



**2022 - 2025**  
DEPARTMENT  
BUSINESS PLAN

Legislative and  
Legal Services

Date of last revision  
**APRIL 2022**



**STRATHCONA**  
COUNTY

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

---



The team at Legislative and Legal Services takes pride in providing excellent service to Council, the public, and administration. The department plays a key role in supporting democracy and continuity of municipal government.

We are tackling improved access to legal service for all County departments with renewed vigor. Legal Service requests have increased significantly since 2017, and we have been supporting major County projects. We will be adding another lawyer to our team in 2022. Further building our capacity and responsiveness in meeting the County's legal needs will be a key goal for this business plan period.

Our electronic meeting management system has streamlined processes and supported public access and participation in Council business. In 2021, we launched a self-directed training program for County staff who use the meeting system.

We crafted an array of standard form contracts and procurement documents for use in the County that are now being expanded and updated. We provide regular coaching and support on these key documents. In 2021, we completed the online library of contract and procurement documents and companion user guides, videos, and FAQs. Regular articles on the Insider have provided targeted information on privacy and access to information.

Significant changes to the management of the County's citizen boards and committees that provide advice and support to Council on key policy areas include electronic recruitment and selection processes and readily available online information. The mandate and workplan process has provided greater clarity to board and committee members to help them better support Council.

We conducted a successful municipal election and new Council orientation, including an innovative drive-thru voting option for convenience and concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. 2022 is a planned census year, leading to a ward boundary review in 2023.

Continued growth and engagement of our valued team remains a top priority for us. We have updated our Engagement Action Plan, led by the "LLS MAFIAA" (Make all Feel Included and Appreciated). Together we will provide excellent service to the County and its residents, while demonstrating County values in our relationships with one another and our customers.

Mavis Nathoo  
Director, Legislative and Legal Services

# PLANNING FOUNDATION

## STRATHCONA COUNTY VISION

### Living in Strathcona County

Strathcona County, located in the heart of Alberta, is an energetic and thriving community. A leader in North America's petroleum industry and a champion for advancing diverse agricultural business, we use our energy to power our new tomorrow.

We are a specialized municipality and work cooperatively with our urban and rural residents to govern as a single municipality. Proud of our distinct governance model, we promote and demonstrate our achievements.

We are a welcoming place to live and attract people of all ages, cultures and walks of life to join us. Families thrive in our dynamic, caring and safe community.

We strive to be a model of ecological integrity, protecting our environment and preserving our agricultural heritage.

Investment in infrastructure, quality services, cultural and recreational programs, and facilities is a priority and sets us apart.



#### Goal 1

Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents



#### Goal 5

Foster collaboration through regional, community and governmental partnerships



#### Goal 2

Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure



#### Goal 6

Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents



#### Goal 3

Cultivate economic diversification, within the petro-chemical industry and beyond, through a business-friendly environment



#### Goal 7

Provide opportunities for public engagement and communication



#### Goal 4

Ensure effective stewardship of water, land, air and energy resources



#### Goal 8

Foster an environment for safe communities



#### Goal 9

Continuously improving the way we work, as one organization, in an agile and sustainable manner

## CORPORATE MISSION

We are committed to working collaboratively, efficiently and effectively to provide quality service delivery to citizens, business, and industry alike.

## CORPORATE VALUES

Our values help to form our organizational identity and define our culture.

<b>Integrity</b>	We demonstrate ethical standards and behaviours We display honest behaviour at all times We do what we say we will do
<b>Respect</b>	We treat others with care and dignity We pay attention to each other We welcome a variety and diversity of ideas
<b>Safety</b>	We consistently demonstrate safe work practices We build an environment of openness and trust We make it safe for each other to voice opinions or concerns
<b>Fairness</b>	We consider how our actions might affect others We treat everyone impartially and equitably We are willing to share the reasoning behind our thinking and decisions
<b>Cooperation</b>	We support, assist and learn from each other We give credit to others for their contributions We compromise when needed to achieve common goals

## DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

---


We are committed to service excellence to Council, the corporation and the public through our advice, guidance and assistance in support of open and transparent municipal governance.

## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

---

Supporting relationships among County Council, administration and citizens, Legislative and Legal Services is charged with ensuring open and transparent government through the development of sound practices and systems for supporting effective decision-making by Council. This includes ensuring that all activities of the municipality are conducted within legislative provisions respecting the roles and responsibilities of local government.

Legislative and Legal Services also facilitates corporate and business unit success through the provision of internal and external legal services and policy and governance guidance.



