



# Request for Decision

**To:** Council

**Staff Contact:** Glen Ferguson, Senior Planner

**Date Prepared:** June 17, 2024

**Meeting Date:** July 10, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Background Report - 2024 Municipal Development Plan Review

**RECOMMENDATION:** Information for Council.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Affordable  
Housing



Climate  
Resiliency



Community  
Development



Community  
Wellness



Economic  
Development



Financial  
Sustainability

## HOW THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE MET:

The Town's [Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) has identified six priority areas for Council to focus on that were selected based on community feedback, as well as having consideration for current service opportunities and challenges identified by Town Administration. The desired outcomes in each of the six priority areas should in turn be reflected in the Town's MDP. The Town's 2024 MDP Review therefore represents an opportunity to update and align land use planning policy in the municipality with the strategic priorities identified in the Town's Strategic Plan.

---

## SUSTAINABILITY

### ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:

The Town's [Business Needs Assessment and Economic Development Action Plan 2022-2026](#) (BNA-EDAP) acknowledges the importance of updating the Town's MDP in order to improve capacities for attracting investment, business retention and expansion, marketing the municipality as a desirable place to live, work and play, and ensuring that adequate housing for the workforce and infrastructure services for businesses are or will be made available. In particular, the Town's BNA-EDAP outlines that the Town's MDP must prioritize and encourage

innovative community development strategies, diverse housing options, and multi-purpose developments. The inclusion of a growth management strategy within the Town's MDP is also considered to be crucial from the perspective of what constitutes good economic development planning.

### **SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:**

The Town's [2023 Social Needs Assessment - Community Report](#) identifies six priority areas (ie. housing, poverty, health, safety, seniors, and families, children and youth) which require focused attention and deliberate action to prevent the exacerbation of social issues. The report also highlights the importance of collaboration among stakeholders to address ongoing and emerging social issues. The land use planning process is an integral part of the Town's larger social sustainability picture. The Town's 2024 MDP Review therefore represents an opportunity to review and modernize existing MDP policies in order to ensure that the Town's longer-term social sustainability goals and objectives are firmly embedded within and aligned with the Town's MDP.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:**

The Town's [Community Sustainability Plan](#) highlights the importance of understanding how actions and decisions made today can impact both the current and future natural environment that exists in Strathmore. The CSP identifies a "natural environment pillar" that focuses on seven themes being appealing landscapes, open spaces and trails, natural area protection, education experience, local food production, storm-water management, and trails that provide strong pathways and linkages throughout the Town.

---

### **IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:**

#### **GENERAL:**

Land use planning and decision-making as it relates to the land in the Province of Alberta is administered through a hierarchy of provincial legislative and policy documents that are in turn implemented by decision-makers including provincial departments and agencies, regional boards and agencies, and municipal governments.

Land use planning at the provincial level is governed largely by the [Alberta Land Stewardship Act](#) (ALSA), the [Land Use Framework](#) (LUF) and in the Town's case by the [South Saskatchewan Regional Plan](#) (SSRP), while municipal and intermunicipal land use planning is primarily governed by the [Municipal Government Act](#) (MGA).

The Town's MDP must also reflect and be consistent with any future Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) that is adopted by the Town and Wheatland County, and it may be limited in part by regulations of the federal and provincial governments. The MDP in turn can provide "spin-off" assistance in terms of guidance and direction to other municipal statutory and non-statutory plans, by-laws, guidelines, and implementation tools.

The Town's MDP also further creates an important connection and understanding of expectations between Council, local communities consisting of both residents and businesses, external agencies and stakeholders, and the Town's corporate and business administration processes.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL:**

Development Services has allocated a Senior Planner (Glen Ferguson, Project Lead) and the Manager of Development Services (Chuck Procter, Co-Project Lead & Team Member) to a core project management group, along with a Planner I (Kate Bakun, Project Team Member) and an Administrative Assistant (Catherine Cortez, Project Team Member). The project also requires the allocation of staff resources from the Town's Economic Development and Stability Services and Communications, Marketing and Legislative Services teams in supporting or consulting Project Team Member roles. Development Services also has a land use planning consultant available to assist with the project should it be required.

