

HOME. GROWN.

Beaver County's Plan for People, Place, and Possibilities.



April 2017

WE ARE THE ONES WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

“Bold leadership is clarity around an unreasonable commitment to what should be.”

@AndyStanley

Fifty percent of jobs will disappear in the next 25 years due to automation. Climate change is science with implications for the County – from length of growing season, to diversified crop potential, to water resources. Rural communities are facing static or declining populations – threatening social connectivity, and stressing ability to re-invest in aging infrastructure. Demands on governments – for quality services provided efficiently - are rising in the face of generationally-low public trust in government.

How prepared is Beaver County to enter a future that will look nothing like the past? The prospect of a better future for our children and grandchildren rests on how well we can answer this question.

Our desire for the safety of what we know often leads to a “beautiful lie” we tell ourselves: that everything is fine as is. That change isn’t needed. That the past will elegantly repeat itself. But it won’t. Accelerating change is a genie that’s out of the bottle. It’s our choice whether and how we participate in change. Complacency is our greatest danger.

This Plan is about preparing Beaver County for an ambitious future its residents can be proud of, grabbing the proverbial tiger by the tail - from agricultural diversification to innovative housing that attracts new residents. All while ensuring life is in balance in our stewardship of environment, wise fiscal management, and good governance.

We can also honour bedrock of our past in our positioning for a successful future. There is profound beauty in the simplicity of rural landscape, connection of land to things we grow or the energy we harness, and generations-long homesteader DNA - reflected in our values and way of life - that has wrestled opportunity from the land. Our new age challenge is to enable the skills and talents of people to step into opportunity.

Culture beats strategy.... all the time. Think of this Plan as a resource guide for interesting ideas that fit a strategic goal: to attract working age population and families. But the real value of the Plan lies in opening minds to new possibilities...to be adaptable....nurturing consistent ability of all of us to look at the world through a prism of how to build a more successful future for Beaver County. Ultimately, it’s not the Plan that will generate greatest success: it’s mindset. It’s the voice on our shoulder telling us to move forward, to progress, to create new, to forge the future from fist of will and anticipation of the journey. It’s about empowering destiny not accepting fate. It’s about “Us” working together, and the infinite power of possibility in shaping a new horizon line.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016, Beaver County embarked on a process to create ONE plan – a clear direction forward for the County that integrates existing plans and documents:

- Community Economic Development Strategy
- Municipal Development Plan
- Recreation and Culture Services Master Plan
- Council Strategic Priorities

A 37-person Steering Committee comprised of a cross-section of County residents and led by County Council met in three workshop settings to brainstorm strategic direction. A regional Community Survey, generating 198 responses from County residents, served as a foundation for the direction of this Plan. The survey included responses from residents of the Towns of Tofield and Viking, and the Villages of Ryley and Holden – who will be very important to the County as communities increasingly collaborate to achieve success. County staff feedback was acquired in late stages of plan creation.

The result is a holistic Plan that aims to balance and integrate five key community building pillars: Economic Prosperity, Environment Stewardship, Social Conscience, Governance Leadership, and Fiscal Responsibility.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

1. **A Vision**

Beaver County: Home of Agriculture and Environment Revival

We will lead and innovate as a food, renewable energy, and imaginative rural housing hub for the province.

2. **A core population strategy that overcomes a key obstacle: static population growth (see the following strategic goals)**

3. **A visual development framework** that helps elected officials, residents, and the business community more easily understand what Beaver County is working on, and how initiatives relate to another in pursuit of its vision.

4. **An initial 12 to 18-month implementation** plan that focuses on best return on investment of time and energy, and have been chosen because they are catalysts that set in motion possibilities for several subsequent actions. A tactical action plan should be developed annually based on this Plan. Production of an annual scorecard that reports on progress is recommended. It's also important that this Plan continue to be adapted as new opportunities arise. Change is accelerating and plans that mean something and achieve results are living plans.

5. **Performance metrics that track progress in achieving strategic direction**

THE POPULATION STRATEGY IS COMPRISED OF FIVE STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 1 – DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY VIA AGRICULTURE, RENEWABLE ENERGY, AND ATTRACTION OF “INDEPENDENTS”

- Objective 1 – Diversify Agriculture
 - Initiative 1 – Develop Niche Crops
 - Initiative 2 – Create a Food Manufacturing Incubator
 - Initiative 3 – Develop a Farm Succession/Apprenticeship Program
 - Initiative 4 – Nurture Immigration Investment
 - Initiative 5 – Attract Processing Investment (Niche Crops, Greenhouses, Fabrics, Aquaculture, Distillery)
 - Initiative 6 – Investigate Aquaculture and Fabrics Diversification Opportunities

- Objective 2 - Develop an Environment-Based Economic Sector Based on Renewable Energy
 - Initiative 1 – Attract a Commercial Scale Solar Installation
 - Initiative 2 – Build a Geothermal Project Associated with Industrial Park
 - Initiative 3 – Explore Opportunities Related to Green Tec and Bioenergy, and Environmental Products and Services

- Objective 3 – Attract and Retain “Independents”
 - Initiative 1 – Grow the Number of Home-based Businesses
 - Initiative 2 - Comprehensively Support Entrepreneurial Talent Development to Attract and Retain “Independents”

GOAL 2 – STRENGTHEN SOCIAL STRUCTURE WITH HOUSING INNOVATION

- Objective 1 - Be a Catalyst for Housing Innovation
 - Initiative 1 – Attract Innovative Housing Development to the County
 - Initiative 2 – Collaborate with Urban Communities in the County to Develop Urban Agriculture Strategies That Support The County’s Strategic Direction

- Objective 2 – Enhance Community Amenities/Services
 - Initiative 1 – Determine Future Recreation and Culture Service Offering
 - Initiative 2 – Consolidate Existing Ag Arena Facilities into an Enhanced Central Indoor Facility
 - Initiative 3 – Enhance Childcare Program
 - Initiative 4 – Enhance Community Events

GOAL 3 – SOFTEN ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT VIA INITIATIVES THAT DEEPEN HUMAN CONNECTION TO LAND

- Initiative 1 – Grow Agritourism
- Initiative 2 – Apply Environmental Industry Technologies to County and Region Activities
- Initiative 3 – Enhance Shelterbelt Planting and Preservation, and Wetland Preservation
- Initiative 4 – Advance Beaver Hills Conservation
- Initiative 5 – Expand Recycling Program

GOAL 4 – IMPLEMENT A LONG-TERM FISCAL FRAMEWORK THAT GUIDES SHORTER TERM DECISION MAKING

- Initiative 1 – Apply Incentives to Achieve the County’s Strategic Direction
- Initiative 2 – Accelerate Industrial Park Land Sales
- Initiative 3 – Maintain Multi-Year Capital/Operating Budgets
- Initiative 4 – Plan for Long-Term Regional Infrastructure Recapitalization Requirements

GOAL 5 – BEAVER COUNTY WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS A RURAL GOVERNANCE LEADER IN ALBERTA

- Initiative 1 – Deepen Region-Community Collaboration
- Initiative 2 – Achieve Health/Education Excellence
- Initiative 3 – Enhance County Communication

ENABLERS

- Initiative 1 – Build Next Generation Broadband
- Initiative 2 – Establish Co-ops to Support Economic Development

The detailing of the strategy is built like a resource guide, with links to online resources.

OUR STORY



OUR VISION

Beaver County: Home of Agriculture and Environment Revival

We will lead and innovate as a food, renewable energy, and imaginative rural housing hub for the province.

Our roots are in homesteading, pioneering, and progress wrestled from the land. Our future lies in innovation and leadership in land-based opportunities as food producers and renewable energy builders, while faithfully serving as environmental stewards. Current farming practices are supported, but so are other extended farming outputs such as processing, organics, greenhouses, aquaculture, farm to table supply chains, and farmers' marketing. Agriculture develops a tourism flavour - in a modest farm stay tourism industry, and with a Beaver County niche food product brand. Celebration of land is reflected in peaceful outdoor recreation activities – bird watching, camping, horseback riding, golf, and nature walks. Leadership in the Beaver Hills Initiative makes our mark environmentally.

A route to population stabilization and modest growth lies in creation of new housing that is fresh and different, and/or more affordable than the great Edmonton metro region – appealing to those seeking to reconnect to land, and rural way of life. Environmental technologies and practices complement these stretch farming goals, with the goal of making our communities self-sufficient economically, and in energy and food production. Innovative forms of residential development like “agrihoods” (urban development with agricultural activity in the development), and “condo farms” (competitive housing prices targeted at a younger population attached to small land plot to grow niche products), contribute to an agricultural revival and create an affordable opportunity for younger people and seniors in the Edmonton region. The addition of tax dollars allows for consideration of expanded services, amenities, and service levels.

A Compelling Future Is
About Overcoming Obstacles

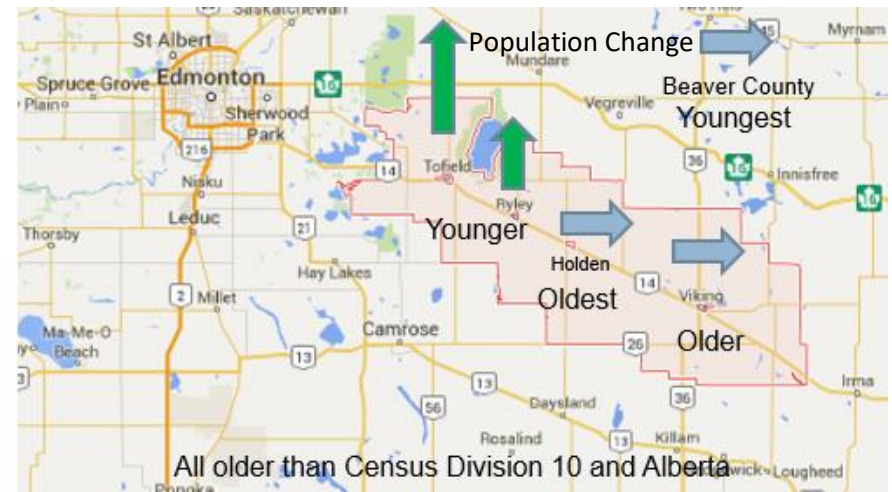


THE KEY OBSTACLE THAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF OUR VISION

THE PROBLEM WE WILL SOLVE

Beaver County has a stable population (1996-2016) but older median age than Alberta average and relatively greater rate of aging suggests a population decline challenge to come. Communities in the County have similar challenges, with the exception of Tofield that has had healthy population growth (1996 to 2011) likely given proximity to the Edmonton metro region.

	1996	2001	% change	Med. Age	2006	% change	2011	% change	Med. Age	2016	% change
Beaver County	5659	5644	-0.3	37.8	5676	0.6	5689	0.2	42.2	5905	3.8
Viking	1081	1051	-2.7	48	1085	3.1	1041	-4.1	49.4	1083	4
Holden	397	374	-5.8	47.8	398	6.4	381	-4.3	55.7	350	-8.1
Ryley	465	437	-6.0	40.5	458	4.8	497	8.5	45.9	483	-2.8
Tofield	1726	1818	5.3	42.7	1876	3.2	2182	16.3	42.3	2081	-4.6
Total County Urban/Rural	9328	9324	0		9493	1.8	9790	3.1		9902	1.1
Census Div. 10	80028	83061	3.8	40.1	86796	4.5	93039	7.2	40.3	97449	4.7
Alberta	2696826	2974807	10.3	35	3290350	10.6	3645257	10.8	36.5	4067175	11.6



WHY POPULATION MATTERS: “THE PICKLE”

Population pays for desired services and amenities. Static or declining population in rural communities stresses ability to pay to maintain those services and amenities, which often then translates to lower than required re-investment in aging infrastructure. No consideration can be given to service enhancement or new amenities that attract or retain working population and families.

The “pickle” – the downward cycle of fewer people paying more for declining quantity and quality of services and amenities – is set into motion. Two primary options to get out of the pickle are to pool resources on a more regional basis, and/or be much more active in working to attract working population and families needed to sustain community economic and social vibrancy.



We are...together...power...and
the infinity of possibility.



BEAVER COUNTY'S CRITICAL GOAL

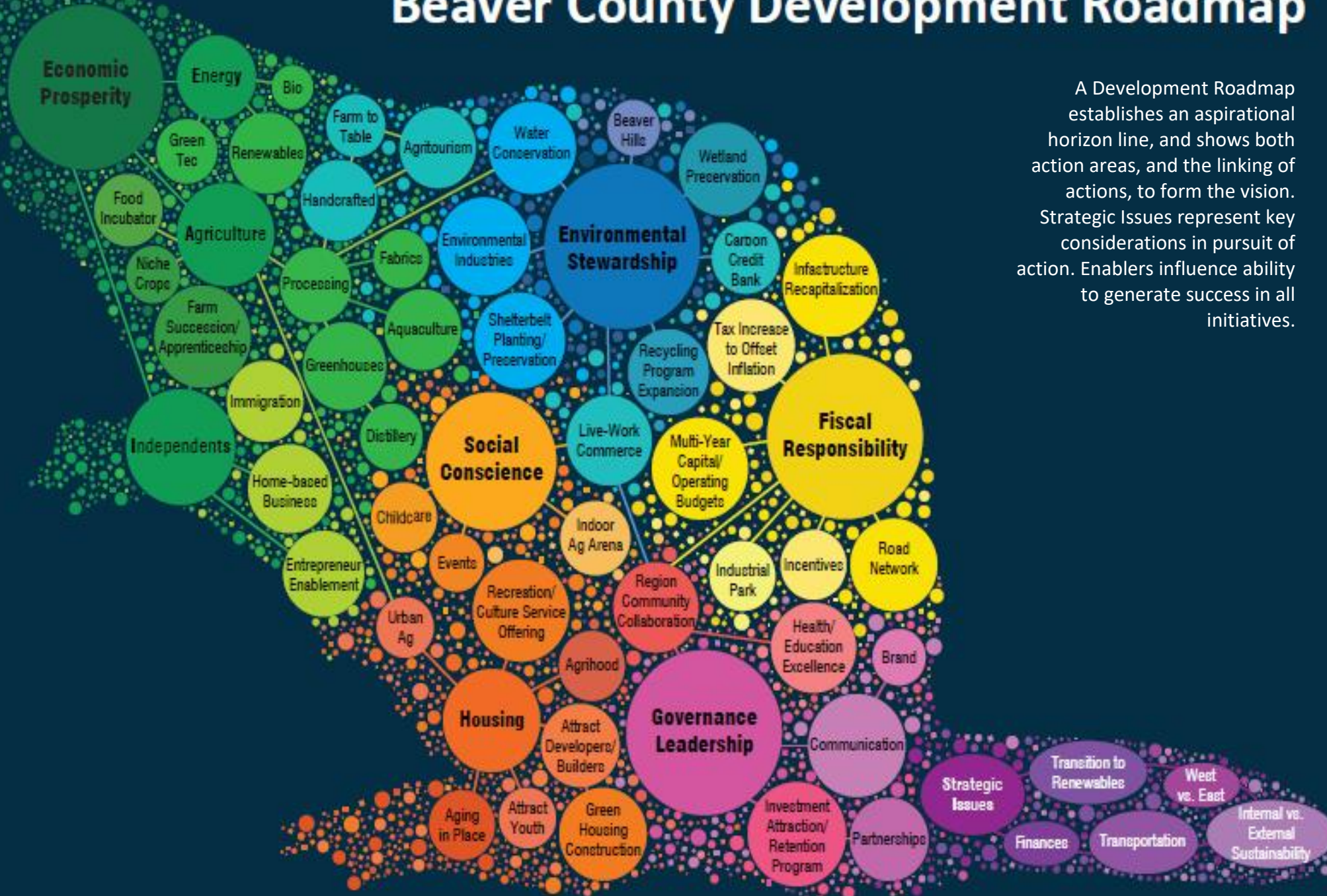
ATTRACT WORKING AGE POPULATION AND FAMILIES

We will accomplish this by:

- 1) Growing rural and urban population in the County to 11,000 by 2024 (11% growth over 2016 baseline)
- 2) Generating 4% rural and urban population growth per Census Canada period (2.5 times average rate of growth from 1996 to 2016)
- 3) Reducing County rate of aging to 2x Alberta rate by 2024 (current: 3x rate between 2001 and 2011)

Beaver County Development Roadmap

A Development Roadmap establishes an aspirational horizon line, and shows both action areas, and the linking of actions, to form the vision. Strategic Issues represent key considerations in pursuit of action. Enablers influence ability to generate success in all initiatives.



