

*2018 Recommended Budget*

# Executive Summary





# Message from the Chief Commissioner



**S**trathcona County introduced its first corporate business plan in 2015. Since then, we have made significant advances in our approach to business planning and budgeting. We have implemented innovative priority-based budgeting (PBB) and other tools to advance many of our priority goals. Our first four-year business planning cycle draws to a close in 2018. As we prepare for the second (2019-2022) iteration of corporate and department business plans, we look forward to continued improvements, as we apply what we have learned.

It bears repeating that our priority approach is about more than simply saving dollars. It is about making sure our resources are directed at the right things – at the right levels. It requires that we challenge our assumptions about ‘the way we get things done’ and what success looks like. More is not always better.

Foundational to this approach is sound planning, because resources and capacity are finite. Knowing what our priorities are ensures we stay on track. Knowing our limits and setting boundaries ensures we pace ourselves as we move toward our desired destination. A solid understanding of our capacity for debt and risk tolerance allows us to make sustainable decisions.

Our strategic plan sets out the long-term vision (2030) and articulates community priorities. Council reviews the order of these priorities each year to ensure continued relevance, and to enable us to adjust our shorter-term focus as necessary. This dialogue will continue with a new Council at the January 2018 strategic planning session.

Budget 2018 represents our second full year of looking at PBB programs to identify opportunities to improve program delivery, and allocate resources to community priorities. In addition to now having some excellent information to support evidence-based decision making, and to help us with our analysis, we have in-house experience with the process that will provide the support we need going forward. We expect this approach will continue to improve our outcome for the benefit of our citizens.

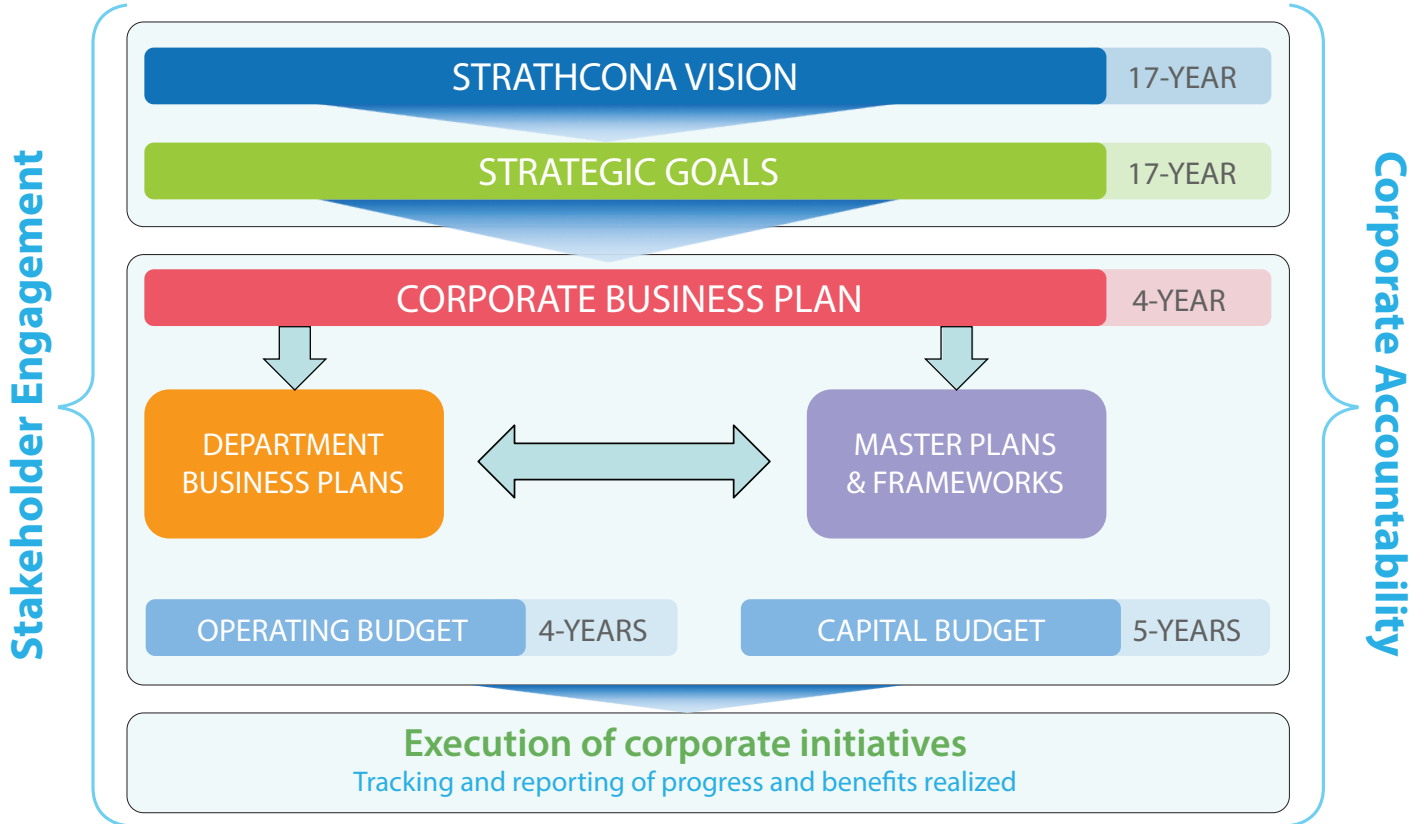
As our first planning cycle draws to an end, we can point to a number of accomplishments over the past three years, demonstrating progress within each of our 12 prioritized strategic goals. We will continue to seek improvement in the areas of planning and performance measures, as we embark on our next iteration of corporate and department business plans. We will continue to pursue our vision of becoming “Canada’s most livable community.”

