



SMOKY LAKE COUNTY

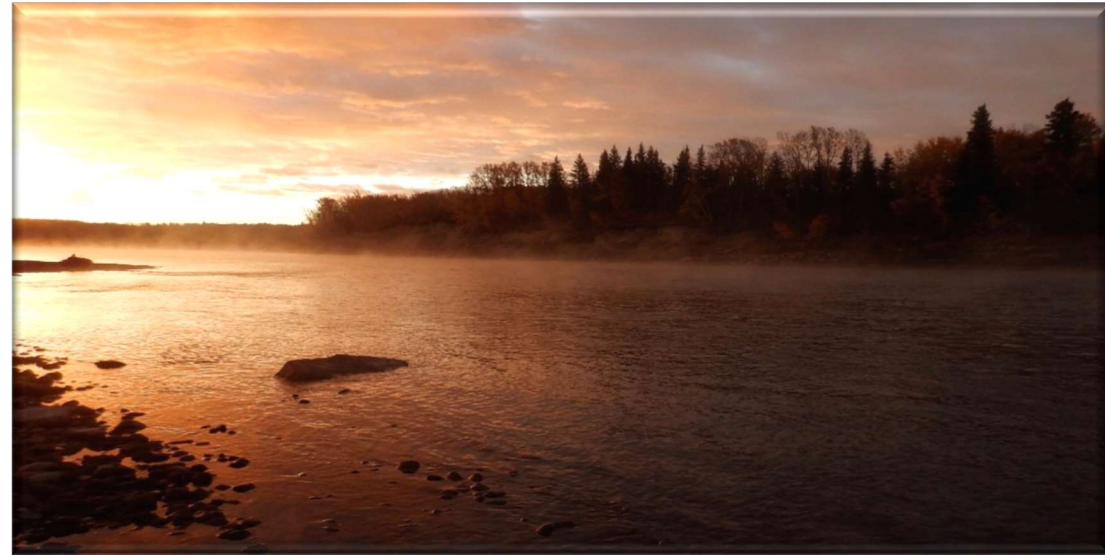
STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

(Revision #1, approved on April 27, 2023, Council Motion #565-23)

BACKGROUND

A municipal Council is responsible for identifying and defining strategic direction for the municipality to ensure that it fulfills its role as outlined in the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*. A strategic plan fulfills this role as it clearly describes or affirms the values of the Council and Community. The strategic plan also:

- 1) defines the vision of the Council as to what it wants to achieve over the next few years, and,
- 2) establishes strategic priorities (between 3 to 5) to guide the organization towards achievement of the vision.



Sunrise on the NSR, Ceyana Canoe Club, 2021

The strategic plan forms the basis of the financial plan as it sets out what the municipality wants to do in the short-term (1 to 3 years) and longer terms (5-10 years). The financial plan determines the anticipated costs to accomplish the priorities of the strategic plan and consequently the extent to which a priority can reasonably be accomplished. The two plans are inseparably intertwined and for this reason, the strategic plan always precedes and is relied upon in the preparation of the budget priorities because the *MGA* requires municipalities to prepare mandatory three-year operating and five-year capital plans.

In reviewing our Values and Vision, Smoky Lake County strives to go beyond strategic plans of the past and instead create a plan with goals that are more tangible.

Smoky Lake County engaged 13 Ways to conduct a 2-day strategic session with the Council and Administrative staff to formulate the basis of the County's strategic plan. The outcome of this session provided the County with a document which provided the Council with a summary of its Values and Vision, which forms the basis for establishing the Council's priorities.

Smoky Lake County Council then conducted a separate workshop to review their Values, Vision and Levels of Service to establish its Priorities as the Council's

VALUES

Smoky Lake County Council defined their values as:

1. **HEALTHCARE** – Council values the continuing access to the George McDougall and Vilna Health Centres by all residents in our region and the increasing of services for more advanced healthcare services.
2. **EMERGENCY SERVICES** – Council values a safe community where all County residents have access to locally sourced full-service police, fire and EMS services.
3. **EDUCATION** – Council values the prospect to allow residents to access dual credit opportunities / advanced education programs provided by colleges and also values the equality of education opportunity for County residents.
4. **CULTURAL DIVERSITY** – Council values the need to continue to accommodate, attain, build and grow the perception of being an open and culturally diverse community.
5. **RECREATION** – Council values the existing recreational opportunities and facilities for all our residents and seeks to explore enhancements to these facilities.
6. **HOUSING DIVERSITY** – Council values and recognizes the needs of our residents for diversified housing opportunities to allow our community to grow.

