strathmore to navigate challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and create a thriving residential and business center. There are details on when to ACT – advocate, champion and team-up for projects. The plan's success will not only benefit businesses but also contribute to the overall well-being and prosperity of the community.



Request for Decision

To: Mayor & Council

Staff Contact: Mark Pretzlaff, Director of Community and Protective Services

Date Prepared: February 13, 2024

Meeting Date: March 6, 2024

SUBJECT: 2024 Recreation and Cultural Needs Assessment

RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council approve a Capital Budget request, in the amount of \$60,000 and funded from the Fiscal Stabilization Reserve, for a Recreation and Culture Needs Assessment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Affordable
Housing



Climate
Resiliency



Community
Development



Community
Wellness



Economic
Development



Financial
Sustainability

HOW THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE MET:

As part of its Strategic Plan, Council has prioritized the maintenance, protection, and improvement of Community Wellness services that support optimum lifestyles for residents of Strathmore.

A Needs Assessment helps define the current state of a community and identifies future needs and potential priority areas. It is an essential component for planning future growth and will act as a critical supporting document that helps to define the needs and desires of a community and help determine how to allocate resources responsibly.

A Recreation and Culture Needs Assessment will provide Council and Administration with a point of reference that can help inform future planning, resource allocations (capital and operating), and potential partnership discussions with other municipalities and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:

To make sustainable decisions surrounding recreational and cultural improvements, a prudent and fiscally responsible approach is to look critically at existing infrastructure, facilities, and programming in Strathmore and the surrounding area, to determine potential gaps, duplications, and redundancies in assets and services.

A needs assessment would assist Administration in gathering information on the various amenities that are desired by the community.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

GENERAL:

There are no anticipated implications as this needs assessment would be a starting point for discussions surrounding existing and potential new recreational or cultural amenities. This report would engage the public and key stakeholders, and provide a comparative analysis of other communities similar in size and character, and current trends in recreation in the Province and Canada.

ORGANIZATIONAL:

Minimal staff time is required to complete this assessment, as Administration would look to a consultant to gather the data, prepare and present the report to Council.

OPERATIONAL:

No impacts to operations are anticipated at this time.

FINANCIAL:

Administration is recommending that the needs assessment be funded through the Financial Stabilization Reserve in the amount of \$60,000. If the funding is approved, the timeframe for a needs assessment is typically six (6) months but can range between four (4) to eight (8) months with no anticipated additional costs.

POLICY:

In December 2019, The Town published the [Town of Strathmore Recreation and Culture Master Plan](#)

IMPLEMENTATION:

With Council's approval, Administration will begin preparation to secure a consultant to prepare a report on the current state of recreation and culture for Strathmore and identify future needs and potential priority areas.

BACKGROUND:

In January 2020, Council adopted a Recreation & Culture Master Plan, replacing the 2010 Quality of Life Master Plan, to serve as the primary document guiding the Town's provision of and support for recreation and culture services in the community.

When it was adopted, the Master Plan assessed the current state, and identified priorities and recommendations regarding the provision of recreation, culture, active and creative lifestyle opportunities, and services to meet the needs of residents and visitors over the next ten years.

But at the same time, as new trends emerge, priorities shift, and different opportunities arise, a Needs Assessment will help to understand and prioritize present and future recreation and cultural needs of the community.

KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S):

To ensure resources are properly allocated, a starting point for planning new amenities should be to engage the community to provide input on their needs. The Needs Assessment will be an open and transparent public process that allows residents to participate in shaping their community by expressing their needs.

Utilizing this data, a prioritization criteria be established to rank projects and suggests that it include:

- Community accessibility
- Social inclusion
- Operational financial impacts
- Partnership opportunity
- Expected economic impact

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

That Council supports the funding of a recreation and cultural needs assessment to support long-term plans for the development of future facilities in Strathmore and area.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Administration would work with the consultants to identify the study area and assist with gathering input from residents and stakeholders on their recreation and cultural needs and preferences.

Upon completion of the report and presentation to Council, the needs assessment report will be posted on the Town's website.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

1. Council may adopt the recommended motion.
2. Council may defeat the recommended motion.
3. Council may provide further direction.

Mark Pretzlaff, Director of Community and Protective Services

Approved
- 22 Feb
2024

Veronica Anderson, Legislative Services Officer

Approved
- 22 Feb
2024

Johnathan Strathdee, Manager of Legislative Services

Approved
- 26 Feb
2024

Kevin Scoble, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved
- 01 Mar
2024



Request for Decision

To: Council

Staff Contact: Veronica Anderson, Legislative Services Officer

Date Prepared: February 26, 2024

Meeting Date: March 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Letters of Support Policy No. 1109

RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council adopt Letters of Support Policy No. 1109 as presented in Attachment I.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Affordable
Housing



Climate
Resiliency



Community
Development



Community
Wellness



Economic
Development



Financial
Sustainability

HOW THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE MET:

The types of letters addressed in the attached policy involve community goodwill or aim to strengthen economic relationships.

SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

GENERAL:

The Letters of Support Policy No. 1109 was created to streamline processes when it comes to issuing specific types of common letters from the Town with the intention of reducing time between when the request is received and issuance.

ORGANIZATIONAL:

N/A

OPERATIONAL:

N/A

FINANCIAL:

N/A

POLICY:

The policy requires that requests be accompanied by draft letters. This will reduce the time required by staff to create final letters for review.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Administration will need to ensure all affected staff is made aware of the *Letters of Support Policy* and its impacts to day-to-day tasks.

BACKGROUND:

As a part of normal operations for the Town of Strathmore, letters to fulfill obligations or express support are regularly sent from the mayor's office. Often there is urgency in being prompt with a response. Expectation remains that official items of this nature are sanctioned by Council. Once initial support has been given for a matter it can be redundant and delay delivery — or cause Special Council meetings to be called — if each subsequent related message requires re-approval during future Council meetings. To streamline the process, administration is recommending a new process which would have the mayor responsible for correspondence (in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*), provided the documents are consistent with a Council approved plan, policy, bylaw, or previous resolution.