- Enablers**
- Entrepreneurship
 - Housing Innovation
 - Faster Internet
 - Coops
 - Water for Economic Development

Beaver County Plan Pillars

These Pillars interact with each other in progressive functioning of a community. Powerful Community Plans consider trade-offs, balance perspective, and pursue concrete actions in the context of vision. Based on input, Economy leads, with desire for pillar-balance in general decision making.



BEAVER COUNTY'S STRATEGY



Compelling communities understand and work to deepen their value proposition. They pursue and celebrate differentiation from other communities for the positive benefits – from volunteer spirit to business expansion – that pride, purpose, and investment competitiveness generates.

Strategy should:

- Reflect achievable opportunities.
- Pursue distinction from other communities – with all the benefits of that (pride, ability to draw community engagement to an ambitious plan, investment interest, brand building).
- Be simply said.
- Overcome the key strategic challenge.
- Work to achieve the Vision and Development Roadmap.



Given the key obstacle is population and attraction of families is a critical success factor for Beaver County, there are **two key ways to overcome the obstacle: Housing, and Jobs.**

Housing innovation that establishes a new form of densified housing connected to land/agricultural pursuits is THE single best opportunity to attract population growth given it's a largely unexploited market, particularly in the west portion of the County within the Edmonton metro commuter region.

Agricultural innovation involving intensification and structural enablement, and careful review of regulation to get “out of the way” of renewable energy installations, create jobs that capitalize on the County’s natural resource advantage. A growing proportion of the Alberta/Canada labour force is footloose – reliant on network connectivity as an enabler. An age old challenge – which Beaver County will meaningfully aim to solve – is how to nurture and grow entrepreneurial talent in a manner that creates self-generating employment and spin-off in a range of professional, scientific, technical, other services, and creative industry sectors that are leading the self-employment charge.

Beaver County Differentiated Strategy



**Innovative
Housing**

**Entrepreneur
Enablement**

**Agricultural
Innovation**

**Renewable
Energy**

COMMUNITY SURVEY (2016) HIGHLIGHTS

<i>Talk about these...(brand)</i>	<i>Work on these</i>	<i>Overcome these (strategy focus)</i>
<p>Lifestyle Factors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Natural environment 2 Peaceful 3 Open spaces 4 Edmonton 5 Can't see neighbours 6 Clean air 7 Farm, industry, natural spaces balance 	<p>Lifestyle Enhancement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 More local employment 2 Faster Internet 3 Lower taxes 4 Healthcare services 5 More nearby urban services/amenities 6 More bylaw enforcement 7 More/better youth activities 	<p>Challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Not enough jobs 2 Resistance to change 3 Retain youth/young adults
	<i>Pursue this</i>	
<p>Key Industries</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Energy/renewables 2 Independent entrepreneurs 3 Ag production/processing 4 Environmental products/services 	<p>Vision</p> <p>Agriculture and Environmental Revival with Dash of Recreation Playground</p>	<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Quality of life 2 Proximity to Edmonton 3 Balance farm, industrial and value-added processing

Action Expresses Priorities



FIRST PRIORITIES (2017/2018)

THE CATALYSTS

Three catalysts (Internet, Entrepreneurship, Farm-To-Table Initiatives) have been chosen based on Steering Committee prioritization of strategic initiatives in this Plan. Four additional initiatives have been added as “game-changer” initiatives that a number of other subsequent initiatives rely on as a foundation. Two key areas lie in organizational systems and regulation adjustment that enables strategic direction, and marketing that communicates desired strategic direction to residents and into the marketplace. This action planning should be updated (evaluation of progress of past projects and identification of new projects) annually as a Council exercise.

Catalyst – actions that change perception or build momentum...that distinguish the County from other places...that surprise... that build pride...that help build momentum for bigger things to come...creating a virtuous cycle.

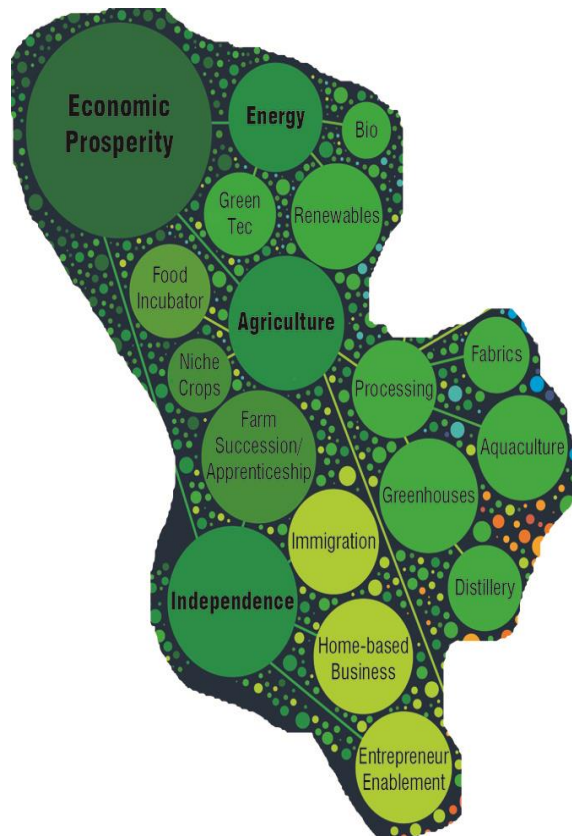
- **Build Next Generation Broadband** – service gaps and bottlenecks analysis, fast-tracking of telco upgrading to CRTC-mandated (2016) 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload – 10 times faster than existing speed targets, while exploring options to generate 100 Mbps speeds.
- **Diversify Agriculture-Farm to Table Product Development** - agriculture opportunities survey including production/products inventory, agriculture opportunities workshop, Agriculture Producers Committee established to work on 3-5 product specialties.
- **Support Entrepreneurial Talent Development to Attract and Retain “Independents”** – business survey, micro-fund, business mentorship group, youth entrepreneurship program.
- **Plan for Long-Term Regional Infrastructure Recapitalization Requirements** - Undertake a Municipal Infrastructure Assessment Project in collaboration between Beaver County, the Towns of Tofield and Viking, and the Villages of Holden and Ryley.
- **Marketing** – brand, visioning, and investment-focused updates to County website.
- **Innovative Housing Enablement** to attract working age population and families – regulatory review and revision, collaboration with Tofield, Ryley, Viking, Holden, consideration of formation of municipal land development corporation and/or housing authority, housing investor attraction package, contact with residential developer/investor business development list.
- **Accelerate Industrial Park Land Sales** – resolve water capacity supply issue for Equity Industrial Park. Research groundwater or water license purchase to secure more water capacity for enterprise and housing.

Steering Committee Priority Initiatives

- 15% - Internet Access
- 13% - Entrepreneurship Enablement
- 11% - Farm to Table Initiatives
- 9% - Industrial Park Incentives
- 9% - Investment Attraction Program
- 7% - Innovative Housing
- 7% - Water Supply
- 7% - Shelterbelt Planting/Wetland Conservation
- 4% - Co-ops
- 4% - Food Production Incubator

DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

BEAVER COUNTY: NEXT GENERATION OPPORTUNITY EXPLORERS



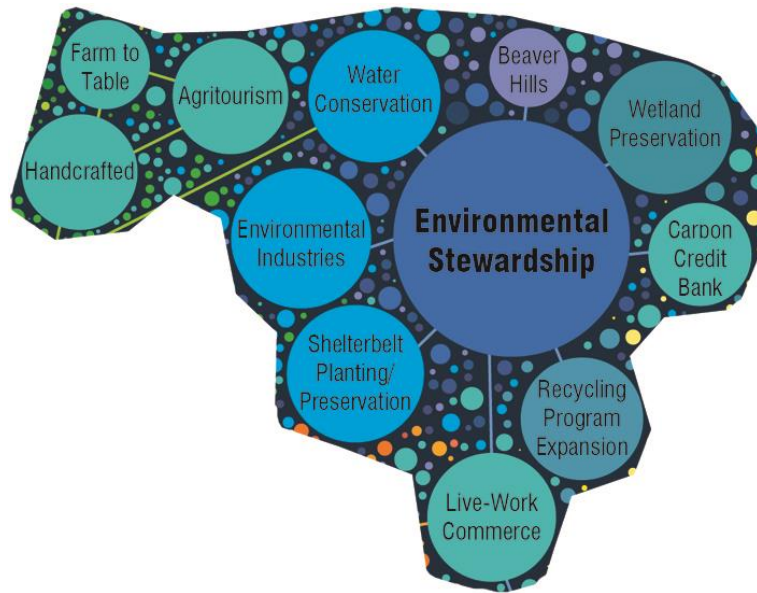
Our homesteading, pioneering, hard fought roots in agriculture gives us the fortitude to forge next generation innovation and leadership in land-based opportunities as environmental stewards, food producers, and renewable energy advocates. We are more diversified. We nurture job creation and business growth, youth retention and attraction, and vibrant communities. We value that enterprise helps pay for desired services and amenities. We help people prepare for a future that only promises change by being open to possibilities, developing education and local investment opportunities, and nurturing collaboration between communities in the region. We believe strongly in the contribution of family businesses and farms, and independent entrepreneurs.

Key opportunity areas for action:

- 1-2 product development priorities
- transition one community hall, church or Legion kitchen into a commercially-licensed food production facility
- match young farmers with succession opportunities
- attract immigrants to purchase farms and start enterprises
- attract processing investment (niche crops/farm to table processing, vertical farming/greenhouses, fabrics, aquaculture, distillery)
- explore potential for local, niche artisan market textile production
- solar farm
- geothermal used as energy source by industrial park
- explore emergent green tec and bioenergy, and environmental products and services potential
- make home-based visible via regulatory relaxation
- celebrate enterprise successes in communications activity
- actions related to entrepreneurial enablement

DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

LEAVING LAND, AIR AND WATER AS GOOD OR BETTER THAN WE FOUND IT



We are responsible to future generations in our interaction with land. We preserve significant ecology in Beaver Hills. We reconnect people to land and make room for wild things in open spaces, trails, and shelterbelt planting/preservation and wetland preservation. We explore opportunities created by societal movement toward lighter footprints – in organic production, recycling, renewable energy, water conservation, and establishment of a carbon credit bank. We strongly support traditional farm production in its ability to provide food to the world, while creating opportunities for more locally-sourced food production in Alberta and western Canada.

Key opportunity areas for action:

- agritourism income stream added to farms
- establish environmental programs:
 - garbage/roadside/community clean-up and tree-planting
 - energy retrofit rebate program
 - water conservation rebate program
- expand Firesmart and drought tolerant shelterbelts via County promotion and communication
- expand wetland acreage via County facilitation of landowner connection with third party conservation organizations
- expand recycling program
- trail strategy to deepen connectivity to Beaver Hills
- participation in ALUS program

DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP: SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

BUILDING A CONNECTED COMMUNITY



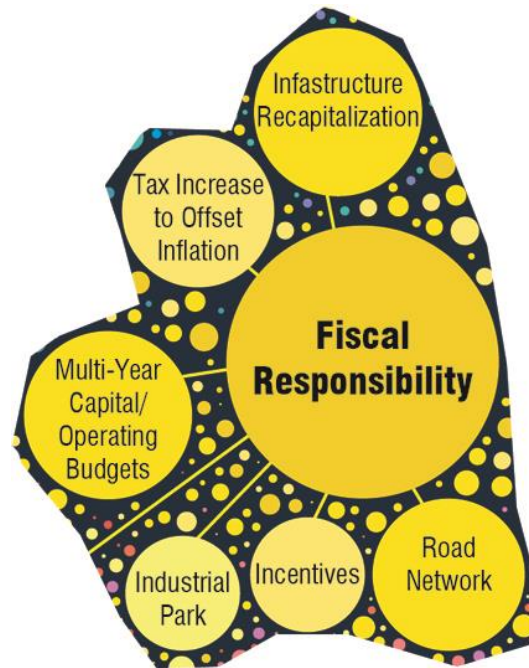
As people and communities, we are connected and collaborative...like the Musketeers we have nurtured a feeling of “being in it together.” We believe in equality and fairness, and are only as strong as our support for those in need. We are multicultural and inclusive. Through bold vision and values-based communication, community-building events, and innovative action that is a source of pride, people are engaged, care, and take responsibility for what happens in community and beyond. We are housing innovators in our aim to promote affordability, opportunities for youth and seniors, reconnection of people to land and community, and population stabilization and growth.

Key opportunity areas for action:

- housing innovation to attract working age population and newcomers (acreage hobby farms in west portion of County, live-work buildings in urban communities, pocket homes, seniors living, new neighbourhoods (condo farm/eco-village))
- green construction
- urban agriculture strategy and actions in collaboration with urban communities in the County
- services survey to guide discussion about future offering (incl. Recreation Master Plan update)
- build central, dedicated indoor Ag arena
- opening of an early and after-school childcare program
- locally-focused events
- redevelopment of Beaver Regional Arts Centre into regional cultural magnet

DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP: FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

EFFICIENT COUNTY OPERATIONS WITH STRONG VALUE FOR TAX DOLLAR



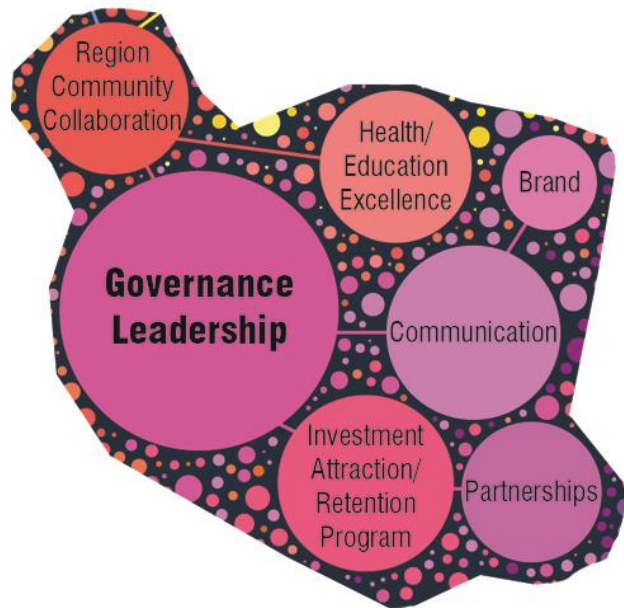
We balance today's budgets while recognizing we must make wise investments as stewards of a bold future. Spending is fair, equitable, accountable, and transparent. We do what we budget. We make it simple for people to understand our finances, and include people in the budgeting process.

Key opportunity areas for action:

- modest energy efficiency, land conservation, industrial development, and family relocation initiatives
- expand water capacity for industrial parks
- region-based municipal infrastructure assessment project that sows the seeds of long term positioning of efficient, desired services and amenities that enhance quality of life for current residents while serving as a draw for investors and new families – with direct application to strength of multi-year capital and operating budgets

DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP: GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

VISION-BASED AND PERFORMANCE DRIVEN LEADERSHIP

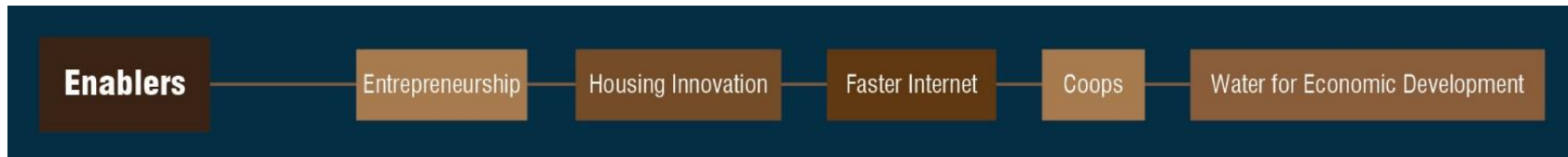


We vision and communicate the future vs. assume the past will be the future. We lead by example. We pursue innovation. We listen to the silent majority who wants our community to thrive. We are visible to the public. We celebrate successes. Along the way we run a tight financial and operational ship that is approachable and service-first. We help people enable their future with a lean and progressive set of policies. People are proud of our achievements.

