

Subject: Livability Task Force Update**APPROVALS:****Annette Antoniak**_____
Director_____
Chief Administrative Officer**Recommended Motion:**

THAT Administration continue to work with the Oil Sands Community Alliance (OSCA) and the Wood Buffalo Economic Development Corporation (WBEDC). Work with OSCA would be to further the RMWB's understanding and reporting of how the rotational workforce is utilized in the region. Work with the WBEDC could be to further all efforts to increase the regional population and livability of the region; and

THAT Administration report back to Council and the regional stakeholders on a semi-annual basis.

Summary:

Since February 2019, Administration has been working with industry on matters related to project accommodations, the fly-in/fly-out workforce, and increasing the population of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Region (RMWB). On June 4, 2019 Council passed a 10-part motion that directed Administration to continue to investigate efforts to increase the population of the region by addressing general and specific areas that impact the livability of the region. Project accommodations, the fly-in/fly-out workforce and increasing the Region's population are complex issues that are best addressed by the municipality, industry and community organizations working together. The Livability Task Force was created to help advance the motion and included representatives from key partner, stakeholder and Indigenous representatives throughout the region. The Oil Sands Community Alliance, Wood Buffalo Economic Development Corporation, RMWB and other key community stakeholders and partners will advance initiatives around regional livability and updates will be reported to the community and Council.

Background:

The RMWB's interest and concern with the oil sands industry's use of a rotational workforce has been documented for over 10 years through participation in regulatory hearings for oil sands projects and through various Council meetings and subsequent motions. While specific concerns have changed from time-to-time, a consistent theme throughout the years has been the desire to have more of the rotational workforce

become permanent residents.

On June 4, 2019, Council passed the following motion:

That Administration be directed to:

- a) Pursue commitments made by Industry signatories arising from the existing signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs).
- b) Continue to request signed memoranda from active oil sands producers.
- c) Work with Industry, contractors, camp providers and other partners to identify priority transportation infrastructure projects that would help improve highway safety and decrease the commute time from regional communities to oil sands projects. This would include retaining experts as required, in partnership with Industry. Once identified, all parties to work collaboratively to encourage provincial and federal funding.
- d) Work with Industry to conduct “Park and Ride” pilot projects that will support Industry projects north and south of Fort McMurray. This includes the expenditure of municipal funds to prepare sites for projects of this scale, once obtaining agreements for usage from Industry partners.
- e) Encourage Industry to:
 - i. increase its use of Fort McMurray as a hub for its camp-based operations workforce;
 - ii. incent its workforce to live in Fort McMurray while off-shift; and
 - iii. support travel to the job site via a “Park and Ride” or flights from the Fort McMurray International Airport and return home to Fort McMurray or other residential centres in the region at the end of their shift rotation.
- f) Continue and expand the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo community engagement initiatives related to rotational workforce.
- g) Encourage all new discretionary use Project Accommodation (camp) applications be located with the “Consolidated Work Camp Area(s)” in proximity to the Fort McKay and Conklin areas, as identified on the MDP’s “Regional Growth Concept” map.
- h) Further explore opportunities for the Municipality to encourage increased local employment via grants or other non-tax related incentives.
- i) Explore opportunities for the Municipality to provide financial incentives for Seniors to continue to stay, or relocate to, the region.

- j) Along with Industry and other stakeholders, determine the baseline for report back to Council the progress of these initiatives to Council no later than December 10, 2019.

In response to this motion, various regional partners, stakeholders and Indigenous representatives were invited to join the Livability Task Force. The objective of the Task Force was to advance the specific parts of Council June 4, 2019 motion through the lens of four key themes:

- Increase net population in the RMWB
- Seek ways to promote affordability of the real estate market in the RMWB
- Increase livability
- Support the Wood Buffalo Economic Development Corporation in its brand development and implementation

Council Motion Parts A & B - MOU's with Industry

Starting in 2006 the Municipality began to enter Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with individual oil sands companies - the last MOU was signed in 2013. The MOUs were signed as a result of the Municipality's interventions in the application process for oil sands projects and served as the platform for which conversations could occur on a wide variety of topics that were important to the Municipality or the oil sands company. While the use of a fly-in/fly-out workforce and camp accommodations was mentioned in 12 of the 13 MOUs, no binding commitments were made with respect to local workforce numbers.

To create a single document that is commonly accepted by all oil sands producers in our region, a set of regional livability principles have been developed and are intended to replace the existing MOUs. Like the existing MOUs, these principles will highlight important topics for both industry producers and the Municipality. However, it is anticipated to have a greater impact as it will identify common topics across the oil sands sector in one document and will provide an opportunity for industry to collectively focus their efforts towards commonly worded goals. Once these principles are finalized, Administration will conduct annual reviews with Industry to track and report on the progress being made.

Council Motion Part C - Transportation Priorities

On July 8, 2019, Council passed a motion reflecting that the East Clearwater Highway as the top transportation infrastructure project in the region. Subsequently, to fulfill Part C of the motion passed on June 4, 2019, the Oil Sands Community Alliance (OSCA) facilitated a regional transportation priority working session that included representatives from multiple sectors in our region. The outcome of this session was that while the East Clearwater Highway was important, twinning Highway 63 north of Syncrude and expanding Highway 881 were equally important. Further, the participants

in the session agreed that no one project had priority over another.

