

LEDUC COUNTY

SUMMARY OF INITIATIVES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT
STRATEGY

2016-2021



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2016 - 2021

Leduc County

Project n°: 141-25626-00

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION..... | 3 |
| 2 | ECONOMIC STRATEGY DIRECTION..... | 4 |
| 2.1 | INITIATIVE E1: ESTABLISH MONITORING TEAM..... | 5 |
| 2.2 | INITIATIVE E2: MONITOR PLANNING PROGRESS..... | 6 |
| 2.3 | INITIATIVE E3: MONITOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT..... | 7 |
| 2.4 | INITIATIVE E4: MONITOR THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR..... | 7 |
| 2.5 | INITIATIVE E5: DEVELOP AN AGRICULTURE STRATEGY..... | 8 |
| 2.6 | INITIATIVE E6: DEVELOP A WORKFORCE STRATEGY..... | 9 |
| 2.7 | INITIATIVE E7: ENCOURAGE HIGH VALUE LAND USES IN NISKU..... | 10 |
| 3 | DIVERSIFICATION AND EXPANSION | 10 |
| 3.1 | INITIATIVE E8: SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF AEROTROPOLIS | 11 |
| 3.2 | INITIATIVE E9: SUPPORT INNOVATION IN BUSINESS | 11 |
| 3.3 | INITIATIVE E10: LEARN FROM ECONOMIC RESILIENCY..... | 13 |
| 3.4 | INITIATIVE E11: PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL SYNERGIES | 14 |
| 3.5 | INITIATIVE E12: EXPLORE AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION..... | 14 |
| 4 | INFRASTRUCTURE | 15 |
| 4.1 | INITIATIVE E13: DEVELOP AN ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (AMP)..... | 15 |
| 5 | COLLABORATION..... | 16 |
| 5.1 | INITIATIVE E14: MAINTAIN A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CITY OF LEDUC AND LEDUC REGION | 16 |
| 5.2 | INITIATIVE E15: MAINTAIN A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH CAPITAL REGION..... | 17 |
| 5.3 | INITIATIVE E16: PARTNER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH..... | 18 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 6 | MARKETING | 19 |
| 6.1 | INITIATIVE E17: MARKET THE COUNTY | 19 |
| 6.2 | INITIATIVE E18: DEVELOP ONLINE MARKETING TOOLS | 19 |
| 7 | GROWTH MANAGEMENT | 20 |
| 7.1 | INITIATIVE G1: ENCOURAGE BALANCED GROWTH..... | 20 |
| 7.2 | INITIATIVE G2: CONCENTRATE DEVELOPMENT TO MAXIMIZE SERVICE EFFICIENCIES..... | 21 |
| 7.3 | INITIATIVE G3: INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY..... | 21 |
| 7.4 | INITIATIVE G4: REVIEW OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING | 22 |
| 7.5 | INITIATIVE G5: ENHANCE FINANCIAL REPORTING & POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT | 23 |
| | CONCLUSION | 23 |

1 INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

The economic climate of Leduc County is ever-changing and moves in response to a variety of internal and external forces. As a result, a comprehensive strategy needs to be developed in order to manage the forecast population and economic growth in the region. The County's position in the wider Capital Region, as well as the high volume transportation corridors that run through it, makes the job of planning for growth and economic development especially challenging. A strong regional economy and dramatic population and employment growth have created the need for the proposed Economic Development and Growth Management Strategy (herein referred to as the EDGM Strategy).

PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The purpose of the Strategy has been to establish a framework that will assist with the County's expressed mission to develop strong, sustainable communities through relevant, innovative, responsible, and efficient growth and development.

STUDY AREA

The study area is represented by Leduc County which spans 105 kilometers east to west and 32 kilometers north to south abutting the southern boundary of the City of Edmonton. Many external factors will shape how growth and development unfold in the County. Owing to the size of the County and its asymmetric socio-economic character, the Economic Development and Growth Management Strategy undertakes an assessment of relevant economic sectors. So called "economic clusters" have been analyzed to identify economic drivers and development trends.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

OBJECTIVE

To develop a strategy for Leduc County that seeks to enable and encourage economic growth within the County that is sustainable and will benefit and enhance the community's well-being. This strategy is designed to be implemented over a 5 year timeline; in stages of short (1-2 years), medium (3-4 years), and long term (5 years and beyond). The implementation of the plan should be monitored to track the actions along with outcomes.