Key opportunity areas for action:

- infrastructure assessment, housing, Internet, and conservation initiatives lead the way
- collaborate with health and education providers to plan for the future
- expanded County communication of vision and strategic actions achieves resident buy-in and nurtures investment and new resident attraction

Development Roadmap: Enablers



Enablers have been deemed to be important catalysts from which several other positive initiatives rely on as a foundation.

Key opportunity areas for action:

- 100% next generation broadband coverage with 50-100 Mbps service enables enterprise and social connection
- co-ops related to agricultural processing, agricultural marketing focused on niche products, and renewable energy, enable people to pool resources, share-risk, and to own and make decisions around important resources in their community.

PERFORMANCE METRICS

Metrics identify a set of measurable, numerical standards that help to evaluate Plan performance. Metrics should be ‘SMART’: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, And Time-based. They are few in number, and quantitative, to focus on metrics “that most matter” to determining the efficacy of the Plan’s implementation. Metrics can be used in “Report Card” format to communicate progress (or lack thereof) to the public.

Population

- Grow rural and urban population in the County to 11,000 by 2024 (11% growth over 2016 baseline).
- Generate 4% rural and urban population growth per Census Canada period (2.5 times average rate of growth from 1996 to 2016).
- Reduce County rate of aging to 2x Alberta Rate by 2024 (current: 3x rate between 2001 and 2011).

Agriculture

- 50% of farmers have a farm-to-table production contract by 2022.

Enablers

- 100 Mbps service at 100% coverage.
- One Co-op created by 2019.

Housing

- 10% annual increase in residential housing starts over 2016 baseline by 2018, 25% annual increase in residential housing starts over 2016 baseline by 2022.

Economic Development

- One micro-investment initiative initiated in 2018.
- 10% annual increase in new job creation over 2016 baseline by 2018, 25% annual increase in job creation over 2016 baseline by 2022.

Environment

- 25% CO² emissions reduction target for County operations by 2020.
- _____ (linear distance) of new shelterbelt planting by 2022.
- _____ acres of new wetland conservation by 2022.
- 25% increasing in recycling tonnage by 2022.

The Details



GOAL #1 - DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY VIA AGRICULTURE, RENEWABLE ENERGY, AND ATTRACTION OF “INDEPENDENTS”

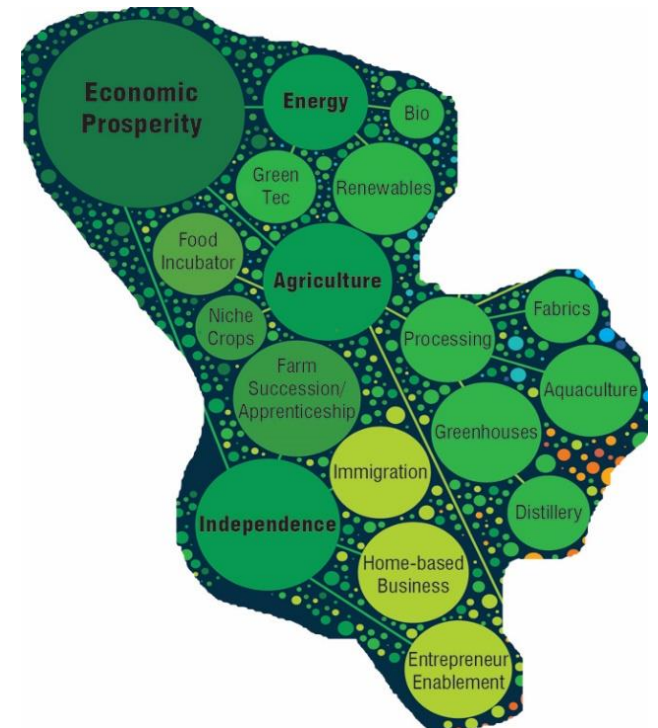
Beaver County will pursue three pathways to diversify its economy:

- 1) Diversify Agriculture
- 2) Attract, Retain, and Nurture Independent Entrepreneurs
- 3) Enable Alternative Energy Projects

OBJECTIVE 1 – DIVERSIFY AGRICULTURE

Challenge - agriculture’s tradition in the County is staple crop production. Farm sizes are increasing and the farm population is aging, generating declining farm population. While established frame of mind focuses on value-added diversification, the foundation below – farm population/farm entrepreneurs – is eroding. Less than 25% of Alberta’s rural population, and 5% of Alberta’s population, live on farms (155,000 people). In a single lifetime, Alberta has shifted from one in two Albertans living on farms to less than 1 in 20. Around half of the farmers still remaining do not make their living producing food, opting to work off-farm (Src: <https://goo.gl/CD54mW>).

Opportunity - the future of farming may well divide into mega-farms on one side and boutique operations that fill niches in the food industry on the other. New mechanisms like a food incubator or farm succession/apprenticeship need to be explored to more fundamentally leverage business opportunity from land-based production. In addition, corporate investment in value-added production is desired, but is a wildcard, while smaller scale niche production catering to the grow-local/organic market trend offers more direct connection to the County’s entrepreneurial enablement direction. The role of technology as an enabler – from GPS-based automation to vertical greenhouses, to eco-village housing forms that integrate land-based production and renewable energy integration – relates strongly to Beaver County’s desire to be an innovator, and ultimately to its value proposition and success at building next generation prosperity and sustainability.



Industries Residents Say Will Lead the Charge in Future in the County (Community Survey, 2016)

- 40% - Energy (including renewables)
- 32% - Independent entrepreneurs
- 29% - Agricultural production
- 27% - Agricultural processing
- 23% - Environmental products and services
- 20% - Recreational tourism
- 18% - Industry (industrial parks)
- 9% - Integrated waste management

INITIATIVE 1 – DEVELOP NICHE CROPS

Opportunity – identify one to two product development priorities.

An agricultural inventory and opportunity identification for the value-added agriculture sector in the Wainwright region (Src: Battle River Alliance for Economic Development, 2009, <https://goo.gl/9V4USF>) reveals the region has roughly 4,600 farmers, and 126 small-scale agri-value added businesses (food products, greenhouses/market gardens, honey products, processed meats). Identified opportunities include nutraceuticals, food ingredients/foods/food for health products (meat, grains and oilseeds, bakery product, beverage, or food ingredient-based), bio-energy (bio-diesel, ethanol, biogas), ag tourism (e.g. experiential recreational products and farm stays), and greenhouse/horticulture activity driven by fibre-in-diet/ethnic/fresh food trends and plant material to serve Alberta's rapidly growing housing market.

This represents a diverse grouping of opportunities. "Brand" and competitive differentiation stems from a focus on one or two inputs/outputs that can leverage a key competitive advantage, while generating brand awareness for Beaver County. The philosophy is that collaboration and partnership of a few suppliers in the same space can generate a sum greater than the parts. An example is Taber (McCain Foods plant)-Lethbridge (Cavendish Farms, 2016 announcement of \$350 million investment) potato production corridor.

Next steps:

- Review Government of Alberta agriculture resource material.
- Conduct agriculture opportunities survey including production/products inventory.
- Facilitate agriculture producers workshop to identify niche product opportunities based on local climate/land capability plus market trends.
- Establish Agriculture Producers Committee to pursue 1-2 key product priorities identified in survey/workshop.
- Consider agriculture development organizational framework and marketing, including but not limited to a co-op structure for niche product production, distribution and marketing, and development of a region-based brand stamp to improve brand awareness.
- Develop agriculture producers email contact list.

Note: the survey, workshop, and working committee should include a farm succession opportunities/constraints theme as per **Initiative 3**.

INITIATIVE 2 – CREATE A FOOD MANUFACTURING INCUBATOR

Opportunity - transition one community hall, church or Legion kitchen into a commercially-licensed food production facility.

The vision is to create a commercially-licensed kitchen that nurtures growth of micro-business/start-up food manufacturing enterprises that face a significant initial – even “non-starter” barrier with respect to regulatory requirement to produce in a commercially-licensed kitchen facility. Manitoba has established solid precedent in this space, with 14 food manufacturing facilities (Src: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development - <https://goo.gl/hieGYr>).

It’s conceivable to view a secondary economic development impact in the form of travel to the County to use a facility of this nature – e.g. Carly Minish, creator of Smak Dab, a line of gourmet mustards, makes the 5-1/2-hour drive from Winnipeg to Swan River to rent the fully equipped small-scale processing plant for \$50 a day to make large batches of her gourmet mustards (Src: <https://goo.gl/Kzj2iB>).

Next steps:

- Identify product opportunities/enterprises/people from agriculture survey.
- Investigate funding sources.
- Construct kitchen.

Other press:

- Swan River - <https://goo.gl/frkyvx>
- Government of Manitoba - <https://goo.gl/MWtLUk>
- Manitoba Cooperator - <https://goo.gl/by3mRb>

INITIATIVE 3 – DEVELOP A FARM SUCCESSION/APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Opportunity – the County can more actively match young farmers with succession opportunities given average farm population in Alberta was 56 in 2011 and is aging (average age 49 in 2001).

Capital, and farm-type, are critical barriers for attraction of young farmers into agriculture. Starting a grain farm with new capital is difficult given very large acreage required to make a viable business, and associated high capital investment in equipment. A lease from existing landowners is possible, but it requires intense capital and no bank will provide an operating loan (cash poor, equipment rich). A bridge across this divide is in-family succession planning, and/or development/facilitation of loans and/or investments from non-traditional sources. Non-traditional sources would be local, and may include a mentorship structure.

Beaver County should consider the following opportunities related to attraction of a younger on-farm demographic:

- Off-farm jobs are typical, with slightly more than half of Alberta’s farm population having an off-farm job. This makes broader economic development important to the local agriculture industry, while also recognizing that off-farm income squeezes labour availability and new investment in farming operations.
- Smaller scale hobby farming can offer a first opportunity for new residents/those without intensive capital investment required for larger scale farming. This form and function would require land use framework adjustments at the County level.
- One perceived pathway (based on previous discussion elsewhere in Alberta) for younger people to farm is cow-calf operations that start small and grow incrementally.
- Target and attract, via agriculture colleges and university programs, farmers whose heart is fully invested in both business opportunity and lifestyle represented by agriculture. This psychographic profiling works to counteract the trend toward off-farm income generation.

Next steps:

- Identify succession needs and succession opportunities from agriculture survey.
- Identify matchmaking opportunities (local farmer “supply” matched with “demand” from agriculture college/university and/or immigration, and/or farmers from elsewhere in rural Alberta) within agriculture producers working committee.
- Investigate how to conduct recruiting through agriculture colleges and university programs for purpose of matching with sale, success, and/or innovative rural housing opportunities.
- Align local mentors with provincial and/or locally developed apprenticeship programs.
- Circulate succession resources to agriculture producers contact list.
- Consider local investment funding options for new farmers.
- Develop and conduct farmer attraction (existing farm purchase, value-added production/niche production) marketing campaign.

Resources:

- Produced by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, the *Transition Planning Guide for Agribusiness* is a handbook that caters to all agriculture business and farm owners at any stage of farm succession - <https://goo.gl/zGu3pR>.
- Grow a Farmer Resource Guide - <https://goo.gl/OSdlca>.
- Ontario Farm Succession Planning Guide - <https://goo.gl/Ukx1uX>.
- The Green Certificate Agricultural Training Program (Alberta Agriculture and Forestry) is an example of an industry-driven training program with an apprenticeship style of delivery. There are ten specializations, from cow-calf to greenhouse - <https://goo.gl/SUL6oz>.
- Agriculture 2025: How the Sector's Labour Challenges Will Shape its Future - <https://goo.gl/mG6ZBM>.
- Alberta Farm Express - A new way to pass on the farm that may help you sleep easier - <https://goo.gl/rmvUHD>.

INITIATIVE 4 – NURTURE IMMIGRATION INVESTMENT

Opportunity – the County can attract immigrants to purchase farms as a first priority, and start enterprises as a second priority.

Canada is a country of immigration (17,000,000 since 1867), including early agricultural populations that homesteaded the prairies. Alberta SouthWest (www.albertasouthwest.com) has set precedent in this area, with securing of \$8.5 M in investment in 2015 via local Dutch community connection with the Netherlands, and conducting of investment attraction initiatives via an immigration consultant. Of note re targeting, those born in the Netherlands comprise roughly one-fifth of the immigrant farm population, compared with less than 2% of immigrants in the general population. The second most common place of birth is the United Kingdom at 14% of the immigration farm population, compared to 9.4% of immigrants in the general population. The third most common place of birth for the immigrant farm population is the United States at 11.3%, compared to 4.0% in the general population. Src: Statistics Canada - <https://goo.gl/u3grn1>.

Next steps:

- Contact Alberta SouthWest and document immigration investment attraction process.
- Identify local cultural connections with potential target immigrant agriculture populations.
- Develop and undertake investment attraction program.
- Work with the Province to develop/enhance a rural immigration program with three streams: 1) entrepreneurs; 2) farm succession/purchase (self-employed farmer stream, Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program); 3) semi-skilled workers – local businesses.

Resources:

- Work Alberta - Attracting and Retaining Immigrants: A Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres - <https://goo.gl/PDI811>.

Other press:

- Calgary Herald - Immigration - <https://goo.gl/nZGn15>.

INITIATIVE 5 – ATTRACT PROCESSING INVESTMENT (NICHE CROPS, GREENHOUSES, FABRICS, AQUACULTURE, DISTILLERY)

Opportunity

- Farm to table processing (jams, cheeses, berry syrup, meats, fruits, vegetables, etc.)/retail linked to tourism/local supply to restaurants. Organic (higher margin) packaged product potential.
 - Supported by co-op approach, regional “brand” for products, and farm-stay tourism (food/education) that offers potential to create a sum greater than the parts.
- Hydroponic/vertical greenhouse (<https://goo.gl/6LkFOc>). Vertical farming - <https://goo.gl/clctjv>.
- Fibre Manufacturing (e.g. clothing – alpaca, hemp) - <https://goo.gl/G5BJgo>.
- Brewery – e.g. (Rossland) - <https://goo.gl/asUDLd>.
- Distillery/Cidery – e.g. Pemberton Distillery - <https://goo.gl/F7xY6z>, Turner Valley Eau Claire Distillery - <https://goo.gl/7B7kHA>.
- Re-investment in Seed Cleaning Plan as a vital base service to industry from which processing is leveraged.

Vision

- Beaver County first-to-market capitalization on vertical greenhouse opportunity to supply Edmonton region fresh food market.
- Three to five farm to table product specialities, with a region-based brand stamp.
- An emergent distillery/brewery market to serve Edmonton’s “fresh” market.
 - Craft brewing has taken off since 2013 with Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission removal of minimum production requirements. This dynamic has been supported by more recent government announcement of a \$1.25 markup for beer sold in Alberta regardless of producer size or location, offset by a \$20 million grant program that returns a significant portion of that money back to small Albertan operators.
 - Lefsrud Distillery, a craft distillery working with a honey base to make spirits, applied for a development permit in Beaver County in 2016. It is a first sign of opportunity to come.

Vertical farming offers a signature opportunity in context of growing consumer interest in organic and/or fresh produce. This interest translates to restaurants, farmer’s markets, and grocery stores that are adding locally grown produce to the supply chain. This opportunity aligns well with broader County environmental goals with CO² emission reduction from shorter supply chains, and reduction of chemical and water use per unit of output. Intensification of production combined with fewer inputs to production (water, chemicals) offers a new form of agricultural economic opportunity. Vertical farming best aligns with the west portion of the County that has ready access to the Edmonton metro market.

“AeroFarms’ high-yielding, economically efficient technology has made it the commercial leader in indoor farming, a market that is expected to quadruple over the next five years to nearly \$4 billion. In about 16 days our output per square foot is approximately 80 times per square foot over a field farmer while using 95% less water, and we also grow using about 50 percent less fertilizers and zero pesticides, herbicides, fungicides.” Src: <https://goo.gl/acvjnl>.

Photo Src: <https://goo.gl/oHOxi6>



Next steps:

- See **Initiative 1** for farm-to-table niche product development actions.
- Review County regulation, and work with urban municipalities in the County to review their regulation, to make it easier for craft brewers to establish production facilities.
- Participate in the annual Alberta Farm Days (August 19 and 20, 2017) to develop and promote niche products - <https://goo.gl/hsnxUx>.
- Work with province or regional economic development agency to develop a vertical farming market study and place opportunity in front of agriculture producers working committee to determine local investor interest. If there is limited local interest, develop a contact list of corporate vertical farmers in the space and promote Beaver County as an investment opportunity.
- Review corporate agriculture investment site selection criteria and develop sector profile/marketing package to advertise County competitive advantage in this space
 - Evaluate water supply issue (small diameter pipe) with industrial park, where processing activity could establish (road and rail access).
 - Conduct groundwater study to establish whether it is a suitable industrial resource.