The proposed policy, as seen in **Attachment I**, covers the following types of letters commonly brought to Council for approval before being actioned:

- Letters of Support

- Letters of Thanks
- Letters of Recognition
- Internal Support Requests (i.e. Grant applications)

Only letters that fit the parameters for previously agreed upon directives will follow this shortened process. New or unclear letters will still be brought forward as an Agenda item.

During the February 14, 2024 Committee of the Whole Council requested Administration look at the policy to consider increasing the time provided for review of letters from two (2) to five (5) days. Administration is still recommending two (2) business days for review, as it is the urgent items that require quick turn around that are most impacted by this policy. However, Council may pass a motion increasing the number of days as deemed appropriate.

Attachment II visually outlines the process.

KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S):

Current process involves additional staff hours for RFD management and can increase time for delivery (dependent on period before next available Regular Council Meeting.) In some instances additional Special Council Meetings could be called if more urgent timelines were required.

This policy was developed to increase efficiency by removing time and formality from the process, while still giving Council an opportunity to see and comment on requests electronically.

Administration is seeking the ability, in certain instances, to :

- Remove the step that requires all letters be brought to a Regular Council Meeting for vote prior to a signature; and
- Allow for the option of the signature to be that of the CAO in certain circumstances.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

The approval of *Letters of Support Policy No. 1109* as presented.

COMMUNICATIONS:

If approved, Administration will work with external stakeholders to ensure they are aware of how to submit a letter of support for consideration. This will include updating Council's landing page with details and posting the policy to strathmore.ca.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

1. Council may adopt the policy as written.
2. Council may request changes to Letters of Support Policy No. 1109.
3. Council may send the policy back to administration for changes.

4. Council may defeat the motion.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment I: Letters of Support Policy No. 1109 - March 6, 2024](#)

[Attachment II: Letters of Support Policy - Process Flow Chart](#)

Johnathan Strathdee, Manager of Legislative Services

Approved
- 28 Feb
2024

Kara Rusk, Director of Strategic, Administrative, and Financial Services

Approved
- 29 Feb
2024

Kevin Scoble, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved
- 29 Feb
2024



TOWN POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 1109

REFERENCE:

Resolution No. XX.XX.24

ADOPTED BY:

Town Council

PREPARED BY: Legislative Services

DATE: March 6, 2024

TITLE: Letters of Support Policy

Policy Statement

As a part of normal operations for the Town of Strathmore, letters to fulfill obligations or express support are regularly sent from the Mayor's office. Often there is urgency in being prompt with a response. Expectation remains that official items of this nature are sanctioned by Council. Once initial support has been given for a matter it can be redundant and delay delivery—or cause Special Council meetings to be called—if each subsequent related message requires re-approval during future Council meetings. To streamline the process, the mayor will be responsible for correspondence (in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*), provided the documents are consistent with a Council approved plan, policy, bylaw, or previous resolution.

Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure an aligned approach to expedite review and approval of letters meant to provide endorsement or appreciation on behalf of the Town of Strathmore. It will outline the process for when correspondence will need to be reviewed by Council prior to signing and distribution and indicate when letters can be signed by the mayor without an additional vote by Council, ultimately providing consistency and efficiency.

1.0 DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 "Chief Administrative Officer" or "CAO" means the person appointed by the Council under section 4 and under section 205 of the Act to be Chief Administrative Officer for the Town, along with any designate appointed by the Chief Administrative Officer;
- 1.2 "Deputy Mayor" means the Councillor appointed by Council pursuant to the Municipal Government Act and the Council Procedure Bylaw 23-17, to act as the Mayor in the absence or incapacity of the Mayor or in the case where the Mayor chooses to step down.
- 1.3 "Letter of Support" means a written correspondence from the Town of Strathmore that supports a Community Group's proposal or request. Organizations often seek local government support, either because it is a requirement of the grant application, or simply seeking to demonstrate to the decisionmaker that there is buy-in beyond their organization.

- 1.4 "Manager of Communications, Marketing, and Legislative Services" means the individual in the leadership role that directly oversees the Legislative Services division for the Town of Strathmore.
- 1.5 "Mayor" means the individual elected to the position of Chief Elected Official for the Town of Strathmore.
- 1.6 "Town" means the Town of Strathmore, a municipal corporation in the Province of Alberta, and where the context so requires, means the area of land within the corporate boundaries thereof.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 Mayor – signs correspondence in accordance with this policy.
- 2.2 Council – remain informed of the correspondence outlined below originating from the mayor's office. Council is responsible for approving this policy and any amendments to it.
- 2.3 CAO – may sign letters of support and thanks in lieu of the mayor in situations where the mayor and deputy mayor are unable to do so.
- 2.4 Legislative Services – oversees the drafting, approvals and delivery of letters of support, letters of thanks, letters of recognition and internal requests.

3.0 LETTERS OF SUPPORT

- 3.1 The mayor and/or CAO may issue and sign a letter of support without revisiting the item at a Council meeting, if Council has previously approved the initial item by resolution or if the item aligns with the Town's policies, bylaws, or previously approved plans (e.g. Council's Strategic Plan). The letter of support must not include:
 - a. changes to Council's approved position (as confirmed by the mayor),
 - b. commitments for additional funding, or
 - c. approval of additional requests.
- 3.2 New requests for letters of support for items that have not previously been considered by Council, must go to a future Council meeting for consideration as per the procedure outlined in 7.1.

4.0 LETTERS OF THANKS

- 4.1 Mayor and/or CAO may issue and sign a letter expressing gratitude for a previously held event or support offered by another organization or level of government without revisiting the item with Council, if it requires no additional funding or requests and it aligns with the Town's strategic priorities.

5.0 LETTERS OF RECOGNITION

- 5.1 If a letter expressing recognition towards an occasion or individual is required the mayor may issue and sign without revisiting the occurrence at a Council meeting, if
 - a. the request fits the criteria for resident recognition being that the individual or group has:
 - i. achieved excellence in their field,
 - ii. reached a milestone birthday,
 - iii. has received recognition from another level of government.
- 5.2 The letter must not include commitments for funding.
- 5.3 New requests for letters of recognition are required to go to Council as per the procedure outlined in 7.2.