I am pleased that Strathcona County continues to set the standard in terms of how municipalities plan and deliver sustainable programs and services, and to develop creative solutions to emerging issues.

The foundation of our approach has been built over many years. These people had the courage to set direction through community priorities, and had the conviction to hold the line when other opportunities or challenges might have distracted. Budget 2018 represents the continuation of this journey – we still have a ways to go.

**Rob Coon**  
*Chief Commissioner*

# Planning Framework



## Our vision

We aspire to be Canada's most livable community.





# Our priorities

Strathcona County's strategic plan sets out 12 prioritized strategic goals, based on community feedback and the desired future for our community.

- 1 Strategically manage, invest, and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure
- 2 Increase and diversify the petrochemical business
- 3 Advance the community's interests by developing and maintaining strong relationships with our neighbouring municipalities and civic organizations to ensure long-term prosperity
- 4 Increase public involvement and communicate with the community on issues affecting the County's future
- 5 Increase and diversify agricultural business
- 6 Promote Strathcona County locally, nationally and internationally as a place that is open for business and investment
- 7 Build strong neighbourhoods/communities to support the diverse needs of our residents
- 8 Promote a climate of safety for individuals in homes, neighbourhoods and public places
- 9 Improve the efficiency of resource usage; minimize the volume of waste and its impact on the community
- 10 Conserve representative ecosystems
- 11 Ensure facilities and activities are available, accessible and used by residents
- 12 Define and strengthen the community's identity and heritage



# Budget 2018 focuses on priorities

*The recommended 2018 budget continues to use a priority lens to view and assess new resource requests, including initiatives, staffing and capital projects.*

## *New / ongoing initiatives coming forward through department business plans:*

- Initiate the Area Redevelopment Plan for Centre in the Park
- Implement key concepts, practices and technology solutions defined within the corporate asset management framework to enhance planning, core service delivery, performance management and support services
- Complete a feasibility study to further examine the Community Hub/Seniors Centre concept
- Continue implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS), planning for the next five-year period (2019-2023) and the new 15-year strategy
- Complete the Transit Fare Strategy, by implementing the Mobility Bus Fare Alignment
- Develop a strategic energy demand management plan to align with the provincial Climate Leadership objectives, prioritize energy efficiency projects, identify new alternative energy technologies, and project funding options
- Review offsite development levies (philosophies, rate model and processes)

# Continuing to improve program and service delivery



*We owe it to our community to find new and better ways of doing business. Strathcona County is committed to finding efficiencies and enhancing effectiveness throughout the organization so we can continue to provide high quality of life with the greatest value for tax dollars.*

The recommended 2018 budget reflects the second year of implementing priority-based budgeting to review and assess programs.

Priority-based budgeting enables Strathcona County to better understand the programs it provides citizens and businesses; how much they cost, and how they reflect and address community priorities. Priority-based budgeting information, together with other data and considerations, helps Strathcona County develop sustainable budget recommendations.

