



2023

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A Place to Call Home

CONTENTS

- Introduction 4
- Economic Development Plan Stages 5
- Overview of Focus Areas..... 6
 - Speed to Market 6
 - Shovel Ready 6
 - Areas of Opportunity 7
 - Diversification 7
- Focus Areas in Detail..... 9
 - Speed to Market 9
 - STRATEGY: Concierge Service for Developers 9
 - STRATEGY: Engineering, Planning, and Servicing Plans & Schedules 9
 - STRATEGY: Estimates and Timelines..... 10
 - STRATEGY: Marketing Materials..... 10
 - Shovel Ready 11
 - STRATEGY: Land Use By-Law..... 11
 - STRATEGY: Levy Program..... 11
 - STRATEGY: Servicing Capacity..... 12
 - STRATEGY: Servicing Plans 12
 - STRATEGY: Concierge Program 12
 - Areas of Opportunity..... 13
 - Renewable and Green Energy Industries..... 13
 - Value-Add Agriculture..... 13
 - Logistics (Transportation/Distribution/Warehousing) 13
 - Eco and Rural Tourism 14
 - Diversification 15
 - Renewable and Green Energy Industries..... 15
 - Value-Add Agricultural..... 16
 - Logistics (Transportation, Distribution, and Warehousing)..... 16
 - Eco and Rural Tourism 17
- Appendices..... 21
 - Appendix A - Business Supports 21
 - Webpage Development and Supports..... 21
 - Economic Development tools..... 21

Small and Micro Business Supports 21
Grant and Funding Opportunities..... 21
Business Orientation Packages for new groups to the County and Region 22
Community Building..... 22
Chamber of Commerce Development/expansion 22
Appendix B – Maps 23

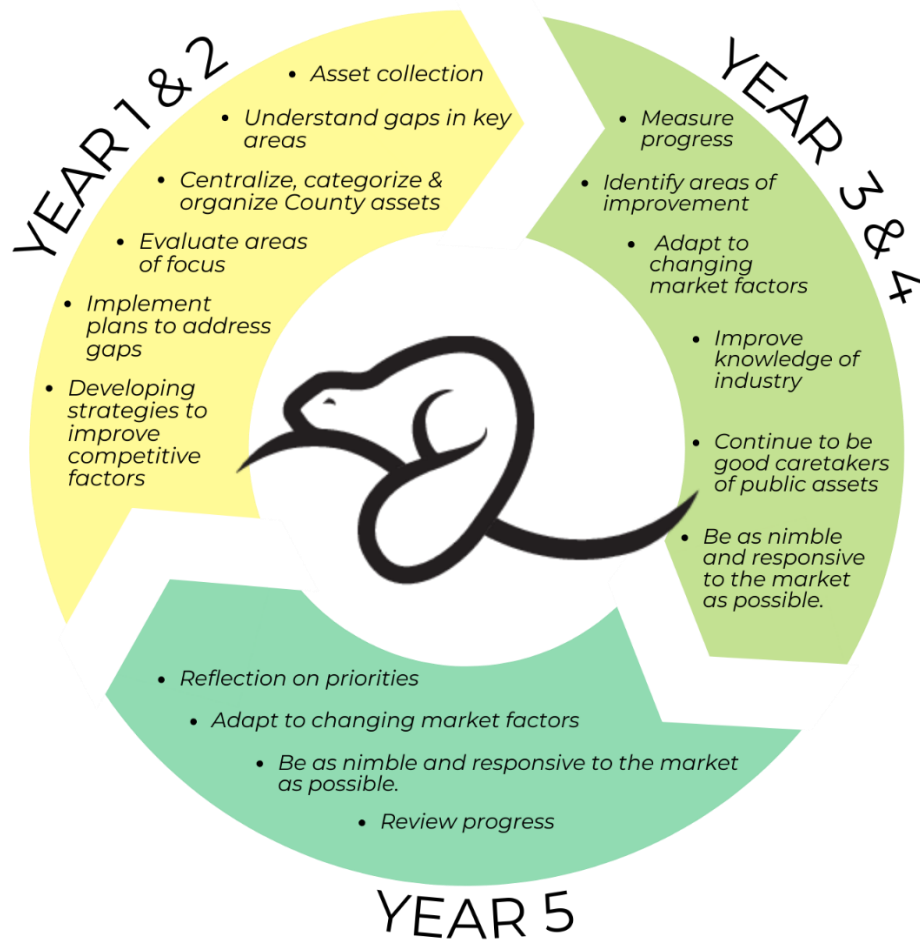
INTRODUCTION

As the County embarks on the next phase of its evolution, one of the focus areas for growth will be its economic diversification. Economic diversification can help to drive several key metrics within the County which include:

- population growth
- increase in tax assessment valuation
- amenity development/improvement
- infrastructure improvement/expansion
- job creation

This plan will concentrate on four focus areas that are important foundational pieces for success, and expected timelines associated with the execution of the plan. Ultimately, investment in a project, development, region or industry is done under the premise that there is a return on that investment. The return is dependent on the investor and the expected outcomes of that investment. Social projects have different investment criteria and expect outcomes which could include improved access to services, reduced service costs or community improvement.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN STAGES



YEAR ONE & TWO

Year one and two are predominantly years of asset collection, understanding gaps in key areas and evaluation of areas of focus for the County. This process includes centralizing county assets, categorizing, organizing, and implementing plans to address gaps. Once this exercise has been completed, the next phase is to prepare the County and its assets for the market. This can include developing strategies to improve competitive factors to aid in the County’s success in the future.