BACKGROUND OF THE STRATEGY

This report is an accumulation of significant background material and analysis which was used to fully understand the current state in the County. This information has also been used to develop an economic perspective on the role the County plays at the regional, provincial, national and international levels. The findings of this analysis have led to the development of a

strategy and accompanying actions intended to sustain and enhance the County's economic growth and prosperity. These recommendations are based on an understanding of the current economic and growth goals of the County and how to achieve them in a fiscally responsible manner. The context for this work includes the areas that both the County and its economic facilitator, the Leduc-Nisku EDA, have influence over. These initiatives are also strongly aligned with adopted County policies such as the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan.

During the development of this strategy, a number of regional economic initiatives have commenced which may impact the County and have, therefore, been incorporated into the research for this document. Among these are the Aerotropolis Viability Study, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Economic Development Initiative, and various other collaborative initiatives. Potentially, the greatest impact on the County will be the outcome of the Town of Beaumont and City of Edmonton proposed annexations which would prevent a significant amount of the County's industrial tax base to grow as currently planned. The Edmonton Annexation (if accepted in its entirety) would also remove integral economic drivers from Leduc County such as essential portions of the proposed Aerotropolis. This Economic Development and Growth Management Strategy has been developed based on the County boundary as of January 1, 2016.

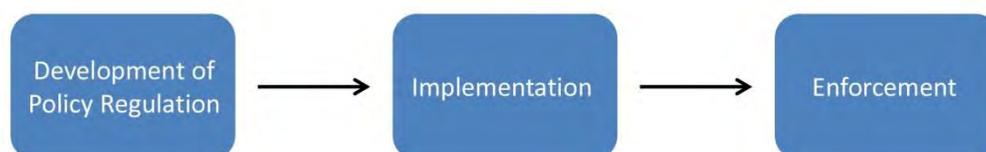
Through the consultation and engagement process for the Economic Development and Growth Management Strategy, a number of vital issues and opportunities have been identified. This strategy is formulated on the basis of these areas, why they are important to economic development, and what actions can be undertaken to assist with greater sustainable prosperity.

2 ECONOMIC STRATEGY DIRECTION

POLICY & REGULATION

The development of County policy and regulation can have a positive and negative impact on economic growth. It, therefore, requires careful consideration and a fine balance between implementing regulation that does not deter investment while also maintaining or improving the quality of life for community residents and/or the environment. A key element that is commonly overlooked in municipalities is the implementation of regular and ongoing monitoring to measure the performance and validity of policies and regulation. When monitoring and reporting are not in place, plans and policies can quickly become outdated or redundant, can result in frustration from stakeholders (including residents, elected officials and staff), and inevitably lead to scepticism and cynicism towards government. Those participating in the consultation have stated that plans need to be adhered to and policy either followed or changed.

Figure 1 - Current Situation



2.1 INITIATIVE E1: ESTABLISH MONITORING TEAM

Develop a County-wide monitoring team that establishes benchmarks for the economic, socio-economic and physical environment to measure achievement of adopted policies and plans and report regularly to council.

When plans and policies are monitored they provide quantitative and qualitative data on their effectiveness, which can assist in transparent and effective decision making and allow for more viable influence on external decisions beyond the County's control.

Figure 2: Proposed Monitoring System

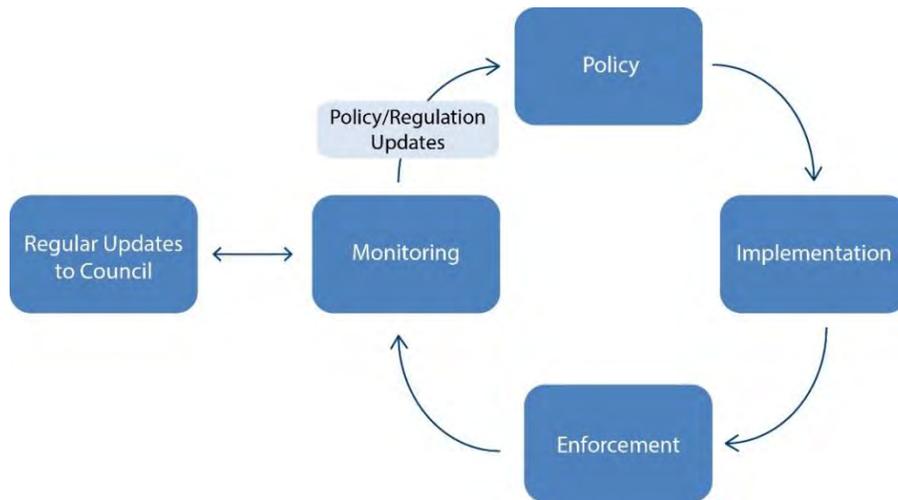
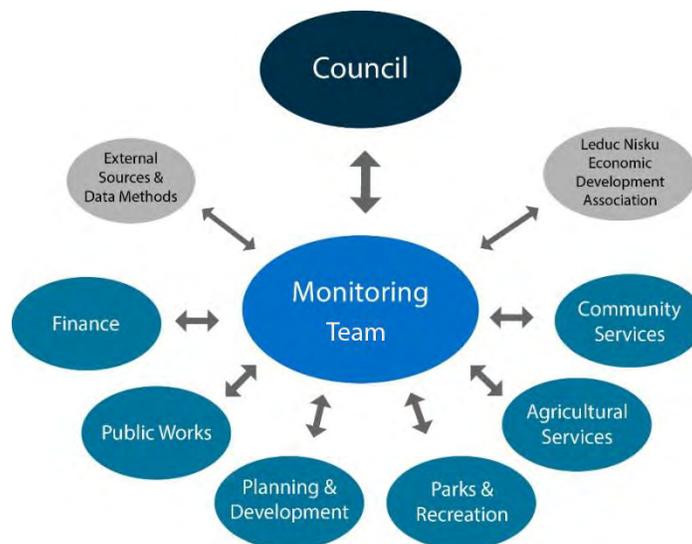


