

Priorities Committee Meeting_Apr17_2018

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Agriculture Master Plan Update

Report Purpose

To update the Priorities Committee on the implementation of the Agriculture Master Plan.

Council History

September 29, 2015 – Administration provided the Priorities Committee with the Implementation Strategy for the Agriculture Master Plan.

June 23, 2015 – THAT Council approved the Agriculture Master Plan. THAT Council directed Administration to bring forward an implementation strategy that outlines the prioritization, timeline and costs required to develop implementation plans for each category area identified in the Agriculture Master Plan to the September 29, 2015 Priorities Committee Meeting.

March 31, 2015 - Administration provided the Priorities Committee with an update on the progress of the Agriculture Master Plan.

December 10, 2013 - Council approved the development of an Agriculture Master Plan for Strathcona County through the budget process.

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Economy: Identification, diversification, and barrier removal for agri-business

Governance: Supports strategic plan to diversify agricultural business

Social: Taking a leadership role in creating and providing opportunities for residents to strengthen community identity, connect with agricultural roots, and offer diversity in lifestyle choices

Culture: Preservation and encouragement of maintaining an agricultural lifestyle

Environment: Promotion of agricultural stewardship and best practices

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Legislative/Legal: n/a

Interdepartmental: Planning and Development Services, Economic Development and Tourism, Recreation, Parks and Culture, Enforcement Services, Family and Community Services, Transportation Planning and Engineering

Summary

Strathcona County developed an Agriculture Master Plan (AMP) in 2015 to provide long-term priority for agriculture in our community.

Strathcona County, as Canada's most liveable community, is distinguished by its agricultural heritage that builds on history and responds to opportunities as a leader in the Capital Region in the provision of a broad range of agricultural and food opportunities as well as agri-food related services to one of Canada's fastest growing metropolitan regions.

The AMP outlined four planning principles that act as underlying themes throughout all implementation of the Plan:

Supporting Policies - The long-term success of agriculture in a metropolitan context can only be assured with strong supporting and integrated land use, food and agriculture sector development and infrastructure policies.

Agriculture Land Conservation - The conversion or fragmentation of large tracks, primary or unique agriculture lands to non-agriculture uses to accommodate growth (residential, commercial, industrial) will only be done as a last resort.

Shared Leadership - The advancement of agriculture requires shared leadership including the municipality, residents and stakeholders within Strathcona County and the Capital Region.

Proactive Agriculture - Changes in agriculture are both continuous and considerable, requiring dynamic and proactive approach in response to emerging trends and opportunities both urban and rural.

Five strategies fall under the AMP, each being developed over the years following approval of the Implementation Strategy.

Urban Agriculture Strategy – Accepted by Council November 2016

- This strategy outlines a specific vision for urban agriculture in Sherwood Park and our rural hamlets (Enclosure 1).
- Strategy areas are scheduled to be turned into working programs over three years following the completion of the strategy
 - Community garden and school garden programs were created in 2017.
 - This year, eight community garden applications were received. A total of seven are in operation.
 - We currently have 19 schools participating in the school garden program.
 - Direction for an urban chicken program was presented to Council in May of 2017. Following a motion from the Agricultural Service Board, this program was not supported.
 - Research continues on the application and scope of: edible landscaping, urban farming, and a “bee healthy” campaign.

Land Use and Development Strategy – Completion anticipated June 2018

- The focus of this strategy is on removing land use barriers to the establishment and expansion of agriculture in our community.
- The Municipal Development Plan (2017) was reviewed with the intent to be able to see some form of agriculture in every land use area within Strathcona County. Council approved the MDP on September 5, 2017.

Agricultural Governance Strategy – Completion anticipated June 2018

- Build the organizational capacity needed to execute the Agriculture Master Plan and any future agriculture growth and innovation in the community.
- Create a shared understanding on the uniqueness of the agriculture in Strathcona County across the Capital Region.
- Increase the profile of agriculture as a central element of the community and the organization.

Food and Agriculture Sector Development Strategy – Anticipated start Fall 2018

- Food and agriculture sector development refers to attracting new diverse enterprises and to building a support network to encourage current agriculture and food endeavors within Strathcona County.
- Sector development also refers to investigating resource availability, especially to new and young producers, and the building of community support.
- We will identify areas of support in our infrastructure that could be changed to help further support agriculture and its movement to market.

Agri-Tourism Strategy – Anticipated start Fall 2019

- Agri-tourism refers to the opportunity to discover agriculture through experiential education in a variety of forms, including but not limited to, single outings or multi-day experiences.
- We will work to connect with current agri-tourism operators to see how we can help to promote business and experience.

Enclosures

- 1 Agriculture Master Plan
- 2 Urban Agriculture Strategy
- 3 Implementation Strategy