



Parkland County
Family and Community Support Services Review
Options and Recommendations Report

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June 2015

Parkland County FCSS Review
Options and Recommendations Report

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Executive Summary

Conclusions from the Review

The funding that Parkland County provides to partner municipalities is primarily for access by county residents to programs and services developed by and operated by those municipalities. There are a diverse range of program and service types, serving a cross section of demographics available from a number of locations across the county. The partner municipalities certify that all FCSS programs and services meet the audit requirements of the Province of Alberta as well as those of their respective municipalities. The municipalities collect program evaluation data from program participants to assist with continuous improvements to their program planning and program and service format and content. From this perspective Parkland County is investing FCSS funding into quality FCSS programs and services that are accessible to county residents through a variety of delivery sites within the County. The current funding model, based on percentage of population or county area served, provides an equitable basis for allocating funding to partner municipalities given the current level of issue or need identification undertaken by the county.

Although reported numbers vary, a preliminary analysis indicates the average of county residents participating in programs and services appears to range between 10% and 20% with some programs reporting as high as 40%. The current agreements with the partner municipalities place no restriction on the percentage of Parkland County residents attending the programs and services. Additional analysis of budget contributions and participation by county residents would be helpful in providing more accurate benchmarks of budget percentages against participation percentages as one indicator of program and promotion effectiveness.

The Agreements currently in place with partner municipalities are primarily concerned with the funding allocation process and amounts and reporting requirements. They do not include information on the goals and objectives of Parkland County with respect to its FCSS resources nor to goals or targets relative to program participation by County residents. Currently there are no consistent quality measures in place to determine the impact on residents from attending the FCSS programs and services.

The programs and services offered by the partner municipalities are based on their assessment of the issues and needs within their respective communities. It is assumed that the program and service needs of county residents will be similar. Currently there is not a formal and consistent mechanism in place in the County to identify program and service needs of county residents or to engage in collaborative program development with the partner municipalities. The County has, however, developed and implemented the Collaborative Action Group (CAG) with its municipal partners. The purpose of the Group is to *“encourage ongoing collaboration between Parkland County and all participating municipalities in order to identify and meet current and emerging social needs Parkland County residents.”*¹

¹ Terms of Reference; Family and Community Support Services Collaborative Action Group

The County currently does not regularly engage its residents in determining what programs and services might be needed and be beneficial, beyond those offered by the partner municipalities, and contribute to achieving the quality of life goals and commitments in the County Strategic Plan.

The County would benefit from developing foundational information and strategic priorities that communicates the purpose and goals of their FCSS programs and services and that helps to guide program partners and community stakeholders in developing and operating programs and services within the County. The Parkland County FCSS Strategic Priorities Plan would also enable demonstrated alignment and integration with the County Strategic Plan, provide a basis for assessing FCSS contribution to the County Plan and provide a template for reporting to County Council on the results of FCSS investments. The Plan will provide a foundation on which to facilitate the changes anticipated by the County with respect to its FCSS programs and services and are reflected in the Options and Recommendations below.

The current funding allocation model is based on a funding formula that considers the county population against the available funding for FCSS programs and services. The funding is then allocated to areas within the County based on electoral districts and assessment of service areas within the county. The allocation formula is relatively fair and equitable in achieving its intended purpose of providing access to county residents. Increased focus on identification of issues and needs within the county, analysis of percentage budgets and corresponding participation levels and qualitative measurement of the impact of specific programs and services may provide additional information to “weight” the funding allocations to program types, demographics and/or geographic areas within the county. Undertaking these processes would provide the data and information to ensure that programs and services available to Parkland County residents are increasingly effective. A concern across all FCSS Programs is the lack of increases to provincial funding levels over the past seven years.

The County currently has little opportunity and capacity to influence or direct the program or service development and delivery undertaken by the partner municipalities. It has been observed throughout this review that the County has an interest, and is working toward, increased participation as an active program partner in the development and delivery of FCSS programs and services rather than remaining solely in the role of a program and service funder. This evolution is consistent with the Values and Commitments (i.e. community engagement) found in the Parkland County Strategic Plan. The change in role of the County is supported by the municipal partners. The Community Action Group (CAG) Terms of Reference, as mentioned above, underscore the intended change in role and relationship. The CAG Agreement reflects the understanding of the program partnerships and is proactive in supporting the increased engagement of the County as a program partner. Many of the recommendations following are intended to support the increasing role of the County in assessing and delivering programs and services that meet the needs of county residents.

There is very little information or opportunity for Parkland County residents to recognize or acknowledge the resources and excellent work that the County is investing in to create and sustain an exceptional quality of life in their communities and for their families through the FCSS Program resources. A report completed in 2010 found that there is a corresponding lack of awareness of the range of FCSS program and service opportunities that are available and of the desire and ability for residents to be engaged in identifying issues and needs and participate in developing program and service solutions that are appropriate for them. Although work has been done since that time to better

inform residents of FCSS Programs and Services there is still potential to increase the level of resident engagement in issue and needs assessment and building community capacity.

Basis for Change

The basis for change reflected in this review includes:

Community Action Group Terms of Reference²

Parkland County has had an ongoing agreement with the Municipal FCSS partners for almost a decade and is now looking to create a more sustainable relationship in order to better serve the residents of Parkland County.

The purpose of the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Collaborative Action Group is to encourage ongoing collaboration between Parkland County and all participating municipalities in order to identify and meet current and emerging social needs Parkland County residents.

This group will be responsible to make informed decisions surrounding programming needs/reporting on program stats related to Parkland County.

Municipal FCSS Partners act as “brokers” and manage the relationship and funding between Parkland County and the service delivery agents. These partners will collaborate with Parkland County to make decisions on maintaining and or pursuing existing and new initiatives to address current or emerging needs of residents.

To understand current issues (within the Parkland County region) and plan new collaborative initiatives.

These partners will collaborate with Parkland County to make decisions on maintaining and or pursuing existing and new initiatives to address current or emerging needs of residents.

Meet annually as a full Collaborative Action Group to evaluate actual and planned responses to needs.

Programming decisions will be the outcome of an annual review process.

Parkland County Strategic Plan³

We are demonstrating leadership in re-defined rural living while purposefully and deliberately continuing to plan for and make investments in our future.

Enhance the lives of our residents in pursuit of quality of life.

Provide quality service to residents and clients through efficient and effective practices while we undertake continuous improvements.

Deliver quality services in an efficient and economical manner that enables development and growth.

Parkland County believes in the values of communities and will continue to support local groups and organizations.

² Terms of Reference – Family and Community Support Services Collaborative Action Group

³ Parkland County Strategic Plan 2014 - 2018

Promote and advance health and wellness opportunities for residents. Elevate the sense of community among residents.

Create a viable and resilient community by empowering residents.

Develop effective communications strategies that advance the interests of the County, its residents and its stakeholders.

Establish key performance indicators that are clear and measureable with respect to the delivery of municipal services.

FCSS Review Scope of Work

Ensure that the FCSS Program operating model is current and relevant in meeting the needs of Parkland County residents.

Ensure that the Partnership Agreements in place reflect the most effective method of delivering FCSS programs and services.

Ensure that the County is receiving good value for the funding invested.

Approaches

The Review Report identifies two potential approaches to move forward and build on the work that has been undertaken to date by the County, with respect to providing quality social programs and services to residents and contributing to quality of life excellence in the community.

The first approach is to develop and implement a Social Development Framework for the County. This Framework would augment and complement the high level strategic planning that has been undertaken by the County in the areas of environment and conservation, recreation and open spaces, economic development and tourism and community sustainability and development. This approach will provide the basis for engaging community and stakeholders in social issues and opportunities in the county and for the needs assessment and evaluation practices that will enable future planning and measurement of the results and outcomes of the County's social programs and services.

The second approach focuses on the efficiencies and effectiveness of the current FCSS Program model. This approach identifies three options and associated recommendations improve the current level of information on the mandate and purpose of the County's FCSS Program, improve information and knowledge on the results and outcomes of FCSS programs and services and the impacts on the corresponding funding allocation and program management model. The recommendations in the second approach increase county participation in needs assessment activities of county residents, in the development and evaluation of FCSS programs and service results and outcomes and in strategies and actions that increase the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the current FCSS Program model.

Social Development Framework Approach

Base Recommendation

Develop a Social Development Framework for the County of Parkland. The Framework will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following elements:

- *Engagement of governance leadership, administration, citizens, businesses and key stakeholders in defining the social development priorities of the County;*
- *Identification of Parkland County strategic priorities and direction related to social issues and quality of life affecting residents of the county;*
- *A social needs, issues and assets profile of Parkland County;*
- *Identification of community values and principles related to the social well-being of individuals and communities within the county;*
- *Identification of policies, strategies and actions that contribute to a sustainable community that balances social, economic and environmental components.*
- *An ongoing engagement framework for resident and stakeholder participation in, and contribution to, social well-being in Parkland County;*
- *Social policies, direction, strategies and an action framework;*
- *County policy and strategy alignments and linkages; and*
- *A results, evaluation, outcomes and reporting framework.*

Social Development Framework Approach – Implementation Recommendations

Establish an advisory team to structure the social development framework project and prepare an outline of the key elements and project outcomes.

