

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026

What We Heard

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

JANUARY 2022

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1.0 Project Overview

Strathcona County's Strategic Plan guides the work of the specialized municipality to help achieve our vision of becoming Canada's most livable community. The 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan is a community document and will feature our vision, strategic goals and the four-year priorities that will make a difference to the people who live, work and play in Strathcona County (County).

The current Strategic Plan was approved by Council in April 2013. The last update to the plan was done in 2018. The County started the process to create an updated plan in June of 2021. This work included research of current trends and issues facing the municipality and consideration of current programs, services, plans, policies and partnerships. This information was used to create draft strategic goals and four-year priorities designed to guide the municipality's decision-making between 2023 - 2026.



OUR VISION

Becoming Canada's most livable community.



GOALS

The areas where we need to make a difference for our community.



PRIORITIES

What we will focus on to make a difference for our community.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The things we will monitor to help us know if we are on track to achieve our priorities and goals.

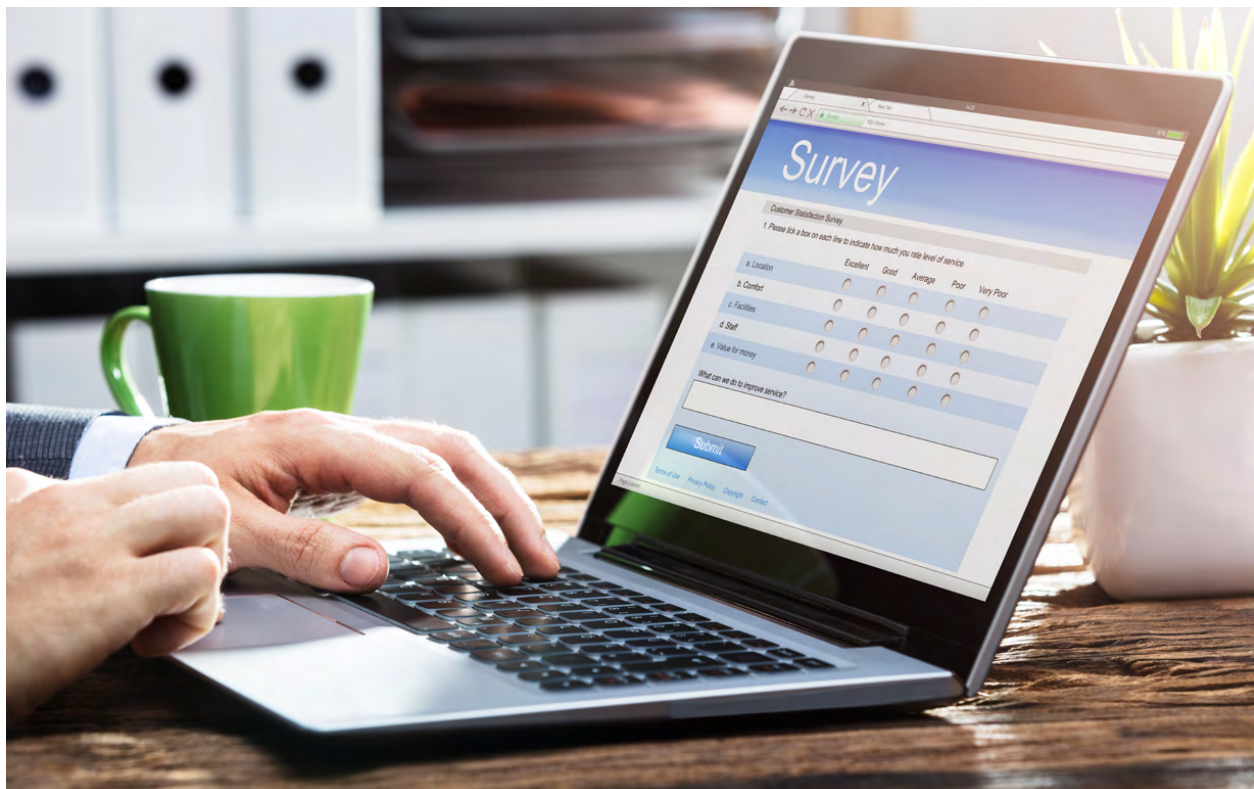
2.0 How & Who We Engaged

Physical distancing remained a priority for the County. Engagement on the Strategic Plan took place online. The County invited all residents to review the draft strategic goals via an online survey available through the Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel (SCOOP) and its [website](#) between October 29 and November 21, 2021.


