

Department business plan update

Transportation and Agriculture Services

Mission Statement

Inspire community by enabling safe travel and agriculture.



Department overview

Transportation and Agriculture Services (TAS) is committed to supporting our residents and other levels of government through the delivery of programs and services in the areas of Public Works, winter maintenance, Right-of-Way Management and Agriculture.

Across all department programs, we provide the essential infrastructure and services that contribute to a high standard of quality of life for residents throughout urban and rural Strathcona County.

Enabling safe travel speaks to the function of the department to ensure residents can move safely throughout our network of roads and walkways in every season. The work we do to enable agriculture involves the protection of soil and water, pest and vegetation control, along with education and awareness to ensure a strong rural community and lifestyle.

Core business functions

- 1 Winter maintenance
- 2 Public Works – urban and rural
- 3 Agriculture
- 4 Right-of-Way Management



Core function highlights

1 Winter maintenance

Enables safe travel for residence on our roads, trails and sidewalks throughout the winter months. County crews are available to respond 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

- Snow removal/ice control
 - Urban roads
 - Rural roads
 - Residential roads
 - Trails

- Focus on improving accessibility of trails
- Additional operational equipment was placed throughout the rural area
- Fully transitioned to digital snow clearing progress maps to support the continuous improvement of winter operations and efficient oversight for supervisors



Winter stats and facts

1

Snow route clearing event

0

Residential clearing event

3

Parking lot clearing events on County lots

717

Vehicles moved after verbal warnings and door knocks

44

Parking tickets issued

61

Vehicles towed

2,920 tonnes

Chips used

3,800 tonnes

Sand used

2,560 tonnes

Salt used

Winter policy Opportunities

- Review ice control standards for trail network and residential sidewalks
- Review current approach to the sidewalk clearing bylaw. Complaints continue to not result in customer satisfaction
- Continue to assess approach to the hamlet of Ardrossan's local roadways
- Assess the ongoing approach to Country residential subdivisions with curb and gutter



Upcoming core function highlights

2 Public Works – Urban and rural

Maintain the essential infrastructure and services important to both urban and rural Strathcona County residents.

- Road maintenance
 - Trail maintenance
 - Parking lot maintenance
 - Sidewalk and curb repair
 - Sign installation (new) and maintenance (existing)
 - Airport management
 - Airport maintenance
 - Drainage and ditches
 - Asset management
 - Street sweeping
- Increased training program for equipment operation
 - In-house developed training program has replaced third party training.
 - Online tool supports the adaptive training needs of our operations team with senior operators leading field level training
 - Specialized training this summer with our paving crew with industry leaders
 - Culvert installation best practice and training
 - Industry training opportunities for internal paving crew

Upcoming core function highlights

3 Agriculture

A strong rural community and lifestyle is supported through a combination of annual, operational programs and long-term strategies and plans.

- Vegetation control
- Pest control
- Weed inspection and enforcement
- Soil and water conservation
- Brushing
- Agriculture development and strategic planning
- Rural outreach and support
- Community Gardens
- Agriculture permits
 - Firearms Discharge Permits
 - Animal Over-Limit Permits
 - Apiculture Permits
- The Weed Inspection and Rural Roadside Vegetation Control Programs will be administered at the pre-COVID service level
- A rural roadside mowing wet blade pilot program will be conducted on select roads south of Highway 16
- Additional pest control staff hired to assist with increased beaver management cases
- The services provided by the Contact Offices, located in Fire Stations 2 and 4, will be evaluated while the stations remain closed
- The Community Garden program continues to grow, and communication and processes regarding the program will be refined
- Brushing – reviewing priorities and program delivery

Agriculture Master Plan Update

Food and Agriculture Sector Development Strategy

- Commence development

Responsible Livestock Ownership Bylaw

- Continuing to work towards development completion. Survey feedback is under review to further address public and animal health, and responsible livestock management for the protection of the agricultural economy and the environment.

Bremner House Heritage Site

- A draft Bremner House Heritage Site recommendation report has been completed, in collaboration with the Bremner Heritage Site Advisory Committee, which outlines site goals, actions and an implementation plan.

Upcoming core function highlights

4 Right-of-Way Management

Operations and management activities are overseen for public safety and protection of infrastructure. This includes overseeing permitting processes that manage temporary traffic control, work zone safety and restoration requirements for roadways.