Figure 3: Proposed Monitoring System



| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| Year 1 | Obtain Council approval to create a terms-of-reference and establish a monitoring team. <i>Note: This can be an internal or external team established for the purpose of tracking goals and objectives set by Council.</i> | County |
| Year 1 | Identify opportunities to collaborate on establishing the monitoring system for joint initiatives with the City of Leduc for cost efficiencies. | County |
| Year 1 | Establish monitoring framework along with benchmarks and indicators required to carry out effective monitoring. | County |
| Semi-annual | Provide Council with semi-annual updates on performance measures. | County |
| Ongoing | Carry out gathering data for monitoring program. | County |
| Annually | Conduct annual scans to monitor property prices and tax base in comparison to other similar Municipalities to maintain competitive edge while maintaining measures on quality of life and the socio-economic and physical environment. | County |

2.2 INITIATIVE E2: MONITOR PLANNING PROGRESS

Update or develop monitoring program for key planning documents and report regularly to Council on progress.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| Year 2 | Review internal procedures to identify efficiencies in processing of applications and improving customer service experiences and expectations. (Could be included in terms of reference for Monitoring committee). | County |
| Year 2-3 | Establish tools for monitoring the performance of the updated Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw. <i>(In progress).</i> | County |
| Year 3 | Establish tools for monitoring the performance of a Master Servicing Plan to include all sanitary, water and stormwater facilities for the County. | County |
| Year 3-4 | Establish tools for monitoring the performance of a Transportation Master Plan that includes all modes of transportation. | County |

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| Year 4-5 | Establish tools for monitoring the performance of the 10 year Asset Management Plan which will be updated with the adoption of a new Municipal Development Plan, Transportation Master Plan and Master Servicing Plan. | County |

2.3 INITIATIVE E3: MONITOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Develop and implement a system to track businesses and increase understanding of business trends.

A significant recommendation intended to enhance the ability of the County to monitor business development is to create a cost neutral business permit system. Business permitting will aid in providing metrics to Council on yearly growth and development as well as provide an approved database for the Leduc-Nisku EDA to access for business engagement and promotion.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization |
|---------------------|---|--------------|
| Year 1 | Investigate a cost neutral Business Permit System to assist in tracking local business and economic patterns to assist with better understanding of economic trends. During semi-annual updates bring license updates to Council. | County |

2.4 INITIATIVE E4: MONITOR THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Develop and implement a system aimed at monitoring and preserving the agriculture sector.

The majority of stakeholders in the consultation process felt that appropriate planning as well as protection and monitoring of the use of agricultural land is the key to protection from the unwanted affects related to urban sprawl. The Class 1 and 2 lands on the Queen Elizabeth II Highway corridor location just south of Edmonton are some of the best and most productive lands in the Province¹. While it is clear that there is development pressure from a number of important projects including (but not limited to) the Edmonton International Airport (EIA) and the Nisku Business Park, as well as multiple residential developments, further loss of Agricultural land in that area was seen as a major concern. Concerns were also expressed regarding what constituted the size of an agricultural parcel and what activity / productivity was included in that assumption.

