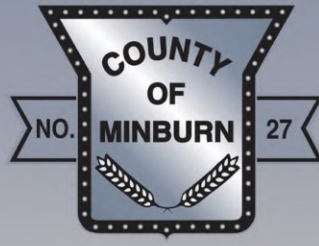




# *Strategic Business Plan*

2020–2025





# MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

## *Focusing on the Year 2030*

### Mission Statement

The County of Minburn No. 27 is a rural municipality that provides excellent community, recreation, and infrastructure services to our residents and commercial enterprises in a timely and efficient manner.

### Vision Statement

The County of Minburn No. 27 is focused on establishing sound governance, financial, and economic growth strategies that will bring the County stability and success into the year 2030 and promote a continuation of our proud rural traditions and lifestyle.

### Values

Accountability  
Transparency  
Dedication  
Efficiency  
Reliability



# COUNTY OF MINBURN NO. 27

## 10 Key Objectives

1. Focus on our Vision for the year 2030.
2. Provide fair and equitable governance to the entire County.
3. Offer the most efficient and cost-effective services possible.
4. Develop and maintain safe and viable communities.
5. Be a local government that is conducive to and welcoming of economic development
6. Think and act in a regional manner and maintain strong relations with neighbors and partners.
7. Be accessible to the public and communicate in a timely and effective manner.
8. Remain accountable for decisions made and dollars spent.
9. Continually seek to improve the quality of life for residents.
10. Be adaptive to changes arising from internal and external sources.





## ***What exactly do municipalities do?***

Municipal government is widely regarded as the most grassroots level of government as it is responsible for day-to-day issues many of us rely on, including infrastructure maintenance, fire protection, potable water, solid waste management, and sanitary sewer to name a few. The role of local government has been evolving since Alberta's entry into confederation; however, the most profound change occurred in 1994 with the passage of the *Municipal Government Act*, which provided a host of new responsibilities and powers for municipalities. This act received a significant amendment in 2017.

As per that Act, municipalities exist to: provide good government; to foster the well-being of the environment; to provide services, facilities and other things, that in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality; to develop and maintain safe and viable communities; and to work collaboratively with neighboring municipalities to plan, deliver and fund intermunicipal services. In other words, municipal governments exist to serve a community and provide services, and the operation of a local government is becoming increasingly complex given often changing legislated requirements and increased responsibilities.

In terms of rural municipalities, infrastructure is one of the largest priorities given the need to service large geographical areas with reliable roads and bridges year-round. Funding these infrastructure needs, in addition to the many other responsibilities, is often problematic, as costs increase, regulations change, liability increases, and funding decreases. And given that property taxes are the main source of revenue for municipalities, local governments must be both careful with the dollars they collect and ever cognizant of the unstable revenue source they rely on.

## ***The County of Minburn No. 27***

The County of Minburn has a population of 3,188 and covers an area of approximately 55 miles (88 km) east to west and 30 miles (48 km) north to south, encompassing 41 townships. The County is made up of a large rural area, and also includes the Hamlets of Lavoy, Ranfurly and Minburn. Within the County's boundaries is the Town of Vegreville and the Villages of Innisfree and Mannville. As a result of both urban and rural influences, the County offers residents a relaxed yet vibrant lifestyle.

County residents are fortunate the town, villages and hamlets offer well established education, cultural and social services. The County supports each of our urban neighbors and local societies in their operation of key facilities and programs.

Highway 16 (Yellowhead Trans-Canada Highway), Highway 36 (Veterans Memorial Highway) and the network of high-quality secondary highways and local roads provide all residents with easy access to any of their destinations. Given its location, the County is a natural center for road, railway, and air transportation services, and all these are provided within its borders.

The County is governed by seven elected councillors from the seven electoral divisions, who are charged with considering the needs of the municipality as a whole and developing and evaluating policies and programs of the municipality. County administration is based at the County office in Vegreville, with operations employees located at public works shops in Vegreville, Lavoy, Innisfree and Mannville.



# SWOT Analysis

## (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats)

A SWOT Analysis is used to assess an organization's current position before it embarks on long-term strategy and goal setting. The County of Minburn believes the below findings represent the primary factors confronting us over the next 5 years.