Resources:

- There is an “aging” Alberta Agriculture profile for Beaver County - <https://goo.gl/jTv9ed>.
- Alberta Food Processors Association – www.afpa.com.
- Farm to table - <https://goo.gl/A791IW>, <https://goo.gl/ZDvaGV>.
- The Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor (Beaver County is a member) has a series of investment opportunity profiles, with profiles on Greenhouses, Meat Snacks, Pulse Foods, and Ready Meals of direct relevance to agriculture diversification opportunities in Beaver County - <https://goo.gl/IErNG>.
- Government of Alberta
 - Horticulture - <https://goo.gl/rxangX>.
 - Processing - [http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/app21/infopage?cat1=Food %26 Ag Processing&cat2=Processing](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/app21/infopage?cat1=Food%26AgProcessing&cat2=Processing)
 - Greenhouses and Specialty Farms - <https://goo.gl/OywrK4>.
 - Alberta Agriculture Programs and Services - <https://goo.gl/v9hyKe>.
 - Ag and Environmental Sustainability - <https://goo.gl/i9YVOr>.

CHART: Agricultural Processing Site Selection Criteria. Src: MDB

Press:

- Edmonton Journal - <https://goo.gl/D6IRLp>.
- CNN - World's largest Indoor vertical farm to produce greens without sun, soil or water - <https://goo.gl/oHA4qb>.
- VOA News - Profits From Eco-friendly Vertical Farming Stack Up - <https://goo.gl/udzcr1>.

FIGURE 10: SITE LOCATION MATRIX SUMMARY FOR VALUE ADD AGRICULTURAL PROCESSING

Labour Force Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Income ■ Ethnicity profile ■ Size of the total labour force/ participation rate ■ Unemployment rate/ employment rate ■ Availability of unskilled workers ■ Cost of unskilled workers ■ Presence of union (labour management relations)
Transportation / Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Proximity to current and future customer markets ■ Proximity to highways ■ Third party trucking availability
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Electricity (capacity, availability, rate, reliability) ■ Water (capacity, availability, rate, reliability) ■ Sewer (capacity, availability, rate, reliability)
Property Availability and Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Serviced industrial land availability (shovel ready sites) ■ Cost of Land / Lease Rates

INITIATIVE 6 – INVESTIGATE AQUACULTURE AND FABRICS DIVERSIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Textile Production Opportunity – explore potential for local, niche artisan market textile production.

In 2011, the Canadian textile industry manufactured some \$3.67 billion worth of textile products, more than half of which (52%) was exported. It's estimated there are 1,970 textile firms in operation in Canada. Src: Canadian Textiles - <https://goo.gl/Xvc8uV>. There is a growing market for artisan goods and materials. Sheep or llama/alpaca offer potential to create a niche artisan textile enterprise(s), and/or producer-owned co-op that focus on natural, minimally processed yarns and textiles sold as raw material or manufactured locally. A major bridge to gap is between wool supplier(s) and producers who use the textiles. Given this industry is largely an Ontario and Quebec industry, the opportunity in Beaver County is likely very niche and involves local manufacturing into artisan products. To succeed on a commercial scale would require a joint venture with a clothing manufacturer or signing of a supplier agreement with a major clothing line. At commercial scale, whether any local manufacturing would be a co-op of ranchers or a private third party would need to be explored. A limitation is the lack of local/Alberta expertise in this space.

Next steps:

- Determine local interest through Agriculture Producers Committee.
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine if, among other things, there is a market that can be created, and if a co-op, joint venture, or recruitment of textile manufacturer is a best operational option.

Resources:

- Canadian Textile Industry Association - <https://goo.gl/K2nWJ5>.
- Hand Weavers, Spinners and Dyers of Alberta – <https://goo.gl/zCNmFv>.
- Industry Canada - <https://goo.gl/IXppBR>.
- Technology Roadmap for Canadian Textile Industry - <https://goo.gl/E1f0uC>.
- Industrial Hemp Enterprise - <https://goo.gl/BBIM6W>.
- Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers Limited - <http://www.wool.ca>
- Alpaca - <https://goo.gl/6bZhnz>.
- Producer Example – Moose Meadows Farm, Quesnel BC - <https://goo.gl/zM8lh2>.

Aquaculture Opportunity – attract an aquaponics facility to supply fresh fish to the Edmonton restaurant/grocery market.

Aquaculture is among the fastest growing agrifood sectors in the world, accounting for half of the world’s fish production. In 2013, Canada’s aquaculture production was valued at \$963.5 million. Alberta currently produces two products: rainbow trout and tilapia. Src: <http://www.aquaculture.ca/>. Tilapia offers an opportunity to sell live product (premium prices) to local markets. Toronto is the single largest market for live tilapia in North America - while burgeoning markets exist in Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver. Tilapia is one of the fastest growing fish farming sectors globally, led by China and other low cost Asian and South American producers. It’s now in the top 10 fish species consumed in North America. Fish production can be combined with hydroponic plant production (i.e. aquaponics) to enhance value of production. High end Boston lettuce and herbs are produced in aquaponics in Canada. Src: Canadian Aquaponics - <https://goo.gl/mpMzyR>.

Major inputs to production are water and heat. Between 5% and 10% of a fishery’s water needs to be replaced on a daily basis in a typical fishery. New technologies with closed loop, recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS), reduce the amount of water needed and are more sustainable. Aquaponics – which uses effluent the fish tanks and circulates that waste product through soil-less growing beds where plants are suspended floating in Styrofoam beds with their roots in the water – also reduces water use. As the plants consume the nutrients from the waste water from the fish tanks, they purify the water so it can be recirculated to the fish tanks. This symbiotic relationship between the fishes and the plants creates a profitable and sustainable method of producing both fish and marketable vegetables.

Heating is one of the largest operating costs of a fishery. Siting adjacent to a waste heat resource and/or solar incorporation can be considered.

Next steps:

- Present the opportunity to the Agriculture Producers Committee.
 - Among investment options, there are several companies that provide the equipment and training to begin a turnkey operation.

OBJECTIVE 2 - DEVELOP AN ENVIRONMENT-BASED ECONOMIC SECTOR BASED ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

Opportunity – the private sector builds one solar farm by 2019, and at least three by 2022.

Opportunity – geothermal is used as an energy source for one or more industrial park enterprises by 2022.

Renewable opportunities in Alberta focus on wind and emergent solar industries, with a geothermal resource that remains relatively unstudied and untapped. Based on the renewable resource, Beaver County feels its best opportunities lie in solar and geothermal.

INITIATIVE 1 – ATTRACT A COMMERCIAL SCALE SOLAR INSTALLATION

Commercial-scale solar power interest is benefitting from the convergence of significant reduction of solar technology/panels over time, Government of Alberta policy (move to phase out coal-fired power by 2030 and simultaneously triple renewable energy's share of the power supply to 30%), carbon tax and credit systems that are increasingly being established globally, and corporate carbon credit, energy diversification and even altruistic (social license) motivations. According to the Alberta Electric System Operator, 21 proposed solar projects generating a total of 681 MW — about 60 times the existing provincial solar capacity — have been registered on its system access service request list as of Sept. 1, 2016. Two projects have reached construction approval phase by the Alberta Utilities Commission. The proposed 77.5-MW Vulcan Solar Project in southern Alberta, would be the largest solar power project in Western Canada.

The Role of Carbon Credits - in 2016, Reuters reported that the World Bank was to hold a \$20 million carbon credit auction (in essence a carbon credit bank). Negotiators from almost 200 countries agreed at last year's climate talks in Paris to support the international trading of carbon credits as part of a new global deal but have yet to decide on the rules or the types of projects that could be included. Src: Reuters - <https://goo.gl/UI71B4>. The County can be mindful of this global dynamic when it comes to promoting company (particularly energy company) investment in renewable energy projects in the County.

An example is the Morocco landfills gas capture, flaring and use program that promotes the flaring or use of landfill gas (LFG) for energy production. The Fonds d'Equipement Communal, Morocco's municipal development bank, develops and manages the activities, which will generate about 1 million carbon credits by 2020 that will be sold to the World Bank's Carbon Partnership Facility. Src: World Bank - <https://goo.gl/LZJZIJ>.

While job generation depends on scale of installation, construction of solar projects will generate significant quality employment given technical skillset (National Observer - <https://goo.gl/X7GH21>, Computer World - <https://goo.gl/Avkcpw>, Fortune - <https://goo.gl/uGeGrr>, Berkeley Labor Center - <https://goo.gl/rg6Ro7>, Globe and Mail - <https://goo.gl/qBU58Z>) and operations jobs are quality jobs that would generate local economic multiplier effect.

There has been expressed corporate interest in solar opportunities in the County. The County's response should be twofold: 1) enabling regulation; 2) promotion and marketing of County readiness to approve projects.

Next steps:

- Review regulation to ensure solar installation investment readiness.
- Promote and market County readiness to approve projects.
- Conduct awareness and education initiative for region residents (website etc.) to improve receptivity to solar initiatives.

Recent news:

- NDP incentives - <https://goo.gl/qBDtr7>.
- Alberta Government looks at options to become 50% solar powered - <https://goo.gl/BhNHVo>.
- Solar was the cheapest source of electricity in 2016, and it will further undercut fossil fuels in 2017 - <https://goo.gl/7YZ3Gz>.

INITIATIVE 2 – GEOTHERMAL

Opportunity - build a geothermal project associated with industrial park.

Geothermal energy is relatively untapped in Alberta. Geothermal energy can be used in three ways: 1) Direct – piping into homes or office buildings for heating; 2) Heat pump – fluid circulation through series of underground pipes with heat exchanger that pulls heat from pipes (reversed in the summer); and 3) Power plant – hot water and steam from deep underground are piped through wells and used to generate electricity in a power plant.

The Canadian Geothermal Energy Association (CanGEA) has generated geothermal favourability maps for Alberta, BC, and the Yukon. This mapping is incomplete for Beaver County (Cangea - <https://goo.gl/wh3eYz>). What is mapped shows promise.

Next steps:

- Review regulation to ensure quick facilitation of solar farm applications.
- Promote Beaver County (website, direct industry connections) as a solar farm destination of choice.
- Complete geothermal mapping project for Beaver County.
- Complete market feasibility assessment for a geothermal power production plant in the County, as a stand-alone or linked to industrial enterprise as a competitively advantageous input to production.
 - Consider the Equity Industrial Park and/or Viking/Beaver Business Park as a primary location.

Resources:

- Energy Futures Lab - <https://goo.gl/9ow0Wx>.

INITIATIVE 3 – EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO GREEN TEC AND BIOENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Green technology generally refers to goals related to sustainability, cradle-to-grave design, source reduction, and innovation. Examples of subject areas are alternative energy, green building, environmentally-preferred purchasing, green chemistry, and green nanotechnology. Src: <https://goo.gl/KsnjHx>.

Bioenergy is any renewable energy or fuel derived from biological sources. There are several potential feedstocks for bioenergy in Alberta including agricultural products (such as corn or canola), forestry waste and livestock waste. Focus areas in Alberta are ethanol, biodiesel, and biogas. Src: Energy Alberta - <https://goo.gl/5iY61M>.

Environmental Products and Services is the core business of roughly 1,330 companies in Alberta, generating revenue of over \$2.8 billion annually. Areas of Alberta expertise are: Remediation - Land, Water and Treatment, Climate Change Solutions, Waste Management, and Bio-Based Value Add Products. High growth sub-sectors are climate change management, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and alternative fuels/vehicles. Src: www.albertacanada.com.

Additional workforce trends in this sector can be found at Eco Canada - www.eco.ca

These are not well-developed as a matter of County capacity and/or existing activity. Given these areas are complementary to the County's vision and can extend its environmental/connected to land narrative, these areas can be explored over time as a complement to implementation of other core elements of the Plan. For example, a plan to attract "Independents" can focus on consultants and engineers in the environmental space – who would be attracted to innovative housing developments that reconnect with land.

Resources:

- The Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor (Beaver County is a member) has a series of investment opportunity profiles, with profiles on Bio Energy, Green Building, and Wind Power of direct relevance to energy diversification opportunities in Beaver County - <https://goo.gl/KSQfsx>.

OBJECTIVE 3 – ATTRACT AND RETAIN “INDEPENDENTS”

We live in an era where developed “western” economies are transitioning to a knowledge-based workforce. Innovation will become our primary source of competitive advantage – generating a global fight to attract and retain talent as a heartbeat of economic development. And talent looks at communities differently than the industrial age ever did – not as places they have to live in, but as places they want to live in – with quality of life and amenity in the driver’s seat. Key implications include the need for next generation Internet speeds, and collaboration between communities in the region to provide desired services and amenities that many rural communities do not necessarily currently offer. On the other hand, there is a market that has been created by those disenfranchised with urban life, the “minimalists,” and other motivations that have a segment of the population seeking reconnection in more authentic and grounded communities. Rural Alberta’s innate characteristics offer potential to step into this opportunity, particularly given Beaver County’s proximity to both an international airport (a top-ranked locational factor for creative industries) and the Edmonton economic region.

INITIATIVE 1 – GROW THE NUMBER OF HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

Opportunity – the County can make home-based visible via regulatory relaxation, and celebration of successes in communications activity.

A reported national average of one in six households operates a home-based business. Translated to Beaver County’s roughly 2100 households suggests there are 350 home-based businesses present in the County. HBBs are proven incubators (e.g. HP, Google, Microsoft, Apple, Estee Lauder, Spanx) for new business growth and development. With an objective of raising visibility and nurturing home-based business growth, County actions should focus on regulation and marketing.

Targets:

- Telecommuters – people who work in the Edmonton metro region but do so remotely from their home.
- Entrepreneurs (solo) – self-employed professionals with home office.
- Entrepreneurs (start-up) – business start-up with plan to expand when more space is needed.
- Services – service-based enterprise (seamstress, hairdresser, masseuse, etc.).

Next steps:

- Review home-based business regulation and remove any restrictions to only mediate impact-related disputes, promote the deregulation, and show how there’s greater freedom to pursue enterprise in the County.
- Regularly write home-based business success stories and present via County website, newsletter, Facebook page, or other third party publications.
- Work individually with home-based businesses to identify and resolve growth-related needs and issues.
- Connect home-based business (and all business) to external business networks and resources. Examples: Northern Alberta Business Incubator <https://goo.gl/sRYRuF>, The Business Link <http://bit.ly/1jo7unu>.

Resources:

- Statistics Canada – Working At Home - <http://bit.ly/1nAbAgR>.
- Globe and Mail - <http://bit.ly/1qEs2gx>.
- Percent working from home by characteristics - <http://bit.ly/1pqM4xl>.
- Small business facts - <http://bit.ly/1nAbFkv>.
- Telework Stats and Value Proposition (US) - <http://bit.ly/1nAbJ3M>.
- Debunking the myths of remote working - <http://bit.ly/1hPgeb7>.