Identify resource requirements including timeframes and funding estimates.

Develop a report for Council consideration including a project outline and rationale, costs, timelines and resource requirements.

Assuming Council approval, identify a project lead within the administration to manage the project and identify the internal and external resources required to implement and complete the Parkland County Social Development Framework.

Current FCSS Program Efficiency and Effectiveness Approach

Base Recommendation

Define the Parkland County FCSS Program as a foundation for evaluation and future direction setting

Undertake a strategic priorities process with county staff, selected agencies and existing information to define the mission, goals and strategic priorities of the Parkland County FCSS Program and to align the proposed objectives and actions with the County Strategic Plan.

Determine the purpose and mandate of the County's FCSS Program, which will help to guide resource allocations and program partnerships and the intended changes in the community as a result of FCSS resource investments.

Develop an evaluation template to facilitate reporting on the results of the Parkland County FCSS Program based on the Programs contribution to achieving the Vision, Mission, Commitments and Strategies in the County Strategic Plan.

The County undertake a more rigorous analysis of the levels of program and service participation by Parkland residents against the funding allocated to each respective municipal partner as one indicator of return on investment (sample on page 26).

Efficiency and Effectiveness Approach – Implementation Options and Recommendations

Option 1.0

Increase effectiveness and efficiency of current operational model.

Recommendations

- 1.1 Continue with the current partner funding model (based on percentage of county population served) until the work identified in the Core Recommendation is completed.
 - 1.1.1 Once FCSS priorities and key issue areas are identified and/or if additional FCSS funding is available consider a weighting factor in the FCSS funding to partner municipalities and community service agencies, in geographic areas or with target populations within the county, that are of particular concern (i.e. Alberta FCSS uses median income as a weighting factor for FCSS allocations to municipalities).
 - 1.1.2 The County to continue to retain a portion of their FCSS funding (and increase when possible) to address critical areas identified in the county to use as fee for service contracts as required and to provide resources to effectively manage the Parkland County FCSS Program.
 - 1.1.3 Based on the analysis in 1.2.3 identify county resident participation targets. Work collaboratively with municipal program partners, and by increasing awareness with county residents of the programs and services available (reference recommendation 1.4), to meet or exceed those targets.
 - 1.1.4 The County consider modifying its allocation model (funding allocation formula) to accommodate overall increases to funding allocated to municipal program partners to acknowledge increased costs of doing business (i.e. system wide costs of living or wage increases), once the analysis in the Base Recommendation is undertaken and considered.
 - 1.1.5 Should additional funding be available it is recommended that the funding be allocated to operational support to the Parkland FCSS Program, cost of doing business increases where warranted and allocations to specific priority issues and needs.
 - 1.1.6 Consider a one-time cost of doing business increase to the allocations to municipal FCSS Program partners to account for program development and delivery cost increases. Recommend that the increase be based on inflation and COLA increases the previous 5 years of approximately 3% (combined per year) or 15%. Estimated cost to the County is \$70,500.
- 1.2 Increase the use and effectiveness of the Community Action Group (CAG) in identification of community issues and needs, in undertaking collaborative program and service planning and in monitoring and reporting on the results and outcomes of FCSS programs and services.
 - 1.2.1 Retain the information sharing capacity of the CAG group as it is seen as valuable by all partners.
 - 1.2.2 That CAG concern itself primarily with a region wide perspective of the social, quality of life and community health needs and capacities within Parkland County.

- 1.2.3 Increase the percentage of resources (time) that the group spends on “collaboration between Parkland County and all participating municipalities in order to identify and meet current and emerging needs to Parkland County residents.”⁴ It is recommended that this become the primary activity of the group.
 - 1.2.4 CAG collectively take on the role of developing meaningful reporting measures and processes, which provide value to all partners, including measuring FCSS Program outcomes and reviewing and revising the annual program information collection and reporting. The resulting information will provide valuable data for program development and continuous improvement and for the respective municipal councils in providing strategic direction.
 - 1.2.5 That CAG undertakes the development and implementation of an annual region wide FCSS program and service planning event to facilitate identification of region wide issues and needs, evaluate actual and planned responses to needs⁵ and plan for program and service development and delivery.
 - 1.2.6 CAG to host an annual workshop of governance representatives from all participating program partners to increase the understanding of the issues, needs, capacities and collaboration options with respect to FCSS programs and services in Parkland County.
- 1.3 Develop a comprehensive communication plan and strategy to support the Parkland County FCSS Program and increase levels of participation by county residents
- 1.3.1 Clearly identify and describe the Parkland County FCSS Program, the programs and services available to county residents, the delivery sites and options and processes to take participate. Take advantage of all media possible i.e. the Green Book, Connector, school distribution, web site, municipal partner and community brochures, etc., to increase the awareness of FCSS programs as a service of the county and awareness of opportunities for residents to participate in programs and services and in the county.
 - 1.3.2 Revise the county website to include the FCSS Program and specific information on programs, services, locations and registration processes.
 - 1.3.3 Through CAG develop common standards and practices with partner municipalities on acknowledgement and recognition of program collaboration and partnership in developing and delivering FCSS programs and services.
 - 1.3.4 Set awareness and participation targets consistent with communication and awareness increasing activities and measure results to determine effectiveness of messaging and communication strategies. Targets to take into account program and area specific variables such as transportation, demographics, etc.
- 1.4 Increase engagement with municipal partners and community agencies and stakeholders in program and service planning and delivery
- 1.4.1 Align the Parkland County FCSS programs and services with the overall strategies and commitments of the Parkland County Strategic Plan.
 - 1.4.2 Confirm with current municipal program partners the intended evolution of the County from a role as primarily a program funder to a program partner, including the related Parkland County FCSS goals, strategies values and principles (ref funding model chart on page 16 and recommendation 1.1).

⁴ Community Action Group – Terms of Reference

⁵ Community Action Group – Terms of Reference; Roles and Responsibilities

- 1.4.3 Identify a clear and consistent mechanism for engaging the community in program and service needs identification and for engaging municipal program partners in program and service development, implementation and evaluation. The mechanism developed is based on the existing excellent program development program resources in the partner municipalities and the county and the strong working relationships that have been developed to date.
- 1.4.4 Engage key community based program and service organizations and regional and provincial resource agencies as partners and stakeholders in providing programs and services for Parkland County Residents (organizations and groups are listed under attachment 4.).
- 1.4.5 Increase the focus of Parkland County and of the CAG committee on a region wide perspective of FCSS Programs and Services.

1.5 FCSS Program Reporting

- 1.5.1 Undertake a review of the FCSS program and service reporting processes to ensure consistency and ease of data collection, facilitate analysis and develop additional reporting formats that provide essential information for County Council and for continuous improvement of resource allocation and program development.
- 1.5.2 Assign resources to undertake data collection and analysis and to support the CAG in monitoring and reporting on municipal and region wide FCSS data and information.
- 1.5.3 Parkland County and the CAG partners would benefit from developing a system of outcome measures for FCSS programs and services. This would add greatly to the qualitative knowledge of program results and provide a valuable level of information for decision making and resource allocations for the administration and County Council.

Option 2.0

Consolidate funding allocations to municipal partners within Parkland County

Recommendations

2.1 Implement recommendations under option 1.0.

Rationale

The recommendations in Option 1.0 are focussed on improving the efficiency and effectiveness and basis for direction and decision making of the current Parkland County FCSS Operational model including:

- Defining and communicating the Parkland County FCSS Program;
- Aligning the FCSS Program with the County Strategic Plan;
- Increasing the awareness and knowledge of social and quality of life issues, needs and capacities in the county;
- Setting benchmark funding/participation levels and developing strategies to maximize access and participation by county residents in existing programs and services;
- Increasing county engagement in program and service design, implementation and result indicators; and
- Improved engagement of the CAG to consider region wide issues, needs, capacities and collaborative program and service development and continuous improvement.

These actions are also relevant and critical to improving the overall Parkland County FCSS Program in Option 2.0.