### Strengths

- Knowledgeable and committed staff
- Strong infrastructure and equipment maintenance program
- Lean operations
- Low-employee turnover
- Decent resident satisfaction
- Excellent teamwork

### Weaknesses

- High Tax Rate in relation to neighboring rural municipalities
- Declining assessment in the non-residential sector
- Relatively few policies (more case-by-case decision making)
- Lack of long-term plans, strategies, and vision
- Weak communication with ratepayers
- Limited use of technology
- Under utilization of other municipalities resources
- Geographic tension within County
- Infrastructure deficit on bridges

### Opportunities

- Potential for further intermunicipal collaboration
- High Economic Development potential
- Incoming assessment growth potential via wind and pipeline projects
- Service reviews have not been undertaken

### Threats

- Legislative and assessment changes from provincial government
- Cuts to provincial transfer payments
- High resident expectations
- Declining and uncertain NR assessment;
- Succession planning w/ senior staff
- Increasing OH&S and environmental regulations from higher levels of government
- Uncertain economic climate in key industries
- Long-term viability of villages within the county
- Lack of infrastructure studies and plans
- Long-term gravel supply
- Significant tax delinquency rate

# SERVICE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## A. Transportation Services

### Goals:

1. To respond to road repair, snowplowing/sanding, maintaining in a timely manner.
2. To develop the best road maintenance plan and be as cost efficient as possible.

### Objectives:

Prepare policies for the carrying out of winter, summer and construction issues related to:

- a) timing of regular maintenance
- b) road priorities
- c) conditions prompting special maintenance
- d) operator evaluation
- e) operator upgrading
- f) snow clearing and maintaining on private property
- g) road construction/repair and bridge standards
- h) give consideration to environment concerns wherever required
- i) brushing program – short or long term

## B. Administration

### Goals:

1. To have highly skilled employees in every position with all positions filled strictly on a merit basis.
2. To ensure enough employees are in place to lessen costly errors, liability and build up of work not being done on a timely basis.

### Objectives:

- a) To have a cost effective training program in place for employee upgrading.
- b) All policies to be up-to-date and appropriate to effective and efficient operation of the County.
- c) On an ongoing basis review and update or discard all existing policies and add new policies where required.
- d) Be prepared to absorb villages that are dissolved.



## **C. Taxation**

### **Goals:**

1. To maintain taxes at the current level and/or reasonable level.

### **Objectives:**

- a) Gradually decrease public expectations with respect to municipal services if Council decides to reduce the service levels.
- b) Broaden the tax base with economic development initiatives.
- c) Review status of County-owned land and other property to determine if sale or other revenue generating use can be developed.
- d) To keep taxes in line with similar municipalities.

## **D. Cost Control**

### **Goals:**

1. To provide services to the residents of the County of Minburn No. 27 by effectively and efficiently managing the human and financial resources of the municipality.

### **Objectives:**

- a) To utilize budgets, forecasts and variance analyses to manage the municipality's finances.
- b) To ensure that financial records are prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for local governments established by the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.
- c) To ensure that risk assessment procedures are implemented to prevent misstatement in audited financial statements.
- d) To manage human resources - ongoing employee performance evaluations for compensation and/or transition to other positions within the organization, provision of access to training and development to enhance employee skills.
- e) To evaluate County of Minburn No. 27 performance with other municipalities - review budgets, financial statements.
- f) To provide financial reports to Council on a regular basis for review, discussion and appropriate action.

## **E. Relationships with Residents and Taxpayers**

### **Goals:**

1. A public perception reflecting the reality of a positive, service-oriented Council and Administration.
2. Full and open communication with taxpayers and residents of the region.
3. Promote public participation in County activities as required.

### **Objectives:**

- a) Council and administration to actively work to be accessible to any member of the public wishing to be heard.
- b) Council and all employees to ensure public requests are met with a polite and informative response.
- c) Establish a process for key actions and decision of Council to be provided to local public media with appropriate background.
- d) Council members to strive for increased one-on-one communication with individual residents.

## **F. Relationship with Other Government Bodies, Organizations and Businesses**

### **Goals:**

1. Promote communications and intermunicipal cooperation with other municipalities within the County region and with other nearby municipalities.
2. Effective communications with federal and provincial governments to ensure local voice is heard at senior levels.

### **Objectives:**

- a) Work to maintain the current positive and cooperative action relationships with representatives of all municipal authorities in the County region and other nearby municipalities and AAMD&C.
- b) Work toward a stronger relationship with other organizations such as Health, Emergency Services, Library Boards, Chamber of Commerce, Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), Agricultural Societies, Police Commissions, School Boards, Health Boards, Parks and Recreation Boards, etc. and local businesses where possible.



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- c) Establish and maintain positive relationships with local MLA's and MP's and keep them informed of local position on pertinent issues.

## **G. Relationships Between Council and Municipal Employees**

### **Goals:**

Develop a working relationship of mutual trust and respect between Council Members and Municipal Employees.