6.0 INTERNAL REQUESTS

- 6.1 If a mayoral letter furthering project fulfillment or support action (i.e., a grant application by the Town) is required the mayor may issue and sign without revisiting the item at a Council meeting, if Council has previously approved the initial item by resolution and/or the item aligns with the Town's policies, bylaws, or previously approved plans (e.g. Council's Strategic Plan). The letter must not include:
- a. changes to Council's approved position (as confirmed by the Mayor),
 - b. commitments for additional funding, or
 - c. approval of additional requests.
- 6.2 New mayoral support requests for internal projects are required to go to Council as per the procedure outlined in 7.3.

7.0 PROCEDURE**7.1 Letters of Support**

- a. Requests for Letters of Support will be reviewed by Legislative Services for completeness and compliance with this policy and forwarded to the Responsible Department review (alternatively, requests received by a department will be sent to Legislative Service for review). A request for a Letter of Support does not obligate or bind the Town in any way to financial support or assistance at any time.
- b. In order to adequately assess a request, those seeking a Letter of Support from the Town will be required to provide the following information with their request in the prescribed form:
 - i. Identify the group's status (a not-for-profit organization and/or other organization) as defined in this policy;
 - ii. Identify the proposed program, project or initiative;
 - iii. Describe the program, project or initiative and identify how the program, project or initiative is of benefit to the Town and its residents;
 - iv. Specify whether the proposed program, project or initiative may require future financial contribution(s) from the Town; and
 - v. Identify contact information and address for the appropriate grant organization.
 - vi. Non-Profit Organizations and other organizations must provide a draft letter of support with their request—the letter may be edited by Legislative Services prior to being sent to Council.
- c. If a new request does not fall within any previously approved initiative or falls outside of the Town's strategic vision then Legislative Services will bring forth to the next available Regular Council Meeting for Council consideration.
- d. If the request is a part of a larger initiative already reviewed by Council then Legislative Services will electronically provide Council with copies of the letter and members will be availed two (2) business days to respond with any concerns. If there are no objections after the prescribed period then Legislative Services will proceed with signatures and provide the final letter as information during the next available Council meeting, to keep Council apprised.

7.2 Letters of Thanks

- a. Requests for Letters of Thanks may be drafted as:
 - i. a follow-up on a meeting or event occurrence
 - ii. a response to an invitation
- b. If a new request that does not fall within any previously approved project Legislative Services will bring the item to the next available Regular Council Meeting for Council consideration.
- c. If the request is a part of a larger initiative already reviewed by Council then Legislative Services will electronically provide Council with copies of the letter and members will be availed two (2) business days to respond with any concerns. If there are no objections after the prescribed period then Legislative Services will proceed with signatures and provide the final letter as information during the next available Council meeting, to keep Council apprised.

7.3 Letters of Recognition

- a. Requests for Letters of Recognition will be reviewed by Legislative Services for completeness and compliance with this policy and, if required, forwarded to the Responsible Department (alternatively, requests received by a department will be sent to Legislative Service for review). A request for a Letter of Recognition does not obligate or bind the Town in any way to financial support or assistance at any time.
- b. In order to adequately assess a request, those seeking a Letter of Recognition from the Town will be required to provide the following information with their request in the prescribed form:
 - i. Identify the individual or group
 - ii. Describe and identify what the achievement has been and how it relates to the Town and its residents;
 - iii. Identify contact information and address
 - iv. Provide a draft letter of recognition with their request.
- c. If a new request does not fall within any previously approved initiative or falls outside of the Town's strategic vision then Legislative Services will bring the item to the next available Regular Council Meeting for Council consideration.
- d. If the request is a part of an initiative already reviewed by Council then Legislative Services will electronically provide Council with copies of the letter and members will be availed two (2) business days to respond with any concerns. If there are no objections after the prescribed period then Legislative Services will proceed with signatures and provide the final letter as information during the next available Council meeting, to keep Council apprised.

7.4 Internal Requests

- a. Requests for Internal Letters of Support will be reviewed by Legislative Services for completeness and compliance with this policy and forwarded to the Responsible Department review (alternatively, requests initiated by a department will be sent to Legislative Service for review).

- b. The Responsible Department will provide the following information with their request:
 - i. Identify the proposed program, project or initiative;
 - ii. Describe the program, project or initiative and identify how the program, project or initiative is of benefit to the Town and its residents;
 - iii. Specify whether the proposed program, project or initiative may require future financial contribution(s);
 - iv. Identify contact information and address for the appropriate grant organization; and
 - v. A draft letter of support.
- c. If a new request does not fall within any previously approved project, Legislative Services will bring the item to the next available Regular Council Meeting for Council consideration.
- d. If the request is a part of a larger initiative already reviewed by Council then Legislative Services will electronically provide Council with copies of the letter and members will be availed two (2) business days to respond with any concerns. If there are no objections after the prescribed period then Legislative Services will proceed with signatures and provide the final letter as information during the next available Council meeting, to keep Council apprised.

8.0 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

- 8.1 The Chief Administration Officer and the Manager of Communications, Marketing and Legislative Services may delegate any power, duty or function assigned to them under this Bylaw to another position within the Town Administration.

9.0 SEVERABILITY

- 9.1 If any section or part of this Policy is found to be illegal, or beyond the power of Council to enact, such section or parts shall be deemed to be severable from all other sections or parts of this Policy.