- 2.2 Parkland County to directly provide program development and delivery responsibilities for areas currently serviced by Drayton Valley, Leduc County and Yellowhead County. Current funding allocations are Drayton Valley \$35,000; Leduc County \$87,000 and Yellowhead County \$56,000.
- 2.3 Investigate the feasibility of reciprocal access agreements with Drayton Valley and Yellowhead County to replace the current Parkland County resident access agreements.
- 2.4 Engage county residents directly impacted by this change in a process to review the change, identify programs and services to keep, identify current issues and needs and develop program and service options for the respective areas. Areas directly impacted include the Graminia area, Hamlet of Entwistle, Hamlet of Tomahawk and Summer Village of Seba Beach.

Option 3.0

Assume responsibility for all FCSS Programs and Services in Parkland County including community engagement and need assessment, community capacity and asset mapping, program and service development, delivery, evaluation and reporting and provision of management and administrative support.

Recommendations

- 3.1 Implement the recommendations in option 1.0 with the exception of those included in 1.2 and portions of 1.3 and 1.5 that do not apply.
- 3.2 Engage county residents directly impacted by this change in a process to review the change, identify programs and services to keep, identify current issues and needs and develop program and service options for the respective areas. Engage community service organizations and agencies where appropriate to deliver FCSS programs and services.
- 3.3 Develop and put in place the necessary program operation and administrative support systems to provide FCSS programs and services to Parkland County residents.
 - 3.3.1 FCSS program and service delivery will require leadership and management resources, program need assessment, program development and delivery, information and registration services, evaluation and reporting, linking with community and provincial based resources and financial management.
 - 3.3.2 Administrative support will include supervision, human resource and financial service support, technology support, advertising and promotion, etc.
- 3.4 Investigate the feasibility of reciprocal access agreements with municipalities in the county to replace the current funded access agreements.
 - 3.4.1 Establish record keeping to support evaluation of reciprocal participation.
 - 3.4.2 Consider a “fee off-set” payment for county residents attending municipal programs and services and vice versa.

Overall Review Recommendations - Summary

Recommendation 1

Undertake the development of a Parkland County Social Development Plan.

This approach provides the greatest opportunity to align social planning and development in the County with the other high level strategic and action plans that the County has developed to date. This approach also provides the highest level of resident and community organization engagement and participation in relation to identifying social issues and needs and building community capacity to resolve them. The Plan will provide County Council and administration with the basis on which provide leadership and set direction with respect to social policy, practice and allocation of resources in the County.

The process to develop a Parkland Social Development Plan will accomplish all of the strategies identified under Option 1.0.

Following the completion of the Social Development Plan, and based on the resulting strategic direction and alignment, the County may wish to consider the relevance and effectiveness of the strategies identified under options 2.0 and 3.0.

Recommendation 2**Implement the Current Model Efficiency and effectiveness Approach and Base Recommendation and Option 1.0**

If the Current Model Efficiency and Effectiveness Approach is taken then we recommend the strategies in the Base Recommendation under the Approach be implemented. The work identified in the Base Recommendation provides an essential basis to move forward with any of the Options following. This Approach and Base Recommendation will enable the County to identify and communicate the intent of, and set direction for, FCSS Programs and Services. Completion of this work will provide a basis on which to set priorities and make decisions between program and service options and create a framework for evaluation of FCSS program and service and funding allocation results.

Once the strategies identified under the Base Recommendation are completed then implement the strategies under Option 1.0. This Option recognizes the evolution of the County as an engaged program partner in the development and delivery of its FCSS programs and services as identified in the “Basis for Change”. The recommendations build on and ensure that excellent political and management structure and processes are in place to set direction, operate and evaluate FCSS programs and services that best meet the needs of residents and address social issues and opportunities in the community.

Recommendation 3**Consider Options 2.0 and 3.0**

Once either the Social Development Plan Approach or the Efficiency and Effectiveness Approach are completed we recommend that the County consider the merits of implementing Option 2.0 and/or Option 3.0.

Option 2.0 consolidates the direction setting, resource allocation and evaluation of FCSS programs and services currently operated from outside the County to within the County. This will increase the ability of the County to engage residents in the identification of needs and creation of community based program and service options. It will provide an opportunity to undertake more direct program and service evaluation and direct continuous improvement program development processes. All funding for additional program and service delivery resources and support will come from the funding currently allocated to partner municipalities outside the county borders.

Option 3.0 creates a situation where Parkland County is fully responsible for the implementation of FCSS programs and services within the County. This is a significant change to the Parkland County FCSS operating model and to the program partnerships and relationships with municipalities within the County.

The experience, data and information that will be gained through implementing Option 1.0 is required to fully evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of Option 3.0 including potential administrative and program operation trade-offs. Option 3.0 will also require assignment of Parkland County administrative support services to be effectively implemented as well as additional program coordination and management resources.

Parkland County FCSS Program Review

Introduction

Parkland County has participated in the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Program, with the Province of Alberta since 2002. The FCSS Act and Conditional Funding Regulation provide for a variety of operating models depending on the structure, needs and capacities of the respective municipalities and Metis Settlements in the province. The County operates under a funding model that includes receiving the annual available funding from the province, adding the required municipal matching share (20%) and allocating a portion of the combined funding amount to adjacent municipalities to support their FCSS programs and services. In response the partner municipalities accept county residents into their FCSS programs and services offered throughout the operating year. The County also reserves a portion of their FCSS funding to allocate to county based service agencies, for direct program delivery and to support administrative requirements.

This model has worked satisfactorily for a number of years. Recently the County has undertaken a number of processes, including a comprehensive region wide FCSS Review (2010), developing the Collaborative Action Group (CAG) to improve regional engagement, instituting quantitative reporting processes and conducting a program survey (2013) with a sample of county residents. A recent strategic planning process has resulted in a new Strategic Priorities Plan (2014 – 2018) for the County. As a result of these processes and the current political and administrative climate in the County it was determined to be timely to review the current FCSS Program operating model.

Review Purpose

The Review will assist and support the County in analyzing the opportunities and challenges with respect to changes in the County FCSS operating environment. It will confirm the “current state” of the FCSS program delivery model and identify potential options and alternatives for consideration in moving forward with FCSS programs and services, that support residents of the County and County priorities, over the next three to four year period.

The review will be guided by the following questions:

- Is the current FCSS operating model still relevant in terms of meeting the needs of County residents?
- Is the model the most effective and efficient method of delivering FCSS services, in the County, at this point in time?
- Are the partnership arrangements with adjacent municipalities effective in supporting the FCSS program and service needs in the County?
- Does the County receive good value for money for the financial and human resources invested in FCSS in the County in relation to the current operating model?

- Does the FCSS programs and services and operating model align with the directions and goals of the new strategic plan?
- What operating model options may be available to the County to deliver its FCSS Program?

Methodology

The FCSS Review Project was conducted in six phases:

1. Clarification of the desired project deliverables and outcomes, scope of work, methodologies and timelines with county administration and project leads. This phase also confirmed the stakeholders to be included in interviews (program partners), the interview schedule and key areas of inquiry for the discussions.
2. A comprehensive review of all existing related documents and reports and a summary of the related findings.
3. Engaging partner municipalities and other similar municipalities to confirm their perspectives on the key areas of inquiry and augment the existing data and document information.
4. Analysis of the existing and new data and information and production and review of a Key Findings Report. The Key Findings Report was reviewed by county administration and revised to ensure the information was meaningful, consistent and accurate. Follow-up discussions were held on various points in the phase with the program partners to clarify or augment the information initially collected.
5. Analysis and consolidation of all information and findings into an Options and Recommendations Report based on the “Basis for Change” principles and factors and the priorities identified supporting the FCSS Review. The Options and Recommendations have been reviewed for alignment with the review findings and the desired outcomes of the FCSS Review Project.
6. Presentations and/or support to presentations of the project process, findings, options and recommendations to County Council, the Collaborative Action Group and other stakeholders as identified by the County.

A final phase of the project is to jointly evaluate the results and outcomes of the FCSS Review project and process and determine any next steps for further strategy development and/or action planning.

Municipal Interview Findings - Summary

Note: A complete version of the Findings Report can be found under Attachment 1

Relationship with Municipal Partners

The Parkland County FCSS program partner municipalities include the City of Spruce Grove, the Town of Stony Plain, Town of Drayton Valley, Yellowhead County and Leduc County. Each of the partner municipalities has an agreement in place for access to FCSS programs and service by residents of the County. The County also works with the Village of Wabamun in delivering FCSS programs and services however there is not a formal agreement in place with the Village at this point. There is an increasingly positive working relationship at the administrative level between Parkland County and its FCSS Program partners.

There currently appears to be little to no formal political governance relationship between Parkland County and the partner FCSS municipalities that would serve to acknowledge the partnership, promote understanding and identify significant common region wide social concerns.