¹ Based on the FAR – Farmland Assessment Rating.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| Year 1 | Establish precise locations and effective agricultural and development guidelines for Prime Agricultural Land. | County |
| Year 2-3 | Create a catalogue database of all current agricultural land and further refine each parcel by an acceptable soil rating method. | County |
| Annually | Provide a yearly catalogue of crop / grazing land in use (by category). | County |
| Annually | Catalogue niche or diversified agricultural producers. | County |
| Annually | Monitor the loss of class 1 and 2 agriculture lands to development on an annual basis. | County |

2.5 INITIATIVE E5: DEVELOP AN AGRICULTURE STRATEGY

Develop an agriculture strategy aimed at protecting prime land and the integrity of the agriculture industry.

The annexations proposed by the City of Edmonton and the Town of Beaumont, if both granted in their entirety, would prevent the agricultural operators from utilizing valuable agricultural lands located south of Edmonton. After the annexation it is possible that additional valuable land for agricultural activities would then be consumed as residential, commercial or industrial development. Globally, the loss of prime agriculture land to urban development is placing pressures on our local food supply and agricultural viability.

Although the County does not have control over the annexation process, it can validate through planning policies that the County is effectively protecting the prime agricultural lands from urban encroachment.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Year 1 | Develop an agriculture strategy with a focus on the protection of prime agriculture land (<i>It is understood that this has been initiated as of the date of this report</i>). | County |
| Year 2 | Update the Municipal Development Plan to reflect the agriculture strategy and develop policies to protect prime agriculture lands. This may also include specifically identifying value added crops and production areas. | County |
| Year 3 | Update the Land Use Bylaw with regulations to protect agricultural lands. | County |
| Annually | Monitor the County and the Capital Region for the rate of reduction of agricultural land. | County |

2.6 INITIATIVE E6: DEVELOP A WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Develop a strategy to maintain a diverse and active workforce in proximity to major business nodes.

Recruitment of skilled workers and workforce availability is a key element in the creation of a business friendly environment; which in turn encourages business innovation and prosperity. Through the engagement process many stakeholders identified difficulty in locating and retaining staff, particularly in the lower income industry sectors.

Even if skilled workers are recruited there is also rising number of people who do not own a vehicle or have a driver's licence and are looking for alternative sources of transportation such as public transit, cycling, or walking. Understanding the balance between costs and providing infrastructure that supports and attracts the needs of a changing demographic workforce will be important in attracting new and diverse industries. In some cases when large organizations look to find a suitable location, particularly in higher-end industries, their criteria includes an environment that provides for the needs and expectations of their staff. Understanding these requirements will be important as part of a strategy to diversify and attract new industries to Leduc County.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Year 1 | Continue or enhance cost sharing / collaborations and marketing with Leduc Region Urban nodes to facilitate an increase in available workforce population. | County |
| Year 2 | Continue to enhance the understanding of the labour force requirements for targeted industries to relocate to a new industrial, agricultural or commercial site to Leduc County, through activities such as the Leduc-Nisku EDA labour force study (2014), investment attraction strategy and conduct new analysis for each new industry cluster being considered for attraction. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| As development dictates | Support the development of infrastructure that focuses on enhancing urban accessibility and quality of life for potential employees within new business growth nodes such as the proposed Aerotropolis. | County |
| Ongoing | Work to enhance and expand the profile of and access to the existing Leduc public transit system, in particular service to the Nisku Business Park. | County |
| Ongoing | Monitor and understand any technological changes that may alter how businesses function and what impact they may have on traditional methods of planning and infrastructure. (E.g. Possible new products include: drones for delivery systems, electric charge stations, self-driverless vehicles and 3-D scanners). | County |

2.7 INITIATIVE E7: ENCOURAGE HIGH VALUE LAND USES IN NISKU

Obtain higher value land uses in Nisku Business Park while meeting industry needs and optimizing tax revenue.

The Nisku Business Park contains pipe laydown and storage yards that support the oil and gas industry. However, the low capital investment in the development of these facilities results in low levels of land utilization and less desirable appearance. Higher intensity uses such as enclosed warehouse or office block on land would garner a higher value in the same location and, therefore, higher tax revenue for a given area. Laydown yards consume a lot of land area and the Nisku Business Park has limited capacity due to physical constraints such as the Queen Elizabeth II Highway, railway, and residential development to the east.

It is recognized that there is a need to provide land for these facilities, however, methods to encourage their location on lower value lands that still meet their business needs could be a focus for the County.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|---------------------|--|-------------------|
| Year 2 | Work with the industry to understand the needs of lay down yards and landowners to redeveloping brownfield sites. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Year 2 | Seek suitable locations for further developing the pipe and laydown storage yards industry. | County |
| Year 3 | Identify, through the development of the Municipal Development Plan, suitable alternative locations for the development of lay down yards. | County |

3 DIVERSIFICATION AND EXPANSION

The oil and gas industry is subject to unpredictability leading to volatility in the economy. Diversification is a necessary step to managing the downturns and creates a more sustainable future for business and government. Through the engagement for this study it was evident further diversification needed to happen. It also revealed that many companies that were solely oil and gas dependant had already learned, through previous downturns, to diversify to develop greater resilience in response to economic fluctuations. The lessons learned by these companies offer creative opportunities for the Leduc-Nisku EDA to harness that knowledge and enhance their business-to-business education programs where companies can mentor each other.