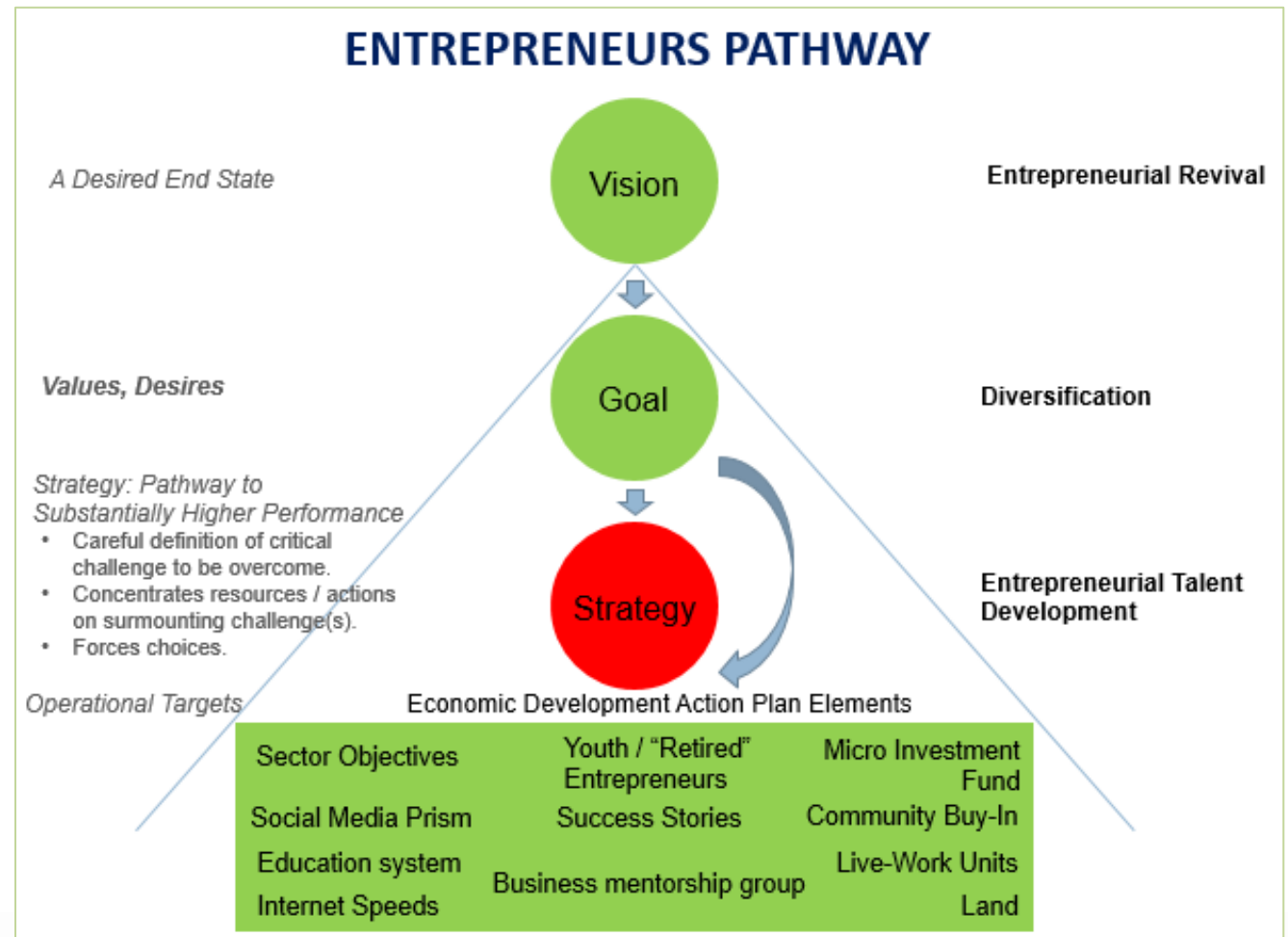
Self-Employment

- Self-Employment, the cash-starved Canadian dream - <http://bit.ly/SStcJT>.
- Industry Canada: Key Small Business Statistics - <http://bit.ly/1oW3ctd>.
- 15% of labour force self-employed - <http://bit.ly/1pQXCi7>.
 - Factors include: an aging population – the over 50 crowd represents 30 per cent of all the new start-ups; technology like the Internet that makes the process easier; outsourcing by corporations to small firms; and the continued influx of immigrants, who represent a sizable number of self-starters.
- CIBC Study (PDF) - <http://bit.ly/1qEsGe5>.
- Millennials - <http://bit.ly/1okngrB>.
- Self-employment/age of entrepreneurship - <http://bit.ly/1ueIdT7>.
- Self-employment trends - <http://bit.ly/1kSyu3c>.

INITIATIVE 2 - COMPREHENSIVELY SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURIAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN “INDEPENDENTS”

Opportunity

A strong focus on entrepreneurial development and innovation will foster business expansion and retention and promote and encourage the injection of local investment into Beaver County.



Next steps:

- Conduct a business survey to identify priority business retention issues and opportunities.
- Explore potential to establish a local micro investment fund.
 - Context: Traditional financing has its merits, but is not a good fit with smaller scale, high risk, and/or more atypical initiatives. With 80% of investment being local, local investment environment mechanisms should be nurtured. Municipal government, local business, and leverage of outside crowd-funding platforms all offer prospect to enhance the local investment environment and complete visible and impacting community development projects, nurture new business start-ups, and support local business growth.
 - Actions:
 - 1) Communicate to business community, financing options available through Community Futures - <https://goo.gl/osNkS8>.
 - 2) Establish a Beaver County fund within a community foundation and “legacy giving” framework to support philanthropy with undertaking of community development initiatives (e.g. Vancouver Foundation - <https://goo.gl/gUGwDC>).
 - 3) Create a modest municipal Community Investment Fund to fund 2-3 community development projects annually. Based on proposal submission, this initiative offers prospect to fund creative ideas, create community dialogue about community development, and create a more permeable relationship between municipal government and the community (e.g. Prince Rupert Port Authority - <https://goo.gl/khHuVz>).
 - 4) Investigate potential to create a Beaver County chapter of Awesome Calgary (Awesome Beaver County) to support 'micro-financing for micro-brilliance'. Note' this very modest funding mechanism should be driven by invaluable local business mentorship - www.awesomecalgary.org.
 - 5) Promote crowdfunding as a source of project/company fundraising, including awareness and information (Canada Business - <https://goo.gl/HfMtKY>).
 - 6) Look at NGO micro-finance programs - e.g. Rotary Action Group for Microfinance & Community Development - <https://goo.gl/MDkrZC>.
- Create business mentorship group (could include micro-investment fund) to mentor/generate new business ideas. Use mentor group as a form of business accelerator (vs incubator) - e.g. CBC article - <https://goo.gl/00k2GO>.
- Consult with City of Airdrie and explore potential to establish a Smart Start Program (<https://goo.gl/3FLzDw>), an eight-month entrepreneur training program to help enhance small business skills through a proven training program and mentorship.
- Create an eNewsletter to communicate timely information related to business issues, opportunities, and celebrations. eNewsletter programs can be purchased to make managing process easier. Recommended twice annually to manage resources.
- Collaborate with Flagstaff County to extend their Junior Achievement Program within the greater Region to nurture youth entrepreneurship. This program supplements the curriculum that students are already learning within the school.
- Implement marketing activities: create Invest tab on Beaver County website, create Target Sector sub-tab on Beaver County website, create two success stories per year and post to Beaver County website (use on social media (eNewsletter), establish entrepreneur email database to target specific communications (eNewsletter) to, create downloadable Investment Profile that communicates vision and targets.

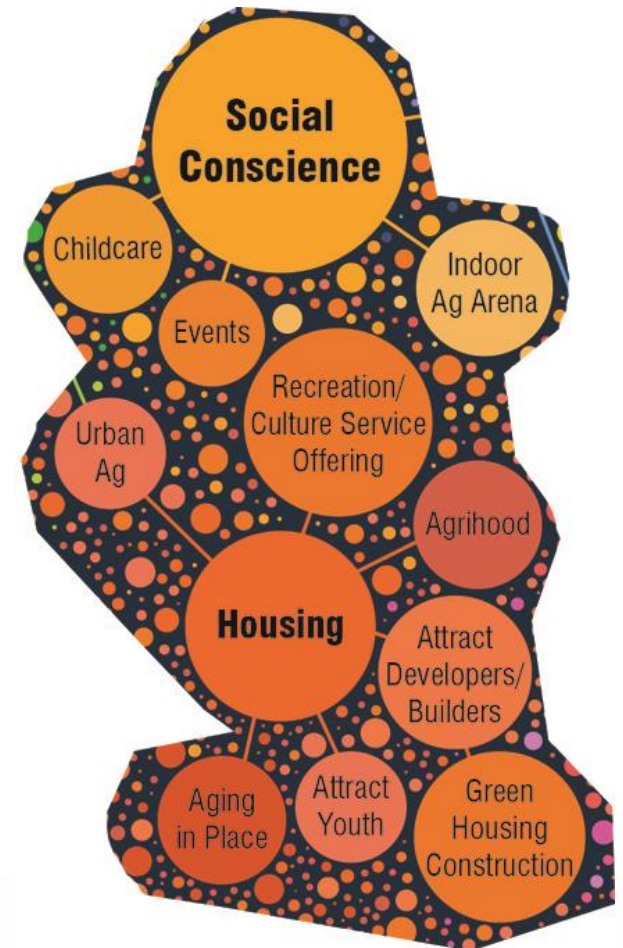
GOAL #2 - STRENGTHEN SOCIAL STRUCTURE WITH HOUSING INNOVATION

OBJECTIVE 1 - BE A CATALYST FOR HOUSING INNOVATION

INITIATIVE 1 – ATTRACT INNOVATIVE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TO THE COUNTY

Opportunity – re-imagined rural housing that elevates connected-to-land living in context of either more ecologically-driven or agriculturally-integrated development offers the best potential to attract families - the core strategic goal of this plan. Housing-related action is the beating heart of this Plan given all other actions benefit from attraction of newcomers to the County. Holistically planned housing development offers the greatest potential positive impact by being able to uniquely integrate economic, social, environmental, and fiscal components of sustainability, and generate labour supply for local enterprise (particularly value-added agriculture processing) while also connecting most deeply with ability to re-integrate land productivity with housing form. It is critical to collaborate with urban municipalities in the County to “sell” the vision and generate focused effort to attract innovative housing development.

There is support for diversity of housing options in the County, most of which do not presently exist. Support is highest for housing forms that are most commonly seen in today’s housing market. However, innovative housing offers greatest potential to make more significant inroads in the County’s strategic focus on attracting families and a more youthful demographic.



Target demographic: young first-home buyers, young families, aging in place (independent or assisted living).

Location: in the County, or adjacent to an urban community in the County. The Tofield area in the west portion of the County is ideal – 50 mins to downtown Edmonton or 40 minutes to refinery row/industrial employment node in Strathcona County.

Key required competitive differentiation: affordability, ecologically advanced, novel in integration of agricultural functionality.

Key brand attributes: reconnection (people, values, land), family living.

Design Ethic: green housing construction (LEED), urban agriculture – land integrated with developments in new ways, renewable energy sources and water conservation measures.

Typology:

- Acreage hobby farms – west portion of County.
 - How to Start Your Own 1-Acre, Self-Sufficient Homestead - - e.g. Earthables - <https://goo.gl/wnNsJL>.
- Live-work building – urban communities in County.
- Innovative housing form – co-housing, green construction.
- Pocket homes, amenity developments.
- Innovative independent or assisted seniors living.
- Innovative neighbourhood design – agri-hood, condo farm, eco-village.

Resource:

- Alberta Agriculture – Attracting and Retaining People to Rural Alberta - <https://goo.gl/pyK1Mq>.

Next steps:

- Review regulation to enable more urbanized subdivision within the County.
- Identify areas where more urbanized developments will be permitted.
- Consult/collaborate with urban communities to identify potential to promote developments adjacent to existing urban communities.
- Sell the vision with marketing, including the Beaver County website, and creation of a developers/builders list and direct target marketing with the County’s vision.

Types of Housing Residents are Willing to Support
(Community Survey, 2016)

- 66% - Assisted living seniors housing
- 63% - Subdivision to permit more than one house on farm properties
- 60% - Independent living seniors housing
- Residential acreages that enable small farm/pasture development
- 43% - Pocket homes
- 41% - Duplex or townhouse
- 39% - Properties adjusted to promote farm stays
- 36% - Residential acreages
- 34% - Condo farms
- 32% - Agri-hood

Affordable Housing Ranks 4th as a Factor Core to Resident Lifestyle in Beaver County
(Community Survey, 2016)

- 58% - Peaceful
- 43% - Family values
- 51% - Proximity to Edmonton
- 50% - Affordable housing
- 47% - Safe/low crime

LIVE-WORK BUILDINGS

Live-work units offer best prospect of downtown redevelopment within urban communities in Beaver County, with affordability, a unique form of construction in the region, and an alternative enterprise lifestyle that appeals to independent entrepreneurs and a range of micro-business opportunities.



Metro Plateau Live/Work Development – Jackson Hole, Wyoming
Src: <https://goo.gl/1Gu9nd>.



Spring Creek Development, Moraine Ridge, Canmore
Src: <https://goo.gl/nJrd6U>.

Flat Creek Live/Work Development – Jackson Hole, Wyoming
Src: <https://goo.gl/BY9n1C>.



RYAN DORGAN / NEWS&GUIDE

A new 20,450-square-foot development will bring 15 live/work units to Jackson on a parcel near Flat Creek along South Highway 89.

INNOVATIVE HOUSING FORM

Co-housing communities are small-scale neighborhoods that provide a balance between personal privacy and living amidst people who know and care about each other. People live in private homes yet enjoy convenient access to shared space including a common house with facilities such as a gourmet kitchen, dining room, laundry facilities, guest rooms, library and sitting areas, and workshops.

e.g. The Green House Project

- A freestanding building-where 10 people live and receive nursing level care (www.thegreenhouseproject.org) has demonstrated that not only is it possible to live in a home and receive skilled nursing services, the model can be financially viable. The model is spreading and several other organizations are now supporting the small house movement, including the National Alliance of Small Houses (www.smallhousealliance.org) and the Association of Households International (www.ahhi.org).

e.g. Wolf Creek Lodge, <https://goo.gl/xe4Hst>, (California)



HOUSING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The housing sector in Canada provides significant potential for the reduction of energy footprint.

e.g. Natural Resources Canada Energy Efficient Housing - <https://goo.gl/JH2kvc>.

Resources:

- Natural Resources Canada Housing - <https://goo.gl/TUdSy5>.
- e.g. Passive House – Fort St. John, BC - <https://goo.gl/jt0kLV>.



e.g. Pasiano Green – first net zero senior housing project in the US

POCKET HOMES

Pocket homes offer very small residential home prices that drastically reduce housing prices, which is attractive to key targets such as millennials.

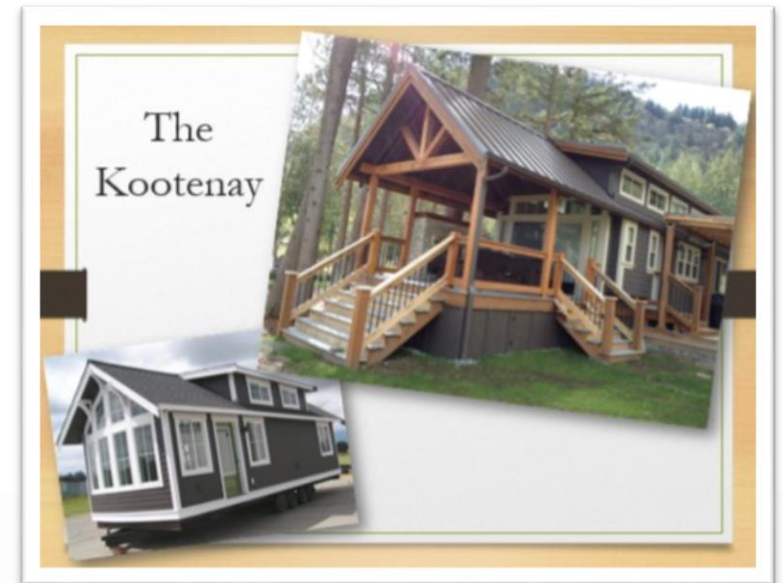
- e.g. Dawson City - <https://goo.gl/yfJHN6>.
- Saskatoon - <https://goo.gl/OOvhqQ>.

Press:

- Tiny House Villages May Be the Next Big Housing Trend, According to Researchers - <https://goo.gl/NLWzZh>.



www.pockethouse.ca



Made a Ranch - <https://goo.gl/LCRW8K>.

AMENITY DEVELOPMENTS

These types of developments have a natural amenity such as a body of water, and can serve as recreational property ownership or affordable independent seniors living developments. A critical success factor is cottage feel/smaller home size/affordability, and on-site activities or amenity. In Granum, a new acreage development that provides ample space for “shops” to tinker in – with very affordable pricing relative to larger cities, has witnessed an influx of early retirees to the community.

e.g. Great Canadian Barn Dance, Hill Spring (<http://qcbd.ca>)



e.g. Granum acreage development

INNOVATIVE INDEPENDENT OR ASSISTED SENIORS LIVING

More innovative independent or assisted seniors living would be attractive to existing County residents who wish to remain in the community, and potentially attract newcomers. Camrose has nurtured success in this space with proximity to Edmonton while offering quieter rural living.

e.g. Ohio. The centers are designed to look like a community of 1930s and '40s homes, complete with porches, rocking chairs, grass-like carpet, and a fiber optic ceiling that transitions from a day to night sky. Src - <https://goo.gl/SFipDs>.



INNOVATIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN

An “**agri-hood**” is a residential development where a working farm is the central feature, in the same way other communities cluster around a golf course, pool or fitness center. Example: Agritopia in Gilbert, Arizona – “16 of Agritopia’s 160 acres are certified organic farmland, with row crops (artichokes to zucchini), fruit trees (citrus, nectarine, peach, apple, olive and date) and livestock (chickens and sheep). Fences gripped by grapevines and blackberry bushes separate the farm from the community’s 452 single-family homes, each with a wide front porch and sidewalks close enough to encourage conversation. The hub of neighbourhood life is a small square overlooking the farm, with a coffeehouse, farm-to-table restaurant and honour-system farm stand. The square is also where residents line up on Wednesday evenings to claim their bulging boxes of just-harvested produce, eggs and honey, which come with a \$100-a-month membership in the community-supported agriculture, or C.S.A., program.” (Source: “Farm-to-Table Living Takes Root,” New York Times <http://nyti.ms/1pgFDKT> - the article lists numerous other examples from across the USA). Other development features that promote connectivity include: shared public spaces, community garden, farmstand (honour system), housing diversity, farmer’s market, u-pick, and annual farm to table dinner.

e.g. Agritopia – Gilbert, Arizona

*Canadian example - Creekside Mills – Chilliwack
Vancouver Sun - <https://goo.gl/upQ8yq>*



A “**condo farm**” is an idea that was brainstormed during Plan consultation in Beaver County. The idea proposes that a new form of more dense housing is offered, connected to small land parcels to grow specialty products – either as a cooperative, or freehold ownership with common areas.

An “**eco-village**” is regenerative in terms of resource use given they use resources in a closed loop.

e.g. Wind Walk, Okotoks - a “dark green” vision that promises to demonstrate a significant shift in the paradigm of sustainability, conservation, efficiency, and future-proofing – including use of smart grid principles as a central system to conserve and manage community energy needs, and a net zero energy consumption goal - <https://goo.gl/vkXY54>.

e.g. ReGen Villages - a start-up real estate development company aiming to build small, self-sustaining residential communities around the world. The first one is expected to be completed in Almere, Netherlands in 2018.



Src: Business Insider - <https://goo.gl/6nfdN5>.

INITIATIVE 2 – COLLABORATE WITH URBAN COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTY TO DEVELOP URBAN AGRICULTURE STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT THE COUNTY’S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Opportunity – create an urban agriculture strategy and actions in collaboration with urban communities in the County.

Urban agriculture contributes to creating livable communities by helping to grow food, relationships, and economy (Src: Strathcona County). The County should take a leadership role in helping its urban communities establish stronger connection to the agricultural community in the form of development of an urban agriculture strategy and action plan.

While communities in some sense always compete against each other, the County should explore opportunities to collaborate with Strathcona County, which is in a more advanced planning stage working toward development of an Agriculture Master Plan (AMP). The AMP will ultimately expand to include land use and development, governance, food and agriculture sector development, and agri-tourism. An urban agriculture strategy represents Phase 1. Urban agriculture focus areas are: community gardens, public agriculture and edible landscaping, urban farms, school agriculture program, urban livestock, home gardens, and education and coordination.

Strathcona County Resources:

- <https://goo.gl/Qxyy7e>.
- Urban Agriculture Strategy - <https://goo.gl/W0ehzU>.

Next steps:

- Initiate discussion with Strathcona County about their urban agriculture strategy and determine if there are areas of mutual interest.
- Initiate discussion with urban communities in Beaver County to determine interest in urban agriculture.
- Consider creation of a Beaver County urban agriculture strategy developed in collaboration with urban communities in the County.

OBJECTIVE 2 – ENHANCE COMMUNITY AMENITIES/SERVICES

INITIATIVE 1 – DETERMINE FUTURE RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICE OFFERING

Opportunity – a services survey will guide discussion about future offering. A redeveloped Beaver Regional Arts Centre will serve as a cultural focal point for the County.

Whether it's a water treatment plant or sewer lagoons, a road, a hockey rink, or other recreation facilities, a municipality provides an array of services and public amenities. Though the County is rural and primary emphasis is on issues like roads, County residents access services in nearby urban communities and the County has an active role to play in determining and contributing to recreation and culture amenity in its financial contributions to urban communities.

Amenities contribute to quality of life, but every new service can also increase taxes. Fewer services can also lower the quality of life in a community, and that can cause population decline, which can mean household taxes could also go up simply to maintain existing services and amenities. What may be offered today with respect to services/public amenities may not be what residents feel is needed in future. Service levels may be considered too high or too low for a particular service. There's also the future to consider – where services and amenities are part of the considerations and deliberations that future business investors and families make when they decide whether to move a region. The challenge is – how does one compete against larger centres that offer more to a population that constantly expects more? How does one ensure a quality of life that attracts new people without breaking the bank? What choices can one make that ensures tax dollars provide best value for money? These are questions to consider in positioning communities and regions for a better and brighter future, amidst a world of accelerating change.

Note: this activity should be conducted in relation to the municipal infrastructure assessment project (Goal 4, Initiative 4). This activity is formative for a review of the County Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

Next steps:

- Conduct region services survey to better understand desired services and amenities. This survey can determine: services satisfaction levels, identification of amenity (recreation, culture, municipal facilities) gaps, tax strategies to support services provision, and distinction between local vs regional services provision.
- Use region services survey (in conjunction with municipal infrastructure assessment project (Goal 4, Initiative 4) outcomes), to update the County's Recreation and Culture Master Plan. Consider migration to a Regional Recreation and Culture Master Plan that co-plans region-recreation needs and corresponding facility planning between the County and urban municipalities in the County boundary.
- Research best practices for regional arts centre (e.g. Bailey Theatre in Camrose, Rosebud Theatre) and pursue a business model that supports redevelopment of the Beaver Regional Arts Centre as a cultural focal point for the region, and a tourism draw.

Healthcare, Internet and More Local Services/Amenities in Nearby Communities Identified as Top 5 Service Needs
(Community Survey, 2016)

What Residents Say Would Make the Beaver County Region a Better Place to Live?
(Community Survey, 2016)

- 65% - More local employment
- 42% - Lower taxes
- 40% - Healthcare services
- 33% - Faster Internet
- 32% - More services/amenities in nearby communities

INITIATIVE 2 – CONSOLIDATE EXISTING AG ARENA FACILITIES INTO AN ENHANCED CENTRAL INDOOR FACILITY

Opportunity – build a central, dedicated indoor Ag arena.

There are currently facilities in the County that serve agricultural uses. An example is Viking, where dirt is brought in for bull-riding and 4_H events. Consultation determined that there is potential to consolidate into a central, enhanced agricultural indoor arena that can support more ambitious agricultural events, including but not limited to reining, cutting, rodeo, barrel racing, 4-H, cattle shows, and jackpots. Reference examples include the Ponoka CalNash event centre, Teepee Creek Event centre, and Lloydminster Ag Events centre.

Next steps:

- Review ag arena situation within a services survey.

INITIATIVE 3 – ENHANCE CHILDCARE PROGRAM

Opportunity – nurture opening of an early and after-school childcare program.

Consultation determined that there is a need for a before and after school program. Programming of this nature supports greater workforce participation rates. This need will become more acute given this Plan’s intent to target attraction of families.

Next steps:

- Conduct a feasibility assessment of a childcare program, including potential facility, consideration of incentive(s), and investigation of funding resources.

INITIATIVE 4 – ENHANCE COMMUNITY EVENTS

Opportunity – create an events strategy that focuses on a small set of well-resourced local events that build social connectivity.

Consultation determined that locally-focused events are a good way to nurture social connectivity.

Next steps:

- Ask about types of desired events in a services survey.
- Focus on 2-3 quality annual events.

GOAL #3 – SOFTEN ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT VIA INITIATIVES THAT DEEPEN HUMAN CONNECTION TO LAND

INITIATIVE 1 – GROW AGRITOURISM

Opportunity – the County nurtures the local agricultural community to add a tourism income stream to existing operations.

Agritourism in Beaver County converges two ideas: 1) Farm stay accommodation; and 2) Farm to table and hand-crafted products. Converged, these two ideas embrace reconnection to land, and direct human connection with local food production from the land. These experiences can be located on the same farm, or form an integrated network of agri-tourism experience. Land stewardship practices and education can be woven into the experience.

The concept behind farm stay involves spending the night as a guest on a working farm. Depth of involvement can vary from there – from a B&B converted from a farmhouse, to a several day stay that includes volunteer work involving any or all of gardening, harvesting, caring/feeding animals, cleaning and maintenance, and household accommodation duties.

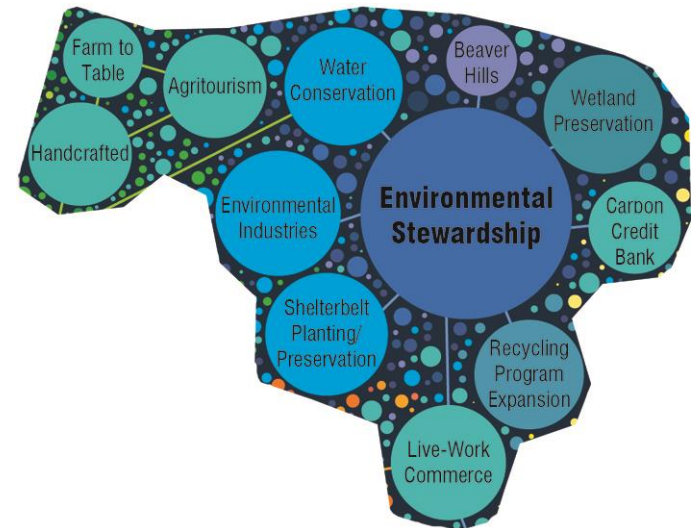
More broadly, agritourism offers experiential re-connection to land. This driver can be supported and enhanced by two activities Beaver County has strength in: 1) Trails - promotion of trail connectivity in the west end of the County – particularly hiking/cycling trails in the Beaver Hills connecting Elk Island National Park, Blackfoot, Ministik and Miquelon - with overnight accommodation in private homes/farm stays promoting multi-day non-motorized recreation; 2) County campground at Black Nugget Lake that has become a destination fishery and family recreation campground, and the Coal Creek golf resort (including RV park). The County should consider recreation-related tourism development proposals in this genre, and explore potential to add to its trail network.

Next steps:

- Promote the farm stay economic opportunity, and develop and promote a farm stay accommodation directory, to complement hand-made products development and branding.
- Develop a trails strategy. E.g. - Strathcona County Trails Strategy - <https://goo.gl/EWOLHy>.

Resources:

- Agri-tourism - <https://goo.gl/M453cT>.
- Alberta Farm Stay Directory - <https://goo.gl/yi3x8l>.
- Travel Alberta Farm Stays - <https://goo.gl/4erylC>.



INITIATIVE 2 – APPLY ENVIRONMENTAL INDUSTRY TECHNOLOGIES TO COUNTY AND REGION ACTIVITIES

Opportunity – establish environmental programs: 1) Garbage/roadside/community clean-up and treeplanting; 2) Energy retrofit rebate program; 3) Water conservation rebate program.

Environmental products and services as an economic sector is discussed in Goal 1, Objective 2, Initiative 3. At a local level given strategic emphasis on renewable energy development, the County can support integration of eco-efficient technology in its operations, and support residents in their effort to incorporate energy efficiency and water conservation measures into their homes. The County can also promote conservation as a general idea in key mediums like the County website, including promotion of private sector and/or provincial/federal program opportunities for residents.

Next steps:

- Tap the expertise and program framework of the Town of Okotoks to develop made-in-Beaver County energy retrofit and water conservation programs - <https://goo.gl/dHGyY2>.
- Help urban communities in Beaver County boundaries establish per capita water consumption targets.
- Help urban communities in Beaver County boundaries establish a carrot and stick regulatory framework for water conservation. Seek advice and collaborate with the Town of Okotoks (best practice). Okotoks regulatory examples - e.g. an enhanced water conservation bylaw (low flow water fixture requirements/retrofits), density bonus in return for enhanced conservation in new subdivisions, greater topsoil depth requirement (reduces summer watering); move toward 100% consumption based water rate structure; water conservation education initiative; xeriscaping in public spaces; Drake Landing - one of the first large-scale subdivisions to adopt mandatory water conservation measures through a legally-binding Restrictive Covenant (agreement permits the developer to increase density from 700 to 836 units); and infrastructure leak detection program that has reduced system leakage to <5%.
- Identify a CO² emissions reduction target for County operations (communicated to residents as efficiency initiatives).
- Install holistic energy efficiency and water conservation measures in all County buildings.
- Promote third party programs that encourage solar installations.
- General County promotion of build green construction, including communication of third party educational resources (e.g. Inhabitat - <https://goo.gl/DfyPu5>).

Resources:

- Solar Alberta (residential) - <https://solaralberta.ca/>.
- Alberta to offer solar rebates to farms, municipalities (Calgary Herald) - <https://goo.gl/tmQ6Tj>.
- Economics of Solar Power (residential) - <https://goo.gl/m86s1l>.
- Community Solar Gardens (Bloomberg) - <https://goo.gl/Ndv99X>.

INITIATIVE 3 – ENHANCE SHELTERBELT PLANTING AND PRESERVATION AND WETLAND PRESERVATION

Opportunity

- expand FireSmart and drought tolerant shelterbelts via County promotion and communication.
- expand wetland acreage via County facilitation of landowner connection with third party conservation organizations.

Shelterbelts can lower residential heating bills, trap snow for moisture, foster biodiversity, and provide wildlife habitat by nurturing connectivity across landscape. The Alberta Shelterbelt Program had been operated in conjunction with the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration program since 1997. The Canadian Federal Prairie Shelterbelt program (also known as the PFRA) ended in 2013. Those looking for trees may now contact private retailers for seedlings including: Prairie Shelterbelt Program - www.prairieshelterbeltprogram.ca, and TreeTime – www.treetime.ca. To support farmers in times of drought, willow and poplar are both excellent drought livestock feeds, and would form a good basis of nurturing completion of naturalization legacy projects. Willow and poplar are also excellent at blocking wildfires, with the exception of poplar in bud for two weeks each spring (do not plant near structures).

In settled areas of Canada, up to 70% of Wetlands have been destroyed or degraded. As they continue to disappear, so too do the many benefits they provide. Src: Ducks - <https://goo.gl/NDLdkw>. Activities impacting wetlands are regulated under the Alberta Water Act - <https://goo.gl/WVRfnZ>. Wetland stewardship can include elements of wetland protection, on the ground action, and/or wetland education. Src: Wetlands Alberta - <https://goo.gl/EBGrBR>. While most wetlands considerations involve conservation and/or protection, given Beaver County’s strategic vision and its parkland geographic landscape that is a natural wetland habitat, the County should strategically position itself to work with landowners to expand wetland acreage.

Ducks Unlimited work with landowners has resulted in 9,700 completed habitat projects, 6.4 million acres of secured habitat and 127 million acres of positively influenced habitat. The Ducks Unlimited website has a section on landowner resources – Src: Ducks - <https://goo.gl/t6XyC0>, including conservation agreements, revolving land conservation program, restoration, and producer programs.

Land trusts offer an alternative means of landscape preservation. The Nature Conservancy of Canada offers a natural areas conservation program, and has a resource page for land trust resources - <https://goo.gl/EeSmMX>.

In 2012, Alberta Innovates Technology Futures worked with Strathcona County to test a strategy, known as a Transfer of Development Credits (TDC), for conserving valuable features in the moraine. A TDC works via identification of owners of land targeted for conservation who are invited to participate. Land is then assessed and given a value in credits, which are made available for purchase. Land developers who purchase the credits can then take them to a municipality to trade for zoning allowances. Src: <https://goo.gl/afgWdd>.

A beneficiary of shelterbelt planting and wetland conservation is land-based recreational tourism potential.

