

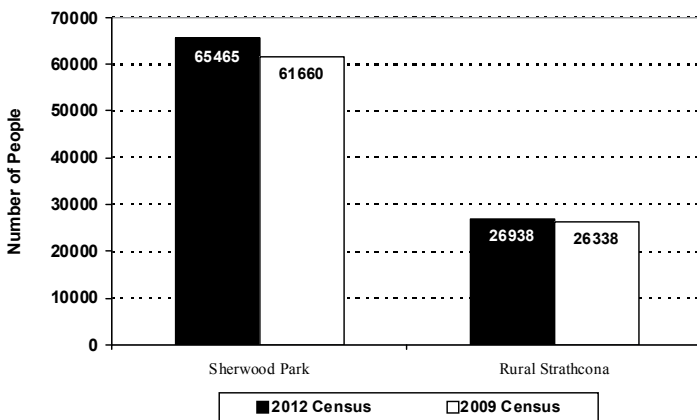
INTRODUCTION: MDP UPDATE

BACKGROUND | 1 OF 8



INTRODUCTION

Strathcona County is growing fast. We've added 25,000 people since the year 2000, an increase of 38% in 15 years. Strathcona County is a specialized municipality within the Alberta Capital Region and is composed of a large urban service area (Sherwood Park) as well as a significant rural area. In total the County has a land mass of 800 square kilometres. Recently, the urban area has grown faster than the rural area:



With the Capital Region projected to grow by 600,000+ people in the next 30 years, it is anticipated that Strathcona County will continue to attract a significant number of new residents and businesses.

With that growth comes prosperity (average income in the County is just under \$62,000), but we also have to manage development to create livable, sustainable communities and to protect what people love about the County.

That's why we are updating the County's Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The MDP is perhaps the County's most important future-oriented policy document, setting out a clear vision for where and how Strathcona will grow and develop over time. With objectives, policies and maps, the MDP guides Council decisions on land use, sustainable development, and key issues like conservation of the natural environment and investment in infrastructure and services, risk management, social well-being, and other issues.

WHY IS THE MDP BEING UPDATED NOW?

Policy in the MDP states it should be updated every 5 years and ours is now 8 years old. The MDP needs to be updated to make sure policies are still relevant, to address recent studies, emerging trends and new issues, and to make it more user-friendly. Revisions to the Capital Region Growth Plan and the creation of new growth management strategies (Bremner and Colchester) in the County mean an update is timely.

The MDP Update will address a number of issues and emerging trends identified by County Council members, County staff, consultants as well as by the public and stakeholder groups. It will also consolidate and streamline information, making it simpler to read and use.

RELATED INITIATIVES & STUDIES

The following current initiatives and completed studies are separate from the MDP update process; however, many of the results of these initiatives and studies may be incorporated into the MDP:

- Capital Region Growth Plan Update

- County Strategic Plan
- Bremner Growth Management Strategy
- Colchester Growth Management Strategy
- Mature Neighbourhoods Strategy
- Heartland Area Structure Plan Update
- Agriculture Master Plan
- Cumulative Risk Assessment Updates

WHAT ISSUES WILL THE MDP UPDATE ADDRESS?

In addition to updating the current population and demographic statistics and trends, a number of issues have been identified by Council, staff, and consultants so far including:

- What is the future of “Country Residential” land use?
- How can we best conserve natural features as growth and development occur?
- What types of housing do existing and future residents need, and how we can encourage more affordable housing?
- How can we protect and encourage agriculture in the County?
- How can we support nature-based tourism and agri-tourism while protecting agricultural and environmental values?
- What does sustainability mean for the County, and how can we encourage high quality urban design and development?

Each of the above is the topic of a short background paper in this series. We encourage you to review these papers prior to the first public event on May 7.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

The MDP update will be led by an experienced consulting team (Modus Planning, Design & Engagement) with the support of County staff. A Steering Committee will provide advice and input about local issues, context and public process. Council will be involved throughout the process and kept informed through regular updates. County residents and stakeholders will also get their say, and the MDP update provides numerous opportunities for input and involvement.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS AND HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

Over the next few months, there will be many ways for County residents and stakeholder groups to have a say in the MDP. Each of 4 phases of the project has an opportunity for you to learn more, attend an event, and provide feedback.



Phase 1 is called “Foundations” and focuses on identifying all the issues that are important for the future of Strathcona County.

Phase 2 is called “Setting Directions” and will explore some early ideas for the updated MDP. Roll up your sleeves and help us craft these ideas.

Phase 3 is called “Options & Trade-offs” and is where we have discussions and make choices on policies. Join one of our topic-based meetings.

Finally, **Phase 4** “Drafting the Plan” is where we create a full draft of the updated MDP and ask for your comments on the plan.

HOW CAN YOU STAY INFORMED?

These are important issues and we need your ideas to help shape the plan. Please sign up for email notifications and learn more about it at:

www.strathcona.ca/MDP