Currently the strongest economic driver for possible upcoming projects is the Aerotropolis. The Aerotropolis presents the newest economic opportunities to capitalize on in the areas of communication, information technology, life sciences, and education.

Based on the identification of key industry clusters using the North American Industry Classification Standards (NAICS)² and a comprehensive review of the Leduc County economic sectors and their growth potential, as well as the clusters and catalytic projects identified in the Aerotropolis Viability Study; the main areas of focus for the fastest economic turnaround would be manufacturing, office business park and warehousing developments in the Saunders Lake North and Highway 19 West areas.

3.1 INITIATIVE E8: SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF AEROTROPOLIS

Support the development of Aerotropolis in contributing to economic diversification and growth.

The Aerotropolis is viewed as a key catalyst to achieving economic diversification, the overall concept that captures on the existing great assets of the airport and rail is likely to lead to some form of development of these lands over the next 30 years. This presents an attractive way to diversify the economic base and present new opportunities for growth.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Based on approval | Market the Aerotropolis location to a variety of businesses once the AVS is approved and the governance model and marketing structure have been determined. | TBD |
| Year 1 - 5 | Work collaboratively with partners towards developing infrastructure to accommodate future development plans. | County |
| Year 3 - 5 | Align phased development plan with accepted policy documents, such as the Corporate Strategic Plan, the Municipal Development Plan and the Land Use Bylaw. | County |

3.2 INITIATIVE E9: SUPPORT INNOVATION IN BUSINESS

Seek out and identify emerging industrial / energy trends and understand their requirements for growth.

Innovation is critical to implementing successful business opportunities. The Capital Region hosts a significant number of higher education institutions. Devon is home to an important energy related federal research center and both the Provincial and Federal governments offer fiscal incentives for scientific research and product development. Attracting innovative business to the County will create synergies and could lead to redevelopment opportunities for existing businesses.

² NAICS – North American Industry Classification Standards (S)

It is also important that any economic development and resources related to these areas focus on those areas that have been identified as having the greatest opportunity for economic growth. These market sectors have been identified as part of this study.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Year 1 | Develop a database of industries in Leduc County with a breakdown of what they do as part of building up a wider monitoring program. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Year 2 | Create partnerships with Leduc Region and Capital Region education and research facilities that specialize in Industrial / Energy Sectors. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Ongoing | Focus growth on attracting businesses within the following market sectors: energy, advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics; and agri-business sectors. In the Saunders Lake Area Structure Plan focus on attracting: manufacturing, agri-business, ICT (information and communication technology), education offices; and warehousing. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |

3.3 INITIATIVE E10: LEARN FROM ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

Identify and work with existing community industries that have weathered previous declines in the oil and gas industry to learn their lessons and share knowledge with others through gathering data, information sharing, and mentorship.

Learn from current businesses responding to economic downturns to establish value-added approaches to diversification. These can be used to create a mentorship program for other local industry. Lessons on economic resiliency can be facilitated by the Leduc-Nisku EDA as part of their existing business services department.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Year 1 | Catalogue current businesses in the oil and energy sectors then conduct a needs assessment with them. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Year 1 | Carry out interviews and gather information from existing businesses on best practices that can be shared by other industries. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Year 1 | Develop a compendium of best practices and establish a business to business mentoring program to facilitate knowledge sharing on diversification and economic downturns between new and existing businesses in the County. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Ongoing | Provide support and assistance to both mentor and mentee companies as they work on diversification (this can include items such as meeting space or administrative support for mentorship meetings). | Leduc-Nisku EDA |

3.4 INITIATIVE E11: PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL SYNERGIES

Develop a policy dedicated to promoting synergies in the Agricultural Sector.

As in all industries there is a great deal of competition and the agricultural sector is no exception. Promotion of synergies and partnerships between agricultural producers could assist in strengthening more of a partnership instead of the individual farming relationship thereby creating a stronger voice with more promotional ability.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Year 1 | Create an Agricultural land inventory, including categories of products coming from each area. | County |
| Year 1 | Identify niche agricultural markets in the Agricultural land inventory. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Year 1 | Work with the County, City of Leduc and EIA to implement the Leduc-Nisku EDA agriculture cluster strategy that is currently being developed. | County |
| Year 2 | Work with CFA ³ , AFA ⁴ , AASB ⁵ and Leduc County ASB ⁶ to align agricultural economic development strategies for promotional synergies. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |

3.5 INITIATIVE E12: EXPLORE AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION

Develop a strategy to explore opportunities for secondary agricultural diversification in the industrial sector.