We will continue our focus on specific program-level opportunities for study, as recommended by the Center for Priority-Based Budgeting. The five areas of focus for study at the program level for Budget 2018 development include:

1. High-cost, high-priority program areas and how these might be delivered more efficiently

2. Programs not mandated and not strongly connected to priority results
3. Fee review for programs serving a small portion of the community and subsidized by tax dollars
4. Programs that are less aligned across priority results are not mandated to be provided, are available in the market place, and do not fully recover their costs
5. Overall review of current priority-based budgeting programs, as well as identification of future years area of study

Priority-based budgeting program information helps support evidence-based decision making in budget development, and complements other information that Strathcona County utilizes, such as an integrated strategic and business plan framework, prior spending patterns and analysis, efficiency opportunities, performance measures, customer feedback, capacity considerations and other external factors.

# Examples identified through priority-based budgeting programs:

- Realigning position duties within Planning and Development Services, following the 2017 retirement of an industrial liaison contract position
- Recommending fare parity as part of the Mobility Bus Fare Alignment Initiative (which reviewed three Mobility Bus programs), while anticipating increasing service demands
- Integrating asset management information and GPS technology to redirect resources from water valve turning to the rural flushing program, increasing system reliability, making it easy to find valves, and reducing maintenance resources
- Reallocating Utilities staff between programs to ensure the highest priorities are met
- Reducing the number of annual P3 snow clearings budgeted for urban winter maintenance from three to two, based on lower number of events over the past three years





# *Examples of efficiencies and enhanced effectiveness include:*

- Acquiring new, up-to-date LIDAR (light detection and ranging) data to improve efficiencies, reduce the need to access properties, and lessen the amount of field verifications required
- Analyzing 2017 Budget for water purchases against actuals in 2016 led department to budget for the purchase of lower volumes of water in 2018
- Implementing a more coordinated approach to advertising cross-departmental initiatives (e.g.: SC Alerts); thereby, eliminating duplication and realizing cost savings
- Enhancing the role of Family and Community Services, recognizing the role of social service agencies within Strathcona County where appropriate to deliver better and aligned services
- Continuing to employ the Electronic Voice Entry Unit to improve support to RCMP members through efficiencies in file preparation and conclusion, allowing RCMP members more time for patrols
- Partnering the Domestic Violence Unit with Family and Community Services, ensuring a more seamless transition from investigation to support for victims of family violence
- Partnering with Planning and Development Services to offer online dog registration and licensing to allow easier access for residents
- Investigating potential increase in use of taxi services as part of the Mobility Bus Fare Alignment Initiative
- Using data from fleet management software to create enhanced maintenance plans that will reduce duplicate maintenance activities and prevent costs related to failing to perform timely maintenance
- Partnering with the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) to negotiate rates for fuel and realize cost savings
- Continuing with the Lean Six Sigma 5S Program (a program that teaches ways to create high-performing processes and workplaces) to enhance efficiencies within the Fleet department
- Leading enterprise-wide roll out of the 2017 GIS Imagery (oblique and orthogonal) to increase efficiency and effectiveness and improve decision making for all departments that leverage GIS imagery as part of their business operations



# Measuring our performance

*To drive continuous improvement and enhance decision making, we have built accountability into each step of the planning process. We monitor strategic direction and operational performance, as well as long-term direction at the level of strategic priorities through our corporate business plan progress and performance reporting.*

We are accountable to the community for our progress and performance, as well as the fiscal costs and resources used to achieve our desired goals and objectives.

Our strategic goals identify the long-term achievable actions that must be accomplished for the success of our vision. Outcomes describe the result of what will occur when the strategic goal is reached.

Progress on corporate business plan goals and performance measures are provided to Council as part of quarterly management reports. The corporate business plan goals that are reported demonstrate linkages back to the strategic plan prioritized goals.

Departments also track performance measurement at an operational performance level. These reports are now available on the County website, and in Strathcona County's open data portal.

**At the strategic and corporate level: are we aligned with the achievement of prioritized strategic goals?**

## *Example indicators:*

- Overall citizen satisfaction with quality of life
- Citizen satisfaction with opportunity to express opinion
- Residential / non-residential tax revenue ratio
- Overall citizen satisfaction with quality of service



At the operational level: are we progressing on the goals of the department business plans and how are we doing delivering programs and services?

