

Agriculture Master Plan 2023 update

Priorities Committee Meeting
June 13, 2023

Overview

- Agriculture in Strathcona County
- Agriculture Master Plan
- Implementation journey
- Current initiatives
- Summary

Agriculture: Yesterday



Agriculture in our community is diverse, ever-changing and unique.

- Of historical importance
- A significant reason of how we came to be here
- More than just an industry, and is an integral part of our community life

Historical photo credit: Strathcona County Museum and Archives
Photographer: C.W. Mathers, taken prior to 1905

Agriculture: Today

- 501 farms
- 168,128 acres of field crops
 - Canola
 - Wheat
 - Hay and forages
 - Barley
 - Other
- Strong livestock sector
 - 369,310 chickens
 - 11,287 honeybee colonies



Agriculture Master Plan

Strathcona County, as Canada's most livable community, is distinguished by its **agricultural heritage**, that builds on history and **responds to opportunities** as a leader in the Edmonton Metropolitan 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.



Implementation

- 4 planning principles
 - Guiding tenants that provide structure to agricultural considerations for service delivery
- 37 potential actions
 - Identify areas to be explored through implementation; validated and interpreted for current organizational and community context.



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-agricultural 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.

Project work



Program work

- Community Garden establishment
- School garden partnerships
- The Pointe
- Tourism Product Development Plan 2022
- Agriculture Impact Assessments for greenfield development
- *You Can* business videos
- Rural mental health initiatives
- Pollinator garden establishment
- Edible garden establishment
- Bremner Heritage Site Master Plan Update
- Expansion of farmer markets
- Advisory services to partner organizations (e.g., Edmonton Global)
- Livestock Bylaw Programming

Agri-Tourism

Tourism Strategy developed in 2020

- Agri-tourism identified as a focus area.

Product Development Plan in 2022

- Identified experiences to support local operators and to attract visitors
 - Long table dinners
 - Open Farm Days
 - Our rural life event

We are engaged with local agricultural operators and experienced providers and are working to support them through multiple channels.



Agri-Tourism

Business support:

- Weekly blog
- Webpage updates
- Story telling maps

Industry support:

- Tourism Action Advisory Committee
- Exploring offering tourism grants
- Tourism Industry Conference



Being in the agricultural and food industry we love to see the support for agri-tourism here in the County and we truly see the opportunities that exist and that Strathcona County cares and is willing to work with businesses to reach their goals and dreams. I would say the continued cooperation and assistance from Strathcona County is all we can hope for! Thanks again for a great event!

Regional Agriculture Master Plan

- Developed by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board
- Approved December 2022
- Regional plan to manage land use for the future of agriculture
- Creates a policy framework that balances our need to develop and grow with the conservation of prime agricultural land



Agricultural Service Board modernization

- Review the Agricultural Service Board Bylaw, procedures and practices to ensure:
 - They are meeting the needs of both our provincial obligations and the unique need of agriculture in our community
 - That Council is receiving agricultural advice to make well supported decisions regarding agriculture



Next: Agriculture and Food Sector Development Strategy

- Transforming Strathcona County into an ideal location for agriculture and food production and processing
 - Confirming
 - Identifying
 - Reviewing
- Providing a path forward to grow the industry through improving investment



Ag and food sector engagement

- The strategy will be informed by public and stakeholder input, along with industry analyses, Acts and Regulations, strategic alignment, policy imperatives, and financial and budget considerations.
- This is our community's agriculture and food strategy. Its foundation must reflect our shared community values.



Get involved!

Public engagement

June 2023 | Everyone

Survey & farmers markets

Summer/Fall | Stakeholders

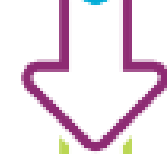
Conversations with agriculture & food industry

Fall/Winter

Feedback & revisions

Mid 2024

Strategy finalized



Summary

Agriculture continues to be a priority in our community and to our organization.