A total of 782 participants filled out the online survey of which 75.7% indicated they resided in Sherwood Park, 22.5% indicated they lived in rural Strathcona County, 1.2% indicated they did not live in Strathcona County and 0.5% of participants indicated that they work in Strathcona County but do not reside in the municipality.

To encourage participation, the survey was promoted through:

- social media platforms;
- County website,
- newspaper ads;
- news release;
- eNewsletters;
- digital screens; and
- posters at various facilities.



3.0 What We Asked




To support the public's understanding of the strategic planning process, the Strathcona County webpage contained an overview of the project, short video about the process, and Frequently Asked Questions, that included information about:

- the purpose of the plan and its contents;
- why the County was updating the plan at this time;
- what was being considered in the update;
- what was included in the public engagement;
- how input from the public would be used;
- how decisions about the content of the plan would be made; and
- the next steps following public engagement.

Members of the public were invited to complete the online survey and share:

- how they thought the draft goals support the County's vision of becoming Canada's most livable community;
- how focusing on the draft priorities between 2023-2026 would help the County support each goal; and
- what else the County should consider to support each goal and priority.

Participants were asked to identify how the goals support the vision, and how the priorities support each goal, using the following scale:

- Offers a great deal of support
 - Offers much support
 - Offers somewhat support
 - Offers little support
 - Does not support at all
 - Not sure
- 

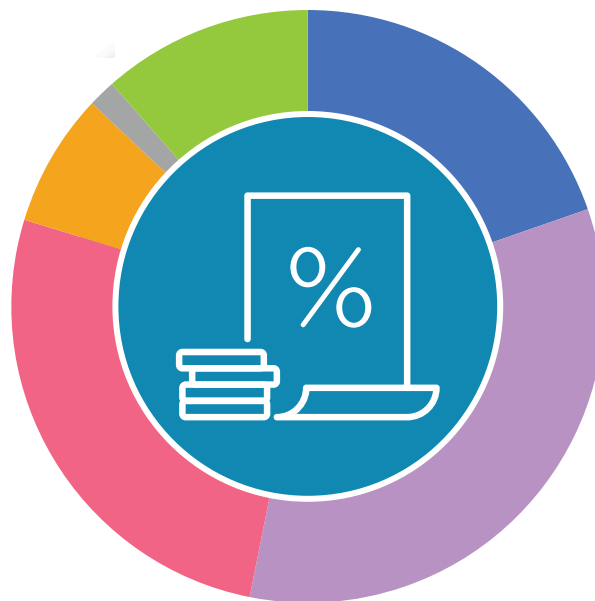
4.0 What We Heard

Economic Prosperity

DRAFT GOAL 1

Strathcona County is a prosperous community that leverages the strength of its industrial and agriculture sectors while advancing economic diversity and growth.

Participants provided input on how they thought the draft economic prosperity goal supports the County's vision of becoming Canada's most livable community.



OFFERS SUPPORT:

- 20% GREAT DEAL
- 33% MUCH
- 27% SOMEWHAT
- 7% LITTLE
- 2% NOT AT ALL
- 11% NOT SURE



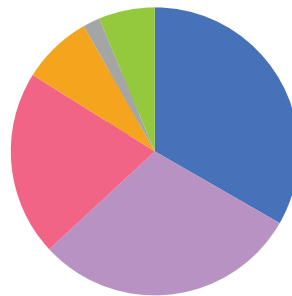


Economic Prosperity

Participants provided input on how they thought the draft priorities support the draft economic prosperity goal.

