



**TOWN OF BLACKFALDS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
REQUEST FOR DECISION**

MEETING DATE: June 25, 2019

ORIGINATED BY: Laura Thevenaz, Infrastructure Services Manager

SUBJECT: Environmental Stewardship Strategy Development Framework and Update

BACKGROUND:

The development and implementation of an Environmental Stewardship Strategy (ESS) has been identified as a priority for the Town of Blackfalds. During the development of the 2016 Municipal Sustainability Plan (MSP), two actions to build environmental performance and awareness were identified; first, to develop and approve an ESS with key focus areas on water, land, energy, buildings and infrastructure, waste and air. The second action, to develop an environmental awareness program, with key elements being the regular environmental awareness communications, and to design environmental awareness signage for Town infrastructure (see Attachment 1: Page 18 of MSP).

The purpose of an ESS is to outline a comprehensive approach to how the Town manages the full extent of its environmental impacts. As per the MSP, the ESS will highlight policy direction, standards improvement, community programs, and resource needs. This will allow the Town to identify the most important actions to reduce environmental impact and initiate community programs with the objective to advance the goal of a healthy environment regarding water, land, energy, buildings and infrastructure, waste and air.

On April 1, 2019, Laura Thevenaz joined the Infrastructure and Property Services team as the Infrastructure Services Manager. One of her key responsibilities is to develop an ESS for the Town. Within the past two months, Laura has been focused on learning capital projects and operations and has now placed a focus on refining a process for identifying a collaborative, local approach for engagement as we start building an ESS for the Town.

This Environmental Stewardship Strategy Development Framework and Update was discussed through the Council Standing Committee on June 17th, 2019, at which time the following motion was made:

SCC. 11/19

Councillor Stendie moved That the Standing Committee of Council recommend that the proposed framework for the Environmental Stewardship Strategy be brought before Council for formal approval. And further that the Standing Committee of Council recommends to Council that the timelines for the development of the Environmental Stewardship Strategy into 2021.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION:

As part of the Town's commitment to developing a comprehensive ESS, a review of existing policies, guidelines, and plans as it relates to ESS key focus areas is currently being undertaken. The purpose of this review was to identify what documentation the Town currently has, and what will be required as part of ESS development.

Administration notes that two actions to build environmental performance and awareness were identified in the MSP:

1. Develop and approve an ESS with key focus areas on water, land, energy, buildings and infrastructure, waste and air.
2. To develop an environmental awareness program, with key elements being the regular environmental awareness communications, and to design environmental awareness signage for Town infrastructure.

The following tables and processes are adopted from the MSP framework for this project (See Attachment 1: Page 18 of MSP). ***Please note this list will be updated based on the outcomes of further research, internal departmental reviews, Council input, and community engagements.***



**TOWN OF BLACKFALDS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
REQUEST FOR DECISION**

TABLE 1: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Key Focus Areas	Relevant Existing Policies/Guidelines/Plans	Plans in Development/To be Developed
Education & Awareness		<p>Create an awareness campaign to educate community on municipal and provincial rebate and incentive programs</p> <p>Develop policy to educate residents, municipal staff, and Council on various components of the ESS</p>
Water	<p>Charter for Protecting Source Water Quality in the Red Deer River Watershed</p> <p>Water Conservation Policy #629/09</p> <p>Master Drainage Plan for the Wolf Creek and Whelp Brook Watersheds (2014)</p> <p>Wastewater Master Plan (2015)</p>	<p>Update Water Conservation Policy (as per Charter commitment)</p> <p>Water Restriction Policy #629/09</p> <p>Create a Plan to identify goals, indicators and metrics for water usage and conservation within the Town of Blackfalds</p> <p>Update Water and Sewer Bylaw (as per Charter commitment)</p> <p>Completion of East Area Stormwater MP, and Northwest Area Stormwater MP (as per Charter commitment)</p>
Land	<p>Municipal Sustainability Plan</p> <p>Intermunicipal Development Plan</p> <p>Approved Area Structure Plans</p>	<p>Develop policy for incorporation of Low Impact Design practices into developments</p> <p>Environmental Conservation Plan as part of Environmental Stewardship Strategy (as per Charter commitment)</p> <p>Develop guidelines to preserve and respect natural areas</p>
Air		<p>Create a Plan to identify goals, indicators and metrics to address air quality within the Town of Blackfalds</p> <p>Idle Free Policy</p> <p>As part of Waste Management Review, evaluate how Town responds to waste generation, reduction, recycling, and diversion to reduce GHG emissions</p>
Energy		<p>Create a Plan to identify goals, indicators and metrics for energy consumption and alternative energy usage on Town of Blackfalds facilities and operational activities</p>
Waste	2013 Waste Management Review	Evaluate and update the Waste Management Review



**TOWN OF BLACKFALDS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
REQUEST FOR DECISION**

Key Focus Areas	Relevant Existing Policies/Guidelines/Plans	Plans in Development/To be Developed
Buildings and Infrastructure	2011 Design Guidelines Land Use Bylaw BOLT Transit Service	Update Design Guidelines Create a Plan to identify current practices, and goals for increasing usage of renewable energy and conservation within the Town of Blackfalds Encourage infill developments that increase densities, compact form and low impact environmental design standards Continued collaboration with community members, City of Red Deer and City of Lacombe to enhance BOLT transit services

To ensure the success and longevity of the ESS, Administration proposes to update Council at prescribed intervals to share progress and receive input. Administration will work with various internal departments to ensure both current and future development and operational needs are accounted for as part of ESS planning, implementation and monitoring. Research and external input from other municipalities will also be considered as part of the ESS development.