10.0 REVIEW

- 10.1 This policy shall be available for public inspection and will be posted on the Town of Strathmore's website.
- 10.2 This policy shall be reviewed at least once every four years. Next review date being: March 2028

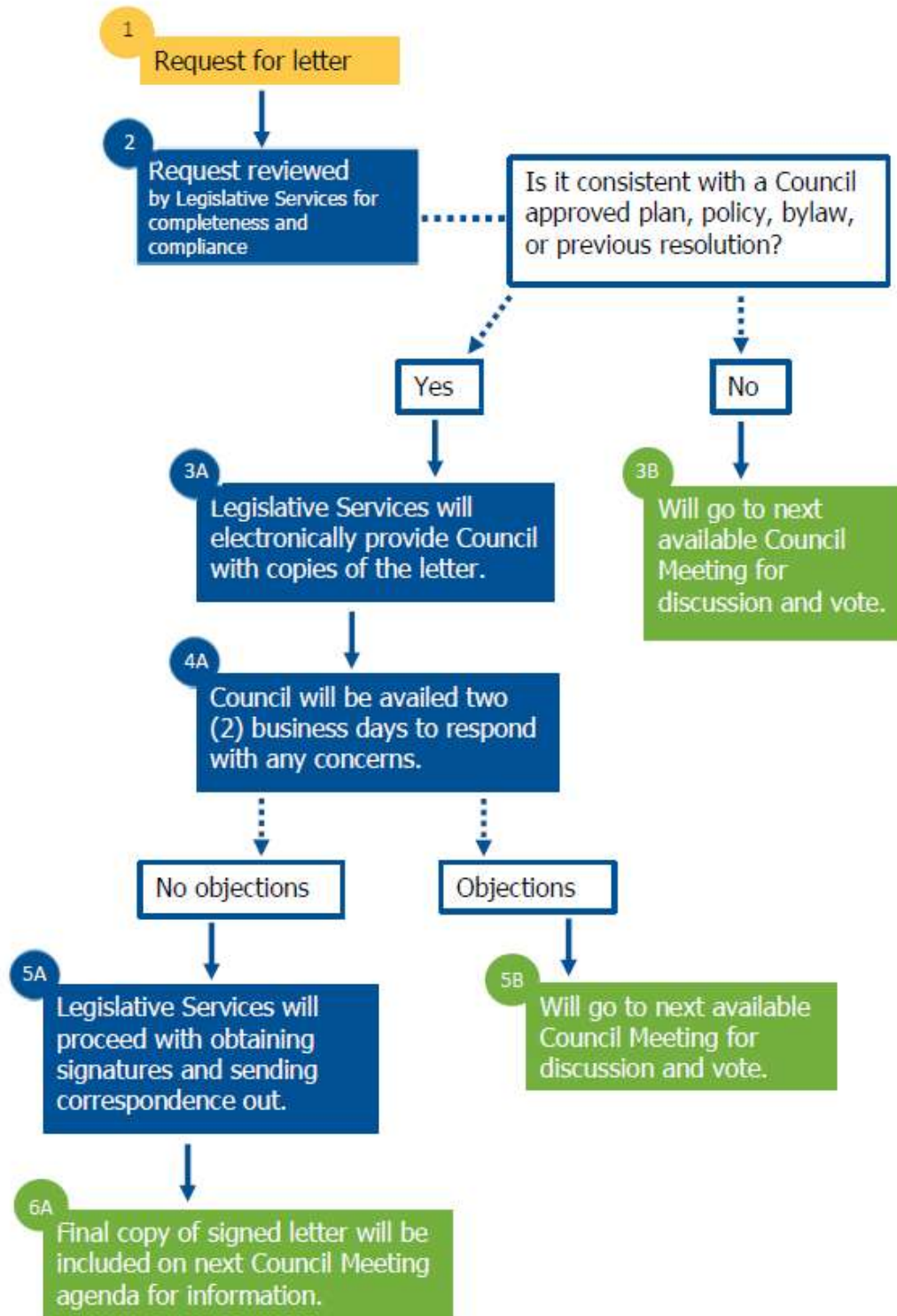
END OF POLICY

APPROVAL

Mayor

Director of Strategic, Administrative
and Financial Services

Letters of Support Policy No. 1109 Process February 27, 2024





Request for Decision

To: Council

Staff Contact: Kara Rusk, Director of Strategic, Administrative, and Financial Services

Date Prepared: February 21, 2024

Meeting Date: March 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Wheatland & Area Hospice Society - Letter of Support

RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council authorize Mayor Fule to sign the letter to Minister LaGrange regarding support for the Wheatland & Area Hospice Society hospice, as presented in Attachment I.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Affordable
Housing



Climate
Resiliency



Community
Development



Community
Wellness



Economic
Development



Financial
Sustainability

HOW THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE MET:

Support for the proposed hospice may result in the furthering community wellness for the Town of Strathmore as residents will not need to travel outside of Strathmore to access services.

SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

Support from the Province will ensure that we are on the path forward to create a community with services that continue to better the quality of life for our residents.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

GENERAL:

None at this time.

ORGANIZATIONAL:

The organizational implications are limited to staff time to prepare this report and associated letter.

OPERATIONAL:

N/A

FINANCIAL:

There are no financial implications other than staff time to draft correspondence and supporting materials.

POLICY:

N/A

IMPLEMENTATION:

Should Council adopt the recommended motion, Administration will arrange for the letter to be signed and sent to the Minister of Health.

BACKGROUND:

The Wheatland & Area Hospice Society has been fundraising for eight years to open a hospice in Strathmore, and they are looking to work with the provincial government to help open this hospice and support those Albertans who need this care in their community close to home and family. Hospice services not being provided locally result in residents having to travel to other urban centres.

The Wheatland & Area Hospice Society is seeking the Town of Strathmore's support in the form of a letter to the Hon. Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Health, expressing our recognition of the importance of this project to the community and our desire to see the Wheatland & Area Hospice Society work with the provincial government to see it come to fruition.

KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S):

Confirm that Council would like to express support for the Wheatland & Area Hospice Society.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

For Council to adopt the recommended motion.

COMMUNICATIONS:

None at this time.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

1. Council may adopt the recommended motion.
2. Council may defeat the recommended motion.
3. Council may provide further direction regarding the draft letter.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment I: Wheatland & Area Hospice Society - Letter of Support](#)

Kara Rusk, Director of Strategic, Administrative, and Financial Services

Approved
- 22 Feb
2024

Johnathan Strathdee, Manager of Legislative Services

Approved
- 26 Feb
2024

Kevin Scoble, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved
- 29 Feb
2024

March 6, 2024

To:
Hon. Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Health

423 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6

Sent Via Email: health.minister@gov.ab.ca

Dear Minister LaGrange,

I am writing today on behalf of the Town of Strathmore and our council in support of the Wheatland & Area Hospice Society. We believe that the hospice Wheatland & Area Hospice Society is proposing will immensely benefit our community and will help your government support rural health care, increase front-line services, and ensure our communities remain viable, all at a lower cost to the provincial treasury than other options.