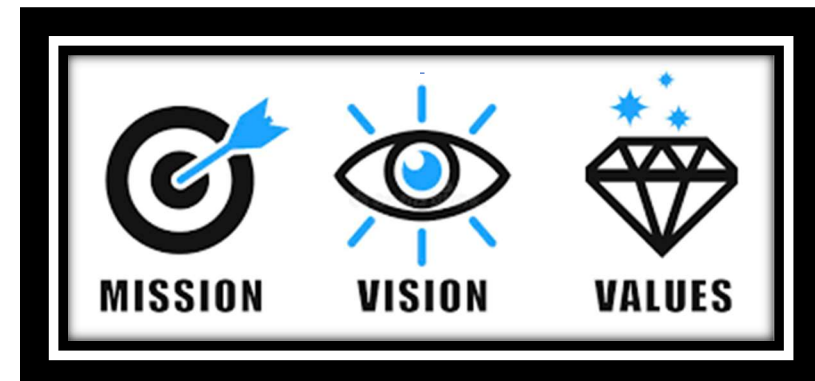


Looking east on the North Sask. River, at 'the Elbow'

VISION

Smoky Lake County Council defined their vision as:

1. **Development along Highways** – Council visualizes new highway commercial growth and business development along key corridor highways in the region, where the County would proactively undertake processes to bring those properties to a “shovel-ready” status specific to land use, zoning, and other planning functions.
2. **Creating policies/atmosphere to create pro-active growth and development:**
 - a. **Population growth** – Council visualizes positive population growth by bringing key services back into the region.
 - b. **Fully utilized Hospitals and Courthouse** – Council visualizes a robust regional healthcare and fully utilized hospitals, health centres, and the courthouse in our region, supporting local needs and overflow capacity from larger metropolitan areas.
 - c. **Housing Diversity** – Council visualizes diverse housing opportunities designed to accommodate the needs of the region through innovative programming such as partnerships, incentives, and/or external grants.
 - d. **Proactive/Partnering Development Strategies** – The Council visualizes that the County would proactively undertake the processes and partnerships to stimulate and promote residential and commercial growth in the region, including “shovel-ready” principles pertaining to land use, zoning, servicing, and other land development functions.
 - e. **Agriculture** – Council recognizes the benefit and value of the County’s agriculture sector, and visualizes its enhancement and strengthening by supporting the expansion of veterinary services, promoting new value-added agri-business culture, and effectively promoting the region.
 - f. **Environment** – Council recognizes the benefit, value, and services delivered by our natural landscape, and visualizes its protection through land use planning, technical studies, collaborative partnerships, and leveraging tools under the MGA, etc.



PRIORITIES



1. Grow Employment Opportunities - Council is committed to lobby for the re-instatement of healthcare services in the region, the re-opening of the courthouse, and supporting growth in all industries, including agricultural business and producers to stimulate population growth in the region.

To attain this priority, Council recognizes the following tasks will be required to be undertaken:

- Lobby efforts to the Provincial and/or Federal Governments – The Council will utilize their lobby efforts, along with other local and regional municipal partners, to jointly advocate to the various levels of government. This may include the retaining of registered professional lobbyist firm(s) as deemed necessary. This may require the adoption of an advocacy plan by the Council to assist in this role.
- Collaboration with Municipalities and Healthcare Providers – The County will need to form collaborative relationships with municipalities within and surrounding our boundaries, as well as explore relationships and/or partnerships within the Provincial Government.
- Examine recreation opportunities and new facilities – The County will review the Smoky Lake Regional Recreation Master Plan, dated March 2013, in the context of 2023 and develop a program for the public to provide input respecting facility improvements and desired programs.
- Examine Incentive Initiatives – The County will examine the possibility of introducing incentives and/or partnership opportunities to foster the growth of business and industry development in the region.

2. Proactivity in Development – Council is committed to the development of policy and programming to foster a proactive approach to land development within our region.

- Sell land to raise revenues for development initiatives – The County will review potential opportunities for highest and best use of Municipal property currently vacant and dispose of the lands at fair market value. Some land may be sold on condition to assist in the undertaking development within a specified timeframe.
- Review existing policy framework – The County will review its existing policy statements across all departments to ensure that they remain relevant and effective.
- Market Evaluation – The County will undertake an evaluation of market conditions to determine what conditions, economic constraints, impediments, catalysts, and stimulus may be beneficial in the proactive promotion of land development in the region.
- Lobby efforts to the Provincial and/or Federal Governments – The Council will utilize their lobby efforts, along with other local and regional municipal partners, to jointly advocate to the various levels of government. This may include the retaining of registered professional lobbyist firm(s) as deemed necessary. This may require the adoption of an advocacy plan by the Council to assist in this role



- Proactive Preliminary Planning – The Council will undertake a review of the existing Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and Municipal Development Plan (MDP) which are both nearly a decade old, and replace or update them with modern language, uses, and provisions that balance economic development with the municipalities' role as a regulator and trustee of the environment and public good. This may also include review/update of older existing, or adoption of new, Area Structure Plans (ASPs) and other tools under the MGA.
- Effective Geographic Information Systems (GIS) - Smoky Lake County's GIS promotes and supports the County Strategic Plan with the use of technology to enable an efficient, effective business process and support decision makers at all levels with access to the most accurate information.
- Housing Diversity – The County will undertake a marketing analysis to determine the needs of the region. The Council will also consider options to promote the construction of diverse housing through the use of specific policy frameworks, investment, partnership, and possible subsidization to achieve this goal.
- Agriculture – The Council will seek opportunities to enhance the agricultural culture of the region through new and innovative partnerships that prioritize landowner needs, sustainable local foods.
- Environment – The Council will pursue necessary advocacy, technical studies, and policy and bylaw amendments to appropriately steward our environmental landscape.