### **Objectives:**

- a) Develop a process of official recognition of special achievements by staff and Council.
- b) To learn and develop new ways to improve County government.
- c) Promote the concept of a team approach to doing the work of the municipality.
- d) Encourage employees to follow the chain of command and work efficiently with the supervisors to achieve a high rate of work performance.
- e) Develop a policy for compassion and loss.

## **H. Public Health Services**

### **Goals:**

- 1. Provide support for proper health services including hospitals, clinics, mental health facilities and community health sites and a variety of health care programs for our residents.
- 2. Provide support for an Advanced Life Support ambulance service for our residents throughout the County.
- 3. Participate with other municipalities in physician recruitment and identifying health care needs of the community.

### **Objectives:**

- a) Actively provide support when health issue needs arise.
- b) Work with the Ambulance Contractors in its efforts to resolve any ambulance service issues.



## **I. Recreation and Cultural Services**

### **Goals:**

1. To provide a fair level of funding for recreation and library services.
2. To provide support for the organizations and urban centers that provide recreation services for the County residents

### **Objectives:**

- a) Provide positive encouragement of projects on a case by case basis.

## **J. Agricultural Services**


### **Goals:**

1. To act as an advisory body and work with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development in matters of mutual concern.
2. To develop policy which organizes and directs weed and pest control, and soil and water conservation programs.
3. To promote and enhance environmentally sustainable agriculture with a view to improving the economic viability of the agriculture producer.
4. To encourage and support 4-H and other agricultural youth programs.

### **Objectives:**

- a) To promote and develop agricultural policies to meet the needs of the municipality.
- b) Ensure that Agricultural Service Board programs are conducted in a manner which promotes good public relations with County ratepayers, Councillors, administration staff, Provincial and Federal Government agriculture staff.
- c) Prevent flooding of agricultural land which is caused by beaver activity.
- d) Enforcement of provincial legislation (Weed Control Act, Soil Conservation Act and Pest Control Act) as delegated by the Minister of Agriculture.
- e) To work jointly with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development and staff, and other municipalities in areas of mutual concern.
- f) To demonstrate the use of environmentally sustainable agriculture practices and promote their use to local producers.



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- g) Ensure that all municipally owned property (road allowances, etc.) be monitored and treated for noxious weed infestations.
  - h) Ensure that government grants are administered effectively and in a proper manner.

## **K. Water/Wastewater Services**

### **Goals:**

1. To provide for waterworks, sanitary sewer and garbage systems including the fixing of rates, charges and conditions for the supply of potable water, sanitary sewer and garbage service to the Hamlet of Lavoy.
2. To provide for a waterworks system including the fixing of rates and charges for the supply of potable water to rural residential users in the County of Minburn as water service becomes available.

### **Objectives:**

1. To develop and maintain a sustainable water infrastructure that provides clean and safe water to the community.
2. Enhance the long-term technical, financial and managerial capacity of the utility.
3. Enhance compliance assurance and environmental stewardship.

## **L. Protective Services: Fire, Emergency Management, Bylaw Enforcement, Building and Other Safety Inspections**

### **Goals:**

1. To maintain adequate bylaw enforcement related to fire safety codes and RCMP services to carry out law enforcement responsibilities.
2. To ensure fire fighting protection and controlling of all fires within the boundaries of the County.
3. To maintain a County Emergency Management Agency to look after public safety.
4. To maintain adequate building safety inspections related to the Alberta Fire Code & Alberta Building Code.
5. Health & Safety Program for Council, Employees, contractors, etc. working for the County.

### **Objectives:**

- a) To have an effective, well-equipped and well-manned fire protection service available throughout the County region via Fire Service Agreements with the Town and Villages within the County.
- b) To continually maintain liaison with service providers – RCMP, Town and Villages, Fire Departments, Alberta Safety Codes Council to maintain and improve services.
- c) To provide safety programs and regular seminars for County employees

### **M. Economic Development**

Good planning results in economic development. Investors and developers wish to see plans and processes in place when deciding where to locate their developments. Planning initiatives that are ongoing will go a long way to giving investors and developers the certainty they require when making their decisions where to locate. Areas have been identified within the County which may become growth areas in the short and long range timeframe. Planning for these areas will help lead to future economic development opportunities.

#### **Goals & Objectives:**

- 1. To retain/attract businesses
- 2. To create an Area Structure Plan for strategic areas in the County
- 3. To create incentives to attract businesses and residents
- 4. To maintain, update and develop infrastructure
- 5. To maintain the Land Use Bylaw and General Municipal Plan
- 6. To assist the public with the subdivision process