The Wheatland & Area Hospice Society aspires to provide compassionate, high-quality care at the end of life's journey. They prioritize creating communities within their facilities and supporting care throughout the community they serve. They have a deep understanding of the Town of Strathmore and the surrounding rural areas and have thoughtfully considered us in their planning. Communities across the region are cheering for their success, and they've developed strategic partnerships with providers like the Wheatland Housing Management Body to ensure that voices from across our rural region are included in developing and delivering services. They are integral to increasing front-line health care in our community.

The plans to restructure health care in Alberta to keep care local are exciting. Keeping care local is essential to our community's viability. By building new hospice space in Strathmore, the Wheatland & Area Hospice Society is ensuring care is provided by those from our community and that all funds are spent directly on patients and their families.

Indeed, we have advantages that larger urban centres do not. Most critical among these are our understanding of our community's needs and our passion for them. The Wheatland & Area Hospice Society shares this. At the same time, we know these services are needed, and if they are not provided, residents would have to travel to distant urban centres, costing taxpayers more and, more importantly, putting added stress on families and loved ones.



The Wheatland & Area Hospice Society has been fundraising for eight years to open a hospice in Strathmore, and we are looking to work with your ministry to help open this hospice and support those Albertans who need this care in their community close to home and family.

I want to say again that the Wheatland & Area Hospice Society has been working diligently to ensure our rural community has the front-line health care support we need, and we are fully in support of the work they are doing. Any support from the province would be very deeply appreciated. The Wheatland & Area Hospice Society can help you and your government achieve its goals of delivering better health care by those who know their communities best. If you have questions or require additional information please do not hesitate to contact my office. I can be reached at 403-324-3314 or by email at Pat.Fule@strathmore.ca.

Sincerely,

Pat Fule
Mayor, Town of Strathmore

CC: Hon. Jason Nixon
Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services
SCSS.minister@gov.ab.ca

Justin Marshall
Chief of Staff to Minister Nixon
justin.marshall@gov.ab.ca

Nicole Williams
Chief of Staff to Minister LaGrange
Nicole.williams@gov.ab.ca

Andre Tremblay
Deputy Minister of Health
Andre.tremblay@gov.ab.ca

Darren Hedley
Associate Deputy Minister of Health
Darren.hedley@gov.ab.ca

Cynthia Farmer
Deputy Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services
Cynthia.farmer@gov.ab.ca

Martin Long
Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health
Martin.long@assembly.ab.ca

Nathan Cooper
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and MLA for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills
nathan.cooper@assembly.ab.ca

Joseph Schow
Minister of Tourism and Sport and MLA for Cardston-Siksika
joseph.schow@assembly.ab.ca

Chantelle de Jonge
Parliamentary Secretary for Affordability and Utilities and MLA for Chestermere-Strathmore
chantelle.dejonge@assembly.ab.ca



Request for Decision

To: Council

Staff Contact: Veronica Anderson, Legislative Services Officer

Date Prepared: February 22, 2024

Meeting Date: March 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Skills for Success - Letter of Support

RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council authorize Mayor Fule to sign the letter support for Prospect Human Services - Skills for Success program, as presented in Attachment I.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Affordable
Housing



Climate
Resiliency



Community
Development



Community
Wellness



Economic
Development



Financial
Sustainability

HOW THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE MET:

As part of its Strategic Plan, Town Council has prioritized the maintenance, protection, and improvement of Community Wellness services that support optimum lifestyles for residents of Strathmore.

SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

GENERAL:

N/A

ORGANIZATIONAL:

N/A

OPERATIONAL:

N/A

FINANCIAL:

There are no financial implications, other than staff time needed to write this report.

POLICY:

N/A

IMPLEMENTATION:

If approved, Administration will arrange for the signature and distribution of the letter of support.

BACKGROUND:

February 2023, Prospect Human Services, presented to Council a desire for a public art mural as part of their Skills for Success program. This program aims to help the unemployed or underemployed improve their skills in reading, writing, numeracy, problem-solving, collaboration, adaptability, creativity and innovation – using art-based learning. Council approved this request for a public art mural.

On June 7, 2023, Council approved the installation of the mural and requested that Prospect Human Services bring back a mural concept for Council's consideration.

On July 19, 2023, Council approved the concept for the mural to be installed at the Lambert Centre.

The mural was painted by participants of the Skills for Success program Summer of 2023.

KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S):

Confirming Council's desire to provide a letter of support to Prospect Human Services, Skills for Success program, for their participation in creating a mural for the Town of Strathmore.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

That Council approves the letter of support.

COMMUNICATIONS:

If Council approves the letter, Administration will arrange for the letter to be signed and provided to Prospect Human Services.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

1. Council may adopt the recommended motion.
2. Council may defeat the recommended motion.
3. Council may provide further comments and direction regarding the draft letter.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment I: Skills for Success - Letter of Support](#)

Johnathan Strathdee, Manager of Legislative Services

Approved
- 26 Feb
2024

Kara Rusk, Director of Strategic, Administrative, and Financial Services

Approved
- 27 Feb
2024

Kevin Scoble, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved
- 29 Feb
2024

March 6, 2024

To:

Shantelle Vermeylen

Team Lead, Skills for Success Program, Prospect Human Services

Unit 119, 320 2 Street

Strathmore, AB T1P 0B3

Sent via email: Shantelle.Vermeylen@prospectnow.ca

Re: Letter of Support – Skills for Success, Prospect Human Services

The Town of Strathmore recognizes that public art is a vital ingredient in the cultural fabric of a community. Art can connect communities in cultural experiences, creating a sense of belonging and connectedness to people, places, stories, and ideas.

