



Integrated Community Sustainability Plan for The Town of Bon Accord

2009 to 2014





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Executive Summary

This five-year plan was created as a result of a three (3) day, strategic planning retreat with input from Council as well as senior staff. Its creation also drew upon indirect feedback from the general public and from other research and documents done in the past year. When completed, it will address a number of issues currently facing the Town of Bon Accord. The vision for planned growth of both residential and business residents will ensure the long-term viability of the community.

We are a relatively small, somewhat transient population, with no industrial base, and a relatively small business base from which to raise tax revenue. The Town of Bon Accord residents enjoy a reasonable standard of living with high levels of public service provided for them. We see opportunities to diversify and expand given the close proximity of activity in the region.

The Town's vision statement (i.e. Bon Accord, a sustainable community, where Families Prosper and Businesses Thrive) and mission statement (i.e. Provide Effective Programs and Services) provides the foundation for which our goals and strategies can be aligned.

This plan consists of five goals that will address the challenges currently facing our Town and assist us in achieving our vision and mission.

These goals are:

Goal 1: Gain continued support of community through improved communication and refocused identity.

In order to be successful in meeting our goals, we must ensure that we have the 'continued' support of the greater community.

Goal 2: Target, attract, and retain mixed commercial and small business development to the Town of Bon Accord.

The need to attract and retain business is two-fold; first, to increase the tax revenue from business; and second, to provide opportunity. Our inclusion in the Capital Region and proximity to three (3) major centers (Edmonton, St. Albert, and Fort Saskatchewan) provides us with an opportunity to promote the Town of Bon Accord as a viable place to set up and conduct business. Attracting and retaining mixed commercial, light industry, and small business will create employment opportunities for our residents and increase the tax base, ensuring that existing services are economically feasible.



Goal 3: Attract and retain families to increase the Town of Bon Accord's population.

We recognize that it is the people who live in the Town of Bon Accord that make it a special place to live. Currently, many residents are looking elsewhere for programs and services not provided in Bon Accord. The quality of life will be positively affected with increased engagement and involvement of the community to carry on the volunteer and community activities. Families bring vibrancy and vitality to our community. They support schools, voluntary organizations, and small business and are integral to the success of the plan. Without people, our schools, small businesses, community programs, and recreational facilities will not survive.

Goal 4: Develop a long-term plan for infrastructure expansion and/or replacement.

To support the residents and businesses we wish to attract and retain, we must ensure we can maintain and/or expand current infrastructure. This infrastructure needs to be in place to support the growth we are visioning.

Goal 5: Establish levels for all municipal programs and services to ensure a stable and viable municipality.

To ensure long-term financial sustainability, we must ensure the Town of Bon Accord and residents are informed and educated, to fully understand what standards of service can be expected in all areas. All municipal services come with costs. In order to be efficient, the Town of Bon Accord must offer only those services that provide the most value to its residents.

We understand that ongoing public consultation is key in assisting us plan our growth. Many of the strategies in this plan require additional input from our residents, and other stakeholders to ensure that the quality of life we have enjoyed over the past decades is not lost. We believe that by working together to take advantage of new opportunities, we can build a stronger, more vibrant community than we have ever had before.





Strategy Summary

This summary essentially consists of a series of strategies that enable a methodical and prudent approach to growing and developing the Town of Bon Accord. Through ‘acting’ on these strategies, we will leverage the Town of Bon Accord’s assets and resources, while ensuring the essential standards and support are in place to deliver and manage the organization. The strategy details and how they relate to each of the goals can be found beginning on page 14.