- Right-of-Way Construction Activity Permits (ROWCAP)
- Road Use Agreements (RUA)

- Collaboration and communication with PDS continues to focus on customer service and delivery



Successes and challenges

- Successes
 - Virtual engagement on the draft Responsible Livestock Ownership Bylaw
 - Staff working remotely at full capacity and maintaining service level
 - Staff finding creative ways to stay connected
 - Improved service delivery for trail snow clearing, supporting increased passive recreational use of trails.
 - Alignment shown across the division as TAS and TPE continue to collaborate on transportation road program delivery.
- Challenges
 - Continued challenges with program delivery within covid
 - Balancing operational approach with impact to the residents
 - Balancing fleet utilization with rented equipment

COVID Impacts

- Staff impacts
 - Team remains at full capacity
 - Team is working a mix of onsite and remote while retaining a high level of engagement
 - Adjusted operational staff start locations using temporary locations at SPSY, Josephberg and other rural satellite locations to minimize numbers gathering.
 - Adjusted contact office model to focus on reaching out to community groups to offer support.
- Service impacts
 - Services have continued to be delivered with minimal impacts on service level
 - Manual processes have transitioned to electronic processes
 - Strathcona Public Service Yard (SPSY) and Contact offices remain closed to public access
- Financial impacts
 - Reduced professional development costs and mileage
 - Additional vehicle rentals to ensure physical distancing

Initiatives

Department strategic initiative:

- **Pointe-aux-Pins Acres (The Point)**

Strathcona County's Pointe-aux-Pins Acres will be a destination where residents from across the County can enjoy agricultural, community and social events.

- The current status of The Point is as follows:

- Issuing of tender documents in Q1
- Award of contract and commencing of construction in Q2
- Commencement of transition of the operations of the facility from Agriculture Services to Recreation, Parks and Culture to occur in Q2



Pointe-aux-Pins Acres (The Point) - Status

Overall Initiative Status



Initiative status	Current status	Previous status
Time	Y	G
Scope	G	G
Budget	G	G

Alignment to Strategic Goals

- Goal 2: Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure

 - Accessible cultural, recreational and social infrastructure
 Goal 5: Foster collaboration through regional, community and governmental partnerships.

 - Seek out unique partnerships that align with project principles
 Goal 7: Provide opportunity for public engagement and communication

 - Community is informed about County decisions
 - Community is satisfied with opportunities to provide input, including rural perspective
 - Public engagement efforts and information sharing mechanisms are innovative and accessible

Key Deliverables

- Construction of a multi-purpose agricultural facility and site that allows the County to fill the need for “Agri-recreation” infrastructure. The facility and site will:

 - Enable residents to be healthier, active, vibrant, and creative through participation in agricultural and related activities
 - Help the County become a champion for advancing diverse agricultural business
 - Help the County preserve its agricultural heritage
 - Create a heightened sense of community throughout the County
 - Be open to the general public
 - Be multi-purpose in nature, meeting the needs of agricultural groups including, but not limited to: 4H, equine, livestock, trade shows, rodeo, hosting special events, and enabling other non-traditional agriculture to occur

Opportunities/Challenges

- Create a unique destination for Strathcona County
 - Creating a layout that is multi-purpose in nature and best meets the needs of various user groups and stakeholders

Risks

The requirements of the community and region are quite diverse. With the goal of being multi-purpose it is essential to balance the need of all users and potential users so that the facility can be utilized to its fullest.

Mitigation

The development of an allocation policy and guidelines will ensure transparency to user groups in the prioritization and booking of schedules.

Initiatives

Department annual capital initiatives:

- Annual Rural Road Rehabilitation Program
- Annual Urban Road Rehabilitation Program
- Annual Asphalt Trail Rehabilitation Program
- Annual Parking Lot Rehabilitation Program



- ❖ Improved coordination and consistency of transportation road program delivery including consistent communication, charter development and regular PM updates and discussion

Department Annual Capital Programs - Status

Overall initiative status



Initiative status	Current status	Previous status
Time	Y	G
Scope	G	G
Budget	G	G

Alignment to strategic goals

Goal 9: Continuously improving the way we work, as one organization, in an agile and sustainable manner

- Supports infrastructure management
- Supports insight-driven/evidence-based decision making
- Engages stakeholders in decision making

Key deliverables

- Rural Roads Rehabilitation Program which includes Country Residential Rehabilitation, 6-8km of Class II road improvements including some Class II road widening
- Annual Urban Roads Rehabilitation Program which includes: 8-9 km of residential and Collector streets, 3-4 km of Arterial and Industrial roadways
- Annual Parking Lot Rehabilitation Program: Approximately 20,000m2 of parking lot reconstruction
- Annual Asphalt Trails Rehabilitation Program: rehabilitation of 2 km asphalt/concrete pathway

Opportunities/Challenges

- Balancing rehabilitation projects with weather and contractors while limiting impact on our residents has and continues to be a challenge. With more focus on communications and service culture we are able to better inform and prepare neighborhoods and residents for the activity.

Risks

As neighborhoods age and traffic changes the roadway infrastructure requires rehabilitation. A number of roads within our newer neighborhoods (that have not seen previous rehabilitation) are getting to the time where rehabilitation is required. This has increased the annual rehabilitation need and stretched our budget dollars.