4. Emergency Services – Council is committed to ensure that all County residents have access to full-service Police, Fire and EMS services.

- Lobby efforts to the Provincial and/or Federal Governments – The Council will utilize their lobby efforts, along with other local and regional municipal partners, to jointly advocate to the various levels of government. This may include the retaining of registered professional lobbyist firm(s) as deemed necessary. This may require the adoption of an advocacy plan by the Council to assist in this role.
- Explore the possibility of Partnership/Investment Opportunities – The County will explore opportunities for possible partnerships and/or investment to attain full-service emergency services.



3. Education – Council is committed to ensuring that educational opportunities for County residents continue to grow.

- Create and enhance Partnerships – The County will continue to forge partnerships with primary and post-secondary education providers (Portage College, Lakeland College, Aspen View Schools, Lakeland Catholic) to provide continuing programming required by residents of the County.
- Lobby efforts to the Provincial and/or Federal Governments – The Council will utilize their lobby efforts, along with other local and regional municipal partners, to jointly advocate to the various levels of government. This may include the retaining of registered professional lobbyist firm(s) as deemed necessary. This may require the adoption of an advocacy plan by the Council to assist in this role.
- Explore the possibility of Partnership/Investment Opportunities – The County will explore opportunities for possible partnerships and/or investment to attain goals such as additional dual credit education programs.



Hillside Acres in Fall



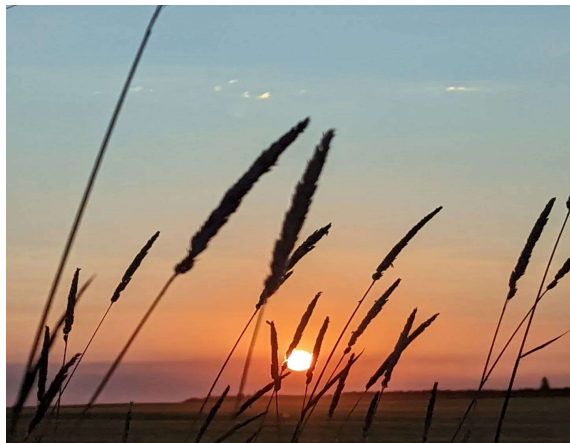
5. **Cultural Diversity** – *Council is committed to ensuring that the County is recognized as being a Culturally Diverse Community.*
- **Apply to Provincial Government to become a Designated Community** – Council is committed to researching and successfully applying to the Province to become a Rural Renewal Stream Designated Community.
 - **Create Policy Statements** – The Council is committed to creating policy statements ratifying the County's commitment to be viewed by peers as a Culturally Diverse Community and welcoming people from all cultural backgrounds.

Who We Were

Our name 'Smoky Lake' comes from smoky vapor that rises from the shallow lake itself, which was noted by the original inhabitants of this area - the Indigenous Peoples' whose footsteps have marked these beautiful lands since time immemorial. Over the last 200 years, explorers and traders were replaced by farmers and entrepreneurs, Eastern Europeans, and others from around the world, as our region grew in population and prosperity.

Who We Are

We have become a services-oriented hub by providing important amenities to our residents while also growing business industrial and agricultural opportunities, tourism, and recreation services. We also serve as a culturally diverse hub that attracts people from around the world for the quality of community and a family-focused life that we offer. This has been accomplished through a tradition of active collaboration with our neighbors.



Credit: Hank Holowaychuk

WHO WE ARE



Waskatenau Creek

Who We Are Becoming

With further partnerships and collaboration, we will be able to offer a re-instated full-service healthcare, emergency services and housing diversity with great amenities all within a short distance, including recreation facilities, walking trails and natural amenities that appeal to all ages.

We have achieved this through our forward thinking and in being proactively involved in the development process to create investment and business opportunities in the County. In response to our growing population, we will present a skilled workforce that will appeal to businesses and industries that create jobs and employment. We are focused on growing local ownership and entrepreneurship in our own community. We are a thriving community with a lot of value-added developments that support our appreciation of our beautiful environment, with year-round events that celebrate our four seasons and take advantage of our natural environments. Our businesses are self-sustaining because of a strong and growing population.

LEVEL OF SERVICE



The Council reviewed the extent and costs of the services the County provides to our residents. While faced with the unpredictable cost of goods and services and inflation pressures, the County has been resolute to continue to provide our excellent levels of services.

In moving forward, the County will strive to minimal taxation increases while continuing to provide the same high-quality levels of service to our residents.