Strategy	Time Frame	Budget - Capital	Budget - Operating
Confirm/improve support of the general public. G1	2009-2014	\$0	\$17,000
Build stronger relationships between the Town of Bon Accord and its residents. G1	2009-2014	\$0	\$ 9,000
Ensure strong leadership exists in the organization. G1	2009-2014	\$0	\$32,000
Develop and implement a communication plan. G1	2009-2014	\$0	\$0
Revisit and revise organization’s brand and identity. G1	2010	\$10,000	\$ 1,000
Identify, target, and recruit businesses to attract and retain. G2	2010-2011	\$0	\$105,000
Develop internal capabilities. G2	2010	\$0	\$ 1,000
Develop marketing plan. G2	2011	\$0	\$15,500
Market and approach target companies. G2.	2011	\$0	\$95,000
Review Municipal Development Plan & Land Use Bylaw. G2	2011	\$10,000	\$ 2,000
Review and update Municipal Servicing Standards. G2	2010	\$0	\$ 5,000
Develop and implement a change management strategy. G2	2012-2013	\$0	\$23,000
Promote local and close proximity employment opportunities. G3	2010-2014	\$0	\$ 1,750
Promote local services. G3	2009-2014	\$0	\$ 7,000
Market the Town of Bon Accord. G3	2010-2014	\$0	\$32,500
Examine need for affordable and rental housing in the Town of Bon Accord. G3.	2011	\$31,000	\$ 7,500



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Revisit and revise the Town of Bon Accord's multi-year capital infrastructure plan. G4	2011	\$0	\$24,000
Review current roadway infrastructure. G4	2010	\$25,000	\$0
Review existing infrastructure for the utility and water management systems. G4	2009-2010	\$27,000	\$0
Review infrastructure priorities with Council during annual budget approval process. G4	2009-2014	\$0	\$0
Ensure plan's relevancy by drawing information from a number of sources on a regular basis. G4	2009-2014	\$0	\$ 1,000
Identify and define current situation of services offered. G5	2010-2011	\$0	\$0
Review services offered and explore options or changes. G5	2010-2011	\$0	\$0
Implement approved changes to service levels. G5	2011-2012	\$0	\$ 100





Introduction

MUNICIPAL CHARACTERISTICS 2009:

Total Area of Municipality (hectares)	211	Population	1534
Number of Hamlets	n/a	Number of Dwelling Units	565
Length of all Open Roads Maintained (kilometers)	15	Water Mains Length (kilometers)	11
Storm Drainage Mains Length (kilometers)	2	Wastewater Mains Length (kilometers)	10
Natural Gas Distribution System	n/a		

ICSP OVERVIEW:

In May 2005, the New Deal for Cities and Communities (NDCC) between Canada and Alberta was signed to transfer federal gas tax funding to Alberta municipalities. Subsequently, each Alberta municipality was invited to join this program and signed an agreement with the Province of Alberta outlining the requirements and benefits under the program.

The NDCC provides financial assistance to municipalities to support the sustainability of capital municipal infrastructure. Through this investment municipalities have the opportunity to maintain or enhance economic, social and cultural opportunities and well being, while protecting and improving the quality of the environment.

Funding under this program supports the development of public transit systems, and water and wastewater systems, solid waste management, community energy systems, and community capacity building. The funding may also be used for rehabilitation of municipal roads and bridges that enhance sustainability outcomes.

Included in the list of eligible projects are design and engineering services, vehicle purchase, construction and rehabilitation. In addition, the program may include barrier-free transportation initiatives to improve accessibility for seniors and persons with disabilities.

As part of the agreement, municipalities are required to develop an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) by March 2010. This long-range plan has four dimensions – environmental, cultural, social and economic – to be validated through public consultation and will provide direction to their Multi-Year Capital Infrastructure Plan.

This report provides a summary of what our vision for Town of Bon Accord is in the future, how we will achieve this vision and how we will ensure its sustainability.



Current Situation

INTEGRATED VIEW:

The Town of Bon Accord is located in Central Alberta, 15 minutes northeast of Edmonton, 25 minutes Northeast of St. Albert, 20 minutes northwest of Ft. Saskatchewan, and four and one half hours south of Fort McMurray. According to the 2006 census data, the Town of Bon Accord has a population of 1534 residents with a population density of 3 per square acre, which includes undeveloped lands. The latest census data indicated that 10% of the population was over the age of 55.