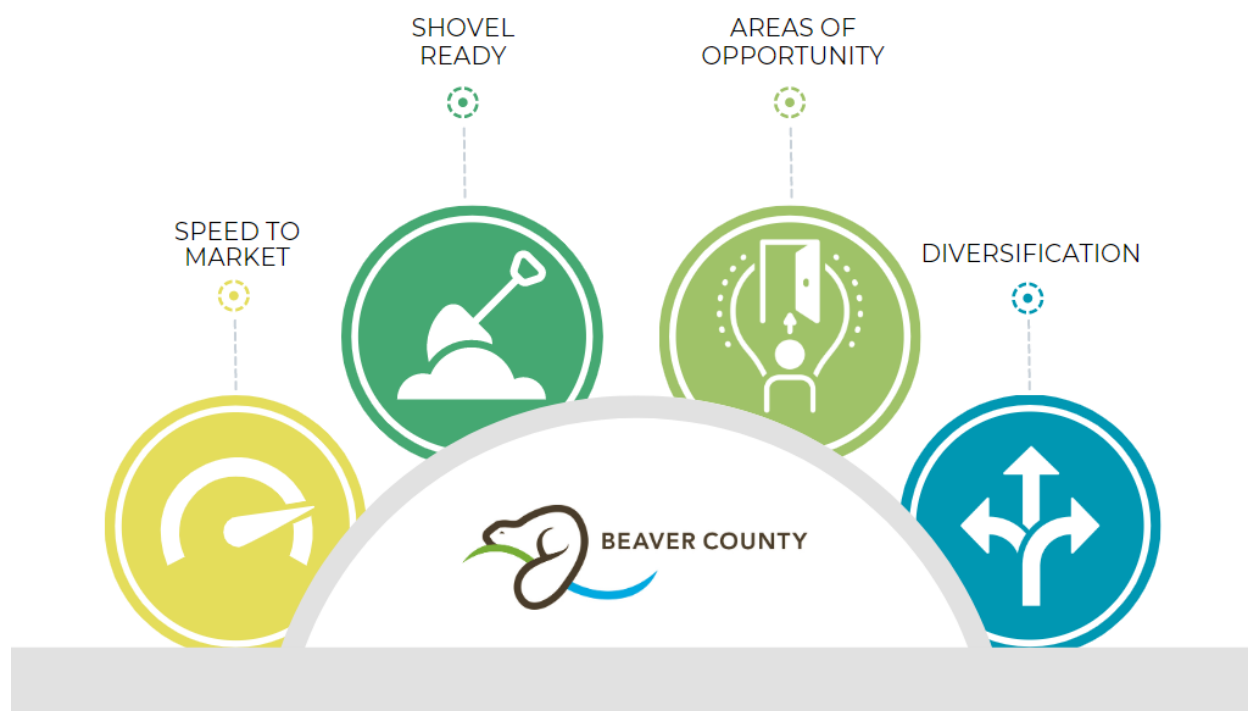
YEAR THREE & FOUR

Year three involves measurement of current progress on the plan's implementation during year one and two. The County will evaluate the levels of success achieved, areas for improvement and adaptations to changing market factors (recessions, new/obsolete technology, etc.) Year four is often a year of adaptation and transition for the county and will concentrate on increasing market awareness of County programming and servicing (infrastructure/engineering). Industry usually moves much faster than government; as government we want to be good caretakers of public assets while being as nimble and responsive to the market as possible, maintaining a focus on the public good and what is best for the County and its residents.

YEAR FIVE

Year five often begins with a new council and potential change in economic cycles which often requires a reflection on priorities, adapting to market and reviewing progress against the strategy implemented in Year one.

OVERVIEW OF FOCUS AREAS



There are four focus areas that have significant impact on the success of highly competitive municipalities. These focus areas are:

Speed to Market

The private sector values ‘speed to market’ this is primarily driven by investment return criteria, availability of a product or services to the market often results in a greater return on investment and further incentivization to invest further in similar ventures. The County’s speed to market could affect the success of economic opportunities such as business parks, co-operative/joint venture investments, or any other iteration of investment potential.

Speed to market often includes several considerations: infrastructure, land use planning/bylaws, availability of land and development permitting. These are just a few factors that are pertinent to the County and its efforts to diversify.

