



**Sponsored by the Town of Strathmore
Development Services**



June 20th, 2019

Event Summary

Emerging Opportunity # 1 - Community, Recreation + Culture

Strong community identity facilitates social cohesion and helps promote the town to newcomers.

Establish + Market a Unique Identity

What is the Town's identity and image?

- Strathmore has many identities, but there is not one consistent theme which people associate with Strathmore. Develop a unique identity for the Town.
- The Town's current logo implies we "do everything" – the logo is misleading
- Strathmore is very much a Sports Town, great access to sports facilities and teams

What needs to be promoted more?

- Explore an identity which is separated from Chestermere, Okotoks, or High River.
- Market the Town throughout Calgary and the region using this unique identity.
- Rural Values and Rural Business is a common theme throughout Strathmore
- Strathmore is a complete community – healthcare service hugely beneficial
- Value for Money in Strathmore – small town population with big City amenities

Guiding Principal: Establish and Market a Unique Identity

Implementation: Focus Group, Public Consultation, Development of New Brand / Logo. Marketing Campaign once Identity is Identified, strong Regional Promotion

Parks, Recreation + Community Design

What amenities would residents be attracted to in Town

- Downtown Strathmore
- Kinsmen Park
- Sports Facilities & Sports Clubs
- Utilize existing parks and pathways to promote that Strathmore takes recreation to every community

What does the Town need to capitalize and invest more into to market the Town?

- Creating an inviting environment for travelers as they approach Strathmore on the Highways. Curb appeal from the highways needs to be focused on.
- Highway Traffic does not know of the Town's amenities downtown or elsewhere. Marketing the Town from the Highway will promote visitors to stop and stay.
- Encouraging the improvement of storefronts and relative attractiveness throughout the Downtown will keep people downtown and assist in getting return trips from non-locals
- Potential Residents need to know the benefits of Strathmore on their down time; provide confidence that we are not simply a bedroom community

- Determine incentives for downtown businesses to have an evening every week where all businesses are open to 8:00 or 9:00pm
- Show residents the breadth of recreation activities and clubs which currently exist
- Explore methods to promote downtown storefront updates.

Guiding Principal: Attract Visitors to the Town's Amenities

Implementation: Highway Beautification; Highway Signage Marketing or Advertisement of "Downtown Strathmore" through billboards, online advertisement, or other local methods;

Guiding Principal: Promote "Strathmore After Dinner"

Implementation: Utilize Downtown Vitalization Committee to explore having an evening with Businesses open late, connect with sports association to understand all their offerings for every age group, Promote year-round facilities and parks.

Cultural Events + Opportunities for Engaging Citizens

What cultural events bring the community together and draw visitors to the Town?

- Strathmore Rodeo
- Canada Day Celebrations
- Music Events

How can the Town better leverage and engage citizens, businesses and developers to help attract visitors to attend these events?

- Promote the Benefits of hosting existing events in Strathmore versus other communities
- Target events which have good attendance, a committed following, and fit the general interest of Strathmore residents.
- Utilize existing venues which are not being used to their full potential and upgrade existing facilities to increase their attractiveness to bring more events to Strathmore
- Make Strathmore's existing events unique, what makes the Strathmore Rodeo different than Calgary, Airdrie, or Ponoka?
- Additional Spaces for Arts and Music was a common theme throughout the event.
- Partner with local business to host events where people can try an Art or Craft
- Utilize existing facilities to allow seniors to continue their skills, such as wood working.

Guiding Principal: Explore Events to be Hosted in Strathmore & Utilize Facilities for Cultural Activities

Implementation: Tourism Focus Group, Venue Promotion Campaign, Approach Events which have lost their Primary Venue, Upgrade Venues which require Small Improvements to attract a New Event, Catalogue specialty facilities and their availability to the Public.

Emerging Opportunity #2 - Commerce, Industry + Employment

A diversified economy is a resilient economy.

Economic Diversification + Resilience

What are some of the emerging sectors that could be attracted to Strathmore?

- Approach large scale distribution centres like Coca Cola, Home Depot, Brick Warehouses etc. and incentivise them to relocate to Strathmore
- Approach Old's College and work with them to relocate a portion of their farming operations to Strathmore. Similar to Bow Valley College, a post secondary institution offers stability and attracts the 18-24 demographic (which Strathmore is currently struggling to retain).
- Explore the idea of pursuing the information technology industry.
- Explore Bio-fuels as an emerging industry for Strathmore to approach and capitalize on.
- Explore Agri-business as an industry to attract and retain. This business was made for Strathmore. An example would be attracting a John Deere/Kubota headquarters. Opportunity to attract greenhouse industry given our climate and farming culture supports this activity.
- Cannabis Industry (edibles) will be approved soon. Create a Cannabis Attraction Strategy.