Mitigation

By working through level of service decisions as part of the Corporate Asset Management Plan and Rural Road Master Plan Update, we will be able to better forecast and predict rehabilitation needs and therefore better balance our funding needs.

Initiatives

Department improvement initiatives:

- Sustainable Rural Roads Master Plan (SRRMP)
- Rural gravel road rehabilitation

Sustainable Rural Roads Master Plan

- Detailed engineering review is underway with a focus on the 3 themes from resident feedback:
 1. Road condition
 2. Traffic amount
 3. Road width
- Opportunity for feedback in coming months to ensure we heard accurately through last round of public engagement
- Final SRRMP Update to be presented in Q3



Sustainable Rural Roads Master Plan (SRRMP) - Status

Overall Initiative Status



Initiative status	Current status	Previous status
Time	Y	G
Scope	G	G
Budget	G	G

Alignment to Strategic Goals

- Goal 9: Continuously improving the way we work, as one organization, in an agile and sustainable manner
- Supports infrastructure management
 - Supports insight-driven/evidence-based decision making
 - Engages stakeholders in decision making

Key Deliverables

This update to the 2010 Rural Roads Master Plan will be a full review including public engagement, levels of service, and a review of maintenance plans and processes, culminating in a final report that will outline:

- Current state of rural road network
- Desired levels of service
- Maintenance program improvement plan
- A report decision making hierarchy could be established in case there is a conflict between the ITMP and SRRMP

Opportunities/Challenges

Resident needs and desires have changed over the years, as have maintenance techniques and materials. With these updates we will be able to look at different options and create clear standards to meet the needs of our community and infrastructure.

Risks

The balance of meeting the needs of residents and road users with their expectations of what surface types are and how they can perform will be a ongoing risk to the project. Materials used in some surface types have established an expectation for roads to look like an asphalt surface but performance of the surface will meet the need.

Mitigation

The update of the Sustainable Rural Roads Master Plan will provide updated maintenance standards and see a clear direction for sustainable management and maintenance of the complete rural road network. The overall review of the road network and proposed improvements to functional classifications will support the service levels and surface types on all roadways. The update will provide clear treatment timing for our operations team to continue to maintain the road network to the expected standards.

Rural Road Gravel Program

- As part of the Rural Road Master Plan update, gravel roads have been an important conversation. We have heard that base improvements and paver laid plant mix dust control have been successful; though we need to work on improving the surface material.
- Approximately 20km of gravel roads will be improved under the 2021 program work.
- Continuing improvements this year, all dust-controlled gravel for the program will be laid with a paver. We will be changing to a medium cure (MC250) dust control oil product in the plant mix which we expect will provide a harder surface in efforts to support the unravelling we have been seeing at agricultural accesses caused by equipment turning movements.



Rural Road Gravel Rehabilitation - Status

Overall Initiative Status



Initiative status	Current status	Previous status
Schedule	G	G
Scope	G	G
Budget	G	G

Alignment to Strategic Goals
<p>Goal 9: Continuously improving the way we work, as one organization, in an agile and sustainable manner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports workplace culture that builds trust and promotes employee contribution • Leverages tools (i.e., technology) to assist in service delivery • Supports development of employee capacity through training and development