The agricultural sector has been supplying the industrial sector for many years with certain products for the manufacture of consumer goods such as rubber, printing ink, motor oil and cosmetics. There are further opportunities for expansion into other manufactured consumables that could be identified. It is also important to understand how to better utilize the export and import opportunities (both nationally and internationally) presented by both the airport and rail in accessing new markets.

³ Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

⁴ Alberta Federation of Agriculture.

⁵ Alberta Agricultural Service Boards.

⁶ Agricultural Service Board (Leduc County).

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Year 1 | Develop an agriculture strategy that takes into account an agricultural product diversification strategy and will work with key partners such as CFA, AFA and AASB to find synergies and opportunities. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Year 1 | Develop more efficient export and import opportunities as per the AVS. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Year 1 | Utilising the Leduc-Nisku EDA investment attraction strategy and agriculture cluster strategy identify new national and international opportunities to further local product sales. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |

4 INFRASTRUCTURE

The ability to enable and attract growth is dependent on infrastructure that can support the economic development. When growth outpaces the availability of critical supporting infrastructure, emerging opportunities can be lost and existing businesses and industries can become quickly frustrated. Categories of infrastructure include (but are not limited to):

- Interchanges
- Roads
- Public Transportation
- Active Transportation systems⁷
- Telecommunications
- Water, Stormwater and Sanitary Sewer Systems
- Fire protection facilities
- Public administrative and maintenance facilities

4.1 INITIATIVE E13: DEVELOP AN ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (AMP)

Develop, implement, and maintain a 10-year revolving Asset Management Plan (AMP).

Infrastructure and utilities are costly both on a capital (installation and replacement) and maintenance level (operation). An Asset Management Plan (AMP) is needed not only to provide fiscally responsible and defensible operations plans, but also to plan new development areas and timelines for those areas to be integrated into the County maintenance program once developed. An AMP is thus a tactical plan

⁷ Active Transportation refers to any form of human-powered transportation – walking, cycling, and using a wheelchair, in-line skating or skateboarding. There are many ways to engage in active transportation, whether it is walking to the bus stop, or cycling to school/work.

for managing an organization’s infrastructure and other assets to deliver an agreed upon standard of service. This type of investment allows for accountable budgeting with defensible decision-making, reasonable planning, and staffing of maintenance programs. An AMP also assists with grant funding and budgeting as with a revolving 10 year plan all Tangible Capital Assets⁸ (TCA) are properly monitored and reportable to other levels of Government.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Year 1 | Complete and adopt a 10 year revolving Asset Management Plan (AMP) for existing infrastructure and current maintenance requirement levels. The AMP will need to be updated on an ongoing basis but particularly upon completion of the MDP and other infrastructure master plans. | County |
| Year 1 | Carry out semi-annual monitoring of the AMP and report to Council as part of the overall monitoring program. | County |
| Annually | Align the County budget to be consistent with actions of the 10 year AMP. | County |
| Year 3 | Prioritize new infrastructure investment with the AMP based on approved economic and strategic policy and direction. | County |

5 COLLABORATION

Economic development activities and initiatives, while having possible “site specific” influence, cannot operate in isolation. Leduc County and its economic development partner, the Leduc-Nisku EDA, must collaborate with the regional, provincial, national and international communities in order to remain competitive.

5.1 INITIATIVE E14: MAINTAIN A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CITY OF LEDUC AND LEDUC REGION

Continue to collaborate and promote a positive working relationship with the City of Leduc and Leduc region.

⁸ Tangible assets include both fixed assets, such as machinery, buildings, roadways, utilities and land.

The County and the City of Leduc have a strong working relationship which continues today as both look to obtain capital and operational efficiencies for their rate payers. Initiatives of this nature should be encouraged particularly in understanding the infrastructure needs for target market sectors in assisting to locate and establish their operations in the respective jurisdictions. The County also has strong working relationships with other municipalities in the Leduc region and these relationships should continue to be encouraged and enhanced.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------|
| Year 1 | Work towards a successful Joint Infrastructure Master Plan and Services (JIMPSE) Evaluation with the City of Leduc, to create an integrated strategy for the joint development of prioritized transportation, water, sanitary, sewer and storm water projects. ⁹ | County |
| Ongoing once approved | Work with the City of Leduc, Edmonton International Airport (EIA) and Leduc-Nisku EDA towards the development of the Aerotropolis. | County |
| Year 2 | Continue to monitor the performance and validity of Inter-municipal Development Plans (IDP) on a regular basis. | County |

5.2 INITIATIVE E15: MAINTAIN A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH CAPITAL REGION

Maintain a strong working and partnership relationship with the Capital Region and its members to build a collaborative and cooperative business environment.