There has been a significant evolution and change in the relationship between Parkland County and the partner municipalities over the past number of years. The operating relationship has changed by intent and through environment changes (i.e. personnel, political factors, program needs), from a pure contractual funder relationship with very little program partnership engagement to contractual funder, program partner and some fee for service relationships. Parkland County appears to be in the middle of a transition in the model of FCSS delivery within the County. Parkland County has not developed or articulated its need and rationale for change and is not necessarily actively directing the change process with the municipal program partners. Therefore, there is some confusion as to roles and relationships and program and service processes and expectations. The intent (not articulated) appears to be to continue to move toward a model where Parkland County delivers its FCSS Program as a program partner through a variety of means including access agreements, fee for services, joint program partnerships etc., and to develop Parkland County FCSS on a regional (geographic not governance basis). The chart below illustrates the various relationship and allocation models in use by Parkland County.

Parkland County FCSS Allocation models

	Direct	Partnership	Funder	Flow Through	Fee for Service
	Programs and services developed, delivered and monitored by Parkland County	Identification of common needs and desired outcomes. Partners bring dollars and resources to plan, implement and monitor programs and services	Dollars provided to existing organizations to assist in undertaking their programming based on their capacity to address community needs. Organizations monitor and report.	Dollars provided to other organizations with similar mandates and under matching regulations (legislation). No direction as to specific areas of need to be addressed or outcomes to be achieved other than those under the legislation	Dollars allocated under contract to agencies to provide specific programs and services and achieve specific outcomes as identified by the funder

	Direct	Partnership	Funder	Flow Through	Fee for Service
<i>Advantages</i>	<p>Direct assessment of needs and community capacity, development and implementation of programs and services, direct knowledge of results</p> <p>Direct decision making</p>	<p>Collaboration in assessments of needs and options. All partners bring resources to the table (dollar, human and/or in kind)</p> <p>Potentially lower overhead or shared overheads and ability to leverage dollars</p> <p>Increased program and service catchment areas</p>	<p>No program or service infrastructure required</p> <p>Use of external expertise and experience</p> <p>Builds and supports community capacity</p>	<p>No program or service infrastructure required</p> <p>Organizations under similar mandate, policy and regulatory conditions</p> <p>Potential leveraging of infrastructure, expertise and experience and dollars</p>	<p>Dollars invested are for specific programs and service with specific results and outcomes identified.</p> <p>Costs for program results are clear</p> <p>No program development or delivery infrastructure required</p>
<i>Limitations</i>	<p>Highest overhead costs, no leveraging of dollar and resource opportunities</p>	<p>Need for partnership and engagement processes</p> <p>Potential for longer time requirements for decision making and development</p> <p>Less direct knowledge of results and outcomes</p>	<p>Decreased direct knowledge and experience of results and outcomes</p> <p>Contractor relationship rather than program and service partner relationship</p> <p>Need for audit controls</p>	<p>Decreased ability to determine needs and plan based on local community demographics and conditions</p> <p>Reduced direct knowledge of results and outcomes</p> <p>Processes required for engagement, reporting, monitoring, etc.</p>	<p>Harder to monitor and control program and service quality and knowledge of results and outcomes</p> <p>Requires formalized contract development and monitoring</p> <p>Contractor role rather than program partnership role</p>
<i>Dollars Allocated</i>	326,500		27,500	478,000	35,000
<i>Percentage</i>	37.8		3.2	55.0	4.0
<i>Total</i>	862,700				

Collaborative Action Group

The formation of the Collaborative Action Group (CAG) was a useful recommendation coming out of the Sierra Review (2010)⁶. CAG has been effective in providing a forum for information sharing although the main beneficiary is seen to be Parkland County.

CAG has helped Parkland County begin to move from funder to program partner. It provides a base of information to let residents know what is happening in the county and in the other municipalities with respect to FCSS programs and services. There is beginning to be a lessening sense of priority in the committee due to lack of action and tangible (program planning and development) results.

There is a sense that the intent of the CAG was to encourage collaborative program planning in the county, however, this has not happened to the degree that partners were anticipating. The CAG forum has potential to be a useful mechanism to accommodate information sharing and program and service planning and development functions with some changes to the mandate and operation of the Group.

It appears that the right people are not always at the CAG table for the appropriate agenda items. There has been a focus on having “decision makers” at the table which serves well for some items, however does not in all cases, support the program and service need identification and development functions.

The Collaborative Action Group mandate and function appears to be evolving from an administrative / compliance mechanism to facilitating a deeper understanding of the collective needs and resources of the County and partnering municipalities as a whole.

Program Planning and Development

Parkland County is in the process of moving to an increased level of engagement in FCSS program and service development and delivery within the county. This a changed environment for the partnering municipalities. The change by the County is based on ensuring both knowledge of, and practices that, address and support the needs of Parkland County residents in the most effective and efficient manner possible. Parkland County has not articulated the intent and trajectory of the intended change nor the values, principles, goals and strategies that support it.

There is currently not a clear and consistent mechanism to participate, with its program partners, in identifying needs, developing programs and services and capacities within the county region to address the needs. As well there is not currently a region wide approach or “system” of programs and services across the county (a county wide perspective rather than looking at individual areas). Programs and services are offered based primarily on the priorities of the individual partnering municipalities.

Partner municipalities are not clear on Parkland County’s areas of focus, priority and anticipated outcomes for their FCSS programs and services. It is therefore difficult for them to determine what program and service areas to proactively develop outside of those that are directed at issues and needs within their own communities.

⁶ Report to Parkland County, Family and Community Support Services Review, Final Report, Sierra Systems

There would be a benefit to the program partnership in articulating the intended goals and principles that guide investments into the Parkland County FCSS Program and the anticipated benefits for residents of the County:

- Need to align the FCSS strategic work with the County Strategic Plan and report to Council on the successes in contributing to and supporting the County plan;
- Clarify Parkland County FCSS goals and strategies to assist in effectively measuring and communicating results and outcomes; and
- This would also assist in developing a process or mechanism for collaborative program and service planning and/or development.

The structure of the program partnership within the County appears to be effective and is viewed positively by the administrations and their respective boards and councils. There is a high level of willingness to work together with Parkland County on an individual basis and on a county wide basis.

Communication

Communication mechanisms and activities have improved significantly over the past couple of years including information on the County's FCSS Program in the Parkland Communicator Newsletter and agency and organization information in the Green Book. The Newsletter and Green Book are both helping to raise the awareness of program and services and the County FCSS Program itself with Parkland residents.

There continues to be a need and potential for greater and more effective communication concerning FCSS programs and services to county residents and to measure the impact of communication strategies on increasing county resident participation. County residents are largely unaware of the Parkland County FCSS Program, its partnership and access opportunities and the fact that the County is providing programs and services for residents through a variety of means and delivery sites. A significant increase in attendance at FCSS Programs and services in the County and in partner municipalities could be achieved through increasing awareness of the opportunities and of the nature of FCSS programs and services in general. There is existing program and service capacity to accommodate an increased number of county residents in a wide and diverse variety of program and service options.

The county web site does not acknowledge, define or describe the Parkland County FCSS Program or access partnership with the partner municipalities. The site essentially refers county residents to external providers (partner municipalities) and does not acknowledge or build an understanding of the resources and support that the County is investing in programs and services for its residents. This appears to be an unrealized opportunity to build a sense of value, support and appreciation of the work of the County by its residents.

Sierra Study

The study is not widely in use by partner municipalities, i.e. demographic information and priorities have not translated into program and service development and implementation.

The Collaborative Action group is seen as a good outcome of the study process and recommendations.

The survey process and methodology used are felt to have not produced actionable information due to limited survey size, poor knowledge of FCSS by survey participants and generalized results and conclusions.

There is a sense that the project and resulting report was highly focused on reporting, defining obligations of partner municipalities and prescribing funding allocations based on compliance.

Reporting

It is not clear to partner municipalities what information is required by Parkland County, what the associated information needs and definitions are and what the resulting information will be used for. Partner municipalities feel they would be better able to provide clear, useful and accurate data if these areas were clarified. It may be helpful if the partner municipalities were engaged as partners in reporting (telling the story of the combined resources) rather reporting as contractors.

The current reporting template and processes are felt to be overly comprehensive and administratively onerous. There are some built in inaccuracies, i.e. use of postal codes and inclusion of programs and services that county residents are highly unlikely to use. There is a sense that collective work on the reporting tools and processes would result in better information for Parkland County administration and Council.

Additional analysis of the existing Annual FCSS Reports from partnering municipalities would provide useful information to establish county resident participation benchmarks and set participation level targets as one indicator of FCSS Program results. Parkland County and the program partners can then work to develop strategies to increase the level of program and service participation. The current Agreements with partner municipalities support and accommodate increased levels of participation by County residents. The following chart is a sample of the potential analysis, the source document can be found under Attachment 2.