## *Example performance measures:*

- Citizen satisfaction with Green Routine for waste services
- Overall road quality visual condition index and citizen satisfaction with road maintenance
- Emergency preparedness - residents prepared for 72 hours without assistance
- Annual transit ridership

Strathcona County will continue to improve its performance measurement and management system maturity, to improve engagement in a measurement and accountability work culture, and to drive improved decision making across the organization. This means that as performance is evaluated, the organization first analyzes how it is performing towards its strategic goals, and then studies how effective the strategic planning and management processes are and adapts as necessary. Excellence in strategic and performance management drives continuous improvement in how we work.

# Advancing community priorities

## *2015 - 2017 business plan accomplishments*

While all of Strathcona County's strategic goals are important, having them ranked by Council allows the organization to invest strategically and direct effort and resources to those areas deemed most important over the course of the four-year business plan cycle (2015-2018).

Since 2015, when we introduced our first four-year corporate business plan and began to investigate the innovative priority-based budgeting (PBB) process, Strathcona County has made solid strides in advancing all of these goals.

### *Goal 1: Strategically manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure*

- Completed studies on major road networks, such as Alberta's Industrial Heartland functional planning study, transportation model update and development expansion area
- Completed major intersection and road improvements
- Developed master plans for water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure to establish servicing strategies for future development areas
- Continued to advance capital projects supporting growth for Ardrossan
- Advanced Utilities' asset management through long-term infrastructure renewal strategy and implementation plan
- Completed Wastewater Cost of Service study
- Completed the Fleet and Transit reserve contribution model that ensures funding for future capital requirements
- Completed the Fleet Asset Reliability model

### *Goal 2: Increase and diversify the petrochemical business*

- Supported industrial development
  - » Kinder Morgan in conjunction with Keyera, Strathcona Industrial Area
  - » Enbridge new tank installations
  - » Imperial Oil upgrades
  - » Air Products upgrades in Sherwood Park and Alberta's Industrial Heartland
  - » Keyera rail terminal yard
  - » PL propane dehydrogenation (PDH) and polypropylene facility
- Supported petrochemical business through safe planning and collaborative partnerships through fire protection engineer practices

### *Goal 3: Advance the community's interests by developing and maintaining strong relationships with our neighbouring municipalities and civic organizations to ensure long-term prosperity*

- Partnered with regional, development, industrial, and transportation partners to optimize and coordinate growth opportunities, including regional growth plan and Alberta Transportation long-range plans and regional traffic models
- Formed the Social Framework Steering Committee, which included leaders from education, emergency services, faith communities, government, health, housing, social serving organizations and the library
- Improved relationship between internal and external partners for traffic safety, as demonstrated by the Strathcona County Traffic Safety Advisory Team (T-SAT), the School Traffic Safety Partnership (STSP) and the Capital Region Intersection Safety Partnership (CRISP)
- Advanced on the Smart Fare/Smart Bus project with our regional partners
- Completed the Community Hall Sustainability Review, which resulted in a stronger partnership with our community hall associations and an enhanced focus on facility maintenance and asset planning
- Developed working partnerships with the City of Edmonton, ATCO Gas, and Imperial Oil

### *Goal 4: Increase public involvement and communicate with the community on issues affecting the County's future*

- Completed public engagement consultations, including: the social framework, dog bylaw, community halls sustainability strategy, traffic calming, and municipal development plan
- Established an open data program
- Continued to streamline, formalize and enhance the County's social media presence
- Reviewed, redesigned and upgraded Strathcona County's external website
- Contracted Insightrix Research Inc. to provide the platform for the County's Online Research Panel (ORP), an inclusive and accessible opt-in community of Strathcona County citizens who are asked to take part in interactive surveys, polls and online forums to provide feedback on municipal issues, policies and initiatives

### *Goal 5: Increase and diversify agricultural business*

- Developed the award-winning agriculture master plan
- Developed the award-winning urban agriculture strategy

### *Goal 6: Promote Strathcona County locally, nationally and internationally as a place that is open for business and investment*

- Created the Foreign Direct Investment Strategy
- Created the Strathcona County Development Readiness Strategy
- Developed Economic Sector Analysis and Diversification Review
- Supported new businesses in Sherwood Park