What collaborative approaches or synergies can the Town take advantage of?

- Origin Brewing Company is a great example of a local success story. More vertical integration within the region will strengthen the local business economy.
- Support farm to table initiatives with farmers and farmers markets in Town. This will allow local restaurants and farming operations to support one another. This can also be achieved through Joint Use agreements between schools and local government bodies.
- Synergies with Siksika Nation and the local school boards and recreational groups, Seniors community and high school students, Downtown businesses and Council Focus Groups.

Guiding Principle: Develop and Promote Community Synergies

Implementation: Economic Development Strategy, Municipal Development Plan, Trade Show and Industry Specific Conferences.

Business Climate

What are the current challenges for Businesses in the Strathmore and Calgary area?

- Current market downturn will be difficult for Strathmore and Calgary area businesses to deal with.
- Strathmore's proximity to Calgary is close enough for people to easily shop in Calgary, but far enough from Calgary to potentially discourage relocation.

What can Strathmore do to be more 'business friendly'?

- Establish consistent development standards for all applicants.
- Offer flexible land uses in the Land Use Bylaw that allow Developers and Builders to offer unique co-working spaces instead of structured traditional office space. This applies to secondary suites and innovative residential housing options.
- Provide better access to Town statistics and data.
- Establish more frequent meetings with development industry will be appreciated.
- Offer a façade improvement program, especially for Downtown businesses as well as businesses location in high visibility locations will help ensure the Town continues to beautify and private investment in existing buildings continues to occur.
- Create a way-finding signage program for downtown businesses.

Guiding Principle: Foster a Business-Friendly Development Environment

Implementation: Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, Development Application Forms and Checklists, Grant Programs, Wayfinding Initiatives

Labour Force + Educational Sector

What are the emerging skills in the current economy?

- Alternative Energy technologist, Biofuels processing technician, cloud computing technologist, cyber security technologist, data miner (bitcoin), solar installation, healthcare information and technology.

What initiatives can the Town look at to support post-secondary education initiatives and co-location of learning, research and business?

- Offer leasable land to Developers. Keep control over the Town land (don't sell the land we own).
- Consider pre-servicing land for Developers to lower up-front costs. Recoup costs at a later phase of development. City of Calgary offers this for industrial property.
- Approach Calgary businesses looking to relocate due to tax issues. Capitalize on their mistakes. Strathmore needs to act now.
- Offer tax holidays similar to Chestermere. Chestermere saw an opportunity and they took it. Strathmore should consider lowering business taxes to attract business, then recoup the costs at a later date.

Guiding Principle: Strategically Compete for Business Within the Region

Implementation: Economic Development Initiatives, Municipal Development Plan policies, Trade Show and Industry Specific Conferences. Trade shows, aggressive marketing campaigns, potential tax incentives, Town as a potential 'developer'

Emerging Opportunity #3 - Housing + Development

Housing, Business and Transportation choice contributes to diverse communities.

Diverse Housing + Affordability

What are the current gaps in the “housing spectrum” in Strathmore?

- Strathmore has various housing needs including families, single parents and Seniors. Allowing for a wider variety of housing options would make housing more affordable to all.
- Not everyone can afford traditional housing (i.e. Single-Family Dwelling, Attached Housing). There are many other options including;
 - Tiny Homes
 - Slab on Grade Homes
 - Secondary Suites
 - Garden Houses
 - Garage Suites
 - Special Needs and Transitional Housing

How can the Town facilitate a balanced range of housing opportunities?

- Cost of land a deterrent to home ownership, leased land is more affordable
- Encourage Complete Communities - Cradle to Grave communities (multiple housing options including; condos, SFD, Attached Housing, Seniors Housing)
- Contextual Site Design – Communities based on similar looks opposed to Uses.

Guiding Principle: Provide More Housing Choice within Complete Communities

Implementation: Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, Area Structure Plans

Commercial & Industrial Land Base

What are the key things to consider as the Town looks to redevelop the Downtown and help attract businesses?

- Downtown – Beautification is incomplete without facades upgrades
- The Town should have a Plaza (gathering area)
- The Town should have more Events
- The Downtown need to be more distinctive, more accessible by path system, better signage
- The Downtown needs to have better connectivity, more uses that promote day and night activity
- The Downtown is the Town’s ‘core’ – our branding and identity needs to be reflected in the way finding / banners / signs / public art etc

Where should the Town expand its industrial parks and what industrial opportunities should the Town focus on attracting?

