

## INTRODUCTION

Council's Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 (The Plan) was unanimously approved on June 28, 2022 and includes 28 milestones and actions. To facilitate implementation of the Plan, Administration has focused on extracting key action words and measurable statements from The Plan that define what projects and initiatives need to be achieved to make continuous progress towards Council's mission, vision and values. This Year in Review document highlights some of the key progress to date for 16 of the 28 milestones within The Plan and it is a starting point for sharing information and it is intended to further develop a shared understanding between Council and Administration that will evolve and reflect new and emerging information over the term of Council.

## FISCAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (FM)

Our world is changing. The revenue we enjoy to provide services will not last forever. It is critical that we build our community and its future upon policies and investments that are fiscally, environmentally, and socially sustainable and enduring. Developing a long-term fiscal budget and strategy will ensure sustainable growth and high-level quality services.

### Priority Project(s) or Initiatives Contributing to Progress and 2022 Highlights

**FM1a: In consideration of the health and well-being of our valued employees, we will, evaluate the organization in its current state**

- A scope of work was jointly developed, and a Request for Proposal (RFP) was posted on November 16, 2022. It is expected to close on December 15, 2022. This scope of work also includes an assessment of service standards, which includes compiling and reviewing general industry norms or standards for delivery of services per department.

**FM1b: In consideration of the health and well-being of our valued employees, we will, invest in the health and the safety of our employees**

- An external health and safety Certificate of Recognition (COR) audit was initiated to ensure that health and safety programs meet established Occupation Health and Safety standards. Thirteen (13) departments participated in 91 interviews with staff.
- The Employee Family Assistance Program has been enhanced with the addition of a virtual care platform known as Dialogue. The platform gives employees 24 hour/7 days a week access to medical services and consultations using their mobile devices.

**FM4: Confirm and/or develop service standards through strategic budget workshops.**

- Seminars with Council were held on November 16th and 18th as an added resource to support the development and presentation of the 2023 Budget. The seminars

provided opportunities for Administration and Council to become familiar with the budget content and review ways to interpret the information.

- Budget binders and electronic files were provided 1 week earlier than the prior budget.
- Access to budget information by way of hardcopy printed information and detailed electronic information were provided. Electronic information packages were available in two forms (i.e., consolidated, and summarized content in binders and access to additional information electronically) plus supplemental capital update report(s) were provided in an effort to provide the current state of capital projects.
- Through its approval of the 2022 Budget, Council continued to support the region through the delivery and maintenance of capital projects and services. \$570 million was approved to support strategic investments and community needs across Municipal departments and non-profit organizations.

## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM (BP)

We recognize there is value in working together. We welcome insight and appreciate collaboration from all groups and stakeholders in order to bring together elements that will help ensure communities continue to grow into the homes we love and homes which welcome others.

### Priority Project(s) or Initiatives Contributing to Progress and 2022 Highlights

#### **BP1: Host or attend regular meetings throughout the region.**

- Forty (40) Council meetings were held in Fort McMurray between January and December.
- Council hosted a Special Meeting in Conklin on June 27, 2022.

#### **BP2: Participate as Council in meetings with Indigenous leaders and communities.**

- Council hosted nine (9) engagements as part of a tour around the region.

#### **BP5: Confirm best practices for consistent communication and feedback between Council and Administration.**

- Administration adjusted its approach for developing and presenting the 2023 budget by listening and incorporating feedback from Council. The approach was reflective of ongoing efforts to create a shared understanding of how to access information and address preferences while enhancing communication between Administration and Council.
- To support Budget 2023, an email account was created to enhance direct communication between Council; the Community Services Department (Community

Investment Program) and Finance. It also enhanced awareness among other members of administration and provided opportunities for more comprehensive responses to budget related questions.

### **BP6: Support opportunities and community partnerships that help promote a positive image of Wood Buffalo**

- Twenty-Six (26) proclamations were made to create awareness of special days or events.
- Through the 2022 Budget process, Council approved \$43 million in direct community support for local non-profit organizations, including municipal facility operators.
- The Municipality participated in the National Communities in Bloom program and received an overall rating of 5 Blooms and were recognized in three additional awards.

## **RURAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAM (RI)**

Our future cannot be separated from our past. As we grow communities into sustainable prosperity we need to learn from and work with local Indigenous partners and communities who have lived in a sustainable way with nature and the environment since time immemorial, as well as forge new relationships that make us leaders in building kinder, more supportive, and more understanding communities.

### **Priority Project(s) or Initiatives Contributing to Progress and 2022 Highlights**

#### **RI1: Create and enhance reconciliation spaces**

- In March 2022, the Municipality hired its first ever Indigenous Arts Curator to assist in the Municipality's public art practices to better align with and respect Indigenous protocols and perspectives.
- For the first time in the Municipality's history, a group of local Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers guided the process of creating artwork for Council Chambers - this group became known as the Circle of Knowledge and Artistic Expression. The artwork was unveiled on April 25.

#### **RI2: Continue to advance the Municipality's response to Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWGS+) and Missing or Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples (MMEIP).**

- Council approved \$150,000 on April 12 to support the Athabasca Tribal Council Cultural Festival which was held between September 8-11.