Shovel Ready

The term ‘shovel ready’ is one that is often misunderstood outside of the development community. The term refers to an area of land that is ready for development or construction. This generally requires having services readily available to the property line of the area to be developed. Services can include road infrastructure, and utilities such as electricity, gas, water, wastewater, and storm water management.

There are a few stages of the planning process that could be considered part of the ‘shovel ready’ premise which include the relevant land use and planning bylaws, and engineering plans for servicing if the area is not currently serviced. Having these pieces in place allows a developer or end-user (resident) to have certainty around timelines for development and potential return on investment.

Areas of Opportunity

Each municipality has a unique set of assets, which they can capitalize on for current and future growth. Previously the County has seen a high degree of success with the oil and gas sector, agriculture, and residential development. Due to changes in the economy, renewed focus on the environment and progression in technology, there is a need to examine County assets. Based on current assets within the County, emerging technology, and energy diversification there are four unique areas which the County has a very strong value proposition. These include logistics (transportation, distribution, warehousing), renewable energy and green technology, agriculture (value-add, supply chain), and eco/rural tourism.

Diversification

Honing in on industries that the County has a strong value proposition does not preclude the County from growing other industries, but these focus industries provide a very unique position from which to drive growth from. Specifically, each industry has a reason for its focus for the County.

- **Logistics (Transportation, Distribution, Warehousing)**

This focus was chosen for several reasons including:

- access to major transportation corridors: Highways 2, 14,16, 43, 36, & 60,
- proximity to a major market (Greater Edmonton Region [GER]),
- access to an international airport (YEG),
- access to a major West Coast seaport (Prince Rupert), and
- land availability/cost and proximity to rail (Canadian National Rail Main Line).

All these transportation factors coupled with available low-cost land make the county very attractive to this industry.

- **Renewable Energy and Green Technology**

Beaver County has one of the few landfill sites equipped for both heavy chemical, biodegradable, and general waste. This provides feedstock for hydrogen production, greenhouse gasses and several other feedstocks for energy/renewable/green technologies. Also, with a large number of deep empty former oil and gas wells in the County, there is opportunity to store carbon and return it back to the earth. Neighbouring Counties have already been identified as well locations for carbon storage sites.

- **Agriculture**

The County has traditionally seen success with agriculture and has several current assets available to expand on, and potentially see growth. There is a big focus in the market to see more productivity in the agricultural space through value-added manufacturing, finding new sources for productivity and improving production of high value agricultural products.

- **Eco/Rural Tourism**

The County has several assets that make for great tourism resources. An example of this is Coal Creek Golf Resort, built on reclaimed land of an old strip coal mine, is an unknown gem to many outside of the county. This is the type of Eco/Rural Tourism story that makes for great press in the current market, and is something the public often gravitates toward. One of the other strengths of the County is the large number of waterbodies in the region. There is a limited supply of ‘tourism’ assets and focusing on resources would improve the ‘draw’ to the County, and subsequently, awareness of the unique assets available to the market would increase.

In the following section each of these focus areas are described in further detail.

FOCUS AREAS IN DETAIL



Speed to Market



Speed to market is a term used to define how long it takes a company to conceive of an idea, develop it and get it to its customers. The County needs to enable quick speed to market so businesses looking to locate here can see a prompt return on investment through set up and execution of operations of their new facility. The below strategies are key in enabling swift speed to market:

STRATEGY: Concierge Service for Developers

Purpose:

Often in large scale development, there is a high volume of permits and inspections needed. Whether the development is a specific, single, large project (hydrogen facility, upgrader, refinery, etc.) or a phased land development project (business or residential development), there is often a shortage of municipal employees, which could lead to delays in issuing the required permits and completing inspections. In large municipalities it is common to outsource project management, planning, engineering, permits and safety code inspections to assist with large scale projects or developments. By outsourcing this service, it allows County employees to attend to day-to-day operational items. These services are offered remotely by several providers, and are often paid for, or offset by the developer to keep project costs lower, reduce delays, and ensure there are no unforeseen costs to a project. These contracted services act on behalf of the municipality and ultimately answer to the municipality to ensure all necessary bylaws, engineering and safety standards are adhered to. Having a concierge program gives a high degree of certainty to the developer and helps to build confidence in the municipality's ability to execute on the project.

Approach:

Engage a company or multiple that are chosen and authorized by the County to issue permits, complete inspections, etc. the services of which are paid for by the developer. Potentially the County could enter into a Master Service Agreement (MSA) with multiple companies (for example, an engineering firm for large scale projects which require project management, and an inspections company for smaller projects), to ensure these services are available with limited outlay or time delay, when needed. Depending on size of project an option could be to second someone from another department to oversee development.