- More opportunities for small industrial ventures (bays)
- Themed industrial Areas;
 - Technology
 - Warehousing
 - Distribution Centres
 - Destination Hubs

Guiding Principle: Make Strathmore a more beautiful and memorable Town with a commitment to excellence in urban design and placemaking

Create a Town attractive to business by promoting and providing locations for new growth while remaining open to innovation and flexibility.

Implementation: Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, Economic Development Strategy

Regional / Local Transportation

Does Strathmore need a local public transit system?

For the most part participants agreed that Strathmore was just not large enough to support a local Transit System. However, it was mentioned several times that it was an opportunity for a private venture. Options discussed included the following:

- Local Private Bus
- Fun Troll (for special events)
 - to and from events, looping the town, up and down Wheatland Trail etc.
- Uber (to our knowledge, Uber has not come to Town)

Is a formalized regional transit system important to attract residents and business to the Town?

- There was a daily Bus to and from the City for commuters who would prefer not to drive run by a private company, unsure if this service is still operational

Guiding Principle: Provide for a variety of mobility choices and transportation options

Implementation: Municipal Development Plan, Large Recreational Events

Emerging Opportunity #4 - Governance

Success results from Collaboration and Implementation

Transparency

How can the Town continue to build relationships and trust with the Development & Real Estate industries, and Businesses & Citizens?

- Commit to Service Standards
- Have consistent review periods and review timelines
- Improve File Tracking capabilities and options
- Be accountable (including communicating regulations from other Government bodies)
- Continue to cut red tape
- Host and attend information sessions, job fairs, educational sessions, and workshops
- Improve online presence and improve media attention

What avenues for engagement and communication should the Town consider?

- Engage the public on all social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Engage the public using the radio station and the newspaper
- Improve the Town of Strathmore website and make feedback, concerns, or questions easy to submit
- Investigate the viability of a 3-1-1 system / Strathmore Mobile App
- Prepare and circulate a monthly or quarterly Strathmore Newsletter

Guiding Principle: Increase levels of Transparency by strategically connecting a wide variety of stakeholders through various communication avenues

Implementation: Website, Social Media), Information Sessions, Workshops, Job Fairs, Development Services Newsletter, Strathmore Radio

Access to Information

What are some best examples and tools for the Town to share and house information?

- Continue with a full time, strong, and consistent communications department
- Be proactive with information and engagement
- Develop real time tracking of feedback & question forms
- Raise awareness for our many great facilities by giving away passes as prizes/draws

What currently works? What doesn't work?

- Council Live Stream is transparent, but more awareness should be brought to it

- Development Services is approachable and is one phone call away
- Strathmore is more personal than other larger municipalities
- Strathmore needs to share our successes more and toot our own horn more
- Consistent data must be put on the website
- Feedback, concerns, and questions need to be easy to submit and tracked
- An “Open for Business” culture and a customer focus culture needs to continue
- Requirements from Development Services must continue to be communicated clearly
- Requirements from other Government bodies (AGLC, Alberta Building Code, etc.) must continue to be communicated clearly

Guiding Principle: Foster and Nurture pro-active relationships with citizens and stakeholders

Guiding Principle: Commit to a High Standard of Change Management and Communication

Implementation: Up-to-date website, Council meeting live stream, newsletter, Town events, seminars, workshops, mobile Strathmore app.

Development Incentives

What potential incentives are there to attract growth and investment within the Town? What are the pros / cons of such initiatives and potential risks to the Town?

- The Development Industry relies on affordability and the cost of developing being fair, the Town should venture to keep costs low
- The Town needs to attract more cultural events which will bring in more people and will keep people from moving away
- The Town needs more incentives, help, and tools for small businesses. Helping our small businesses will lead to a healthy business climate in Town and the residents will have access to quality services and shops
- Investigate marketing incentives. Marketing the Town will get the word out about Strathmore and attract new residents and businesses.
- Investigate tax breaks and tax holiday programs for businesses and industry. Tax incentives may spur investment in other areas, such as façade improvements.
- Investigate grants and other incentives for the Municipality. Grants may increase savings for the Town, allowing money to be spent elsewhere on other programs and services to offer people.

Guiding Principle: Foster a spirit of collaboration and integrated decision making

Implementation: Focus Groups, Economic Development, Development Agreement Guidelines

Guiding Principle: Pursue development incentive options and bold marketing initiatives

Implementation: Focus Groups, MDP, Economic Development, Recreation