Sample for discussion purposes only – figures are not necessarily accurate

	Total	Parkland	Participation
	Participants	Residents	Percentage
Yellowhead County	678	246	36.30
Drayton Valley	4724	347	7.3
Stony Plain	525	80	15.2
Spruce Grove	3698	1080	29.2
Parkland County			
Totals	9625	1753	17.60

Parkland County residents that participate in partner municipality programs and services are included in the current evaluation processes and practices conducted with those programs and services. The resulting data is used by the respective municipality to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the respective program or services and continuous improvement decisions are made accordingly. The evaluations and data are reviewed by the respective administration, boards and / or councils as part of their ongoing evaluation of their programs and services. Increased engagement of Parkland County in reviewing the evaluation results and in the continuous improvement processes undertaken with the respective municipalities would be helpful in creating an increased level of capacity in determining value for money of Parkland County's financial resources.

All programs and services offered by the municipalities, including Parkland County are required to operate within and report to the conditions and requirements identified within the provincial FCSS Act and Regulation. Reporting and review of all FCSS programs and services offered by Parkland County and its partner municipalities is undertaken annually by the province under the terms and conditions identified in the FCSS Conditional Funding Regulation. All programs and services municipal partners undertake, including those with funding from Parkland County, must meet the terms and conditions of the FCSS Act and Regulation and undergo review and audit by the provincial government.

The majority of information reporting on programs and services to Parkland County by the partner municipalities is quantitative in nature. It would be useful to establish some parameters for qualitative outcome reporting and begin to move toward collectively identifying some common outcome measures to be used by the CAG municipalities in evaluating their joint programming. Information and training resources in qualitative evaluation are available from the Province.

Support for Program Partnership with Parkland County

All partner municipalities reported good support administratively and at the respective political level for delivering programs and services in partnership (on behalf of) Parkland County. There is some concern with issues of rising costs and lack of additional dollars from the County to cover those costs. This also reflects an issue with the lack of increased resources for FCSS at the provincial level and the historic role of Parkland County as a funder rather than program partner.

Recognition of the partnership with Parkland County in supporting and delivering FCSS programs and services is not consistent between municipalities and in some cases does not identify or reinforce the value of the partnership and combined resources in making the programs and services available to all municipalities involved.

Impacts of Reducing or Eliminating Funding

If FCSS funding from Parkland County was significantly reduced or eliminated provision of programs and services outside the boundary (“outreach programs and services”) of the respective partner municipality would not be able to be continued. This would directly affect programs and services currently provided under contract to communities including Graminia, , Tomahawk, Entwistle, Fallis, Gainford, Moon Lake and Parkland Village and other outreach services such as home support and short term counselling.

Partner municipalities would likely begin adding a fee or a fee surcharge for any County residents attending programs and services in the respective municipality and municipal residents would likely have first priority if programs and services were oversubscribed. Depending on the municipality there may be no access to programs and services provided for Parkland County residents.

The opportunity for collaborative program development and design would be greatly reduced and would only occur in specific cases where a municipality(s) and Parkland County were each putting dollars into a joint program or service.

There would likely be a reduction in the programs and services available within the partner municipalities due to lower number of participants (i.e. minimum class sizes) and or fewer overall operating dollars resulting in prioritization and reductions in some program types or frequency of offerings.

Findings from Comparative Municipality Interviews

County of Rocky View

The County of Rocky View allocates a portion of their combined FCSS funding to three municipalities within the County.

The Town of Cochrane receives funding to support County residents attending Cochrane FCSS programs and services. Cochrane reports approximately 20% of program and service participants are county residents.

The Town of Irricana funding from the Rocky View County is allocated specifically toward a Women's Conference and a youth center operated by the Irricana Boys and Girls Club.

The Town of Chestermere receives funding from the County to support county residents attending Chestermere FCSS programs and services. Chestermere reports approximately 30% of program and service participants are County residents.

MD of Willow Creek

The MD of Willow Creek allocates a portion of their combined FCSS funding to five municipalities within the County. The allocations provide funding for access to FCSS programs and services in the five municipalities by MD residents.

Mountain View County

The County funds organizations providing programs and services within the county and grant transfers to urban centers in the County. The grant transfers are under a funding agreement (sample agreement available). Reporting includes what programs and services were offered, how many urban and rural residents participated and Mountain View is now requesting some outcome information (sample reporting form available).

Grande Prairie County

The County provides program funding to two municipalities within the county to provide specific programs (i.e. Sexsmith youth programs). The contract is for a set amount of dollars and does not have number or outcome reporting requirements. The agreement does provide for access to the programs funded by county residents.

Municipal District of Northern Lights

The MD allocates FCSS funding to three municipalities to provide for access to programs and services by MD residents. Some funding is allocated to partnership programs i.e. family day activities. There is an informal funding agreement and the MD requests reporting on the number of MD residents attending.

Document Review Findings Summary

Parkland County Strategic Plan 2014 - 2018

- The Plan is comprehensive and well-articulated in describing the strategic priorities of the County;
- Not clear what the FCSS contribution to achieving the principles and goals is in the Strategic Plan;
- Parkland county values, strategies and expectations from its FCSS Program and resources are not described. Residents do not have the opportunity to understand or acknowledge FCSS programs and services as part of the benefit of living in the County. There is a need to develop and communicate to Council, departments, residents, municipal partners etc.;

- FCSS can and does contribute to the goal areas including economy, environment, infrastructure (social) and governance;
- It would be helpful both internally and externally to develop an “alignment” and integration document that described how Parkland County FCSS contributes to achieving the strategic priorities of the County for use within the County and as a foundational piece for working with the partner municipalities;
- The Plan identifies a focus on quality of life and strong rural values. FCSS can make a significant contribution in creating and sustaining both areas of focus;
- A principle and value based decision matrix that reflects the values, principles and goals in the County Strategic Plan and that enables decision making between social choices would be helpful for Parkland County administration and Council and the FCSS municipal program partners;
- The CAG agreement / process and achievements, could be referred to as an example under the intergovernmental excellence area;
- FCSS can add to and sustain the quality of life area of effort of the plan and its corresponding results;
- The Economy section is an ideal place to identify the significant relationship between community health and municipal prosperity. A great deal of information is available that describes the return on social investment and the relationship between on social health and prosperous communities;
- The Environment section could be used to reference the community building value of environmental stewardship that can be supported by FCSS programs and services; and
- There is an opportunity to begin conversation on FCSS and social infrastructure within the County and with the program partners.

Agreements with Partner Municipalities

- Five out of six program partner municipalities have FCSS advisory or management Boards (includes Wabamun). Only one municipality currently has a provision for Parkland County residents to sit on their board. Two others indicated that if Parkland County desired they could undertake to revise their board bylaw provisions to accommodate Parkland County residents sitting on the respective boards;
- Accountability requirements are deferred to the CAG Agreement. There are layers of accountability in the FCSS “system”. Each FCSS Program is accountable to its board and/or council. Each municipality is accountable to the provincial government in relation to the FCSS Act and Conditional Funding Regulation. Parkland County has inserted another level of reporting and accountability from the partner municipalities to Parkland County to determine the number of county residents attending municipal partner programs and services and to satisfy the County’s requirements to report to the provincial government;
- The agreements are access agreements. Specific programs and services are identified and offered under additional fee for service contracts. There is no “cap” on access by Parkland County residents; and
- The Agreements do not include any provision for or requirement for collaborative program planning activities or processes.

Collaborative Action Group Terms of Reference (CAG)

- “Better serving Parkland residents” is not identified as a purpose and therefore does not focus the activity of the group;
- “Broker” designation of partner municipalities adds some clarity to roles and responsibilities. Is it clear to community agencies that they are working for the County in this capacity or do they think they are working for the respective municipality? Makes a difference in the perception of the County as an active participant for its residents in identification and resolution of social issues and opportunities;
- There is a need to differentiate the roles, responsibilities and “business” that CAG is undertaking in the CAG forum as opposed to ongoing work that takes place between and/or as a result of CAG meetings; and
- A model option or addition is to use CAG as vehicle to deal with “regional” issues, programs and services. Each municipality (Parkland included) deals with local issues, specific to their demographics and populations, independently and then come together to share and to work on more common issues and opportunities that impact more than one municipality, ie housing and homelessness or youth engagement.

Collaborative Action Group Minutes

- The meeting format (agendas) and actions are not consistent with Terms of Reference (at least in this sample). This is not a criticism but rather may point to a need to adjust either the agenda content and structure or the Terms of Reference;
- The group appears to allocate the majority of meeting time to information sharing and understanding what is occurring in the various participating municipalities;
- There does not appear to be a strong mandate for, or practice of, issue/opportunity identification and program/service planning and evaluation;
- Comments from the municipality interviews are that the annual planning process has not yet occurred; and
- An appropriate key task for the CAG may be developing and monitoring a county wide strategy on increasing FCSS awareness and subsequent participation by county residents.