DRAFT PRIORITIES

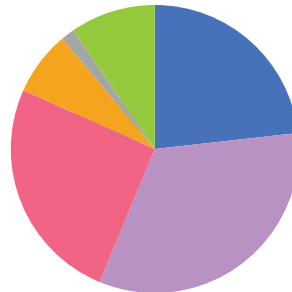
Collaboration with industrial and agriculture partners that promotes sector investment and growth



OFFERS SUPPORT:

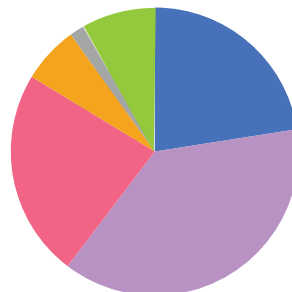
22.5% GREAT DEAL
38% MUCH
23% SOMEWHAT
6.5% LITTLE
2% NOT AT ALL
8% NOT SURE

Development of the emerging sectors that supports economic diversification



23% GREAT DEAL
33% MUCH
25% SOMEWHAT
7% LITTLE
2% NOT AT ALL
10% NOT SURE

Attraction and retention of small and medium-sized businesses that fosters local economy growth



33% GREAT DEAL
30% MUCH
21% SOMEWHAT
8% LITTLE
2% NOT AT ALL
6% NOT SURE

Participants were also invited to share what else the County should consider to support our community's **economic prosperity** over the next four years. Key themes from this feedback include:

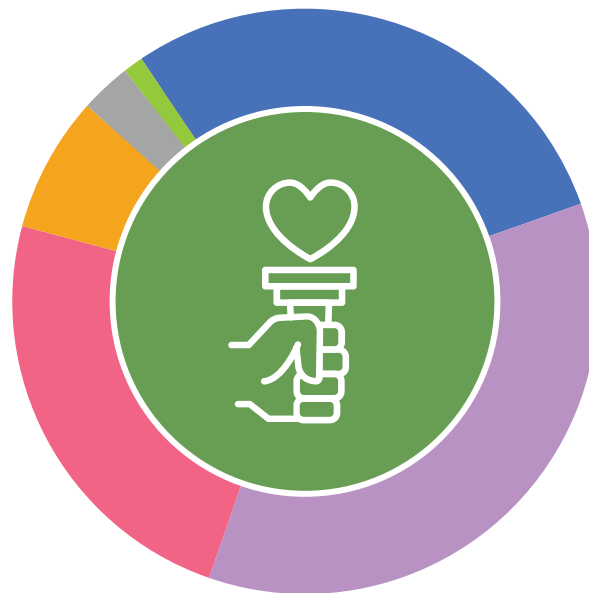
TOPIC AREA	CONSIDERATIONS
Economic diversification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing the industrial and agriculture sectors as separate priorities in the plan to acknowledge the importance and distinction of each area • Pursuing the renewable energy sector and green industry to help mitigate climate change and address environmental sustainability • Specifying the emerging sectors that the municipality will focus on in the plan • Investing in and promoting other sectors including hydrogen processing, the technology industry, post-secondary institutions, entertainment, transportation and logistics • Advancing tourism including eco-tourism and tourist amenities • Continuing to support the oil and gas sector • Aligning environmental stewardship with economic prosperity
Agriculture sector growth and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on the agriculture sector and advancing the Agriculture Master Plan • Rethinking the development of farmland for the purpose of commercial, residential and/or industrial use
Economic and community development alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting businesses that fit with the characteristics of the community and support changing demographics and needs • Encouraging the development of art and culture businesses, amenities and initiatives that contribute to community vibrancy and socialization • Being aware of, and addressing, the implications of industrial and economic growth on the rural population • Focusing on social supports, affordable housing and public transportation to enable people to participate in the economy • Enhancing broadband infrastructure and internet access • Investing in youth training and development opportunities
Small and medium sized business support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being aware of, and addressing, the negative impacts of regulations and legislation on businesses (e.g., COVID-19 restrictions, bylaws) • Expediting business development and application processes • Pursuing funding programs, promotional support and/or tax incentives to help businesses in the County • Enabling the use of rental space to support development, growth of and collaboration between businesses

Healthy Community

DRAFT GOAL 2

Strathcona County is a safe and supportive community where all people are healthy, active, connected and able to thrive.