### **OPERATIONAL:**

Development Services is not anticipating any major interruptions at the operational level to existing services (eg. phone and counter inquiries) or to application-related processing timelines (eg. development permit, land use re-designation, etc.). If existing service-based requests were to increase in volume substantially, or if larger applications were to be received by Development Services, it is possible that timelines would be impacted.

### **FINANCIAL:**

Wherever reasonably possible, the Town's 2024 MDP Review utilize previous outputs (eg. SWOT Analysis) that were completed as part of the Town's 2019-2020 MDP Review that was paused due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. The Town is also well-positioned in terms of utilizing currently applicable documents (eg. [2019 Recreation and Culture Master Plan](#), [2023 Social Needs Assessment - Technical Report](#), [2020 Transportation Master Plan](#), etc.) to help guide the 2024 MDP Review as it moves forward, as opposed to requiring the undertaking of new studies, plans and/or supporting documents at this time.

The Town's [2024 Operating and Capital Budget](#) also includes budgeted line items under the Infrastructure, Operations and Development Services Division (IODS) that can be utilized where needed and appropriate for materials, goods and supplies, public engagement-related costs, as well as consulting services if required. At the time of writing this report, it is not anticipated that any additional budgetary resources will be required.

### **POLICY:**

All municipalities in the Province of Alberta are required to adopt an MDP under Section 632 of the [Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, cM-26](#) (MGA). The MDP as a statutory plan must address certain matters and issues as described under 632(3) of the MGA. Specifically, the MDP must address the following matters:

- The future land use within the municipality;

- The manner of and the proposals for future development in the municipality;
- The provision of the required transportation systems either generally or specifically within the municipality and in relation to adjacent municipalities;
- The provision of municipal services and facilities either generally or specifically;
- Policies compatible with the subdivision and development regulations to provide guidance on the type and location of land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities;
- Policies respecting the provision of municipal, school or municipal and school reserves, including but not limited to the need for, amount of and allocation of those reserves and the identification of school requirements in consultation with affected school boards; and,
- Policies respecting the protection of agricultural operations.

The MGA provides for additional flexibility on the inclusion of other topic areas, which may include addressing the following matters:

- Proposals for the financing and programming of municipal infrastructure;
- The co-ordination of municipal programs relating to the physical, social and economic development of the municipality;
- Environmental matters within the municipality;
- The financial resources of the municipality;
- The economic development of the municipality;
- Any other matter relating to the physical, social or economic development of the municipality;
- Statements regarding the municipality's development constraints, including the results of any development studies and impact analysis, and goals, objectives, targets, planning policies and corporate strategies; and,
- Policies respecting the provision of conservation reserve in accordance with Section 664.2(1)(a) to (d) of the MGA.

The Town's MDP does not directly address the co-ordination of land use, future growth patterns and other infrastructure with adjacent municipalities on the basis that the Town of Strathmore and Wheatland County are currently in the process of developing an Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). The MGA does not require these matters to be addressed in the MDP as they are addressed more appropriately within the Town of Strathmore-Wheatland County IDP.

With the above in mind, the Town's 2024 MDP Review will seek to modernize and build upon its predecessor (i.e. MDP 2014) by establishing or reaffirming policy directions on several topic areas including land use planning, transportation and infrastructure planning, environmental responsibility, community well-being, the growth of the local economy and innovative approaches to ensuring growth and development takes place in a manner that is representative of good land use planning.

The policy directions that are established or reaffirmed in the Town's MDP are not static and can be reasonably expected to change across time. Responding to emerging trends and

shifting requires that the MDP be subject to continual and ongoing coordination and implementation efforts at various stages throughout the land use planning process. The Municipal Government Act (MGA) in this respect specifically requires that all Town statutory plans be consistent with the Town's MDP.