STRATEGY: Engineering, Planning, and Servicing Plans & Schedules

Purpose:

Often, one of the major hurdles for developers and municipalities is understanding the deep service infrastructure (Water, Wastewater, Storm Water, Gas, and Telecommunications) needs in the near, medium, and long term. There is a delicate balance between public interest and a developer's desire to capitalize on their investment. Often a developer will want to develop the infrastructure to a level of current need rather than the future requirement

when the development reaches maturity. Some of the consequences of deferring to a single developer interest results in infrastructure being underbuilt and, as a result, current improvement costs to this infrastructure are significant enough that they are barriers to the necessary improvements being undertaken. This could limit growth in the future due to capacity limitations of the same deep services.

Investing in planning, engineering, and servicing in focused areas for development can make a difference in a project locating within the County or choosing another region. These plans often can be invested in over time and be on a shelf ready to be executed on, should there be a demand.

Approach:

The County needs to establish growth trends and create 20-year, 50-year, and 100-year projections for planning and engineering to support population growth, job creation and regional development.

Over building infrastructure allows for reduced costs in the future, it promotes future planning and opens doors to further development. Using a levy program would help with offsetting costs for the developer.

STRATEGY: Estimates and Timelines

Purpose:

Having executable plans can often improve speed to market and ‘shovel readiness’ which would incentivize developers to locate in the County. This level of certainty gives developers confidence that their projects can be successful and generate strong returns. Many states in the US, other major Canadian markets, and some regions closer to home such as Parkland County, Rocky View County, and the Industrial Heartland have been successful attracting industry by having these plans at the ready.

Approach:

The inventory and business case analysis will give a road map of current, needed, and future state of development space. After completion, the next step is to investigate the planning and engineering requirements with Council and Administration to determine the projects with the best opportunity for investment return for the County, while keeping public interest in mind.

STRATEGY: Marketing Materials

Purpose:

Use marketing materials to drive awareness of the County and what it offers. This includes business park maps, information on services, access to Area Structure and Master Development Plans, and general marketing materials.

Approach:

Ideally making these items available to developers through an online portal that tracks sign up, documents viewed/downloaded and developer contact information. This will allow the County to see who is looking, and what they are interested in. This information can be shared with the Planning department to prepare them for potential development permit applications.



Shovel Ready



Part of being 'shovel ready' for development means having all the assets and resources in place to have development and construction move forward in a timely manner. This includes having a clearly defined and easy to understand development processes. Key components to the shovel ready premise include:

STRATEGY: Land Use By-Law

Purpose:

Having a clearly defined land use planning by-law program allows both developers and end-users to understand where they can construct and reside, how the parcel of land can be used, its capacity and any other relevant matters that they see as requirements for locating in the County.

Approach:

Updating LUB to have more defined permitted use and less discretionary eliminates the future potential for appeals to Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB). Public engagement in the early stages of development can help alleviate issues later in the process and reduce councillors' potential conflicts with existing and future residents. The LUB should be progressive in considering the future of the County, while also bearing in mind the current state of society (e.g., the current green initiatives).

STRATEGY: Levy Program

Purpose:

A levy program spreads costs across a larger area and multiple developments, rather than having a single developer carry the burden for an infrastructure servicing requirement. The levy program allows the infrastructure cost to be shared amongst the benefiting parcels in the development area and those costs carried by the County until the surrounding parcels are developed. For example, 65 hectares has an estimated infrastructure cost of \$25 million. That cost is shared across all 65 hectares rather than having a single developer paying the entire cost as part of their development. Each developer in that subdivision pays their proportionate share of the costs for land they are developing depending on the size and zoning.

Approach:

The Levy program Bylaw would be developed by the County, sent to legal for review and subsequently presented to Council for approval. Timeline is dependant on the public engagement period, however an estimate of one year from start to completion is attainable.

STRATEGY: Servicing Capacity

Purpose:

Building infrastructure and servicing for future growth is both prudent and beneficial for future cost savings, while also enhancing growth opportunities. As an example, having a capacity restriction on a water supply could lead to an end user choosing another location over the County. This has to be done with caution since there are significant costs associated with infrastructure. Improper planning/projections of growth, economic and population could lead to large costs into the future.

Approach:

Attain full understanding of current business park assets and investigate prospects for future business/industrial park locations. This will provide context and a road map to plan other areas.

STRATEGY: Servicing Plans

Purpose:

Developing infrastructure servicing plans that include objective costing indexed to inflation, expansion, and growth are keys to being shovel ready. These plans are investments in the future and will expedite development with required capacity, and plan expansion updates, versus needing to complete full scope engagements again when growth arises. These plans should be developed in identified areas for future growth, ensuring that the County is ready to execute on opportunities as they arise.

Approach:

Develop current servicing maps, consider future planning for the main utility corridor. Determine which areas to focus on and invest in infrastructure planning. Once Council approves the areas of focus, commence the planning aspect, and go to development community to drive development forward through land sales/acquisition.

STRATEGY: Concierge Program

The concierge program as detailed in the 'STRATEGY: Concierge Service for Developers' section is also a key part of being 'shovel ready'.



