

Topic: Technical Growth Study**Introduction:**

This report provides Council with information on the Technical Growth Study.

Facts (Background Information):

Administration began work on the Technical Growth Study in July 2016. The study was completed in 7 steps:

Step 1: Establish Council Development Priorities – Administration worked with Council to identify priorities for the Technical Growth Study. This included understanding areas to be considered in the Study, as well as identifying strategic projects currently underway for the County.

Step 2: Identify Strategic Development Areas – Administration worked with Council to identify “strategic development areas” (SDA’s). SDA’s are geographic areas where public and private investments could be leveraged to expand existing physical, community, or economic characteristics.

Step 3: Establish Strategic Development Areas for the Whole County – this step confirmed the SDA locations for the County. The step also focused on identifying preliminary growth opportunities for each SDA.

Step 4: Complete Population and Employment Projections for each SDA – population and employment projections were completed for each SDA. This informed the analysis and findings in steps 5-7.

Step 5: Analyze Financial Impacts, Opportunities and Constraints of each SDA – this step reviewed the detailed growth opportunities and constraints for each SDA. The step also included a Fiscal Impact Analysis to identify fiscal considerations for specific SDAs and development types (i.e. hamlet development, country residential development).

Step 6: Preferred Development Scenario – the County’s preferred scenario was identified and aligned to the draft Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The preferred scenario is incorporated in draft MDP Figure 7 – Development Concept.

Step 7 – Recommended Implementation Measures – this step recommended practices to implement key Growth Study findings. Study recommendations will help the County on initiatives identified in the *County Long-Term Strategic Plan* and *Municipal Development Plan*.

Project timelines

Completion of the Growth Study occurred under extremely quick project timelines and concurrently to the completion of the County’s new Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Bylaw 2017-14. Administration kept Council regularly informed on the completion of the Technical Growth Study through “Council touchpoint” sessions held in late 2016 and early 2017.

A summary of the Technical Growth Study phases showing alignment to the MDP project timelines is highlighted in the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Fiscal Impact Assessment

As noted, a fiscal impact assessment was completed as part of the Technical Growth Study. A full copy of the assessment is included in Appendix C of the Growth Study. The assessment provided additional analysis on the potential costs and benefits associated with the preferred growth scenario. In particular, the assessment provided additional information related to development in the County's proposed growth hamlets and existing country residential areas.

Technical Growth Study recommendations

Recommendations from the Technical Growth Study indicate that the County needs to diversify its economy to adapt to changing economic conditions. The County should also balance residential development (and land supply) with non-residential supplies to ensure continued services and employment opportunities for County residents.

The County should also prioritize the development of infill. Infill development may result in a net-benefit to the County since infill lots use existing infrastructure already in place.

The County should identify strategic growth hamlets where future employment and residential growth may be directed. Identifying growth hamlets will allow the County to strategically direct future investment to promote growth and development opportunities. Hamlet area redevelopment plans should be completed for growth hamlets. Existing area structure plans for county residential areas should also be updated and supported by financial impact assessments.

The County may diversify its economy by leveraging unique assets and focusing on new markets. This includes growing the recreation and tourism industry, and diversifying the agricultural sector into ag-tourism, value added and new processing opportunities.

Programs focused on the transfer of development credits / densities should be explored to reduce the oversupply of county residential lands and to help preserve agricultural land for agricultural purposes.

Final Growth Study recommendations are identified in Table 9 of the Technical Growth Study. Recommendations have been incorporated into the proposed Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 2017-14 and will inform the completion of initiatives identified in the Municipal Development Plan and the County's Long Term Strategic Plan.

Analysis:

The purpose of the Technical Growth Study is to identify future growth options for the County, and assist Council and Administration in prioritizing the County's preferred growth approach. Prioritizing a preferred growth approach was needed to complete the County's new Municipal Development Plan.

Municipal Development Plan One Parkland: Powerfully Connected Bylaw 2017-14

Preliminary findings from the Growth Study informed the final policies and the future development concept identified in the proposed Municipal Development Plan (Bylaw 2017-14). In particular, MDP policies have informed policy directions in the following MDP sections:

- Section 3.0 – Development Concept
- Section 4.0 – Agriculture (and Prime Agriculture areas)
- Section 5.0 – Economic Competitiveness and Employment

- Section 6.0 – Hamlets
- Section 7.0 – Rural Communities and Housing
- Section 8.0 – Recreation & Tourism Development (and Prime Recreation areas)
- Section 11.0 – Community Infrastructure & Services

The Technical Growth Study preferred growth scenario was also incorporated into several MDP figures. These include MDP Figure 7 -Development Concept, Figure 9 – Prime Agriculture Areas and Figure 11 – Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas. **Table 9 of the Technical Growth Study** shows the alignment between Technical Growth Study recommendations and proposed policies in Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 2017-14.

Alignment to Parkland County Long Term Strategic Plan

The Technical Growth Study supports the community pillars and broad objectives of *Long Term Strategic Plan 2040 and Beyond*:

- Complete communities- the Technical Growth Study recognizes that “complete communities” includes developing rural, country residential and hamlets areas. The Growth Study also emphasizes concentrating growth in “growth nodes”. These are strategic areas where development is already occurring or where development may be supported in the future.
- Strategic Economic Diversification – the Technical Growth Study recognizes the importance of diversifying the County’s economic base to maintain long term growth and promote community resilience.
- Respected Environment – the Growth Study recognizes that the County’s natural assets should be promoted.
- Responsible Leadership –the Growth Study recognizes that future growth requires a responsible use of County resources.

Recommendations from the Technical Growth Study will also inform and assist the County in completing several initiatives identified in the Long Term Strategic Plan including the Hamlet Reinvestment Strategy.

Alternatives:

1. Council could request more information on the Technical Growth Study.

Conclusion/Summary:

Parkland County Administration supports findings from the Technical Growth Study.

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