Leduc County is a part of the Capital Region along with 23 other municipal partners. The draft Edmonton Metropolitan Region Economic Development Initiative (EMREDI) is an economic development framework which seeks to market the region as a whole. It has five cornerstone components which have an impact on the local and sub-regional levels: Innovation, Collaboration, Sustainability, Excellence, and Respect. The strategy is focused on work in three key areas: marketing, industry, and talent. Leduc County contains essential infrastructure (EIA, Foreign Trade Zone and the Queen Elizabeth II Highway) which is critical to the Capital Region's success at the local, provincial, national and international level. Leduc County should actively participate in existing or future initiatives to market the region as a whole.

⁹ Based on the tender for JIMPSE competition ID 2-159934 www.competitiononline.com

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Ongoing | Continue to advocate to the Capital Region Board the specific advantages of Leduc County, so the regional level understands how to market the sub region in an accurate fashion. | County / Leduc-Nisku EDA |

5.3 INITIATIVE E16: PARTNER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

Continue and expand collaboration with other economic drivers and those that create barriers to economic growth.

There are many stakeholders in the economic realm. The County should consider partnerships with other municipalities, other levels of government, non-government organizations, and private sector entities. It is important to pursue and establish relationships, be informed of the challenges and opportunities for economic development, and be involved in providing constructive initiatives to assist with overcoming the barriers.

Leduc County has been successful in developing Inter-municipal Development Plans (IDP) that focus on building collaboration, cooperation and governance with other communities that they border such as the City of Leduc and Town of Devon. These statutory documents have created a formal framework in working with other communities on the land uses that lie adjacent to their respective boundaries. Exploring additional opportunities to formalize IDPs with other communities that border the County can enable a structure for building on mutual areas of interest and developing formal dialogue. As with the success of the IDP with the City of Leduc the focus should be on collaboration and coordination and not on annexation (Section 6.6.1 of IDP). It is recognized that the development of an IDP and the role it serves will only work with the support and leadership of the respective Councils of the partnering communities.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Year 1 | Update existing IDPs and explore opportunities to collaborate with other communities that border the County to develop an IDP. | County |
| Ongoing | Develop ongoing relationships with a variety of organizations in order to understand the needs and opportunities to support the County with economic development, and identify how the County can assist other agencies to remove potential barriers to growth. | County / Leduc-Nisku EDA |

6 MARKETING

Leduc County as a member of the Leduc-Nisku EDA should create a market strategy and brand for its specific needs which would be a complementary asset to the regional marketing strategy.

6.1 INITIATIVE E17: MARKET THE COUNTY

Develop County-specific marketing strategies to attract business and support economic growth.

Marketing Strategies must carefully consider and target specific audiences and desired outcomes, such as attracting new business, supporting economic growth, attracting skilled workers, and maintaining growth.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Year 2 | Create specific marketing strategy for the Nisku Business Park concentrating on desired industries for the Park. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Year 2 | Develop a marketing strategy for Leduc County agriculture within the context and work of the agriculture cluster strategy already in development at the Leduc-Nisku EDA. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Year 3 | Develop a marketing strategy to attract population and skilled workers within the regional workforce development strategy to the Leduc region. | Leduc-Nisku EDA |
| Year 3 | Monitor the strategies and inform Council on their performance. | County |
| As needed | Develop marketing strategies for other areas including Tourism and Parks and Recreation to draw more people to the Leduc Region once the Regional Tourism Asset Assessment and Tourism Industry Cluster Strategy that is being reviewed as a potential 2016 activity by the Leduc-Nisku EDA is undertaken. | Leduc-Nisku EDA / Leduc Regional Chamber of Commerce |

6.2 INITIATIVE E18: DEVELOP ONLINE MARKETING TOOLS

Develop online marketing tools to increase access to information for growing and new businesses to support economic growth.