Areas of Opportunity



The following sub-industries focus on the County's competitive assets. Each industry identified will give rise to potential challenges, but also unique opportunities.

Renewable and Green Energy Industries

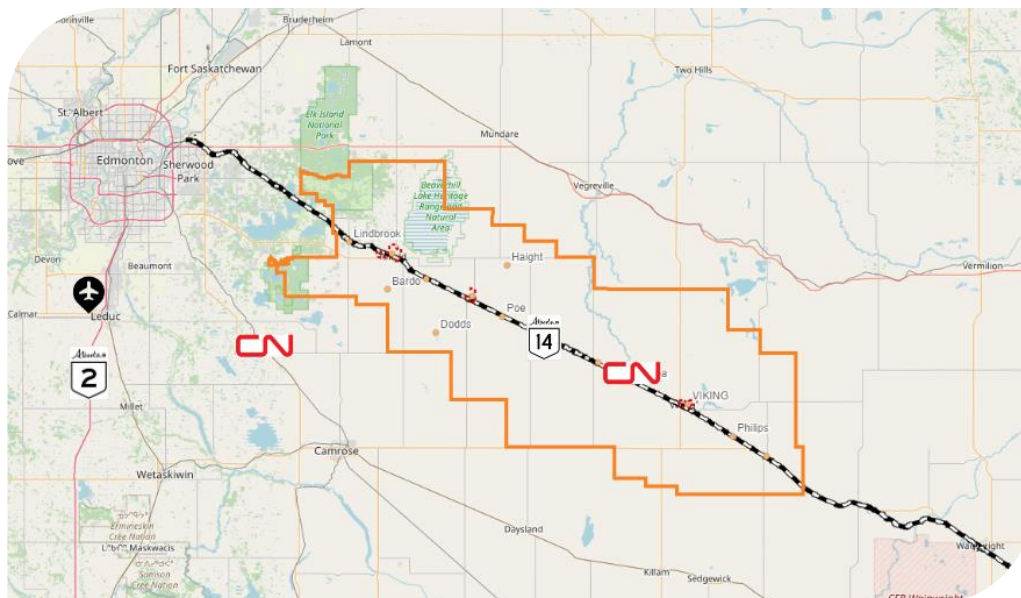
The renewable and green energy industries are an ever-evolving focus at all levels of government. Renewable and Green energy Industries include hydrogen, renewable energy, and carbon capture, to name a few.

Value-Add Agriculture

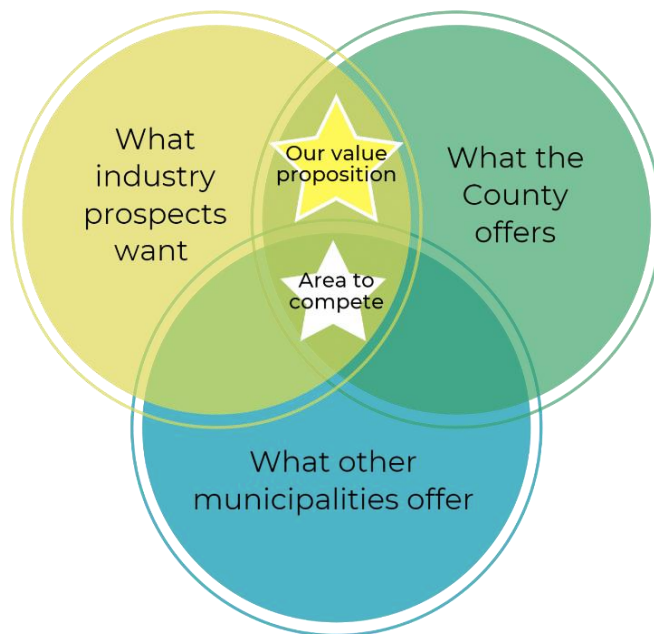
The emerging need for new food sources, higher crop yields, and value-add to raw agricultural products gives the County a great opportunity to leverage its expertise and help further develop this industry within the County. Vertical farming coupled with renewable energy is an example of this concept.

Logistics (Transportation/Distribution/Warehousing)

The proximity to major transportation corridors (Hwy's 2, 14, 16, 43, & 60), access to Canadian National Rail main line and Canadian Pacific Rail line, and proximity to an international airport (YEG, is within 45 minutes of the County) offer significant opportunities to attract this industry. The County is not currently home to businesses in this market, but our proximity to a major seaport (Prince Rupert) and being the first major city (1.5MM+ population) on route to major North American Markets make us very attractive to this industry space. For maps, see [Appendix B – Maps](#).



Municipalities who take a forward-looking approach for industry players find it often leads to success in the marketplace. Identifying large scale projects such as development of an inland port, as an example, could help to enhance development and attract specific and spin off industries. The County's market position on the local, national and international stage is very attractive, our value proposition makes us very competitive in those markets. Key factors for the county to highlight in our value proposition are lower land costs, access to local labour market (Edmonton and area) and access to major transportation corridors. These are important factors for early adopter's (primary businesses) looking for development locations to establish themselves in the County.