The municipality offers safe, quality, small town living. Residents enjoy recreational opportunities and community services including programs and facilities for seniors, children and adult education opportunities. Tax rates are a bit higher than surrounding areas due to limited growth and increased cost to serve over recent years; however, taxes have been relatively stable over the past couple of years.

Military housing and residential housing in support of the oil and gas sector has traditionally been the primary economic activity in the Town of Bon Accord. The decline in the oil and gas sector has negatively affected the economy and population growth. There is little industrial or commercial tax base within the municipality which threatens the long-term economic viability of the region and its residents. The oil and gas industry has the potential to quickly expand the Town of Bon Accord is ideally located to capitalize on resulting growth.

The Town of Bon Accord faces a number of challenges. These include an aging and low population, aging water and wastewater infrastructure, lack of economic diversity within the Town of Bon Accord and no industrial tax base. Upon expansion of the oil and gas industry, there is opportunity to attract new business and residents to the community which will ensure the long-term viability of the Town. Council recognizes the need to act quickly for positioning purposes but also to adequately plan for the expected growth so as to not negatively affect the quality of life that current residents enjoy.

ENVIRONMENT:

We understand that the issues facing the Town of Bon Accord on the environmental side are many. We have water supply issues, issues relating to water management and an aging infrastructure. Our land use and development bylaw and regulations are constantly being challenged and this must be addressed given the current and potential interest in our Town.

ECONOMIC:

The Town is heavily underpinned by residential tax dollars. We do not have the economic diversity enjoyed by other towns or counties nor do we have a large commercial or industrial base from which to draw tax revenue, no industrial currently exists within the Town limits, nor will it given the recent



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directives of the Capital Region Board; residential taxes represent a significant portion of our income (greater than 97%). We have relied heavily on grants from other levels of government (federal and provincial) to fund new and upgraded infrastructure. Our balance sheet does not differ significantly from that of other towns of our size. We offer our residents a reasonably high level of service but we don't necessarily understand what the service costs nor how it is valued by residents. Our utilities do not provide us with any profit margin as is the case in other municipalities or private industries. Currently, the Town is working on a three year plan to achieve full cost recovery for all utility services.

CULTURAL:

The Town has a somewhat transient population; as a result our Scottish heritage has become somewhat lost. Without ties being enforced or celebrated adult and youth involvement within the community has decreased significantly over the years. Alternatively, the Town has diverted its attention in paying tribute to the military, focusing on supporting the families of those that serve our country.

While we are proud of our Scottish heritage, we do recognize and accommodate diversity.

SOCIAL:

Residents here enjoy a traditional, small town (rural) lifestyle. Our population is aging as many of our youth have left the Town of Bon Accord to live and find employment in the city or elsewhere. As our population ages, we recognize their changing needs and that the older population may prefer the status quo to change and growth. The increased age of our residents also puts a strain on our pool of volunteers that have traditionally made this community a vibrant and enjoyable place to live.





Vision

INTEGRATED VIEW:

The Town of Bon Accord will be seen as a municipality that supports economic and population growth. We present an inviting, affordable community for families to enjoy quality small town (rural) living where business and residents share common values. We are an environmentally responsible Town that attracts business development through a clear and varied land use bylaw and development agreement with a view to preserve, protect and improve our natural environment. The Town of Bon Accord will continue to focus on upgrading its infrastructure to an acceptable standard, social programming, and recreational facilities that support the residents' quality of life. We will embrace change and growth but be mindful to preserve our traditions and values.

ENVIRONMENT:

We envision that growth will have a positive effect on the existing environment of our Town. With both population and commercial growth we will be mindful to protect and preserve our natural environment; continuing or enhancing our current recycling program while attracting businesses that aligns with our environmental philosophy. Our land use bylaw and development agreement will reflect our desire to protect and improve our natural environment.