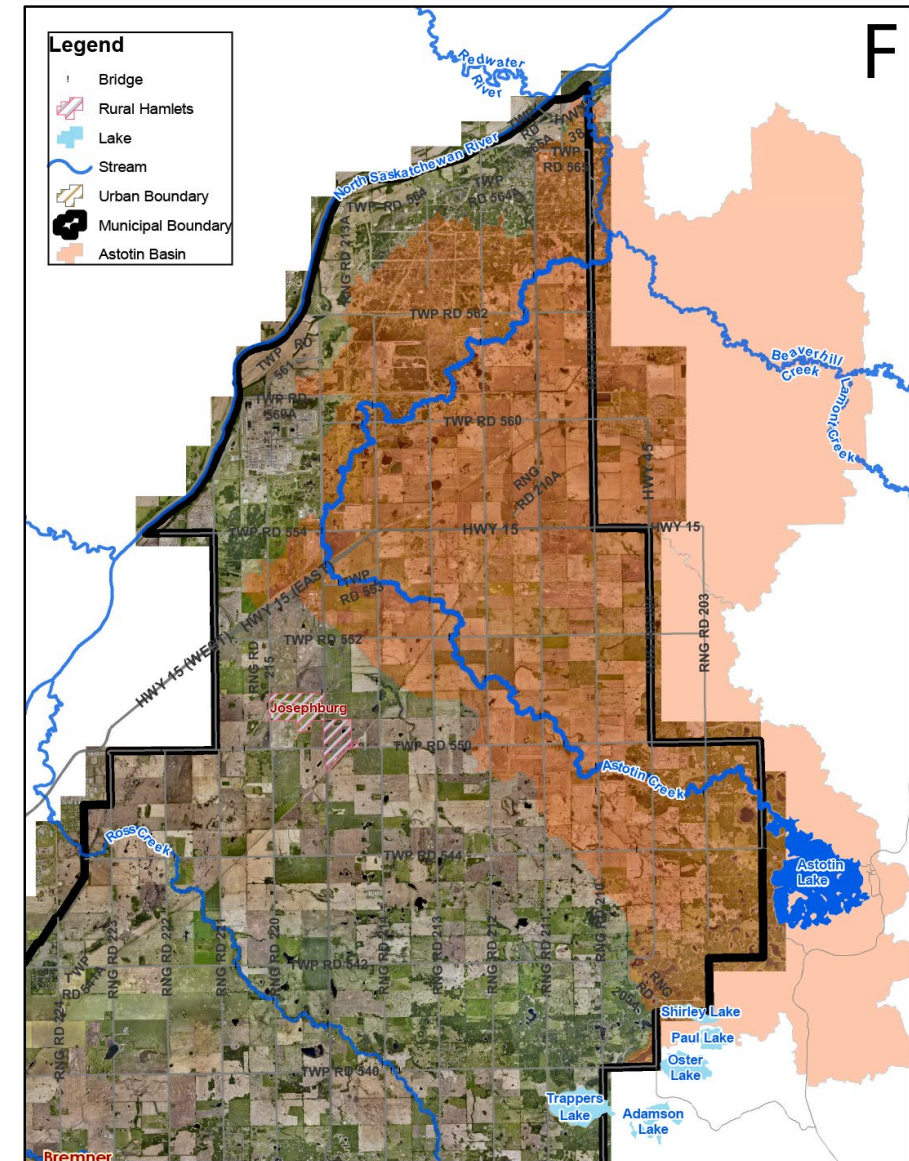
Key Deliverables
<p>This program is continuing, in conjunction with our regular maintenance program, on improving the rural gravel road networks most needed roads by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilizing base failures • Widening road widths • Identifying road edges • Developing road crown • Bound asphalt surface

Opportunities/Challenges
<p>The allocation of additional dollars has improved the road base and overall road condition and has allowed us to address some off the worst roads. The need for a harder surface to withstand turning movements has caused us to re-evaluate the types of oils used and there is opportunity to try a different oil.</p>

Risks	Mitigation
<p>Gravel roads within Strathcona County are our lowest volume roads and are all built differently depending on the soil types in the area, and no proper road base exists on these roads creating difficulty in maintaining. There is also varying degree of user desire for the roads, from asphalt surfaces to straight gravel.</p>	<p>The update of the Sustainable Rural Roads Master Plan will provide updated service and maintenance standards through public engagement. These level of service and standards will allow us to clearly communicate and meet service levels.</p>

Astotin Creek Study

- Astotin Creek Study is in progress
- Priorities Committee received a detailed project update on progress and next steps
- This project is being lead within the Planning and Development Service department with TAS team members supporting the historical and operational aspects.



Department scorecard

Metric	Goal	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 Q1
Inquiries received <i>#CC cases</i>	n/a	6753	6613	7044	7415	1094
Timely inquiry handling <i>Completed within SLA target</i>	85%	69.9%	78%	71%	76%	82%
Average case duration <i>Average number days to close a case</i>	8	23.55	14.3	14.33	15	7
Employee engagement <i>This metric captures overall engagement rate.</i>		75%		62%	62%	TBD
<i>*Data below based on 28 surveys completed Jan-Mar</i>						
Customer satisfaction <i>This metric reflects how satisfied our customers are with the service we give them regarding their inquiries or cases.</i>	85%		52%	70%	71%	63%
Response is professional <i>This metric reflects customer opinion of professionalism of staff regarding their inquiries or cases</i>	85%		65%	79%	81%	71%
Response is timely <i>This metric reflects customer opinions of timeliness of response regarding their inquiries or cases</i>	85%		67%	76%	86%	75%
Customer call backs complete <i>Managers calling customers within five days of their request is a reflection of how important customer service is in our department.</i>	90%		73%	76%	90%	75%

Employee engagement

Engagement survey theme	Engagement initiative	People Plan focus area
Recognition and rewards	Sharing and celebrating kudos, find out how staff like to be recognized	Positivity
Leadership Communications	Leadership training for leaders, regular Leadership team meetings to ensure regular communications and consistency	Clear Purpose Leadership
Communications Staff and resources	Reinforce County Connect standards and Service Principles to ensure service expectations, staff training in customer service	Accountability
Leadership Career growth	Encourage staff participation in corporate and department committees, team building to further develop networks, newly formed Engagement Committee, develop team charters to assist in creating shared purpose how we interconnect	Team Clear Purpose

Questions?