- National Indigenous Peoples Day celebration was hosted on June 21 at MacDonald Island Park with approximately 700 people in attendance. The event was organized in cooperation with Indigenous partners and the celebration was an informal opportunity for people to share a meal while honouring the rich history, diversity, and strength of Indigenous Peoples in Wood Buffalo. The event featured drumming and traditional dances, as well as blessings and teachings from Indigenous Elders. The municipality's new ceremonial tipi was also officially unveiled during the event. A proclamation was read, officially declaring National Indigenous Peoples Day.
- The annual Truth and Reconciliation Challenge was hosted over seven weeks between August and September. The challenge provided both Municipal staff and the public opportunities to access resources, attend events, and engage in activities to advance their knowledge and understanding of Indigenous history and culture.
- Protocol Agreements were signed with four Indigenous communities to help identify mutual priorities, establish a formal communications process, and advance reconciliation. These agreements will also provide a foundation for the Municipality to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for advancing truth and reconciliation in Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo.
- \$230,000 was approved on June 28 to advance the Calls to Justice identified within the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)
- The Municipality continued to work with Indigenous experts and organizations to implement a local action plan that is inclusive of Missing or Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples (MMEIP). Council is represented on the MMEIP committee.

**RI3: Commemorate, document, and raise awareness to ensure significant events impacting relationships with Indigenous Peoples are recognized, remembered, and honored.**

- Several proclamations were made that contributed to raising awareness about significant relationships with Indigenous Peoples, including International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL) - January 11, 2022, to January 11, 2023, National Indigenous History Month in June, and National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, 2022. The IDIL proclamation was published in Cree, Dene, and English- marking a first for the Municipality to publish a proclamation in an Indigenous language.
- Administration collaborated and helped host events on significant dates, including the National Day of Awareness and Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S+) and Missing or Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples (MMEIP) on May 5, and Sisters in Spirit on October 4.
- Heritage Resource Management Planning (HRMP) continued. Heritage Resources management is designed to preserve and protect local historical resources. The purpose of the HRMP is to provide a useful and proactive framework to encourage and facilitate heritage conservation activities in Wood Buffalo and to guide future

initiatives for the identification, stewardship, and management of heritage resources. Phase one engagement took place from November 8, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Information was gathered through online surveys, virtual group discussions, and one-on-one sessions. Phase two of engagement included exploring heritage values, vision, and places of interest in the region. One-on-one discussions and in-person engagements took place throughout the Spring and Summer of 2022, completing August 15, 2022.

- On October 17, members of Council and the Senior Leadership Team attended a bus tour that highlighted local history and heritage resources and stopped at six different sites within downtown Fort McMurray.

#### **RI4: Honor, acknowledge and commemorate residential school confirmation of gravesites, survivors and their families.**

- In collaboration with Indigenous communities and partners, luncheons were hosted for residential school survivors across the region on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30.

## **LOCAL ECONOMY PROGRAM (LE)**

We have the potential to make the region a destination of choice for economic development and quality of life by supporting growth of the local business community and to improve services to residents.

### **Priority Project(s) or Initiatives Contributing to Progress and 2022 Highlights**

#### **LE1: Establish reporting metrics for economic development and tourism to ensure maximum accountability, transparency and clarity for Council and taxpayers.**

- Administration reviewed and supported updated reporting metrics provided by Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism (FMWBEDT).

#### **LE3: Establish a Business Advisory Committee**

- A bylaw for the Wood Buffalo Pro-Business Advisory Committee was drafted in collaboration with local business stakeholder groups.
- On September 13, Council approved the Wood Buffalo Pro-Business Advisory Committee Bylaw and supported the establishment of a committee.
- Committee recruitment was completed in November 2022.

#### **LE4: Advocate and partner with all levels of government to deliver consistent and accessible broadband services.**

- Construction began to provide broadband services to the premises of all businesses and residents in communities south of Fort McMurray and Fort MacKay. Residents and businesses within these communities will have the option to sign up for high-

speed internet services from TELUS at the same rates and plan options as those within the Urban Service Area.

## **LE5: Deliver a pro-business environment for businesses with attention to excellence in customer service (red tape reduction)**

- A multi-stakeholder Social Procurement working group has been established, which is inclusive of community partners. The first working group meeting was held on October 27, and subsequent meetings will be held on a quarterly basis. The intent of this working group is to provide an opportunity for on-going communication, feedback and modifications (as required) to the Social Procurement Program.
- A working group, comprised of membership from Indigenous community-owned businesses or social entities and Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA), has formed to advance the development of a framework that incorporates Indigenous Procurement opportunities into the procurement practices of the Municipality.
- The Planning and Development Department Process Review Report was completed and accepted as information by Council in September. The report includes 92 recommendations and over 300 actions intended to help improve customer service, reduce red tape, facilitate property improvement investment, responsible growth and reduces barriers to development.
- Three meetings occurred between the Government of Alberta Associate Minister of Red-Tape Reduction, members of the Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee, Administration and representatives of Council. Information sharing and learning about what's happening across the province has been helpful in working together to reduce red tape and support a pro-business environment within the region

## **DOWNTOWN VISUALIZATION PROGRAM (DV)**

The downtown has struggled over time with indecisions, rapid changes in decision, and natural disasters for too long. It is time to choose what downtown will be and lay out a plan for redevelopment and disaster mitigation and carry on with implementation.

### **Priority Project(s) or Initiatives Contributing to Progress and 2022 Highlights**

#### **DV5: Incentivize private investment in the downtown**

- Council approved the amended Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program Policy and extended the program to new applications from May 16, 2022 through April 30, 2023.
- Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program has been successfully implemented. The following program goals have supported:

1. Retention of existing businesses, while encouraging new businesses in the downtown.
2. Introduces new features and amenities that create interest, improve accessibility, enhance safety, and increase vibrancy, helping to transform the downtown into a place people want to spend time.
3. Enhances the aesthetic qualities of private buildings and property to improve the character and quality of the downtown.
4. 2022 and prior investments leverage public funding to catalyze private investment in the downtown. \$8M has been approved for the program to date. To date, \$6.9M grants have been allocated/earmarked by the Municipality to 189 projects. Private contributions of about \$12.6M totaling \$19.5M in investment.