Eco and Rural Tourism

The county has an expansive land base, with an opportunity to look at unique developments focussing on ecotourism and rural tourism. As remote-working options are now more common, individuals who work remotely are looking to locate in more majestic and beautiful spaces. This provides an opportunity for the County to leverage its rural areas for tourism and drawing short-term or seasonal residents to the County.



Diversification



As noted in the Areas of Opportunity section above, the County may look to pursue diversification in through the following approaches.

Renewable and Green Energy Industries

Waste to Energy

The Claystone Waste and Clean Harbours facilities present unique opportunities for the County to leverage renewable and green industries. Waste-to-energy is a growing industry which includes capture and repurpose of off-gassing, feedstocks for hydrogen, biochar production. There are many other value-add products that can be captured, repurposed and then recycled back into the market in this industry. These assets are unique to the County and while these might not be the most attractive pieces to many, they provide a great narrative to the world about economic diversification, sustainability, renewable messaging, and adoption of emerging technologies.

Solar

The County has an abundance of large land masses that are unusable for standard development, including wetlands. With current focus on renewable energy sources including solar, these areas could provide the County an opportunity to consider vertical or traditional solar projects to increase linear tax base, expand an ecotourism story, and look at a self-contained closed loop ecosystem for developments.

Hydrogen and Related Industries

Hydrogen is an emerging industry and one that is being heavily identified as a fuel source into the future. By looking to attract hydrogen-based industries including production, maintenance, distribution and related support industries, this could put the County at the leading edge and be considered a ‘hub’ for this industry. These industries could support the self-contained closed loop ecosystem development through its power consumption, energy production, and potential water by-products.

An option to obtain a footing in this industry is to market the County to ancillary companies of large hydrogen facilities already in place, for example a company that manufactures parts for use in the facilities.

Carbon Capture & Storage

Proximity to current upgraders and refineries, there have been several carbon capture projects that are looking for places to return the spent carbon to the earth. Carbon storage sites can be found throughout the County in former oil and gas deep well sites, these former well sites present the county an opportunity for additional infrastructure development through pipelines, cooling facilities, turbines etc. These pieces along with the potential carbon dioxide feedstock for closed space greenhouses could provide unique opportunities for the County to lead the “green energy” sector.

Value-Add Agricultural

The County has a long history of farming and given changes and advancements in the agriculture industry there are unique opportunities within the County to leverage these changes to assist with industry growth.

Vertical Farming

Vertical farming has seen some significant advances and now includes aero/hydroponics, soil substrate farming and many other advances. Looking at capitalizing on some vertical farming options and using smaller footprints for growing high value produce gives the County further narrative toward the green orientation and industry diversification. An example of this could include CO2 intensive greenhouses ([DutchGreenhouses](#)), supplementing the traditional vertical farming option. This type of development would naturally pair with a carbon capture/storage focus as the CO2 would provide feedstock. An example of hydroponics is the [Coaldale lettuce facility in southern Alberta](#).



Processing & Manufacturing Facilities

When looking at value-add agricultural processing and manufacturing, this includes seed cleaning, processing of raw farm products and many other related processing facilities. Processing and manufacturing facilities to export finished food products or create an industry cluster specific to agricultural processing is a potential area of strength for the County. An example would be a pea cleaning and processing facility, a protein fractionation facility, a protein product manufacturing facility (e.g., Beyond meat), along with a distribution facility.

Soil and Agricultural Supports

In looking at the current feed stocks within the County, there are several opportunities with biodegradables and recyclable inputs that could create soil sub-straits, biochar for soil enrichments and other supports for agricultural industries.

Protein Fractionation

Given the current grain production, processing, and storage in the County, it's plausible to consider dry or wet protein fractionation facilities. Dry fractionation is used in several industries but does have some limitations for food production, however if coupled with wet fractionation this could allow the region to develop and increase its agriculturally based market presence. The County currently produces the raw material to supply this industry, however with limited knowledge around the County's water capacity it could hinder securing these types of investment opportunities.

Logistics (Transportation, Distribution, and Warehousing)

With strong transportation corridors and networks in the Beaver region and surrounding area, low cost of land, competitive tax base, and tax incentive programs the County can look to focus on securing logistics industry investment. Often these industries look for low cost of operations, availability of source

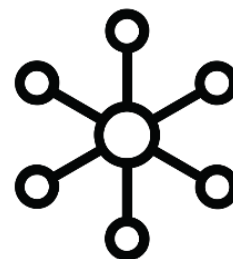
products, and connectivity to the major Highway networks. The County has a great opportunity to compete in this industry.