Provincial legislation impacting Legislative and Legal Services includes:

- Municipal Government Act (MGA), including recent amendments from the Red Tape Reduction Act (Bill 48)
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)
- Health Information Act (HIA)
- Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)
- Education Act
- Commissioners for Oaths Act
- Interpretation Act

Other documents that impact the department:

- Municipal Policy Handbook
- Municipal Bylaws



# DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS

---

## ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS

Legislative and Legal Services coordinates and supports appeal hearings to quasi-judicial boards, such as the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, Assessment Review Board, Bylaw Enforcement Order Review Committee, and the General Appeals and Review Committee, in accordance with requirements set out in the *Municipal Government Act* and principles of natural justice.

### 2022 – 2025 FORECAST

The majority of the County's tribunals have been onboarded to electronic meeting management, and the electronic processes will continue to be refined over the next few years with a longer-term goal of becoming paperless. Our ability to leverage technological resources has paved the way to accommodate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as we supported tribunals to move to virtual and hybrid hearings. Legislative and Legal Services continues to develop plain language templates for tribunal communications, as well as resources to help members of the public navigate the various appeal processes.

## BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Legislative and Legal Services supports and maintains the Council committee structure and bylaws, manages committee processes, recommends amendments to committees, manages elected official and public member appointment processes, and is responsible for public member recruitment to all boards, committees, and commissions.

### 2022 – 2025 FORECAST

Legislative and Legal Services has made significant process improvements to service and function of its boards and committees. One of the most important changes has been the transition to electronic meeting management. This transition has been iterative with approximately half of the Council committees onboarded, with the remainder expected to be completed over the next three years. Another area of focus has been supporting board and committee public members through an orientation session, with an increased focus on governance. A rewrite of the Boards and Committees Bylaw was completed in 2021, and we continue to refine the mandate process as means of enhancing communication between Council and its committees.

In 2022, we will introduce the eSCRIBE Board Manager module to further enhance electronic management of boards and committee records and member recruitment and take on a review of Council's advisory committee structure.

## BYLAW AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Legislative and Legal Services provides legal and legislative analysis in bylaw and policy development to ensure coherent, integrated and consistent policy and legal frameworks that effectively meet the County's needs. The department also provides advice on related initiatives (e.g., administrative directives, procedures and guidelines, delegation of authority and enforcement matters).

### 2022 – 2025 FORECAST

Legislative and Legal Services will perform ongoing maintenance of County policies to ensure they remain up to date, relevant and compliant with current legislation, after a full review was completed in 2019. This initiative has seen the rescission of many outdated policies, and the review and update of all County policies. A review and update of County bylaws was started in 2020 and will continue through 2024. This initiative continues to improve electronic bylaw accessibility for the public, replacing the dated bylaw database, repealing outdated bylaws and updating those that are still needed. In-house bylaw preparation will be a focus for the coming years to bolster the County's expertise and capability in this area and to ensure a coherent framework and use of plain language for County legislation.

## CENSUS

Legislative and Legal Services conducts municipal censuses in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*. Census data is used corporate-wide to help departments with future planning and program development. It also provides valuable information for election purposes including identification of voting stations and the calculation of ballot requirements. We are addressing challenges such as reaching residents in an era when answering your door is not the norm and encouraging greater online participation.

### 2022 – 2025 FORECAST

The comprehensive review of our current census process will continue. The 2022 census will adopt some of the recommendations identified, including going paperless and a new platform to provide close to real-time updates for field workers. Legislative and Legal Services is exploring various software options to conduct the 2022 census.

## COUNCIL / PRIORITIES COMMITTEE / GOVERNANCE ADVISORY / EMERGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Legislative and Legal Services coordinates and supports Council, Priorities Committee, Governance Advisory Committee and Emergency Advisory Committee meetings, which includes agenda creation and management, minutes, and documentation and monitoring of action items. The department ensures that all legislative requirements necessary to support effective, defensible, and open and transparent decision-making are in place, along with providing procedural advice during meetings.

### 2022 – 2025 FORECAST

The work described above is ongoing and the department continues to focus on refining the electronic meeting management system and improving the integration of technologies that we use to facilitate meetings—whether in person, virtual or a combination of both. A major review of the Meeting Procedures Bylaw was completed in 2021. In 2022, LLS will take on a major review of the Priorities Committee Bylaw.