### *Goal 7: Build strong neighbourhoods/communities to support the diverse needs of our residents*

- Approved and adopted the new Social Framework that outlines a collective, community vision promoting a new way of thinking and working together to create a supported, safe and connected community
- Began implementation of a new transit fare strategy that is affordable, consistent and convenient

### *Goal 8: Promote a climate of safety for individuals in homes, neighbourhoods and public places*

- Implemented the rural traffic safety program
- Developed public safety education and emergency preparedness programs to be a better prepared and more disaster-resilient community
- Improved education and awareness of fire code compliance
- Completed extensive wildfire reduction work in Strathcona County

### *Goal 9: Improve the efficiency of resource usage; minimize the volume of waste and its impact on the community*

- Implemented a multi-tenant waste diversion program
- Increased transit ridership

### *Goal 10: Conserve representative ecosystems*

- Obtained UNESCO Biosphere designation for the Beaver Hills Initiative

### *Goal 11: Ensure facilities and activities are available, accessible and used by residents*

- Opened Emerald Hills Leisure Centre, Emerald Hills Sports Pavilion and newly renovated Glen Allan Recreation Complex
- Continued development of River Valley Alliance/Trans Canada Trail

### *Goal 12: Define and strengthen the community's identity and heritage*

- Planned and delivered Canada 150 celebrations and park improvements
- Acquired art pieces for the new facilities in Strathcona County





# Your tax dollars at work

**S**trathcona County continues to be a leader in service delivery. We are proud to provide some of the highest levels of service anywhere to citizens and businesses.

*Five divisions across the organization – Infrastructure and Planning Services, Community Services, Corporate Services, Financial and Strategic Management, and Senior Administration – work together every day to deliver cost-effective programs and services that improve citizens' quality of life and help them succeed.*

*Budget 2018 ensures resources are directed toward essential programs and services that our citizens have come to expect each day. A small sample of what your tax dollars support is shown in the following pages.*

*Numbers are estimates based on 2016 values.*

# We keep you safe



**11,827** residents engaged in community safety education



**28** peace officers and **96** police officers responded to **38,497** calls



**154** full-time and **37** part-time emergency responders tend to over **7,941** emergency calls



Service a fleet of **89** transit buses, including **19** double deckers for a total of **1.55 million** transit rides

# We keep you moving

Maintain **1,711 km** of urban and rural roads and **229 km** of trails



Provide over **21,067** accessible transportation rides





## We support a strong and resilient economy

11,000 businesses and establishments




Commercial, industrial, institutional and residential construction valued at \$343 million




Issue 1,373 development permits and 1,042 permits for new residential units



## We reduce environmental impact



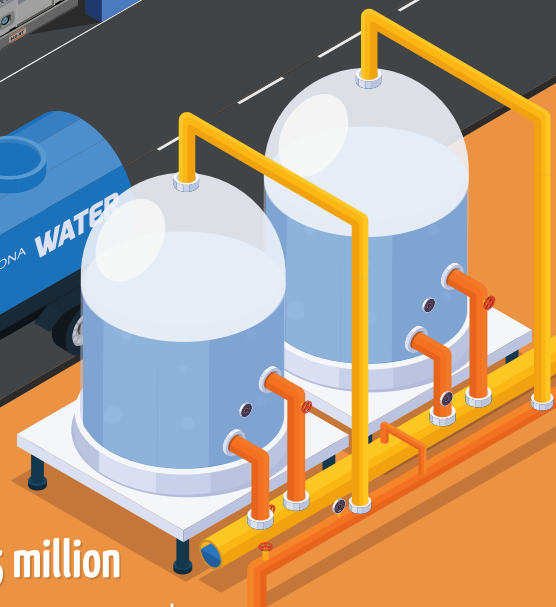
Collect 6,038 tonnes of material per year for recycling



Distribute 33.2 million litres of water per day through 593 km of underground pipes (mains)



Treat 20.5 million litres of wastewater per day



# We support healthy, active lifestyles



Provide for more than **1,585,299** library, bookmobile and online library visits



Operate **12** main recreation facilities



Accommodate **1,155,000** admissions to our facilities



# We keep you connected



Over **15,000** likes on our Facebook pages



**1,677** posts & tweets



**36,000** clicks, shares or comments



Over **7,000** followers on Twitter

**18** staff crafting messages and/or monitoring across departments