Annual Reporting Documents

Municipalities indicate they do not have a clear sense of the definitions for some of the data areas and how the numbers will be used. Clarification of these points would increase the accuracy and reliability of the data.

There is no sense of a “value added” to the municipalities in providing this information to Parkland County, i.e. what is the return to the municipalities in terms of information and data for planning or evaluation purposes.

An annual summary of the key data elements* over time, combined with a summary of the reported issues and trends has the potential to provide useful information for program planning and development. The annual summary data would be a significant element for determining and reporting the percentage of county residents attending specific program areas in each municipality. It would also assist in determining the effectiveness of communication and awareness building strategies and by linking that information to the program evaluation reports and provide a measure of program and services effectiveness. Combining the data collected with the respective municipality’s FCSS Program operation cost and county contributions could also provide a measure of program contribution percentage against the program participation percentage. The following chart is an example for discussion purposes only.

Note: The CAG group would need to determine what the key data elements are for Parkland County and for the participating municipalities as well as the most effective means of collecting, analysing and reporting on the resulting information.*

Parkland County FCSS

Municipal Partner Funding and Participation Comparison

*Example for Discussion Purposes Only –
figures are not necessarily accurate*

	Municipality Budget (80 / 20)	Agreement Contribution	Budget %	Participation %
Spruce Grove	483.6	181	37.43	29.2
Stony Plain*	437.7	145.7	33.29	15.2

* includes municipal over contribution amount

The Program Report currently does not include program outcome data other than the narrative stories collected from each municipality.

Accuracy, utility and ease of implementation would be improved if work was undertaken to clarify what information is required and by who, confirm definitions for the resulting data elements, work together on data collection sources, methodologies and reporting and investigate potential information “loops” that would provide valuable processed data back to the partner municipalities.

Parkland County Web Site

- FCSS programs and services are not identified on the county website. Council, administration, residents and others are not aware from the site that Parkland County has an FCSS Program or

that the County provides (through various means) those programs and services to and for its residents. The site is not useful as an information site for FCSS and essentially sends residents to the sites of other municipalities for information on available programs and services;

- It does not appear that the potential of the site to communicate that the County, places value on and invests resources in, a positive quality of life through provision of FCSS programs and services to its residents, is being effectively utilized. One of the results is that the county administration and council are not receiving the “credit” for holding this value for their community and for taking actions and investing resources to achieve a higher quality of life for Parkland County;
- Site has been described as being hard to navigate and hard to find FCSS content; and
- Not clear how FCSS programs and services link to the rest of the site i.e. appears to be an “add on” rather than an integral part of the site with respect to the perception that, “this is important to our residents and we are taking action” feel of the other sections.

Report to Parkland County, Family and Community Support Services Review Final Report – Sierra Systems

Although demographic factors and area priorities are identified in the report⁷ there is not a defined or formal mechanism in place to undertake program and service planning or development. To bring forward the priorities for use at this time verification and updating would need to be undertaken to ensure the needs and trends identified are still accurate and relevant.

The content, tone and approach of the Study and Report serves to keep Parkland County in the role of funder, rather than program partner. Examples include:

- Each member of the CAG will be held accountable to participate in all CAG activities and to provide the information requested by Parkland County;
- Ongoing participation will be required to secure ongoing funding;
- The participating municipalities will need to provide detailed feedback to the County regarding program participation and distribution of Parkland County dollars; and
- Sierra report suggests some form of least cost accounting for programs and services which continues the primary role of the County as “funder” and the surrounding municipalities in the role of “agency”. It is a challenge to enforce these requirements and participate as a program partner.

A great deal of outcome measurement work has been done by a collective of provincial trainers working for FCSS Programs in the province which are able to provide resources and training to municipalities. Measuring program and service outcomes will provide more meaningful information for decision making and continuous improvement processes than developing a per unit cost approach. The per/ unit costing methodology with respect to FCSS has proven to be onerous and has not served to provide the level of information anticipated for administrative and political leadership purposes.

⁷ Sierra Systems, Report to Parkland County, Family and Community Services Review, Final Report; August 5, 2010

The community ranked issues identified in the Report provide a data source for the CAG to discuss and analyse community interests and needs and may be useful for program development when updated and used in concert with current demographic and community resource information.

The information on “Accessing Programs and Services” is seen by program partners not to be valid due to the low sample sizes. The section reports that 7% to 11% of County residents accessed FCSS programs and services. Considerations include that the level of understanding of FCSS programs and services in the county is seen to be low (Less than 30% rated their knowledge of FCSS as excellent or good) and the Report does not identify comparative rates with other FCSS Programs in the province to determine if the percentages reported are consistent with, higher or lower than with similar FCSS Programs.

The report does not consider or address impact of the administrative and political /culture change in the County that is influencing the current evolution of FCSS moving from a funder model to a program partner model. This evolution is influenced by a desire to move toward a “needs based” funding allocation (program and service development and delivery) model.

The Report does not consider strategies to increase municipality’s motivation to participate in the partnership and undertake the roles specified in the CAG Terms of Reference other than funding. There would be value to the partnership in determining the value added components for the partners as a collective and mutually beneficial basis for collaboration (i.e. insufficient registration to run programs unless county residents are included or extending number and/or duration of programs and services by leveraging collective resources).

Parkland County Family and Community Support Services Review

Recommendations and Options

Approaches

The Review Report identifies two potential approaches to move forward and build on the work that has been undertaken to date by the County, with respect to providing quality social programs and services to residents and contributing to quality of life excellence in the community.

The first approach is to develop and implement a Social Development Framework for the County. This Framework would augment and complement the high level strategic planning that has been undertaken by the County in the areas of environment and conservation, recreation and open spaces, economic development and tourism and community sustainability and development. This approach will provide the basis for engaging community and stakeholders in social issues and opportunities in the county and for the needs assessment and evaluation practices that will enable future planning and measurement of the results and outcomes of the County's social programs and services.

The second approach focuses on the efficiencies and effectiveness of the current FCSS Program model. This approach identifies three options and associated recommendations improve the current level of information on the mandate and purpose of the County's FCSS Program, improve information and knowledge on the results and outcomes of FCSS programs and services and the impacts on the corresponding funding allocation and program management model. The recommendations in the second approach increase county participation in needs assessment activities of county residents, in the development and evaluation of FCSS programs and service results and outcomes and in strategies and actions that increase the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the current FCSS Program model.

Social Development Framework Approach

Base Recommendation

Develop a Social Development Framework for the County of Parkland. The Framework will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following elements:

- ***Engagement of governance leadership, administration, citizens, businesses and key stakeholders in defining the social development priorities of the County;***
- ***Identification of Parkland County strategic priorities and direction related to social issues and quality of life affecting residents of the county;***
- ***A social needs, issues and assets profile of Parkland County;***
- ***Identification of community values and principles related to the social well-being of individuals and communities within the county;***
- ***Identification of policies, strategies and actions that contribute to a sustainable community that balances social, economic and environmental components.***
- ***An ongoing engagement framework for resident and stakeholder participation in, and contribution to, social well-being in Parkland County;***

- *Social policies, direction, strategies and an action framework;*
- *County policy and strategy alignments and linkages; and*
- *A results, evaluation, outcomes and reporting framework.*

Social Development Framework Approach – Implementation Recommendations

Establish an advisory team to structure the social development framework project and prepare an outline of the key elements and project outcomes.

Identify resource requirements including timeframes and funding estimates.

Develop a report for Council consideration including a project outline and rationale, costs, timelines and resource requirements.

Assuming Council approval, identify a project lead within the administration to manage the project and identify the internal and external resources required to implement and complete the Parkland County Social Development Framework.

Rationale

Social policy typically refers to legislation or a set of principles guiding the factors that affect human wellbeing. A social policy framework will provide the foundation or blueprint as the County works with other organizations, citizens, and visitors towards a specific set of social goals for the whole community. The Plan will represent the views and ideas of people who live and work in the County and want to create a community that takes care of its most vulnerable, while providing opportunities for everyone to realize their potential in a thriving, caring, connected community.

A Social Development Framework will enable the County to define, direct and influence (with partners and stakeholders) decisions, resource allocations and actions in relation to broad social policy in the County. The most obvious area of influence for the County is with respect to Family and Community Support Services, however, the impacts of good social policy integrate with strategy and direction in areas such as housing and community infrastructure, accessibility, quality of life impacts on economic development, increasing the sense of community through community engagement, population growth and retention, balancing urban and rural issues and opportunities, etc.