The ongoing review and alignment of both statutory and non-statutory plans, by-laws, guidelines, implementation tools are also required to successfully deliver on policy directions at both the municipal-wide and area-specific levels. These documents include but are not necessarily limited to Area Structure Plans (ASPs), Area Redevelopment Plans (ARDPs), master plans (eg. Transportation Master Plan), and other non-statutory plans (eg. Economic Development Action Plan), tools (eg. Citizen Satisfaction Surveys) and regulatory instruments (eg. Land Use Bylaw) of the Town.

It is also important to note that any municipal improvements or municipally-funded projects that are described, implied or proposed within the Town's MDP are subject to the applicable decision-making process and the availability of funding. In accordance with Section 637 of the MGA, it is noted that the adoption of an MDP does not require a municipality to undertake any of the improvements or projects that are described within an MDP.

## **IMPLEMENTATION:**

The Town's 2024 MDP Review has been designed from an implementation perspective around the notion that the municipality is returning to and building upon the work that was completed previously during Town's 2019-2020 MDP Review, which was placed on-hold due to the emergence of the Covid-19 global pandemic. With this in mind, implementation of the Town's 2024 MDP Review is anticipated to take place across three phases that are summarized as follows:

- **Phase 1: Re-Launch and Draft MDP**
  - Background Report to Council;
  - Prepare Draft MDP; and,
  - Prepare Public Engagement Strategy.
- **Phase 2: Resuming Public Engagement**
  - Launch of Online Project Portal;
  - Release Draft MDP;
  - Conduct Public Engagement; and,
  - Interim Report to Council.
- **Phase 3: Refinement and Adopt MDP**
  - Review Public Engagement and Revise MDP;
  - Statutory Public Hearing at Council;
  - Final Report to Council; and,
  - By-law to Adopt MDP.

---

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Town's current Municipal Development Plan (MDP) was formally adopted on April 16, 2014, when [Bylaw #14-03](#) was enacted by Council. The Town's current MDP refers to a population of 7,165 in 2000, which at the time had grown to approximately 12,352 by 2013. This population increase amounted to an increase of 42% across a 12-year period.

Available [federal](#) and [provincial](#) data across a more recent 10-year period shows that the Town's population has continued to grow from an estimated 12,305 in the census year of 2011 to approximately 15,189 in the most recent provincial estimate of 2022, which represents a population increase of approximately 23% across this period. Based on census data alone, this more recent period of growth included an increase in population between census years of approximately 4.2% from 13,756 in 2016 to 14,339 in 2021.

Most recently, population forecasts have typically assumed a medium-scenario annual population growth rate of 1.8% upward to a high annual population growth rate of 2.5%, which would result in the Town's population surpassing 35,000 people in the medium growth scenario and 50,000 people in the high growth scenario within the next 50 years. While the Town's current MDP does reference a population 50,000, it was prepared more than 10 years ago and the first comprehensive review was paused due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. It would be appropriate from a good land use planning perspective in the current Calgary regional growth climate to resume work on a comprehensive update and modernize the Town's MDP to address current land use planning policy issues and reflect best land use planning practices as it relates to the Town's future growth and development.

It should also be noted that the Town's 2024 MDP Review is occurring at a point in time where the municipality has recently exited the Calgary Metropolitan Regional Board (CMRB) and has started work on the development of an Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) with Wheatland County. The Town's 2024 MDP Review is expected to address this change in approach to regional and intermunicipal planning and an updated MDP must align with any future IDP that is adopted by Council as required by the [Municipal Government Act](#) (MGA).

It is largely on the above basis that Development Services is proceeding with the resumption of a comprehensive review of the Town's 2014 MDP, which is supported under Section 5.3.4 of the 2014 MDP which reads, "The Municipal Development Plan shall be reviewed every five years as required, or when large events such as an annexation or adoption of a Regional Plan occur."