Following the working session, OSCA has since submitted a letter requesting an amendment the July 8, 2019 motion to reflect the session's outcome and that the region's transportation infrastructure priorities include, in no particular order:

- East Clearwater Highway;
- Twining Highway 63 north of Syncrude; and
- Highway 881 Improvements.

Council Motion Part D - Park and Ride pilot

Throughout the beginning of 2019, Administration heard from oil sands producers that the safe and efficient transportation of its workforce to the various job sites is very important. To enhance the existing busing service that many sites use to transport their workforce from Fort McMurray, Administration began to assess various sites throughout the Urban Service Area to conduct a Park and Ride Pilot Project. Site selection primarily considered proximity to residential areas, ease of access, and costs for site preparation and led to the preferred location being in Abraham's Land.

Multiple meetings have occurred with one specific oil sands producer to advance the pilot project and it is anticipated that the Park and Ride pilot project will commence this spring.

Council Motion Part E - Attract workforce to live in Fort McMurray

In its conversations with industry representatives throughout 2019, Administration encouraged companies to make efforts to help increase the permanent population in our region and monitored oil sand job postings on a regular basis. Initially, many region-based job postings didn't include encouragement for residents to apply. Since June 2019, Administration found that many companies have changed their approach and now residents are encouraged to apply for local positions.

Through surveys of the rotational workforce conducted by OSCA, it was found that many camp-based employees had unfair perceptions of the region. To change these perceptions and help build ambassadors for the region, some oil sands producers have started to bring their camp-based employees during their time off - resulting in increased activity at shops, restaurants, events and various other businesses.

Administration has been working directly with oil sands producers, and collectively with OSCA, to measure the progress that has been made. This includes setting up a new process where project accommodations data will be collected up to four times per year and reporting on this work will occur through existing Council reporting processes.

Council Motion Part F - Engagement Initiatives

As part of its work to market the region to potential residents and business, the Wood Buffalo Economic Develop Corporation (WBEDC) has been developing its Place Brand Strategy and Administration has been supporting that effort. This strategy seeks to address the negative perceptions of our region by awakening Canada to the importance of Fort McMurray through a national marketing initiative.

Through work with OSCA it has been identified that approximately half of the rotational workforce would consider moving to Fort McMurray. By using the outcomes of the WBEDC's Place Brand initiative, the rotational camp-based workforce will be a focus of this marketing initiative not only while they reside in the camps themselves, but also when they return home at the end of their shifts.

Council Motion Part G - Consolidated Work Camp Area(s)

As the owner of public lands throughout the region, any efforts to achieve consolidated camp nodes as outlined in the Municipal Development Plan would require joint efforts with the Government of Alberta. Administration has approached Provincial Government employees on this matter and have been informed that changes to the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan would be required in order to alter how and where work camps are developed. During this conversation, Administration learned the Provincial Government is focused on other higher priorities and this work would be considered a long-term deliverable.

Council Motion Part H - Increased local employment via incentives

Administration has assessed 10 incentives to increase local employment - incentives such as rent subsidies, home purchasing assistance, tax subsidies and centralized bussing. With the exception of the centralized busing, a legal review of these incentives identified that restrictions in the *Municipal Government Act*, and the likelihood of discriminatory policies and procedures are the primary reasons why the majority of these incentives are deemed not viable.

Given the restrictions on the incentives that have been investigated, Administration believes that the best way for the Municipality to attract and retain residents is to continue to work towards fulfilling Council's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.

Council Motion Part I - Financial incentives for Seniors

Administration has researched provincial and municipal incentives that other jurisdictions in Canada offer to support the seniors in their regions. In addition to this, Administration has assessed existing workplans to identify potential areas where additional programming could be undertaken, or existing planned programming could be reprioritized to result in meaningful increases to the quality of life for seniors in the region over a relatively short period of time.

Stakeholder engagement is underway to help validate the research that has been occurred and identify priority areas.

Council Motion Part J - Baseline for reporting

Since June 2019, Administration has been working closely with OSCA to create two baselines that could be reported to Council on a regular basis.

To help ensure that there is a common understanding of the use of project accommodations between the RMWB and the oil sands industry, commonly accepted definitions have been created and will result in more accurate report to Council and the community on a regular basis.

The second baseline that is being created with OSCA will focus on employment trends in industry's local and non-local workforce. Similar to the work being done for the project accommodations baseline, public reporting on this area will help increase awareness across the region on some of the most important ways that industry benefits the people of this region.

Rationale for Recommendation:

As the work related to project accommodations, the rotational workforce and the livability of this community has progressed since June 2019, it has become increasingly apparent that this work does not have a specific end date. Therefore, this work should be transitioned into the day-to-day operational mandate of the RMWB - working in partnership with WBEDC and OSCA updates to key stakeholders will be made bi-annually.

Specifically, as it relates to regional transportation infrastructure priorities, Administration supports the changes suggested by OSCA as they accurately reflect the result stemming from the stakeholder session that was held and will increase safety and economic development across the region.

Strategic Priorities:

Regional Economic Development

Attachments:

Livability Task Force Presentation (Administration)

Livability Task Force Presentation (OSCA)

Letter of Support Athabasca Oil

Letter of Support Greenfire

Letter of Support PetroChina

Letter of Support Suncor

Letter of Support Syncrude