ECONOMIC:

We will attract and support growth. We wish to have a strong commercial base to employ our growing population and to support tax revenue. We will be creative in funding the infrastructure required to support our growth.

CULTURAL:

We wish to be open and inviting to new and varied cultures to support growth and encourage diversity in our community. We will also proudly preserve and establish an environment that supports culture.

SOCIAL:

We envision an increased population of families. We see appropriate social programs in place to support and enhance quality of life for residents of all ages. We will endeavor to ensure that all residents enjoy a quality of life of which we can be proud of.



Goals

Goal 1: Gain support of community through improved communication and refocused identity.

In order to be successful in meeting our goals, we must ensure that we have the 'continued' support of the greater community.

Strategy 1: Confirm/improve continued support of the general public

Strategy 2: Build a stronger relationship between the Town of Bon Accord, its residents, and other stakeholders.

Strategy 3: Ensure strong leadership exists in the organization.

Strategy 4: Develop and implement a communication plan.

Strategy 5: Revisit and revise organization's brand and identity.

Goal 2: Target, attract, and retain mixed commercial and small business development to the Town of Bon Accord.

The need to attract and retain business is two-fold; first, to increase the tax revenue from business; and second, to provide opportunity. Our inclusion in the Capital Region and proximity to three (3) major centers (Edmonton, St. Albert, Fort Saskatchewan) provides us with an opportunity to promote the Town of Bon Accord as a viable place to set up and conduct business. Attracting and retaining mixed commercial and small business will create employment opportunities for our residents and increase the tax base, ensuring that existing services are economically feasible.

Strategy 1: Identify, target, and recruit businesses to attract and retain.

Strategy 2: Develop internal capabilities.

Strategy 3: Develop marketing plan.

Strategy 4: Market and approach target companies to attract to the area.

Strategy 5: Review Municipal Development Plan & Land Use Bylaw

Strategy 6: Review and update Municipal Servicing Standards.

Strategy 7: Develop and implement a change management strategy.





Goal 3: Attract and retain families to increase the Town of Bon Accord's population.

We recognize that it is the people who live in the Town of Bon Accord that make it a special place to live. Currently, many residents are looking elsewhere for programs and services not provided in Bon Accord. The quality of life will be positively affected with increased engagement and involvement of the community to carry on the volunteer and community activities. Families bring vibrancy and vitality to our community. They support schools, voluntary organizations and small business and are integral to the success of the plan. Without people, our schools, small businesses, community programs, and recreational facilities will not survive.

Strategy 1: Promote local and close proximity employment opportunities.

Strategy 2: Promote local services.

Strategy 3: Market the Town of Bon Accord.

Strategy 4: Examine need for affordable and rental housing in the Town of Bon Accord.

Goal 4: Develop a long-term plan for infrastructure expansion and/or replacement.

To support the residents and businesses we wish to attract and retain, we must ensure we can maintain and/or expand current infrastructure. This infrastructure needs to be in place to support the growth we are envisioning.

Strategy 1: Revisit and revise the Town of Bon Accord's multi-year capital infrastructure plan.

Strategy 2: Review current roadway infrastructure.

Strategy 3: Review existing infrastructure for the water, wastewater, and storm water management systems.

Strategy 4: Review infrastructure priorities with Council during annual budget approval process.

Strategy 5: Ensure ICSP's relevancy by drawing information from a number of sources on a regular basis.





Goal 5: Establish levels for all municipal services to ensure a stable and viable municipality.

To ensure long-term financial sustainability, we must ensure the Town of Bon Accord, its residents, and stakeholders are informed and educated, to fully understand what standards of service can be expected in all areas. All municipal services come with costs. In order to be efficient, the Town of Bon Accord must offer only those services that provide the most value to its residents.

Strategy 1: Identify and define current situation of services offered.

Strategy 2: Review programs and services offered and explore options or changes.

Strategy 3: Implement approved changes to programs and service levels.