The 2021 municipal election included the planning and implementation of an orientation program for elected officials that complies with the requirements of the Municipal Government Act and associated regulations. The orientation program will continue throughout 2022 and includes a two-part County bus tour, an Indigenous experience and education opportunity at Métis Crossing and sessions on other identified training gaps. Future orientation activities will provide opportunities to have Council connect with neighbouring Councils.

The next few years will see us working on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Council's the COVID-19 pandemic Recovery Task Forces. Supporting the municipal organization through providing eSCRIBE contributor training and Council report writing training is an ongoing task as we continue to capitalize on our 2021 changes to make contributor training available online as a self-serve offering, and to conduct report writer training virtually. In 2022, we will support the Council Remuneration Task Force as they undertake an independent review of Council compensation and related policies. We will also lead a comprehensive review of the Council Code of Conduct bylaw.

## ELECTIONS AND PETITIONS

Pursuant to the *Local Authorities Election Act*, the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Education Act*, Strathcona County conducts the general municipal election and by-elections for the County, conducts the local public and separate school board trustee elections, and validates petitions.



## 2022 – 2025 FORECAST

Council has directed Administration to conduct another ward boundary review after the 2021 general municipal election and report to Council by the end of Q1 2023.

In non-election years, the election team monitors proposed changes to the *Local Authorities Election Act* and participates in engagement opportunities relating to any proposed changes to the legislation. Leading up to our next election, staff continue to explore voting options to encourage participation in our local democracy. The next general municipal election will be held on October 20, 2025.

Petitions are written requests that are organized and signed by electors within Strathcona County. Once validated under the *Municipal Government Act*, a petition may require that Council act on an issue. The filing of a petition can occur at any time, and once a petition is filed, LLS must always be ready to validate within 45 days.

## CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The Strathcona County Business Transformation (SCBT) continues to progress with implementing the Oracle Cloud ERP. The SCM team (which includes procurement and contract management functions) has been busy working through the Oracle system to streamline the process and implement technology improvements. In 2021, it was decided that Oracle will not be used to facilitate contract administration and contract performance management activities, which has resulted in the need to find an alternative technology solution to meet the business requirements.

## 2022 – 2025 FORECAST

Legislative and Legal Services will continue to provide leadership, strategic management and operational support in the areas of contract administration and contract performance management. The team will collaborate closely with both internal and external clients to develop foundational governance practices, efficient business processes, templates and tools, technology standards and centre-led training and coaching strategy that will support the growth and maturity of the contract management function across the organization.

As we continue to work toward achieving operational effectiveness, we will prioritize the rollout of initiatives and development of value-creating programs while ensuring continued alignment between the closely tied function of procurement. Upcoming initiatives that will be prioritized over the next three years include:

- Creation of a corporate contract tracking tool and central corporate contract repository which will support new functionality of tracking purchase agreements

in Oracle and provide the organization with a single source of truth for all contracts;

- Procurement or development of a technology solution to support contract administration and contract performance management activities;
- Development and implementation of a contract performance management program which will standardize performance management activities and assist contract managers with managing Supplier performance against contract scope and deliverables established in contracts;
- Development of governance documentation (policies, directives and procedures) that will act as a benefit lever to drive change and will provide guidance and direction as we transform.
- A review of contract execution practices including the use of electronic signatures and single sign authorities to align with the Chief Commissioner Bylaw which will support a more streamlined and risk-based approach to contract execution.
- Establish a training and development program to support departmental and corporate staff involved in contracting processes to ensure that staff are setup for success.

## INTERNAL LEGAL ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Legislative and Legal Services is responsible for providing support for the County's contract preparation, negotiation, and review, bylaw preparation and review, providing legal advice and opinions, conducting bylaw prosecutions, and monitoring litigation on behalf of the County. As well, the department provides proactive legal support to County departments in the review and update of County department documents and the preparation of new legal documents. Internal legal services also include legal review of the records retention and disposition schedule in accordance with the Records Retention and Disposition Bylaw.

### 2022 – 2025 FORECAST

While the County will continue to have a need for external legal services, one of the key objectives for Legislative and Legal Services is to expand and enhance the provision of in-house legal services. Doing so helps to reduce costs while mitigating risk and building readily accessible in-house expertise. Further, the increased complexity of the municipal sector and the additional complexity associated with being a specialized municipality with a large petro-chemical industry requires robust legal resources.

The addition of a lawyer in early 2022 will enhance our ability to build in-house capacity and specialized expertise over the next few years. Managing bylaw prosecutions in-house will continue to save costs. The legal services strategy for 2022 includes aligning the team as a strategic partner, and to develop additional non-procurement contract templates.