Next steps:

- Conduct communication program to determine interest in alignment with Ducks Unlimited or Nature Conservancy Canada wetlands-related options.
- Conduct education program around wetlands conservation and shelterbelt planting.
- Create a wetlands acreage target that is greater than current wetlands acreage.
- Create a shelterbelt planting target that is greater than the current shelterbelt situation.
- Review land conservation techniques and adopt a County policy to this effect.
- Review bylaws/penalties to ensure stringent control over illegal disposal of waste, draining of wetlands and/or alteration of drainage courses around wetlands, and non-designated trail recreational vehicle use.

Resources:

- Shelterbelts in Alberta - <https://goo.gl/OSZBWz>.
- Shelterbelt varieties in Alberta - <https://goo.gl/angBxl>.
- Wetlands stewardship resources in Alberta - <https://goo.gl/qGWTsS>.
- Willow and poplar planting - <https://goo.gl/Mg9Hti>.
- FireSmart Canada - <https://goo.gl/40QrXg>.

INITIATIVE 4 – ADVANCE BEAVER HILLS CONSERVATION

Opportunity – develop a trail strategy to deepen connectivity to Beaver Hills.

Consultation in the County reveals the Beaver Hills – a UNESCO Biosphere site - as a primary feature of pride. Opportunities have been identified in land-based outdoor recreation that “treads lightly,” including wildlife and walking corridors. Beaver Hill Lake had vast recreational activities in the past but has been ignored for 50+ years. The lake bed is used by a wide variety of wildlife and access for non-motorized recreation could be enhanced.

Next steps:

- Beaver County should continue to participate in the Beaver Hills initiative and serve as a strong advocate for legacy preservation – and soft-adventure enjoyment – of this unique natural environment.
- In a trail strategy, use the Beaver Hills as a focal point from which to consider expanded trail, shelterbelt/wildlife corridor, and wetlands linkages.
- Through the Beaver Hills Initiative, examine the creeks flowing into Beaver Hill Lake and restore them to hold water throughout the year by encouraging a wide buffer along the full length, including no livestock in the creeks nor beavers retaining water.

Resources:

- <http://www.beaverhills.ca/>.

INITIATIVE 5 – EXPAND RECYCLING PROGRAM

Opportunity – greater recycling capture from the waste stream offers a stronger environmental narrative while generating a modest cost-offset revenue stream.

Consultation indicates there is lack of public information about what the County's landfill accepts, and where and when. Depending on resident location in the County, some are taking materials like glass and plastics to Edmonton. More broadly, promotion of desired recycling behaviour could be enhanced.

Next steps:

- Create a waste recapture (as % of total waste generation) recycling target.
- Track and report recycling program tonnage expansion to the community.
- Expand types of materials collected.
- As part of Services Survey, conduct a market analysis to determine where in the County people are having difficulty/inconvenience from current landfill and transfer station locations/hours of operation.
- Enhance communication of what can be recycled, and where and when.

GOAL #4 – IMPLEMENT A LONG-TERM FISCAL FRAMEWORK THAT GUIDES SHORTER TERM DECISION MAKING

INITIATIVE 1 – APPLY INCENTIVES TO ACHIEVE THE COUNTY’S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Opportunity - the County should consider modest energy efficiency, land conservation, industrial development, and family relocation initiatives.

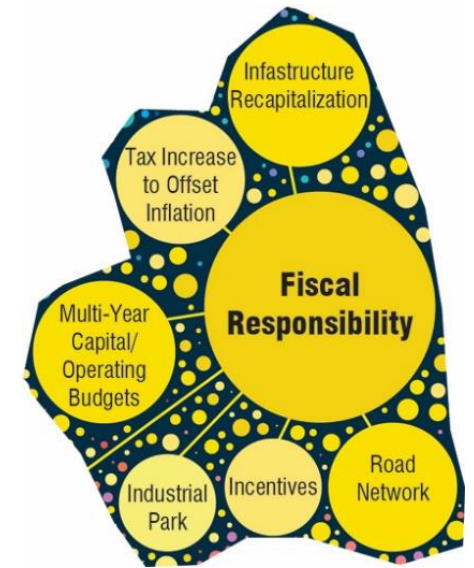
Opportunities identified in this Plan include:

- Energy efficiency and water conservation retrofits.
- Economic credits for land conservation (Alberta Tech Futures) - <https://goo.gl/SqdKai>.
- Industrial land pricing.
- Incentives to locate families with children in the County (note: jobs and housing affordability are critical successes factors but consultation has posed the question whether anything else can be done).

This initial scoping should not restrict County consideration of other policy or other modest financial incentive (with positive cost-benefit analysis) to support its strategic direction.

Next steps:

- Develop energy efficiency and water conservation tactical strategy and work to achieve buy-in from urban communities in the County.
- Create Water Strategy (incl. analysis of long-term supply).
- Create Business Incentive Strategy.
- Research any practices in Canada related to incentives for family relocation.



INITIATIVE 2 – ACCELERATE INDUSTRIAL PARK LAND SALES

Opportunity – expand water capacity for industrial parks.

Consultation has identified opportunity for the Equity Industrial Park in an Edmonton metropolitan context as:

- Fabrication – with Highway 14 access to Fort McMurray that is easier to transport over-size fabricated outputs vs other locations in the Edmonton region.
- Manufacturing (particularly agricultural processing) – with access to mainline rail.
- Environmental Industries (in line with County strategic direction).

Two conditions need to be considered in order to accelerate industrial park development:

- 1) Water supply is a major restriction given pipeline water is allocated from Strathcona County licensing (a competitor for the purpose the water is to be used for), and pipe capacity is under-sized. This restriction is emphasized by value-added agricultural processing that is a heavy water user.
- 2) There is significant Edmonton metro competition for industrial land supply, particularly Parkland County and Strathcona County industrial nodes that offer all the features of Beaver County – with closer access offset by higher land prices.

Next steps:

- Continue to consult with Strathcona County to negotiate pipe capacity upgrading and licensing allocation. Consider an alternative water source, including any potential for groundwater aquifer supply, should negotiations with Strathcona County fail. Consider pipe upgrading as a potential negotiating term with any interest shown from a major industrial enterprise.
- Review comparative business start-up/development and operating costs to establish quantitative cost value proposition.
- Establish target sector language on Beaver County website so the investment community knows what beaver County is looking for.
- Evaluate potential for water recycling system incorporation into the industrial park.
- Mandate strong water conservation measures for industrial park users.
- Promote the Viking/Beaver Business Park for smaller scale (than Equity Industrial Park) regional industrial services enterprise location.

Resources:

- The Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor (Beaver County is a member) has a series of investment opportunity profiles, with profiles on Metal Fabrication of direct relevance to industrial park development in Beaver County - <https://goo.gl/G11QHp>.

INITIATIVE 3 – MAINTAIN MULTI-YEAR CAPITAL/OPERATING BUDGETS

Opportunity - the County has a long range financial plan updated by MNP in late 2016. This document will guide multi-year capital and operating budget decision making. Multi-year decision making will be further supported by a recommended municipal infrastructure assessment project detailed in **Initiative 4**.

Residents Support for Tax Strategies

(Community Survey, 2016)

- 34% - Maintain current level of services/facilities, which may require a tax increase in future.
- 35% - Enhancement of level of services/facilities, which may require a tax increase above inflation.
- 16% - Unsure.
- 15% - Reduction of services/facilities to maintain or reduce current tax levels.

Consultation has added one element of consideration for the County: the nature of resident support for tax policy in relation to a service offering - in context of positioning for future success where attraction of key targets like families and Independents requires consideration of provision of desired services and amenities. A majority of Community Survey (2016) respondents support tax increases to maintain or enhance services/facilities.

Next steps:

- Consider resident sentiment regarding tax policy when making multi-year capital and operating budget decisions.

INITIATIVE 4 – PLAN FOR LONG-TERM REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE RECAPITALIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Opportunity – a municipal infrastructure assessment project sows the seeds of long term positioning of efficient, desired services and amenities that enhance quality of life for current residents while serving as a draw for investors and new families.

A strong number of rural communities find themselves in a pickle today. Static or declining populations have challenged municipal budgets and infrastructure has been aging. A more robust way of calculating infrastructure deficits and recapitalization beyond the simplicity of a tangible capital asset entry on a financial summary will reveal that the majority of existing total rural municipal budgets may be required to recapitalize infrastructure...to repair what is there. Never mind getting to talking about positioning services and amenity for the future – to create a desirable community for investment, and for new families. The choices can be stark: end the service, compromise the service, or don't provide services and amenity people want – leaving a community on a downward cycle.

A Municipal Infrastructure Assessment Project completed in conjunction with the urban communities in the County would assist with determining the current state of repair of infrastructure, discussion about a future services offering related to service choices and service levels, addressing of recreation and culture amenity gaps, and associated taxation levels. This project may very well be the foundation of future intermunicipal discussion related to the MGA's new requirement for intermunicipal collaboration frameworks between neighbouring municipalities. Long term, this process opens the door to longer term, deeper collaboration between Beaver region municipalities – which may include next generation region-based services and/or governance solutions.

A related discussion is roads – which typically leads as a proportion of county/municipal district budgets. The 2016 Beaver County budget was \$22,104,025. Of that, the Public Works budget was \$14,593,868 - or 66%. The County maintains 2575 km of roads, of which 105 km is hard surfaced (pavement, oil or chip seal) and the remainder is gravel. In 2011, average farm size in Alberta was 1168 acres; in 1931 average farm size in Canada was 224 acres (Src: Statistics Canada - <https://goo.gl/E3Pk5E>). Farm sizes have been steadily growing while farm population has been steadily decreasing. This trend begs the question – positioning rural Alberta for the future is the extensive nature of road grids, which are a settlement era legacy from a time when farms were much smaller, required? A scenario in which 50% of roads could be removed from the grid suggests a very significant operating and capital budget saving that could be used to enhance rural-based services and amenities.

Infrastructure assessment activity will be formative for preparation of multi-year capital and operating budgets.

Next steps:

- Undertake a Municipal Infrastructure Assessment Project in collaboration between Beaver County, Towns of Viking and Tofield, and Villages of Ryley and Holden.
- Meet with Flagstaff County Council in 2017 as focus of annual meeting with one of the County's rural neighbours to discuss the Flagstaff region's infrastructure assessment project.
- Maintain multi-year capital and operating budgets that Beaver County is currently generating.

GOAL #5 – BEAVER COUNTY WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS A RURAL GOVERNANCE LEADER IN ALBERTA

INITIATIVE 1 – DEEPEN REGION-COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Opportunity – infrastructure assessment, housing, Internet, and conservation initiatives lead the way.

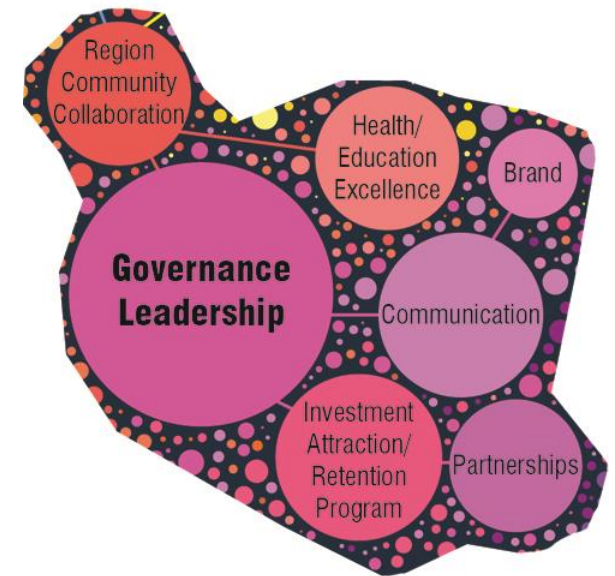
Geese fly 70% further per unit of energy in formation than they do individually. In an environment where cost pressures are ever-present and change is both changing and accelerating – from technology to legislation, communities and other non-municipal organizations will be required to collaborate together on issues of shared interest. This Plan identifies a number of productive region community collaborations and organizational partnerships:

- Municipal Infrastructure Assessment Project – Beaver County, Tofield, Ryley, Viking, Holden.
 - Potential for service provision collaboration with Flagstaff region communities.
 - Potential for Beaver enhanced regional services provision (e.g. water, emergency services).
- Enabling housing regulation for housing innovation, conservation, renewable energy adoption - Tofield, Ryley, Viking, Holden.
- Internet – incumbent telcos/Axia models to consider.
- Conservation – Town of Okotoks as a best practice.
- Urban agriculture, development credit incentive system, water for economic development – Strathcona County.
- Wetland Preservation/Land Conservation - Ducks Unlimited, Nature Conservancy.

This list should not preclude formation of collaborations and partnerships as a matter of normal operating practice, and more broadly as a matter of pursuit of excellence, leadership, and innovation.

Next steps:

- Develop energy efficiency and water conservation tactical strategy and work to achieve buy-in from urban communities in the County.
- Create Water Strategy (incl. analysis of long-term supply).
- Create Business Incentive Strategy.
- Research any practices in Canada related to incentives for family relocation.



INITIATIVE 2 – ACHIEVE HEALTH/EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

Opportunity – collaborate with health and education providers to plan for the future.

Health and education are pillars of quality of life. The County’s pursuit of attraction of families and population growth will support health and education organizations with facilities planning and programming, and reduce the threat of closure that often surfaces in rural communities with static or declining population. An identified opportunity is that medical facilities with surplus space consider office space co-location of medical professionals and or “Independents.”

Next steps:

- Hold annual meetings with each of school boards and health authorities to identify issues and opportunities.
- Consider and plan for any prospect of centralization of facilities.
- Work with Augustana University in Camrose / local school board(s) to identify potential to support entrepreneur skill development.

INITIATIVE 3 – ENHANCE COUNTY COMMUNICATION

Opportunity – expanded County communication of vision and strategic actions achieves resident buy-in and nurtures investment and new resident attraction.

An ambitious strategic plan requires support and involvement of residents and other communities and organizations required to help further that agenda. A typical gap in municipal government communication is a tendency to communicate in dry, operational terms vs engaging the imagination and energy of people required to row in the direction of the strategic agenda.

Key baseline activities in context of constrained resources are:

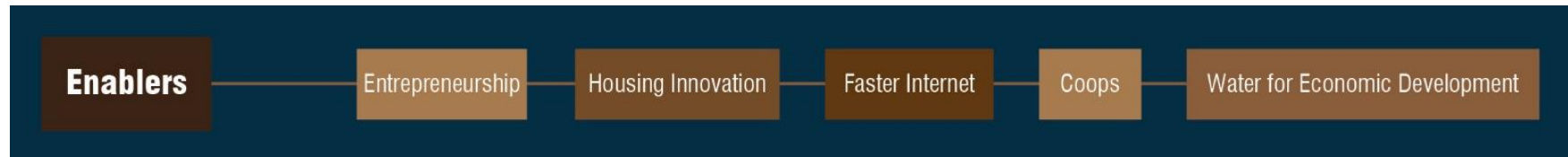
- Communication of vision – website, regular communication in newsletter, etc.
- Reporting of “state of the union” – a report card that highlights achievements and progress working toward performance metrics.
- Newsletter – quarterly. Focus on strategic initiatives reporting and securing of involvement.
- Investment attraction electronic marketing package – highlighting target industry sectors, key facts and figures, and focused value proposition.
- Website – more interactivity (news and success stories) to promote return visits, and enhancement around vision, targeting, and strategic pillars (e.g. Invest, Entrepreneurship, Environment, Social Connection, Housing).
- Social media – Facebook presence (with personality for traction) with modest updating focused on strategic news, events, and success stories.
- Investor contact list – find a way to capture contacts via social media, website, or newsletter sign-up, and maintain connection with list over time to facilitate typically long-tail investment interests.

These activities achieve the basics of an investment attraction and retention program focused on the core strategic objective of this Plan to grow population and attract families, while conveying strategy in a way that nurtures resident pride, and involvement of residents in strategic pursuits. Approachability and accountability are other key features of nurturing strength of trust in government – that in turn enables more creative and innovative pursuits. Municipalities should always be mindful of communicating more simply and more visually, using less bureaucratic language that puts barriers between residents and government.

Next steps:

- The County should work with urban municipalities in the County boundary to establish a regional brand that serves as an expression of strategic direction. This action will focus communication to target audiences in a noisy marketplace.

ENABLERS - BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS



Enablers have been deemed to be important catalysts from which a number of other positive initiatives rely on as a foundation.

INITIATIVE 1 – BUILD NEXT GENERATION BROADBAND

Opportunity – 100% coverage with 50-100 Mbps service enables enterprise and social connection.