Following the structure of the Sustainability Planning Process in the MSP (see Attachment 2: Page 3 of MSP), the following ESS planning process will be implemented:

TABLE 2: ESS DEVELOPMENT TIMELINES

Phase	Description	Timeline
1 - Review	Data and review of existing policies and plans Identify internal departmental stakeholders for input Outline key objectives Update project timelines	September 2019
2 - Workshops	Conduct workshops to summarize findings and recommendations Identify key actions and direction for the ESS.	Q1-Q2 2020
3 - Action Planning	Develop draft plan to present to public for feedback. Conduct public engagement workshops Summarize recommendations and findings Review with Standing Committee and Council Present to Council	Q3-Q4 2020
4 - Finalize Plan	Finalize ESS	Q1 2021

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

To be determined through future refinement of tasks.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council move to formally approve the proposed framework for the Environmental Stewardship Strategy.
2. And further, that Council move that the timelines for the development of the Environmental Stewardship Strategy be extended into 2021.

ALTERNATES:

1. That the Council does not approve of the proposed framework and timelines for the Environmental Stewardship Strategy as presented.
2. That Council refer this back to Administration for further review.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Page 18 of MSP
- Attachment 2: Page 3 of MSP

Approvals:



CAO Myron Thompson



Department Director/Author

Actions

Action 1: Develop and approve an Environmental Stewardship Strategy

This would provide a comprehensive approach to how the Town manages the full extent of our environmental impacts. The Strategy would highlight policy direction, standards improvement, community programs and resourcing needs. This would allow the Town as an organization to identify the most important actions to reduce environmental impact and initiate community programs to advance the goal of a healthy environment. Key focus areas would be:

- **Water:** How the Town manages water resources to reduce use and improve quality
- **Land:** How the Town manages growth, natural spaces and the landscape
- **Energy:** How the Town manages energy use and increased use of renewable energy
- **Buildings and infrastructure:** How the Town builds and maintains these assets to reduce environmental impact
- **Waste:** How the Town manages waste to increase waste diversion
- **Air:** How the town manages emissions and improves air quality

Action 2: Develop an environmental awareness program

This would complement the changes in how the Town approaches the environment to build community knowledge on how households and individuals can have a positive impact. Key elements of the program would include:

- Regular environmental awareness communications. A regular program of environmental awareness can provide ongoing information and knowledge of how to reduce the environmental impact of citizens. A combination of information (facts, statistics, etc) combined with clear direction for action (how to municipal services and programs) can lead to improved results over time and will be measured through the indicator program.
- Design environmental awareness signage for Town infrastructure. By including environmental awareness signage throughout the community, citizens are better informed and the message of environmental stewardship is reinforced. Examples in other communities have shown that making items such as energy use visible can lead individuals to change their behaviour.

Sustainability Planning Process

The development of this plan is built upon the existing MSP. Using this as a starting point, this plan was refined and created through workshops and research.

Phase 1: Review

The process started with the project team reviewing and assessing the existing Municipal Sustainability Plan. Acknowledging and working with what already existed was important to continue the progress that was already made over the last number of years. This review looked at both the content of the document as well as the format in which it was presented. The team then pulled the key information from the existing MSP and started to develop the framework for refocusing efforts on critical steps and short-term implementation “sprints.” As part of the process, Intelligent Futures also observed the Town’s budget planning process to better understand the functioning of the municipality.



Phase 2: Workshops

The project team met with Town Council and key staff two times to provide the key context and content of the plan.

- The first working meeting with Council focused on the positive and negative attributes of the existing MSP. Council also shared what success looked like for a new MSP process.
- The second gathering was a two-day workshop with Council and Senior Administration. Working through all of the key elements of the plan – Vision, Pillars, Actions and Indicators, this workshop provided the majority of the content of the MSP that is presented in the following sections.



Phase 3: Action Planning

Building off the Council/staff workshops, the project team put together the key actions and directions for the document. These were sent to the Town of Blackfalds for review and revision to ensure the MSP is realistic within the context of resources within the Town.



Phase 4: Finalize Plan

Using feedback from Town Council, the draft plan was created and presented to the public in the fall of 2016 for comment. The final plan was then prepared for Council approval in November 2016. This version of the MSP builds on the great work from previous MSP’s and shifts the focus to prioritized shorter-term actions and measurement. This will help build momentum for the plan in the coming years.