- HWY 2 (Canada/Mexico Corridor),
- HWY 16 (East/West corridor)
- HWY 43 (Alaska Corridor)
- HWY 14 (heavy haul local corridor)
- HWY 36 (heavy haul local corridor)

[\(Appendix B – Maps\)](#)

Inland Port

The Greater Edmonton Area (GER) is the first major city on the Prince Rupert seaport CN rail line, this means that as this port evolves and grows there will be limited storage space in the area and will give rise for an opportunity to have an inland port developed on a large scale in the region. A great example of this is Winnipeg as a centralized hub for rail, distribution and logistics.



Warehousing and Distribution Centres

Strong transportation networks, proximity to the US and Western Canadian markets make the County a great location for warehousing and distribution centres. Coupled with an inland port this would create a hub for job creation, residential growth, and several spin off industries. Low-cost land and access to transportation networks are key factors in locating warehousing developments.

Value-add Warehousing

This industry is often found in conjunction with ports and is identified as packaging of related products. This industry is partially composed of foreign companies wishing to take advantage of free trade zone regulations to ‘manufacture’ on Canadian soil. For example, components made in Germany or China and assembled in a warehouse in Canada would allow those products to fall under the ‘made in Canada’ trade rules, permitting those products to be accessible to US markets.

Transload Facilities

Transload facilities are used to transfer cargo between railcars and semi-trailers. Currently, there are a two of these facilities in the west-end (CN), and southside (CP), of Edmonton, but these are reaching capacity and given the growth of the warehousing and distribution industry in the surrounding area these locations are going to reach or exceed capacity. New locations will need to be found, these are typically located near rail spurs, or spurs are developed to accommodate these transload facilities.

Eco and Rural Tourism

Rural and ecotourism is a focus that provides value to residents, small and micro businesses, and exposes the County to visitors. County assets including unique landscapes, campgrounds, waterbodies, and recreational amenities provide unique attraction levels to local, national, and international travellers. Improving visitor numbers to the region increases exposure to the larger population, if we are viewed as

a ‘tourist destination’ and a potential area of relocation for our visitors this could lead to long term relocations, business, and industry attraction. Having a desirable place to visit makes for an improved quality of life for both local residents, and employees of local companies that may need to relocate to the County for their career.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism attracts individuals who primarily chose their travel destinations from those with reclaimed areas, high social responsibility and strong environmental, social and governance policies (ESG). Areas that focus on these principals often see individuals who are willing to pay a premium to maintain the environment. There are lessons to be learned from successes and failures of existing projects ensuring future projects are supported politically, socially, environmentally and financially.

Closed Loop Ecosystem

These ecosystems are popular in Europe, they focus on self-contained waste management, water treatment, renewable energy, and supply chains, utilising minimal support from outside of the ecosystem. This involves designing and maximizing water usage then feeding spent water to a treatment facility to return it to the system. This method translates across all aspects of the development and makes for a great marketing opportunity to attract tourists specifically is conscious of being ecofriendly. Industries that have strong ESG policies will value these types of developments as they work towards sustainability into the future.

Reclaimed Areas

Coal Creek is a local success story of a previous industry that has been repurposed to find a new life and beautify the region for tourism attraction.



Coal Creek Golf Resort

Image Source: Gene Hrabec

Rural Tourism

Attracting the rural tourist takes a different approach and is often considered a focus on hunters and trappers but this also includes adventure seekers and outdoors oriented individuals. Often these tourists like to visit small unique and quaint areas and support a local business or local community. Great examples of these are rural locations on Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia and small towns across Alberta as tourists are on route to other destinations and making the County attractive stop along the way.

Local Attractions

Focusing our efforts to support local attractions is an area that can help grow further tourism-based industries; Coal Creek Resort, Black Nugget Park, and the numerous other campgrounds are great examples of the attractions the County could focus on adding value to the surrounding areas to help drive traffic to their businesses.

Utilising a dedicated [tourism resource](#) for the region would help to promote and grow the tourism industry.

Black Nugget Lake Park



Development of Supporting regions

Focusing on local attractions and enhancing the surrounding areas will help to further drive people and development into those areas. Seasonal restaurants, recreational amenity development, are great examples (Trestle Creek in Parkland, or Sylvan Lake area development). These types of developments appeal to the domestic tourism market, especially during summer months. With the shift to great amount of remote working, the County could capitalize on these areas to focus on growth for the population base seasonally.

Identifying new opportunities

Looking at areas that are ‘known locations’ to the locals could be an opportunity to see development and improvement in the County. Those areas that the County could focus on are yet unknown, there is an opportunity for public engagement to identify future prospects and include the public in future planning. As an example, the “Three Sisters Mountain Village” development in Canmore is an example of an emerging area, reclamation project, and ecotourism all in one project.