The Plan will enable the County to articulate and integrate priorities and directions between the various high level strategic plans currently in place. The Plan will identify interconnections and potential efficiencies with the County's Environmental Master Plan, the Recreation and Open Spaces Master Plan, the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and the Community Sustainability and Development Plan. The Plan will help to define the contribution of social strategies, actions and resources in achieving the commitments and outcomes identified in the Parkland County Strategic Plan.

A Social Policy Framework will provide a powerful opportunity for the County to coordinate more effectively with other stakeholders and make better use of limited resources to evaluate and address community needs.

The Plan will provide the basis for effective reporting to Council and sharing with county residents on the progress and achievements on the Social Development Plan values and goals. The Social Development Framework will serve to ensure that the County's social resources remain relevant and responsive for years to come. Planning for and addressing social issues will ensure that Parkland County both responsive and proactive in building a sustainable

community where community members have the opportunity to contribute to the overall well-being of the community.

Resource Implications:

- Assignment of a staff resource as project lead for the Social Development Framework project;
- Tasking of other County administrative resources as required;
- Engagement of external support resources as required by the project outline and work plan;
- Estimated time requirement of 12 to 18 months to complete the project; and
- Requires estimated funding of \$75,000 to \$100,000 based on other similar social development planning projects.

Current FCSS Program Efficiency and Effectiveness Approach

Base Recommendation

Define the Parkland County FCSS Program as a foundation for evaluation and future direction setting

Undertake a strategic priorities process with county staff, selected agencies and existing information to define the mission, goals and strategic priorities of the Parkland County FCSS Program and to align the proposed objectives and actions with the County Strategic Plan.

Determine the purpose and mandate of the County's FCSS Program, which will help to guide resource allocations and program partnerships and the intended changes in the community as a result of FCSS resource investments.

Develop an evaluation template to facilitate reporting on the results of the Parkland County FCSS Program based on the Programs contribution to achieving the Vision, Mission, Commitments and Strategies in the County Strategic Plan.

The County undertake a more rigorous analysis of the levels of program and service participation by Parkland residents against the funding allocated to each respective municipal partner as one indicator of return on investment (sample on page 26).

Note: sample FCSS Program Outline can be found as attachment 3

Rationale

Without the fundamental information generated through a strategic priorities process it is difficult to communicate to program partners, community agencies and residents the intent and priorities of resource investments in FCSS programs and services. It is also difficult to measure effectiveness and progress without defined and anticipated objectives and outcomes (changes in the community). This work will provide the basis for communicating to residents that their county government is investing quality of life resources on their behalf, will help to indicate direction and focus the programs and services offered through program partners on issues of concern to county residents and administration and provide a basis for evaluation of the resources in achieving the results identified in the County Strategic Plan. These actions will also begin to build a framework and source of information that identifies Parkland County specific value for money and quality of life indicators and measures (augmented by the work identified in recommendation 1.6)

Resource Implications

Recommended that this work be undertaken prior to work on any of the other Options and Recommendations in this report as it forms the basis, and creates a foundation, for the work in the following strategies and options. It is our recommendation that this work would be most efficiently completed by an external resource given that current dedicated resources for the FCSS Program are not available in the Community and Protective Services Department for this work at this time. Estimated cost of this work is \$8050 (see draft cost estimate under attachment 5.) Ongoing leadership and support to this work would be provided by the FTE resources identified in the resource implications for Option 1.0

Efficiency and Effectiveness Approach – Implementation Options and Recommendations

Option 1.0

Increase effectiveness and efficiency of current operational model.

Recommendations

- 1.1 Continue with the current partner funding model (based on percentage of county population served) until the work identified in the Core Recommendation is completed.
 - 1.1.1 Once FCSS priorities and key issue areas are identified and/or if additional FCSS funding is available consider a weighting factor in the FCSS funding to partner municipalities and community service agencies, in geographic areas or with target populations within the county, that are of particular concern (i.e. Alberta FCSS uses median income as a weighting factor for FCSS allocations to municipalities).
 - 1.1.2 The County to continue to retain a portion of their FCSS funding (and increase when possible) to address critical areas identified in the county to use as fee for service contracts as required and to provide resources to effectively manage the Parkland County FCSS Program.
 - 1.1.3 Based on the analysis in 1.2.3 identify county resident participation targets. Work collaboratively with municipal program partners, and by increasing awareness with county residents of the programs and services available (reference recommendation 1.4), to meet or exceed those targets.
 - 1.1.4 The County consider modifying its allocation model (funding allocation formula) to accommodate overall increases to funding allocated to municipal program partners to acknowledge increased costs of doing business (i.e. system wide costs of living or wage increases), once the analysis in the Base Recommendation is undertaken and considered.
 - 1.1.5 Should additional funding be available it is recommended that the funding be allocated to operational support to the Parkland FCSS Program, cost of doing business increases where warranted and allocations to specific priority issues and needs.
 - 1.1.6 Consider a one-time cost of doing business increase to the allocations to municipal FCSS Program partners to account for program development and delivery cost increases. Recommend that the increase be based on inflation and COLA increases the previous 5 years of approximately 3% (combined per year) or 15%. Estimated cost to the County is \$70,500.

Rationale

The current funding model, based on the percentage of population or county area served, provides an equitable basis for allocating funding to partner municipalities given the current level of issue or need identification, and quantitative and qualitative evaluation undertaken by the county.

The current funding allocation model and resulting allocations to municipal partners has not increased over seven years resulting in a net decrease in dollar spending power in the funding to program partners. This has caused the municipalities to make up the corresponding shortfall, on Parklands behalf, from their respective municipal (tax levy) FCSS program budgets as there have been no increased to the provincial FCSS budget.

Without additional information identifying specific areas of need in the county and the resulting identification of county social, quality of life and community health priorities, it would be difficult to allocate resources on any other basis that would reflect an increase in fairness and equitability. The provincial FCSS system has not seen an increase in funding for over eight years and as a result all municipalities are absorbing common costs of doing business into current resources.

The current agreements with municipal program partners accommodate increasing the level of participation in all FCSS programs and services by county residents. Preliminary analysis and review of the levels of program and service participation against the percentage of budget allocated to each municipal partner would indicate that in most cases the percentage levels of funding allocation by the County are higher than the participation percentages. Please note that these calculations are only preliminary and this is only one quantitative indicator of effectiveness and efficiency.

- 1.2 Increase the use and effectiveness of the Community Action Group (CAG) in identification of community issues and needs, in undertaking collaborative program and service planning and in monitoring and reporting on the results and outcomes of FCSS programs and services.
 - 1.2.1 Retain the information sharing capacity of the CAG group as it is seen as valuable by all partners.
 - 1.2.2 That CAG concern itself primarily with a region wide perspective of the social, quality of life and community health needs and capacities within Parkland County.
 - 1.2.3 Increase the percentage of resources (time) that the group spends on “collaboration between Parkland County and all participating municipalities in order to identify and meet current and emerging needs to Parkland County residents.”⁸ It is recommended that this become the primary activity of the group.
 - 1.2.4 CAG collectively take on the role of developing meaningful reporting measures and processes, which provide value to all partners, including measuring FCSS Program outcomes and reviewing and revising the annual program information collection and reporting. The resulting information will provide valuable data for program development and continuous improvement and for the respective municipal councils in providing strategic direction.
 - 1.2.5 That CAG undertakes the development and implementation of an annual region wide FCSS program and service planning event to facilitate identification of region wide issues and needs, evaluate actual and planned responses to needs⁹ and plan for program and service development and delivery.
 - 1.2.6 CAG to host an annual workshop of governance representatives from all participating program partners to increase the understanding of the issues, needs, capacities and collaboration options with respect to FCSS programs and services in Parkland County.

Rationale

⁸ Community Action Group – Terms of Reference

⁹ Community Action Group – Terms of Reference; Roles and Responsibilities

Parkland County is on a course to move from a role as primarily a funder to a collaborative program partner (see chart page 16). CAG is a useful and effective body to facilitate and support this transition with the municipal program partners. CAG provides an excellent forum to focus on the issues and capacities of Parkland County as a region, developing collective strategies and actions to address issues and build capacity and to focus on methods of continuous improvement that lead to increasingly positive results for the residents of Parkland County and the municipalities within. The current Terms of Reference for the Community Action Group identify roles in relation to collaborative needs assessment and program and service planning and in undertaking annual region wide reviews of needs and issues and the range of FCSS programs and services provided. To continue to be relevant to the municipal program partners the time invested in the CAG committee must also provide a benefit back to them in terms of information, resource leveraging and opportunities for collaboration. The overarching goal of the CAG needs to be to achieve more significant results than any one municipality could achieve on their own.