The growth and power of the internet is very evident in today's society. People rely on internet channels as a primary source of information, a vehicle for communication, and as a critical business tool. A well-designed, comprehensive online system is an essential component of any municipal economic development strategy.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Year 1 | Enhance the County’s website with business-friendly links to information that meets business needs in seeking to locate or expand in the County. The information should include market data, provide background on existing industries and businesses, information on transportation systems, and guides to planning approvals. | County |

7 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The County should strive to ensure there is balanced growth in urban residential growth nodes. By having sufficient non-residential development in each urban growth node, the non-residential assessment base can be used to subsidize the costs of providing services to residential development and tax rates can be maintained at reasonable levels. Enhancements to the non-residential assessment potential of urban residential development will contribute to the overall fiscal capacity of the County.

7.1 INITIATIVE G1: ENCOURAGE BALANCED GROWTH

Encourage a balance in growth between the residential and non-residential assessment base to help balance costs and revenues.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Ongoing | Continue to pursue balanced growth through industrial and commercial development at a rate that at minimum will keep pace with residential development. | County |
| Year 1 | Identify a residential/non-residential tax assessment goal. | County |

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Consideration should be given to the location of future major employment areas and urban residential growth in the County to maximize the financial benefit of these growth areas. It is expected that there are synergies of having workers located within close proximity to employment opportunities. As a result, planning for the location of residential development near employment centres will help to maximize the potential for these businesses being successful in attracting the required workforce.

7.2 INITIATIVE G2: CONCENTRATE DEVELOPMENT TO MAXIMIZE SERVICE EFFICIENCIES

Concentrate development to take advantage of existing infrastructure and mitigate future costs of expanding or extending services to new areas.

| ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME | ACTIONS | ORGANIZATION LEAD |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Ongoing | Locate new development in close proximity to existing development and infrastructure to maximize municipal service delivery efficiencies. | County |
| Ongoing | Direct growth to existing planned areas (i.e. East Vistas) to minimize the financial risk to developers and the County associated with the costs of infrastructure. | County |

7.3 INITIATIVE G3: INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY

Explore opportunities to enhance the long-term financial sustainability of the County through managing growth in a way that maintains a responsible balance in the tax structure that reflects the revenue and costs associated with growth areas.

While urban residential development does not unto itself make a positive net contribution to the County's financial picture, it may be preferable for the County to pursue this type of development to provide a location for jobs to support the non-residential development in the County and to achieve other objectives. As a result, it is prudent to consider options to allow for urban residential development that minimize its negative financial implications.

One opportunity to achieve this would be to contain the financial impacts of future urban residential growth nodes to the growth node itself thus limiting the impact of this type of growth on other ratepayers in the County. To this end, the County could options to mitigate financial impacts of urban development on the remainder of the County.

| ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME | ACTIONS | ORGANIZATION LEAD |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Year 1 | Define an urban growth area and explore options for establishing a differential tax rate to be set for the urban and rural areas of the County. | County |
| Year 1 | Explore cost and revenue sharing opportunities and arrangements with adjacent municipalities. | County |

OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

It is recommended the County review its current policies respecting how off-site linear infrastructure improvements will be funded and develop a comprehensive off-site levy bylaw that would include all future growth areas in the County.

7.4 INITIATIVE G4: REVIEW OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Review the approach to funding for off-site infrastructure to minimize risk and debt load for the County.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Annually | Review the cost of off-site infrastructure requirements to support growth in all approved growth areas of the County. | County |
| Ongoing | Monitor capital funds available from senior levels of government and third party sources. | County |
| Annually | Monitor debt limits for both current and projected debt levels. | County |
| Year 1 | Develop information that will prioritize funding decisions around municipally financed off-site infrastructure. | County |

COUNTY FINANCIAL REPORTING & POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

In order for the County to develop a better understanding of the costs and revenues associated with the various growth areas in the County, the County should consider setting up processes to collect and track data associated with future development.

7.5 INITIATIVE G5: ENHANCE FINANCIAL REPORTING & POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Ensure the full financial impact of development is understood in considering new Area Structure Plans to protect the County's financial sustainability.

| Estimated Timeframe | Actions | Organization Lead |
|---------------------|--|-------------------|
| Ongoing | Require proponents of development to define infrastructure requirements and costs for both on-site and off-site infrastructure at the time of ASP application. | County |
| Annually | Track municipal revenues and costs to service approved development areas. | County |
| Year 1 | Develop an internal 'made in Leduc County' debt limit. | County |
| Annually | Develop fiscal capacity measures and monitor the County's progress in maintaining 'balanced growth.' | County |

CONCLUSION

The Leduc County Economic Development and Growth Management Strategy (EDGM) is an important planning tool in providing clear direction to both the County and Leduc-Nisku EDA in the future directions taken towards economic development and growth of the overall County. Through thoughtful and carefully managed growth, a strong focus on economic development opportunities, and the use of strategic partnerships, Leduc County is in a position to maintain its position as a strong force in the region.