It’s not enough to be connected. Higher speed is the great enabler...opening the world to enterprise that serves the world from a home or enterprise in Beaver County. Next generation high speed access is of particular interest to a key target market for Beaver County: “Independents,” including entrepreneurs/creative and knowledge workforce, and tele-commuters.

Internet 4th ranked Need in Terms of Making Beaver County a Better Place to Live
(Community Survey, 2016)

- 65% - More local employment
- 42% - Lower taxes
- 40% - Healthcare services
- 33% - Faster Internet
- 32% - More services/amenities in nearby communities

In late 2016, the CRTC declared broadband internet access to be a basic service - CBC - <https://goo.gl/3VAGvK>. The ruling compels telecommunications providers to help fund \$750-million in broadband infrastructure in rural and remote areas over the next five years, sets ambitious speed targets and requires them to offer an unlimited data plan. The CRTC will mandate Internet speeds of 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload – 10 times faster than existing speed targets.

An example of alternative/innovative network access is a community-owned fibre (more expensive, fastest) community Wi-Fi (most affordable, slowest of the options) network, or fibre-led Wi-Fi infrastructure (middle price, middle speed) options as a matter of pursuing faster Internet connectivity (e.g. an active initiative of the Calgary Regional Partnership - <https://goo.gl/wtuZja>.. Olds (www.o-net.ca) is the best known Alberta community with a community-owned fibre network. A number of communities in Alberta are currently exploring this option.

Axia is currently active in rural Alberta with fibre-to-the-home initiatives.

Next steps:

- Assess current County connectivity and upload/download speeds (note: consumers in the County can test this using online tools).
- Set a target of 100% connectivity and CRTC mandated speeds to 100% of households within five years.
- Strongly and persistently advocate for incumbent telco upgrading of County network to CRTC mandated speeds to ensure Beaver County gets “ahead of the pack.”
- Should incumbent connectivity, speed, and particularly pricing be unsatisfactory, consider potential for Axia connectivity or community-owned next generation wireless ICT broadband infrastructure. (e.g. Parkland County – which has established an Intelligent Communities Initiative (<https://goo.gl/DKtME3>) with a strategic goal of providing reliable, reasonably priced, high speed Internet to 95% or more of its residents.

INITIATIVE 2 - ESTABLISH CO-OPS TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Opportunity - co-ops related to agricultural processing, agricultural marketing focused on niche products, and renewable energy, enable people to pool resources, share-risk, and to own and make decisions around important resources in their community.

Co-ops are typically created to meet a common need, and to benefit members who share that need. Co-ops also provide a decision making structure that make it easy to organize groups, to share resources, and to promote equality and equity. Src: <http://acca.coop/>. There is identified interest in co-op structures in Beaver County related to agricultural processing, agricultural marketing focused on niche products, and renewable energy. One of the key reasons that groups might choose to organize as a New Generation Co-op is that it may be easier to gain the confidence of local community investors. Co-op legislation, by reputation and by design, restricts the degree of control held by any one individual or group of individuals. The co-op principle of democratic control by the membership may be attractive where a venture depends upon raising funds from the community.

Next steps:

- Agriculture Producers Committee to explore potential for co-op structure(s) around opportunity identification.

Resources:

- Alberta Community and Co-operative Association - provides co-op development resources, youth and adult education, rural development, administrative services, conference coordination and financial management - <http://acca.coop/>.
- Next generation cooperatives – Alberta Agriculture and Forestry - <https://goo.gl/dXeHGQ>. Start Up Guide - <https://goo.gl/y4GC7S>.
- Service Alberta – Co-operatives - <https://goo.gl/ZWjIT9>
- Top 300 global co-operatives - <https://goo.gl/jRb8Hb>.
- Nebraska (examples of cheese business, retail store, and online farmer’s market - <https://goo.gl/JQWGZa>).

First priorities (2017/2018) – “THE CATALYSTS” – ACTION PLANNING

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	TIMELINE / TARGETS		BUDGET	IMPLICATIONS	LEAD / PARTNER	OBSTACLES
				ST	MT				
<p>Implement Enablers that are important catalysts from which a number of other positive initiatives rely on as a foundation.</p>	<p>To have 100 Mbps service across the County.</p> <p>To make it compelling – “City speed in a rural setting.”</p>	<p>Initiative 1 - Build Next Generation Broadband</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess current County connectivity and upload/download speeds ((note: consumers in the County can test this using online tools), and to determine service gaps and bottlenecks. Set a target of 100% connectivity and CRTC-mandated speeds to 100% of households within five years. Determine method of delivery (e.g. satellite, hard wire) in context of bottlenecks, gaps, and CRTC-mandated speeds. Strongly and persistently advocate for incumbent telco upgrading of County network to CRTC mandated speeds to ensure Beaver County gets “ahead of the pack.” Should incumbent connectivity, speed, and particularly pricing be unsatisfactory, consider Axia, or potential for community-owned next generation wireless ICT broadband infrastructure. (e.g. Parkland County – which has established an Intelligent Communities Initiative with a strategic goal of providing reliable, reasonably priced, high speed Internet to 95% or more of its residents. 	<p>End of 2018 – establish the Plan.</p>	<p>End of 2019 – network installation.</p> <p>Metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 Mbps service at 100% coverage. Anecdotal business attraction/ retention success stories. 10% increase in residential housing starts. 	<p>TBD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine if any non-compete clause with MCS Net. Have Internet come through existing infrastructure (electricity lines). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County as lead. Direct work with industry (MCS Net). Involvement of educational institutes, businesses, and healthcare facilities in planning. 	<p>Infrastructure cost and financing.</p>

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	TIMELINE / TARGETS		BUDGET	IMPLICATIONS	LEAD / PARTNER	OBSTACLES
				ST	MT				
<p>Goal 1 – Diversify the economy via agriculture, renewable energy, and attraction of “Independents.”</p>	<p>Objective 1 – Diversify Agriculture</p> <p>-Farm To Table-Product Development</p> <p>Note: Goal 3 (Soften environmental footprint via initiatives that deepen human connection to land) Initiative 1 (Grow tourism) refers to an opportunity to grow agritourism around the convergence of farm to table products and farm stay accommodation.</p> <p>To make it compelling – a well-branded product.</p>	<p>Initiative 5 – Attract Processing Investment (Niche Crops, Greenhouses, Fabrics, Aquaculture, Distillery)</p> <p>•Farm to table processing (jams, cheeses, berry syrup, meats, fruits, vegetables, etc.)/retail linked to tourism/local supply to restaurants. Organic (higher margin) packaged product potential.</p> <p>Related initiatives:</p> <p>Co-op approach to product development and marketing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Review Government of Alberta agriculture resource material. •Conduct agriculture opportunities survey including production/products inventory. •Facilitate agriculture producers workshop to identify three to five farm to table product specialities (niche product development opportunities) based on local climate/land capability plus market trends. •Establish Agriculture Producers Committee to pursue 1-2 key product priorities identified in survey/workshop. •Consider agriculture development organizational framework and marketing, including but not limited to a coop structure for niche product production, distribution and marketing, and development of a region-based brand stamp to improve brand awareness. •Develop agriculture producers email contact list. •Review County regulation, and work with urban municipalities in the County to review their regulation, to make it easier for craft brewers to establish production facilities. •Participate in the annual Alberta Farm Days (August 19 and 20, 2017) to develop and promote niche products - http://albertafarmdays.com/. •Work with province or regional economic development agency to develop a vertical farming market study and place opportunity in front of agriculture producers working committee to determine local investor interest. If there is limited local interest, develop a contact list of corporate vertical farmers in the space and promote Beaver County as an investment opportunity. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •50% of farmers have a production contract by 2010. •Headway within 18 months. Geographic target: •Edmonton consumer. •Small restaurants. Metrics: •Sector growth (jobs/profit) •Co-op created. 	<p>1% of BMS - \$100K</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Water / weather. •Power. 	<p>Interested farmers in co-op approach, with initial agricultural producers meeting(s) facilitated by the County.</p>	<p>Investment.</p> <p>Motivated people, educated about opportunities.</p> <p>Development of skillset to market products</p>

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	TIMELINE / TARGETS		BUDGET	IMPLICATIONS	LEAD / PARTNER	OBSTACLES
				ST	MT				
<p>Goal 1 – Diversify the economy</p>	<p>Objective 3 – Attract and Retain “Independents”</p> <p>Beaver County is a catalyst community for entrepreneurs. Efforts are well-branded and actioned as “no limits” enablement, and it recognizes the entrepreneurial lifecycle.</p>	<p>Initiative 2 - Fully Support Entrepreneurial Talent Development to Attract and Retain “Independents”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Conduct a business survey to identify priority business retention issues and opportunities. •Explore potential to establish a local micro investment fund: 1) Communicate to business community, financing options available through Community Futures, 2) Establish a Beaver County fund within a community foundation and “legacy giving” framework to support philanthropy with undertaking of community development initiatives, 3) Create a modest municipal Community Investment Fund to fund 2-3 community development projects annually, 4) Investigate potential to create a Beaver County chapter of Awesome Calgary (Awesome Beaver County) to support 'micro-financing for micro-brilliance', 5) Promote crowdfunding as a source of project/company fundraising, including awareness and information, 6) Look at NGO micro-finance programs. •Create business mentorship group (could include micro-investment fund) to mentor/generate new business ideas. Use mentor group as a form of business accelerator (vs incubator). •Consult with City of Airdrie and explore potential to establish a Smart Start Program (https://www.smartstartbusiness.ca/), an eight-month entrepreneur training program to help enhance small business skills through a proven training program and mentorship. •Create an eNewsletter to communicate timely information related to business issues, opportunities, and celebrations. eNewsletter programs that can be purchased to make managing process easier. Recommended twice annually to manage resources. •Collaborate with Flagstaff County to extend their Junior Achievement Program within the greater Region to nurture youth entrepreneurship. 	<p>Business survey and County website adjustments in 2017.</p>	<p>One micro-investment initiative initiated in 2018.</p> <p>Metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Jobs created. •Anecdotal small business owner success stories. 	<p>TBD</p> <p>Research how Community Futures, BRAED and other grants can assist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fear of failure. •Lack of finances. 	<p>Must be led by business community with initial facilitation by County.</p> <p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Education partner. •Employment centres. •Post-secondary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Regulations. •Financial assistance / barriers. •Invested interest. •Getting the message out to new business people.

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	TIMELINE / TARGETS		BUDGET	IMPLICATIONS	LEAD / PARTNER	OBSTACLES
				ST	MT				
<p>Goal 4 – Implement a long-term fiscal framework that guides shorter term decision making.</p>	<p>Quantitative infrastructure assessment that generates decisions on future service offering, service levels, degree of regional collaboration, and multi-year capital and operating budgets.</p>	<p>Initiative 4 – Plan for Long-Term Regional Infrastructure Recapitalization Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Undertake a Municipal Infrastructure Assessment Project (MIAP) in collaboration between Beaver County, Towns of Viking, Ryley, and Tofield, and Village of Holden. Apply for Provincial funds to complete work. •Meet with Flagstaff County Council in 2017 as focus of annual meeting with one of the County’s rural neighbours to discuss the Flagstaff region’s infrastructure assessment project. •Adjust/maintain multi-year capital and operating budgets that Beaver County is currently generating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •MIAP funding applied for in 2017. •MIAP project completed in 2018. •Meeting with Flagstaff County Council completed in 2017. 	<p>Any potential adjustments to multi-year capital and operating budgets completed in 2018.</p>	<p>Est. \$100,000 including the County, Viking, Ryley, Tofield, and Holden</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A core elements of mandated ICFCs (MGA). •Potential for service provision collaboration with Flagstaff region communities. •Potential for Beaver enhanced regional services provision (e.g. water, emergency services). <p>Project in context of positioning to attract working population, families, and investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •County to lead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Urban community resistance. •Budget and provincial grant funds.

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	TIMELINE / TARGETS		BUDGET	IMPLICATIONS	LEAD / PARTNER	OBSTACLES
				ST	MT				
Sell the vision and actions in County marketing activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Attract resident engagement and participation in strategic initiatives. •Form a foundation that communicates to attract investment, working population, and families. 	Make adjustments to Beaver County website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communicate vision throughout the website. •Rebrand the visual skin of the website with more dynamic look and feel. As an initial brand narrative – focus on young families imagery and housing strategic focus – with a Home. Sweet Home marketing campaign approach and a “things that matter” (life’s vignettes that show very simple and human moments of reconnection to things deeper, and closer to the heart of the deeper meaning of life) detailing through imagery and text. With well-chosen imagery, this thematic conveys connection to land, the County’s role in stewardship of land, and the County’s role in making the future happen with its aspirational messaging and imagery. •Retool Business tab on Beaver County website. Rename it “Invest.” Include a Target Sector sub-tab. •Create two success stories per year and post to website (use on social media (eNewsletter). •Report strategic initiatives progress in the News section. •With a sign-up link on the website, establish entrepreneur email database to target specific communications (eNewsletter) to. •Create downloadable Investment Profile that communicates vision and targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Completed in 2017 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •\$10-\$15K (external contract with basic design and content edits). •\$30K for bigger re-design. •\$50K including brand creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A regional brand (see Flagstaff County) with common urban/rural strategic goals expressed in the brand would add significant value to investment and family attraction efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •County to complete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Budget.

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	TIMELINE / TARGETS		BUDGET	IMPLICATIONS	LEAD / PARTNER	OBSTACLES
				ST	MT				
<p>Goal 5 – Beaver County will be recognized as a rural governance leader in Alberta.</p>	<p>•Work with urban communities in the County boundary to create foundational and innovative housing enablement.</p>	<p>Initiative 1 – Deepen Region-Community Collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •County reviews all relevant regulation to enable housing innovation outlined in this Plan and makes bylaw adjustments based on review. •Hold an information session with Tofield, Ryley, Viking, Holden municipal representatives to communicate County housing vision and strategic intent. Work to secure interest in reviewing all relevant regulation to enable housing innovation outlined in this Plan. •Hold a follow-up workshop to brainstorm collective regulatory/policy approach to serve as a catalyst for housing innovation. •All communities make relevant bylaw adjustments. •Develop housing investor attraction package. <p>Develop land development, housing, and residential investor business development list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Contact key investors/companies in the space to determine their location/development needs. •Investigate potential for daily public commuter transit from Tofield to Edmonton in relation to promoting innovative-housing related residential growth in the Tofield area. This initiative should consider construction of a park and drive parking lot in Tofield, and then another park and drive at the western edge of the County. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Completed in 2017 	<p>Housing investor package, business dev. list and first contact with contact list in 2018.</p> <p>Public commuter transit study completed by end of 2018 once innovative housing regulatory structure and initial contacts with housing developers has been completed.</p>	<p>Internal staff cost.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This initiative is THE primary difference-maker for the County and it requires participation from urban communities given some housing forms and functions are more urban oriented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •County to lead with urban communities participating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mindset

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	TIMELINE / TARGETS		BUDGET	IMPLICATIONS	LEAD / PARTNER	OBSTACLES
				ST	MT				
<p>Goal 4 – Implement a long-term fiscal framework that guides shorter term decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Secure more water for Equity Industrial Park •Investigate groundwater aquifer or other water sources, and conservation to secure water supply for other initiatives (e.g. housing). 	<p>Initiative 2 – Accelerate Industrial Park Land Sales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continue to consult with Strathcona County to negotiate pipe capacity upgrading and licensing allocation. Consider an alternative water source, including any potential for groundwater aquifer supply, should negotiations with Strathcona County fail. •Consider pipe upgrading as a potential negotiating term with any interest shown from a major industrial enterprise. •Develop stringent water conservation bylaw (incl. consideration of use of incentives to reduce water use) for all water users, including Equity Industrial Park. •Determine if water licensing purchasing and transfer to Strathcona County to acquire more capacity is an option. •Evaluate potential for water recycling system incorporation into the industrial park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Negotiation with Strathcona County completed in 2017 with signing of an MOU related to water capacity upgrading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Water cons. bylaw / recycling system evaluation by end of 2018. •Pipeline capacity upgrade by 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Pipe upgrade cost and potential licensing purchase cost TBD. •Ground water research cost TBD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lack of water capacity upgrade is a significant barrier for agricultural processing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •County to lead with Strathcona County participating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cost •Strathcona County ownership of water license.