Residential, Tourism and Business Development

Residential Expansion in Urban Areas

The development of this strategy and targeted industries, will attract new residents to the area through job creation and low cost of living. With these pieces in mind, the County needs to determine how best to manage the growth in conjunction with our urban partners and consider potential development in country residential estates, and acreage living. Planning this effectively, investing, and partnering with reputable developers would be key to see these types of developments succeed, and ultimately feed into the overarching economic diversification plan.

The County needs to work with its urban partners to ensure an agreement is in place to promote job creation and support the urban centres with infrastructure and amenity growth, within reasonable bounds.

Tourism specific development in Targeted areas

The Coal Creek Golf Resort is a great example of an underdeveloped supporting tourism asset. There could be further development in the area to make it more of an attraction to the local community. Black Nugget is another example, having more seasonal supporting industries and diversity could assist with further development in the area.

Commercial and Retail Development

This type of development will be driven through tourism, development and/or expansion of business and industrial parks, and general population growth in our urban communities and rural hamlets. An increase in population will drive demand for retail locations and commercial supports related to the industries located within them.



Business Directory Development and Maintenance

Identifying local businesses and maintaining a database that can be used by new incoming and existing local businesses will help the business community grow. Often these are achieved through partnerships with a Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with a local business association, or using development permits to establish contact information for local businesses.

Small Business

It's important to recognize that small things have the potential to compound into significant impacts. Similarly, nurturing a thriving small business community can yield great advantages for the county. Small businesses play a crucial role in driving local economic growth, creating job opportunities, and fostering a vibrant community spirit. By recognizing the potential and value of small businesses, we can collectively cultivate an environment that encourages entrepreneurship, innovation, and long-term prosperity for the county and its residents.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Business Supports

Webpage Development and Supports

A page on the [County website](#) dedicated to providing information including planning, bylaws, development permitting, safety codes, engineering contacts, links to County policies and procedures for development. Making this information easily accessible to potential and current residents would help to expedite the development process, and reduce the burden on County employees.

Economic Development tools

These include the concierge program, major business attraction programs, tax incentive programs, and any other programs that could be used to attract industry.

Concierge Program

Creating a Concierge Program, a centralized process designed to streamline and simplify the journey of starting a business in the county. This attractive tool offers numerous benefits for business owners, ensuring a seamless experience from start to finish.

Under the program, the Economic Development Officer will serve as a valuable resource, vetting potential businesses and initiating meetings with relevant internal Administrative Departments to facilitate smooth development. They will provide ongoing support and coordination until the Development Permit is issued.

Additionally, the Concierge Program assists with exciting milestones such as coordinating "grand opening" ribbon-cutting ceremonies and capturing memorable photo opportunities. The aim is to support the business's successful launch and create a positive community impact.

Small and Micro Business Supports

"Small Business Resource Hub" - a dedicated section on our website designed to provide local small and micro businesses with answers to essential questions related to their operations. Whether they're seeking clarity on hiring employees, permits and licenses, or exploring grant opportunities to support their emerging business, this resource hub would offer valuable insights and guidance. Include the range of support available for businesses through local, provincial, and federal programs, and information on various assistance initiatives.

Grant and Funding Opportunities

We can put the grants available on the County website through a link to both the provincial and federal websites and have a staff member who is familiar with the grant program help them navigate the programs. Conversely, we could partner with a company who specializes in grant work and refer the business/resident to them to help navigate that program.

Business Orientation Packages for new groups to the County and Region

With the above noted programs in place, we can develop a marketing package to support new businesses to the region. Package to include:

- Links to local business and supports for those businesses (grants, peer industries, suppliers, County Admin & Counsellor contact info)
 - Work with the assessment team to create a refined database of county businesses to be able to provide to locating businesses
- Chamber of commerce information, links and other items
- Link for website (planning, bylaws, and other admin supports for business)
- Links to Economic development department to handle inquiries and help smooth out development/growth process

These same packages can be used by the Economic development Advisory committee members, Councillors, and staff at trade shows and any other events that might help attract business to the County.

Community Building

With any increase in population there is often a degree of resistance from the local residents and having some industries that are community focused can help to offset any concerns that residents might have. Companies that engage with the community to show the value and enhancement they bring to the community often help residents understand the benefits to a specific large-scale development. Companies that do a great job of this are often viewed in their respective communities as pillars of the community and their engagement helps to alleviate concerns from its residents. The municipality can also request the development/industrial community to add amenities to the development for example a community hall. This is a very common practice in land development and is often included in the developers plans as an engagement piece for the project.

Chamber of Commerce Development/expansion

A Chamber of commerce is a great support for local business and gives the business community a voice in the political realm. Business associations and community groups are not legally able to lobby any government entity but the chamber is legislated to be allowed to publicly advocate for its members or industry. This is both a pro and con that the County needs to be aware of; the benefit for the County and its residents is far outweighed by any potential negatives. Getting access to larger chambers, support through other business members, discounted benefit packages through group discounting available through a chamber are just a few of the benefits of setting up a local chamber and affiliating with a larger chamber.

Appendix B – Maps