As part of its Strategic Plan, Town Council has prioritized the maintenance, protection, and improvement of Community Wellness services that support optimum lifestyles for residents of Strathmore. Prospect Human Services is a like-minded partner with a mission to foster, creativity, resilience, and community engagement.

In February 2023, Prospect Human Services, presented to Council a desire for a public art mural as part of their Skills for Success program. This program aims to help unemployed or underemployed improve their skills in reading, writing, numeracy, problem-solving, collaboration, adaptability, creativity and innovation – using art-based learning. Council agreed, these types of endeavours help to build an attractive, healthy, and thriving community.

Skills for Success' public mural, at the Lambert Centre is a result of the hard work and dedication of the talented participants who collaborated on a final project that celebrates our valued community partnership. This vibrant mural serves as a testament to the meaningful relationship we have cultivated and the positive impact we aim to achieve together. The Town appreciates the positive contributions that the Skills for Success program has made to the community.

If you have questions or require additional information please do not hesitate to contact our offices at 403-934-3133 or by email at lsadmin@strathmore.ca.

Sincerely,

Pat Fule

Mayor, Town of Strathmore

Strathmore.ca



1 Parklane Dr. (Box 2280)
Strathmore AB T1P 1K2





Request for Decision

To: Council

Staff Contact: Angela Groeneveld, Economic Sustainability and Investment Officer

Date Prepared: February 26, 2024

Meeting Date: March 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation - Thank You Letter

RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council authorize Mayor Fule to sign the letter thanking the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation for visiting our community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Affordable
Housing



Climate
Resiliency



Community
Development



Community
Wellness



Economic
Development



Financial
Sustainability

HOW THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE MET:

A key activity under Community Wellness in Council Strategic Plan is "Successful Advocacy Outcomes".

SUSTAINABILITY

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

GENERAL:

N/A

ORGANIZATIONAL:

N/A

OPERATIONAL:

N/A

FINANCIAL:

N/A

POLICY:

N/A

IMPLEMENTATION:

If Council adopts the recommended motion, Administration will arrange for the letter to be signed and sent to the Honorable RJ Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture.

BACKGROUND:

The Honorable RJ Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture visited Strathmore on February 8, 2024 and met with Economic Development, CAO Scoble and Mayor Fule.

This letter is to:

- thank him for his time and the robust conversation
 - invite him to the 2024 Strathmore Stampede.
-

KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S):

The key issue is whether or not Council would like to authorize the Mayor to sign the letter in Attachment I.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

To have Council adopt the recommended motion.

COMMUNICATIONS:

N/A

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

1. Council may adopt the recommended motion.
2. Council may choose to defeat the motion.
3. Council may provide further direction to Administration.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment I: Minister of Agriculture - Thank you letter 2024-02-27](#)

Claudette Thorhaug, Legislative Services Officer

Approved
- 27 Feb
2024

Johnathan Strathdee, Manager of Legislative Services

Approved
- 27 Feb
2024

Kara Rusk, Director of Strategic, Administrative, and Financial Services

Approved
- 27 Feb
2024

Kevin Scoble, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved
- 29 Feb
2024

March 6, 2024

To:
Honourable RJ Sigurdson
Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
131 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Sent via email: AGRIC.Minister@gov.ab.ca

Dear Minister Sigurdson:

On behalf of the Town of Strathmore, I would like to thank you for visiting our community. Kevin, Angela and I sincerely thank you for sharing your time with us and the robust conversation.

As you know better than just about anyone, Alberta's ability to produce high-quality agriculture products is second to none. With the growing threat of food insecurity, our province is well-positioned to boost production to help meet global demand. We're grateful to have a government that understands our province's agriculture and agri-food potential and is making the necessary investments to support modernization and expansion projects, develop business opportunities, increase exports, and create good-paying jobs for Albertans.

The optimism and opportunities for agriculture are undeniably there, but so, too, are the challenges, particularly this year. With another summer of dry conditions on the horizon, Southern Alberta potentially faces a devastating drought. We are grateful to your government for your leadership and the drought-related initiatives you've announced to date, including an advisory council to help support communities, farmers, ranchers, and businesses to share, conserve, and manage this precious resource. If there is anything the Town of Strathmore can do to help the province prepare for a potential drought and maximize water supplies, please don't hesitate to let us know. We're in this together, so it's important that we work together.

Finally, on behalf of the Town of Strathmore, I would like to invite you to our annual Stampede. Taking place this year from August 2-5, the Strathmore Stampede is a vibrant celebration of Alberta's Western tradition, featuring everything from a rodeo and chuckwagon races to concerts and family-oriented events. We've hosted members of your government in past years, including Premier Smith last year, who spend the entire day in our community. We would be honoured if you agreed to attend. If available, please contact our offices at 403-934-3133 or by email at lsadmin@strathmore.ca. We look forward to sharing some of our western hospitality with you.



I would once again like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me. It was an engaging and productive exchange. Grounded by our history and guided by our values, Strathmore is confidently moving towards our future – a thriving, dynamic, prosperous community that helps to propel Southern Alberta forward. Whether it's agri-food, logistics, or oil and gas, we combine the necessary resources and expertise with the strategic access to key markets that will fuel economic growth and diversification. Strathmore looks forward to working with your government to build a more prosperous future for Alberta, the place we love and are privileged to call home.

Sincerely,

Pat Fule
Mayor, Town of Strathmore



Request for Decision

To: Council

Staff Contact: Johnathan Stratthdee, Manager of Legislative Services

Date Prepared: February 21, 2024

Meeting Date: March 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Library Board Auditor

RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council approve of Orion LLP as the auditor firm for the Strathmore Municipal Library Board.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Affordable
Housing



Climate
Resiliency



Community
Development



Community
Wellness



Economic
Development



Financial
Sustainability

HOW THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE MET:

Council's approval of an audit firm is a legislated requirement that ensures the Strathmore Municipal Library's financial statements and information is prepared according to accounting standards.

SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

GENERAL:

The Strathmore Municipal Library requires Council's approval and appointment of an audit firm before working with an associate of the firm to commence the audit.