Participants provided input on how they thought the draft healthy community goal supports the County's vision of becoming Canada's most livable community.



OFFERS SUPPORT:

- 29% GREAT DEAL
- 36% MUCH
- 24% SOMEWHAT
- 7% LITTLE
- 3% NOT AT ALL
- 1% NOT SURE



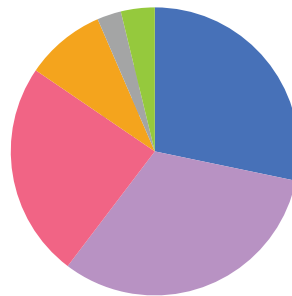


Healthy Community

Participants provided input on how they thought the draft priorities support the draft healthy community goal.

DRAFT PRIORITIES

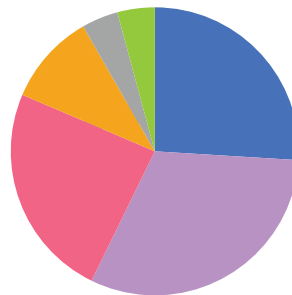
Housing options that align with community needs and respond to changing demographics



OFFERS SUPPORT:

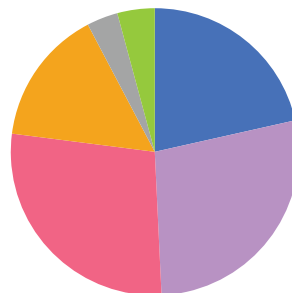
21% GREAT DEAL
28% MUCH
28% SOMEWHAT
15% LITTLE
4% NOT AT ALL
4% NOT SURE

A diverse and inclusive community that honours, welcomes, and accepts all people



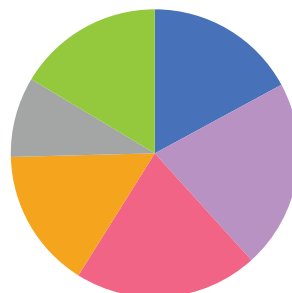
26% GREAT DEAL
31% MUCH
24% SOMEWHAT
11% LITTLE
4% NOT AT ALL
4% NOT SURE

Social supports that contribute to community connection, health, safety, and well-being for all people



28% GREAT DEAL
32% MUCH
24% SOMEWHAT
9% LITTLE
3% NOT AT ALL
4% NOT SURE

Indigenous relations that advance reconciliation



17% GREAT DEAL
21% MUCH
21% SOMEWHAT
16% LITTLE
9% NOT AT ALL
16% NOT SURE

Participants were also invited to share what else the County should consider to support **community health, well-being and inclusion** over the next four years. Key themes from this feedback include:

TOPIC AREA	CONSIDERATIONS
Community amenities, programs and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing arts, culture and active living initiatives for families and seniors • Promoting the naturalization of public spaces and other areas in the community • Advancing community and outdoor programs and services that foster connectivity all year round • Exploring ways to enable social and mental health agencies to deliver services and grow together including access to shared and affordable operating space • Enhancing promotion of the many social programs and supports available in the community • Meeting the needs of seniors • Maintaining people's access to community amenities, programs and services during the pandemic • Supporting broadband infrastructure and internet access
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and/or supporting affordable housing programs and initiatives that meet community needs • Enabling affordable and accessible social, recreation and transit services to foster community connection • Exploring ways to make the community affordable for seniors and young and low income families • Supporting affordability by promoting access to local agriculture food products
Changing demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being aware of and planning for changing demographics that could impact community needs such as senior supports, amenities, facilities, services and opportunities to age in place • Proactively attracting young families to the community • Providing opportunities to support the community's youth
Diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discouraging discrimination by advocating for and actively supporting all community members including vulnerable populations and persons with disabilities • Exploring ways to increase the diversity of the community and the municipality including diverse representation on municipal boards and committees • Enhancing the accessibility of the County's indoor facilities and outdoor amenities • Being aware of and acting on implications of COVID-19 restrictions on community inclusion • Rethinking the focus on diversity and inclusion in the plan • Enhancing efforts to support indigenous relations
Health and wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for a full-functioning hospital • Enabling supports for mental health and addiction awareness and recovery
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing community safety through traffic, bylaw and noise infraction enforcement

Responsible Growth

DRAFT GOAL 3

Strathcona County is a well-planned community that fosters sustainable growth and respects the environment.

Participants provided input on how they thought the draft responsible growth goal supports the County's vision of becoming Canada's most livable community.



OFFERS SUPPORT:

- 23%** GREAT DEAL
- 32%** MUCH
- 25%** SOMEWHAT
- 11%** LITTLE
- 7%** NOT AT ALL
- 2%** NOT SURE



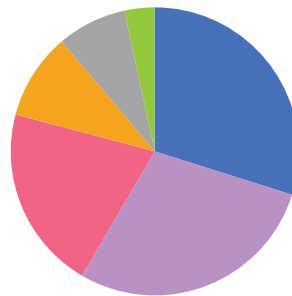


Responsible Growth

Participants provided input on how they thought the draft priorities support the draft responsible growth goal.

DRAFT PRIORITIES

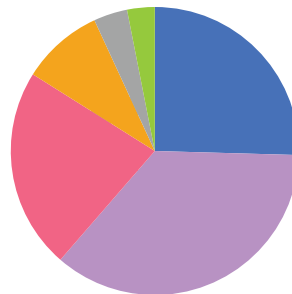
Growth and development that balances economic benefits and community well-being



OFFERS SUPPORT:

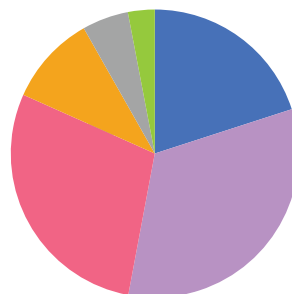
20% GREAT DEAL
33% MUCH
29% SOMEWHAT
10% LITTLE
5% NOT AT ALL
3% NOT SURE

Investment in our infrastructure that supports development and sustainable communities



25% GREAT DEAL
36% MUCH
23% SOMEWHAT
9% LITTLE
4% NOT AT ALL
3% NOT SURE

Environmental stewardship that demonstrates responsible use of land and natural resources



30% GREAT DEAL
28% MUCH
21% SOMEWHAT
10% LITTLE
8% NOT AT ALL
3% NOT SURE

Participants were also invited to share what else the County should consider to support **responsible growth** of our community over the next four years. Key themes from this feedback include:

TOPIC AREA	CONSIDERATIONS
Growth and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring ways to limit urban sprawl • Investing in mature neighbourhoods to maintain them as unique, viable and attractive places to live • Growing in a way that meets both rural and urban needs and limits the influence of developers • Exploring what can be done to fill vacant professional, commercial and retail spaces before adding new development • Adhering to current plans and policies related to growth and development • Taking a balanced approach to growth that considers economic, social and environmental implications • Making investments that address the community's year-round transportation needs including walkability and transit improvements
Agriculture land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving and protecting farmland • Following the Agriculture Master Plan and agriculture policies • Rethinking the Bremner development to preserve agriculture land
Environmental stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being proactive and advancing environmental actions and policies including naturalization of areas to help combat climate change, adding more trees in development areas and, implementing programs that encourage individuals to pursue renewable energy options • Investing in environmental initiatives for public buildings and infrastructure including ways to decrease reliance on vehicles, protection of natural habitats and more green spaces • Emphasizing the impact of climate change and environmental responsibility
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring and understanding growth and development implications on community safety including the need for more enforcement and emergency and protective services

Municipal Excellence

DRAFT GOAL 4

Strathcona County is a well-run municipality that meets community needs through service excellence delivered by engaged and empowered employees.