---

### **KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S):**

The Town's 2024 MDP Review will focus primarily on the six priority areas and their desired outcomes that have been identified by Council in the Town's [Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) as key issues and concepts that will be explored from a land use planning perspective with the Town's future growth and development in mind. These "pillars" will help inform and guide the update and modernization of the Town's MDP. These six priority areas and some examples of each and the linkages that may exist between the Strategic Plan and the Town's MDP are summarized below:

- **Affordable Living**
  - Mix of Housing Types, Built-Forms and Tenures (eg. accessory dwelling units, building conversions, densities, "missing middle" housing, mixed-use buildings, own-rent splits, supporting small businesses, tiny homes, etc.).
- **Climate Resiliency**
  - Natural Infrastructure Systems (eg. conserved ecosystems, green roofs, rain barrels, tree canopies, xeriscaping, etc.).
- **Community Development**
  - Area Structure Plan (ASP) Requirements (eg. minimum densities, requiring mixed use, etc.) and Existing ASPs Review;
  - Downtown Strathmore (eg. expanded boundaries, requiring mixed use, etc.); and,
  - Municipal, School, Environmental and Conservation Reserves Policy.
- **Community Wellness**
  - Access to Parkland and Open Space (eg. arts and culture, active and passive recreation options, etc.); and,
  - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (eg. access control, natural surveillance, territorial reinforcement, etc.).
- **Economic Development**
  - Community Investment Readiness (eg. affordable and supportive housing, multi-residential built-forms, non-residential business attraction, etc.); and,
  - Growth Management Strategies (eg. contiguous growth, future land use schedule, protecting agricultural and rural lands from premature development, etc.).
- **Financial Sustainability**
  - Planning for Infrastructure (eg. aligning financial and land use planning decisions).

## DESIRED OUTCOMES:

The Town's 2024 MDP Review is expected to result in the adoption of an updated MDP that is immediately responsive to both the municipality's updated strategic priorities that are identified in the Town's [Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) and to current-day land use planning matters, including but not limited to affordable housing, economic development, as well as providing a strong policy-based land use planning direction for the future growth and development of the Town.

## COMMUNICATIONS:

There are two main statutory requirements under the [Municipal Government Act](#) (MGA) that a municipality is required to undertake when preparing a statutory plan (i.e. MDP) and when presenting a bylaw that would have the effect of adopting a statutory plan to Council. These legislative requirements are summarized as follows:

- Section 636(1) of the MGA requires a municipality that is preparing a statutory plan (i.e. MDP) to facilitate public engagement with any members of the public who may be

affected by a statutory plan, school boards with jurisdiction in the area where a statutory plan applies and in the case of a MDP any adjacent municipalities, Indian band or any adjacent Indian reserve, and any adjacent Metis settlement; and,

- Section 692(1) of the MGA requires a Council to hold a public hearing prior to the second reading of any proposed bylaw that would have the effect of adopting an MDP.

In accordance with the MGA, staff are currently in the process of preparing a public engagement strategy and stakeholders list ahead of publishing a draft version of the Town's updated MDP. The public engagement strategy and stakeholders list will be primarily utilized and relied upon during Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the MDP Review, however staff has started to communicate informally already with the public and a number of stakeholders in anticipation of this report being brought to the Town's Committee of the Whole.

Further to the above, staff would also note the importance of Council as a key stakeholder having decision-making responsibilities as it relates to the Town's 2024 MDP Review. At the time of writing this report, staff anticipates holding a minimum of two workshops with Council to explore and help guide the Town's 2024 MDP Review as it relates to the key issues and concepts that have been identified in this report. There will also be an interim report and final report provided to Council in Phases #2 and #3 of the review process, which will afford further opportunities to participate in the process as certain project milestones are achieved.

#### **ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS/MOTIONS:**

N/A

---

Chuck Procter, Manager of Development Services

Approved  
- 26 Jun  
2024

Jamie Dugdale, Director of Infrastructure, Operations, and Development Services

Approved  
- 26 Jun  
2024

Veronica Anderson, Legislative Services Officer

Approved  
- 28 Jun  
2024

Johnathan Strathdee, Manager of Legislative Services

Approved  
- 02 Jul  
2024

Kevin Scoble, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved  
- 05 Jul  
2024