ORGANIZATIONAL:

The Strathmore Municipal Library Board discussed and voted to hire Orion LLP located in Brooks, Alberta to provide a financial audit.

OPERATIONAL:

N/A

FINANCIAL:

N/A

POLICY:

Section 280 and 281 of the *Municipal Government Act* requires Council to appoint one or more auditors for the municipality. In order to provide an independent audit opinion on whether the financial statements and financial information returns of the municipality have been prepared according to generally accepted accounting principals approval is required to appoint an auditor.

IMPLEMENTATION:

If Council approves of Orion LLP as an audit firm the Strathmore Municipal Library Board will work with an associate to begin audit preparation.

BACKGROUND:

On Tuesday, February 20, 2024 during the Strathmore Municipal Library Board meeting the Library Board members voted to hire Orion LLP to complete a financial audit. Orion LLP completed a financial audit and provided financial statements in past years to the Strathmore Municipal Library Board, most recently in 2015. Based on the vote, The Strathmore Municipal Library Board recommends Council to approve Orion LLP to complete a financial audit.

KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S):

The key issue for Council's consideration approves of Orion LLP as the auditing firm for the Strathmore Municipal Library.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

The desired outcome is to ensure that approval and appointment of Orion LLP is received by Council prior to working with an auditing firm.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Administration will advise the Director of Library Services for the Strathmore Municipal Library of Council's decision.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

THAT Council refer the appointment of the auditor back to the Library Board for further discussion.

Veronica Anderson, Legislative Services Officer	Approved - 26 Feb 2024
Claudette Thorhaug, Legislative Services Officer	Approved - 26 Feb 2024
Johnathan Strathdee, Manager of Legislative Services	Approved - 27 Feb 2024
Kara Rusk, Director of Strategic, Administrative, and Financial Services	Approved - 29 Feb 2024
Kevin Scoble, Chief Administrative Officer	Approved - 29 Feb 2024

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Annual Organizational Meeting of the Town of Strathmore Library Board

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Strathmore Municipal Library Program Room

PRESENT

- Trustee Ann Horn, Chair
- Trustee Melissa Langmaid, Vice Chair
- Trustee Sunday Adeola, Treasurer
- Trustee Caleigh Haworth, Secretary
- Trustee Tammy Anderson
- Trustee Ruth McCluskey
- Trustee Marie Mortreuil
- Trustee Lindsay Walker
- Trustee Taura Fox Walker
- Trustee Robyn Weinkauf
- Director Rachel Dick Hughes

CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Horn called today's meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

1. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

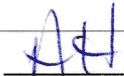
Moved by Trustee McCluskey

To approve the agenda for the January 16, 2024, Town of Strathmore Library Board Annual Organizational Meeting, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

2. NOMINATIONS AND VOTING

2.1. Chair



Chair



Secretary

Moved by Trustee Langmaid

That Trustee Horn be nominated as Chair.

MOTION CARRIED

2.2. Vice-chair

Moved by Trustee McCluskey

That Trustee Langmaid be nominated as Vice Chair.

MOTION CARRIED

2.3. Secretary

Moved by Trustee Mortreuil

That Trustee Haworth be nominated as Secretary.

MOTION CARRIED

2.4. Treasurer

Moved by Trustee Horn

That Trustee Adeola be nominated by Treasurer.

MOTION CARRIED

2.5. Finance & Audit Committee Chair

Moved by Trustee Horn

That Trustee Adeola be nominated as Finance & Audit Committee Chair.

MOTION CARRIED

2.6. Policy & Governance Committee Chair

Moved by Trustee Langmaid

That Trustee Langmaid be nominated as Policy & Governance Committee Chair.

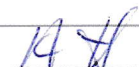
MOTION CARRIED

2.7. Strategy & Community Committee Chair

Moved by Trustee Fox Walker

That Trustee Fox Walker be nominated as Strategy & Community Committee Chair.

MOTION CARRIED



Chair



Secretary

3. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

3.1. Finance & Audit Committee (0-2 members)

Chair Horn appointed Trustee Mortreuil to the Finance and Audit Committee.

3.2. Policy & Governance Committee (1-2 members)

Chair horn appointed Trustee Weinkauff and Trustee Haworth to the Policy & Governance Committee.

3.3. Strategy & Community Committee (1-3 members)

Chair Horn appointed Trustee Walker, Trustee Anderson, Trustee Weinkauff, Trustee Mortreuil, and Trustee McCluskey to the Strategy & Community Committee.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Fox Walker

That this meeting be adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, January 16, 2024, following adjournment.

APPENDICES

A – Duties of Executives and Committees

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the Town of Strathmore Library Board

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

Following the Annual Organizational Meeting
Strathmore Municipal Library Program Room

PRESENT Trustee Ann Horn, Chair
Trustee Melissa Langmaid, Vice Chair
Trustee Sunday Adeola, Treasurer
Trustee Caleigh Haworth, Secretary
Trustee Tammy Anderson
Trustee Ruth McCluskey
Trustee Marie Mortreuil
Trustee Lindsay Walker
Trustee Taura Fox Walker
Trustee Robyn Weinkauff
Director Rachel Dick Hughes

CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Horn called today's meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

1. OPENING REMARKS

2. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Trustee Langmaid

To approve the agenda for the January 16, 2024, Town of Strathmore Library Board Meeting, as amended.

MOTION CARRIED

AH
Chair

CH
Secretary

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 21, 2023 (Appendix A)

Moved by Trustee Mortrueil

To approve the minutes for the November 21, 2023, Regular Library Board Meeting, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

4. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS AND ADMINISTRATION

4.1. Director's Report (Appendix B)

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. Volunteer Recognition – Gary Jensen

5.2. Notice of Marigold Library System's Annual General Meeting, Saturday, April 20, 2024, 9:30 a.m. <https://marigold.ab.ca/Meeting-Dates-Minutes>

5.3. 2024 Town of Strathmore Library Board Meeting Schedule (Appendix D)

Moved by Trustee Weinkauff

To to adopt the 2024 Town of Strathmore Library Board Meeting Schedule, as presented.