## EXTERNAL LEGAL SUPPORT – RETENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Legislative and Legal Services is the liaison between County departments and external legal service providers. The department ensures that the County's needs for legal services in specialized areas of law are appropriately addressed through selecting and retaining appropriate services and monitoring all files that are being advanced by external legal service providers. The department also has responsibility to manage the legal professional services budget.

### 2022 – 2025 FORECAST

Enhancing the monitoring and administration of external legal files continues to be a focus. Continued process review for contract management of external legal service providers is also planned.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Legislative and Legal Services assists County staff and members of the public with respect to access to information requests (including those made under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*) and privacy breach complaints. We also participate in mediations and investigations involving the Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner. The department helps County departments ensure that County projects and programs are compliant with all relevant privacy legislation.

### 2022 – 2025 FORECAST

Legislative and Legal Services will work to manage the volume of access to information requests that are received by the County, and to work with departmental staff to develop and refine routine disclosure initiatives. In addition, we will develop and implement appropriate training tools and programs for all staff.

The FOIP area will continue its work in proactive privacy, including developing new practices, policies and procedures to better support privacy protection, while supporting efficient and effective business operations. In 2022, the area will continue to provide educational resources, and develop a training plan for FOIP coordinators in the County.

## DEPARTMENT SUPPORT ROLES (ANNUAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS)

---

The list below includes initiatives that this department will be supporting during the 2022 – 2025 Business Plan timeline. Lead departments are responsible for providing clear plans to support departments. These plans are to advise support departments on particulars of the support required and timing.

- Annual Vehicle and Equipment Refurbishments Program  
Lead: Fleet Services
- Annual Transit Refurbishments Program  
Lead: Fleet Services
- Annual Fleet Transit Replacements  
Lead: Fleet Services
- Annual Vehicle and Equipment Fleet Replacements  
Lead: Fleet Services
- Annual Information Technology Corporate Infrastructure Replacement Program - Municipal  
Lead: Information Technology Services
- Annual Parks Infrastructure Lifecycle Program  
Lead: Recreation, Parks and Culture
- Annual Recreation Equipment Replacement Program  
Lead: Recreation, Parks and Culture
- Annual Open Space Planning Revitalization  
Lead: Recreation, Parks and Culture
- Annual Facility Capital Lifecycle Program  
Lead: Facility Services

# DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

---

## DEPARTMENT SUPPORT ROLES (IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES)

The list below includes initiatives that this department will be supporting during the 2022 – 2025 Business Plan timeline. Lead departments are responsible for providing clear plans to support departments. These plans are to advise support departments on particulars of the support required and timing.

- Business Expense Policy Review and Update  
Lead: Financial and Strategic Services
- Strathcona County Business Transformation (SCBT) Project  
Lead: Financial and Strategic Services
- Service Definition Project  
Lead: Financial and Strategic Services
- Strathcona County Public Services Yard Expansion and Modernization  
Lead: Facility Services
- Enterprise Risk Management Program  
Lead: Financial and Strategic Services
- Fleet Lifecycle Replacement Program  
Lead: Fleet Services
- Fleet Management Software Upgrade and Fuel Module  
Lead: Fleet Services
- Occupational Health and Safety/ Disability Management Technology Project  
Lead: Human Resources
- Succession Planning Strategy  
Lead: Human Resources
- New Occupational Health and Safety Legislation Implementation  
Lead: Human Resources
- Corporate Learning and Development  
Lead: Human Resources
- Corporate Inclusion and Diversity Training  
Lead: Human Resources and Family and Community Services



- Digital Workplace Program  
Lead: Information Technology Services
- Electronic Procurement System Update  
Lead: Financial and Strategic Services

# DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

---

## DEPARTMENT SUPPORT ROLES (STRATEGIC INITIATIVES)

The list below includes initiatives that this department will be supporting during the 2022 – 2025 Business Plan timeline. Lead departments are responsible for providing clear plans to support departments. These plans are to advise support departments on particulars of the support required and timing.

- Energy Efficiency Upgrades Arising from the Strategic Energy Master Plan  
Lead: Facility Services
- Northern Strathcona County Regional Park Masterplan  
Lead: Recreation, Parks and Culture
- Indoor Fieldhouse - Design  
Lead: Recreation, Parks and Culture
- Urban and Rural Trail Construction  
Lead: Recreation, Parks and Culture