Participants provided input on how they thought the draft municipal excellence goal supports the County's vision of becoming Canada's most livable community.



OFFERS SUPPORT:

- 22%** GREAT DEAL
- 37%** MUCH
- 24%** SOMEWHAT
- 8%** LITTLE
- 4%** NOT AT ALL
- 5%** NOT SURE



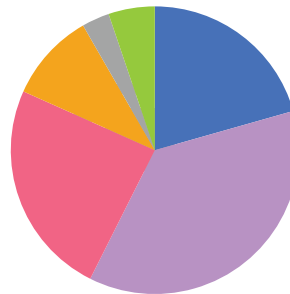


Municipal Excellence

Participants provided input on how they thought the draft priorities support the draft municipal excellence goal.

DRAFT PRIORITIES

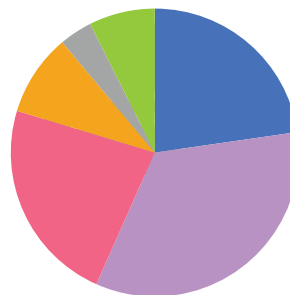
Sustainable use of resources that balances service level value with community needs



OFFERS SUPPORT:

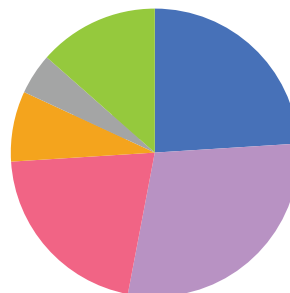
21% GREAT DEAL
37% MUCH
24% SOMEWHAT
10% LITTLE
3% NOT AT ALL
5% NOT SURE

Relationships with all levels of government that are purposeful and productive



22.5% GREAT DEAL
34% MUCH
23% SOMEWHAT
9% LITTLE
4% NOT AT ALL
7.5% NOT SURE

A workplace culture that is connected, inclusive, diverse, and promotes employee development



24% GREAT DEAL
29% MUCH
21% SOMEWHAT
8% LITTLE
5% NOT AT ALL
13% NOT SURE

Participants were also invited to share what else the County should consider to support **municipal excellence** over the next four years. Key themes from this feedback include:

TOPIC AREA	CONSIDERATIONS
Municipal services and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing customer service and communication efforts with residents, businesses and community organizations • Encouraging more dialogue with the community to help meet needs • Understanding and addressing the negative implications of COVID-19 restrictions on individuals and people • Demonstrating accountability, transparency and prioritization in decision-making to foster public trust • Finding ways to streamline and implement processes that are efficient for residents and businesses
Community needs and municipal investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing what the community needs and focusing efforts and investments in those areas • Involving the public in decisions with large financial implications through a referendum or plebiscite • Understanding rural and urban needs and promoting consistent infrastructure investment and service levels for both areas
Municipal resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making investment decisions that align with the current fiscal environment • Exploring structure and operations of the municipality and identifying where there are opportunities to become more efficient and effective • Capitalizing on the expertise and experience of municipal employees
Measuring progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying the terms “well-run municipality” and “sustainable” to help determine whether progress is being made
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing work with regional partners on service delivery and provincial advocacy efforts
Workplace focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rethinking workplace culture and employee development as a priority in the plan

5.0 What Happens Next

The input received, along with research on trends and issues, current programs, services, plans, policies and partnerships, will be considered by Strathcona County Council in early 2022 as they work towards finalizing the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. Once approved, the Strategic Plan will be made available publicly on the County website.