MOTION CARRIED

5.4. Provision of Financial Services

Moved by Trustee Langmaid

To direct the Finance & Audit Committee, with the Director of Library Services, to obtain proposals for the provision of bookkeeping, accounting, and/or audit services that meet the needs and timelines of the Strathmore Municipal Library for the 2024 fiscal year, and make a recommendation to the Board at the February 2024 regular meeting.

MOTION CARRIED



Chair



Secretary

5.5. Budget Approval

Moved by Trustee Langmaid

To go in camera at 9:26 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Trustee Langmaid

To exit in camera at 9:47 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Trustee McCluskey

To approve the budget as amended.

MOTION CARRIED

6. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Horn

To adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Subject to outcome of §5.3.

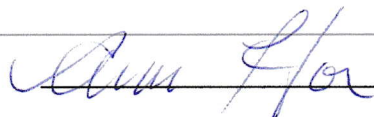
APPENDICES

A – Unconfirmed November 21, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes

B – Director's Report

C – Strathmore Library Policy Manual

D – Proposed 2024 Town of Strathmore Library Board Meeting Schedule



Ann Horn
Chair



Caleigh Haworth
Secretary



NOTICE OF MOTION

Date: January 11, 2024

Meeting Date: February 7, 2024

SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Brent Wiley

SUBJECT: Cemetery Bylaw Amendments

WHEREAS the Town of Strathmore is the owner of the Cemetery situated at Plan 9612032, Block C;

AND WHEREAS Council deems it necessary and expedient to have certain regulations pertaining to the management and administration of the Cemetery;

AND WHEREAS Council previously considered Cemetery Bylaw No. 23-31 at the November 1, 2023 Regular Council Meeting;

AND WHEREAS the Cemetery Bylaw No. 23-31 Request for Decision (RFD) included proposed amendments to the Bylaw in Attachment II;

AND WHEREAS Council has deferred further discussion of the Cemetery Bylaw to the May 8, 2024 Committee of the Whole Meeting;

Notice is hereby given that the following motion will be brought forward for consideration at the February 21, 2024 Regular Council Meeting:

THAT Council direct Administration to prepare a bylaw with the following amendments to Bylaw No. 23-31 as presented in Attachment II of the November 1, 2023 Cemetery Bylaw No. 23-31 Request for Decision as amended:

- That section 8.3(a) be amended to state:
"Monuments sitting on a full-size burial plot are recommended to not exceed a maximum height of three feet (3') including base, maximum depth of one foot (1') including base, and a maximum width of two and a half feet (2.5') not including the base. The Cemetery Coordinator, at their discretion, can prevent monuments considered to be too large for: safety reasons; deemed to impede other plots; or prevent landscaping and maintenance. Where there is a ribbon or base present, all monuments will be placed upon the base or the ribbon."

- That section 8.4(a) be amended to state:
"Flat grave markers must be flush with the ground and not impede other plots or landscaping and maintenance."
- That section 13.1 be amended to state:
"The public may visit the cemetery at any time that Strathmore's regular parks are open."
- That section 13.8 be deleted in its entirety.
- That section 13.9 be deleted in its entirety.
- That the following be added to section 13 of the bylaw:
"Grave decorations such as, but not limited to, statues, crosses, plaques, benches, and vases must be made of granite, marble, metal craft or another equally durable material. Items made of glass, ceramic, china, or other easily breakable material will be removed immediately and placed in storage. The town will make reasonable efforts to provide written notice to the authorized representative of any disrepair of the grave decorations. The authorized representative will be provided 30 days to contact the Town with a repair or replacement plan. If no contact is made, the Town will hold it for an additional 90 days. If no contact is made at the expiry of 90 days of the removal, the Town will dispose of the grave decoration."
- That section 13.12 be amended to state:
"Seasonal decorations shall be allowed to be placed one (1) week prior to a holiday but cannot impede maintenance or be a safety hazard. Seasonal decorations that are still in place one (1) week from the conclusion of the holiday will be removed and disposed of without notice."
- That section 13.13 be deleted in its entirety.
- That section 13.14 be amended to remove the word "benches".
- That section 13.20 be deleted in its entirety.
- That section 13.22 be amended to state:
"No person shall cultivate any plot without the consent of the Cemetery Coordinator."
- That section 13.26 be amended to state:
"Any memorial tribute or grave decoration considered offensive will be brought to council for the possibility of removal."
- That Schedule 'A' – Penalties section 13 be amended to remove the word "benches" from the item on erecting or constructing; and the word "care" from the item on cultivating.

AND THAT Council direct Administration to develop a permitting process for residents who want to apply for decorations under the condition that they maintain the plot and bring the proposed permit process and revised Cemetery Bylaw to the April 10, 2024 Committee of the Whole Meeting for Council's consideration.

Dear Mayor Fule,

I trust this letter finds you well. I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen, healthcare worker and advocate.

Without preamble, Alberta Health Services has made urgent and sudden changes to our Palliative Care space at the Strathmore District Health Services site. I regret to inform you that it has been converted into a regular care space with two beds, without consultation of the public, front-line staff, Women's Auxiliary or Wheatland Hospice Society.

In its place, the facility is utilizing a significantly smaller room that cannot accommodate the needs of many families. In addition, the adjacent family area, considered part of the palliative room, will now see increased visitor and staff traffic.

Furthermore, this previous designated space has furnishings donated by the Ladies Auxiliary, not to mention various community and staff contributions. These items were provided to help make the space more appropriate and comfortable.

I am confident that the impact of these changes is self-evident and requires no further discussion. It is my sincere hope that you will consider this matter and take prompt action to assist in addressing this drastic deterioration in our approach to palliative care.

This is not a thoughtful direction for end of life care and below the expected standard Albertans deserve.

I appreciate your time and attention regarding this matter. Your support in ensuring the provision of compassionate end-of-life care at Strathmore Hospital is crucial, and I am hopeful for a positive and timely outcome.

Thank you for your time and support regarding this matter, signatures in support of this letter by my colleagues in the Allied Health Professions have been included below.

Kind Regards,
Hailey Izsak, RN

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TOWN OF STRATHMORE
Accounting

FEB 1 / 2024

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