1.3 Develop a comprehensive communication plan and strategy to support the Parkland County FCSS Program and increase levels of participation by county residents

- 1.3.1 Clearly identify and describe the Parkland County FCSS Program, the programs and services available to county residents, the delivery sites and options and processes to take participate. Take advantage of all media possible i.e. the Green Book, Connector, school distribution, web site, municipal partner and community brochures, etc., to increase the awareness of FCSS programs as a service of the county and awareness of opportunities for residents to participate in programs and services and in the county.
- 1.3.2 Revise the county website to include the FCSS Program and specific information on programs, services, locations and registration processes.
- 1.3.3 Through CAG develop common standards and practices with partner municipalities on acknowledgement and recognition of program collaboration and partnership in developing and delivering FCSS programs and services.
- 1.3.4 Set awareness and participation targets consistent with communication and awareness increasing activities and measure results to determine effectiveness of messaging and communication strategies.

Rationale

The average Parkland County resident is not aware of the effort, arrangements and resources that the County makes to ensure the provision of FCSS programs and services on their behalf. Residents who do participate in these programs and services may well believe that they are provided solely by the municipal program partners. In addition to increasing awareness of and participation in FCSS programs and services by county residents, there may well be an opportunity to increase the sense of “value added” by residents of their county government by increasing the recognition of the county’s role in engaging community members in identifying issues and needs in the community and the steps taken through Parkland County FCSS to address those needs.

Parkland County is in a unique position to provide information on programs and services to county residents living outside the municipal partner areas. Several communication vehicles using various forms of media are available to provide information on programs and services and promote community activities.

The Sierra review (2010) concluded that there were no significant unmet needs that could be met within the FCSS mandate. The conclusion was based on a rating by 31% of 400 respondents or 145 persons. Other data in the report suggest that 27% of respondents indicated that services were needed but were not available, over 56% of respondents had fair or poor knowledge of FCSS, over 36% wanted additional information on FCSS programs and services and over 31% did not know where to find information on programs and services that were available. The report also indicated that 66% of respondents were concerned with illegal drugs in the community, 38% were

concerned with issues related to bullying and services for youth were identified as one of the high priority areas across all municipal program partners. The review also indicated that 78% of community agencies relied on volunteers to deliver their programs and services while only 22% of respondents reported volunteering time in the community.

Given the information reported above and the current levels of participation by county residents in FCSS programs and services there is a significant opportunity to increase levels of participation and corresponding quality of life results for county residents. A first step is to increase and diversify communication strategies that are targeted to increasing utilization and participation in the available FCSS programs and services currently offered by Parkland County in collaboration with municipal partners. Secondly to engage residents and community agencies and program partners, on a regular basis, to assist in identification of priority issues and needs, and target future programs and services to areas of highest need.

- 1.4 Increase engagement with municipal partners and community agencies and stakeholders in program and service planning and delivery
 - 1.4.1 Align the Parkland County FCSS programs and services with the overall strategies and commitments of the Parkland County Strategic Plan.
 - 1.4.2 Confirm with current municipal program partners the intended evolution of the County from a role as primarily a program funder to a program partner, including the related Parkland County FCSS goals, strategies values and principles (ref funding model chart page 16 and recommendation 1.1).
 - 1.4.3 Identify a clear and consistent mechanism for engaging the community in program and service needs identification and for engaging municipal program partners in program and service development, implementation and evaluation. The mechanism developed is based on the existing excellent program development program resources in the partner municipalities and the county and the strong working relationships that have been developed to date.
 - 1.4.4 Engage key community based program and service organizations and regional and provincial resource agencies as partners and stakeholders in providing programs and services for Parkland County Residents. (list of key organizations and groups under attachment 4)
 - 1.4.5 Increase the focus of Parkland County and of the CAG committee on a region wide perspective of FCSS Programs and Services.

Rationale

In response to a variety of changing environmental factors Parkland County has been proactive in evolving the use of their FCSS resources from a funder only model to a model that combines a number of funding/program relationships including as a program partner. This change is based on ensuring that the knowledge and practices that address and support the needs of county residents are undertaken in the most effective and efficient manner possible. This is a significant change for the county as well as for the municipal program partners and speaks to a positive engagement with partner municipalities and the community as a whole.

The structure of the program partnership appears to be effective and is viewed positively by the municipal partner's administration and their respective boards and councils. A clearer articulation of the evolution including rationale and expectations will assist the municipal program partners in understanding the changes and expectations in their roles and relationships with Parkland County. The clarification and subsequent discussion of the intended goals and principles that guide FCSS investments will also benefit the partnership in addressing priority issues and need identified by the county and in evaluation results and facilitating continuous improvement processes.

The FCSS Legislation enables the provision of a wide range of programs and services based on the needs of the specific municipality and/or community. There are also a diverse range of organizations and agencies that can assist in defining, developing and potentially resourcing program and service areas. Resources are required to identify, build and maintain relationships with these organizations in order to leverage and take advantage of the knowledge and resource opportunities that are available to benefit the residents of Parkland County. A list of organizations and agencies of particular interest to Parkland County are listed under attachment 4.

1.5 FCSS Program Reporting

- 1.5.1 Undertake a review of the FCSS program and service reporting processes to ensure consistency and ease of data collection, facilitate analysis and develop additional reporting formats that provide essential information for County Council and for continuous improvement of resource allocation and program development.
- 1.5.2 Assign resources to undertake data collection and analysis and to support the CAG in monitoring and reporting on municipal and region wide FCSS data and information.
- 1.5.3 Parkland County and the CAG partners would benefit from developing a system of outcome measures for FCSS programs and services. This would add greatly to the qualitative knowledge of program results and provide a valuable level of information for decision making and resource allocations for the administration and County Council.

Rationale

Parkland County and its municipal program partners are measuring a number of indicators relating to the delivery of FCSS programs and services. These indicators provide a good base of quantitative information on program and service participation and utilization, program costing, program locations, diversity of programming, etc. There are some levels of analysis that could be done with existing information (reference recommendation 1.2.3) that would provide assurance to Council of the effectiveness of FCSS investments and provide information for consideration by the program partners as they continue to develop their relationships, capacities and collaborative work.

In addition to the quantitative data, as with all social based services, qualitative measures (resulting effect on people's lives and on the community) are invaluable in providing a more comprehensive picture of the effect of resource investments on creating positive changes to the quality of life in the community. Resources are available from the Province of Alberta to assist with outcome measure process development and training.

Option 1.0 Resource Implications

There is currently not a designated position that coordinates all FCSS activity within the County organizational structure. The functions associated with providing access for county residents to programs and services offered by partner municipalities are currently incorporated as part of other existing positions. These functions include:

- Contract development and management;
- Management of the CAG committee;
- Collection of statistics and annual report information;
- Some direct program development;
- Publicity & marketing (or is this covered in info dissemination?);
- Attendance at various meetings relative to issues and programs;
- Program Advocacy and
- Some information dissemination.

In order to support the outcomes identified under the “Basis for Change” (page 5) and to achieve the results and outcomes desired by the County for residents additional staff resources are required. The functions to be addressed by the additional resources include:

- Communication and increased information dissemination to county residents – estimate .25 FTE;
- Increased CAG focus on issue and needs assessment, program development and evaluation, data analysis and reporting and coordinating development of annual region wide FCSS planning events – estimate .25 FTE;
 - Set participation targets and develop strategies to achieve C/W indicators and measures
 - Annual Region Wide Program Review and Planning
 - Annual Region Wide Political Governance working session
- Increased community engagement and Parkland County needs assessment – estimate .25 FTE;
- Work with community agencies (capacity development), region wide committees and organizations and county businesses as a basis to identify needs, capacities and potential resources (leveraging) – estimated .25 FTE;
- Engage community groups and agencies in targeting issues identified for Parkland County residents and in developing potential solutions and options – estimated .25 FTE; and
- Develop formats for reporting to County Council on the contribution of FCSS to achieving the County strategic goals.

Recommendation

Allocate new staffing resources and budget to support 1.0 FTE to implement the recommendations identified in Option 1.0

Option 2.0

Consolidate funding allocations to municipal partners within Parkland County

Recommendations

2.1 Implement recommendations under option 1.0.

Rationale

The recommendations in Option 1.0 are focussed on improving the efficiency and effectiveness and basis for direction and decision making of the current Parkland County FCSS Operational model including:

- Defining and communicating the Parkland County FCSS Program;
- Aligning the FCSS Program with the County Strategic Plan;
- Increasing the awareness and knowledge of social and quality of life issues, needs and capacities in the county;
- Setting benchmark funding/participation levels and developing strategies to maximize access and participation by county residents in existing programs and services;
- Increasing county engagement in program and service design, implementation and result indicators; and
- Improved engagement of the CAG to consider region wide issues, needs, capacities and collaborative program and service development and continuous improvement.

These actions are also relevant and critical to improving the overall Parkland County FCSS Program in Option 2.0.

- 2.2 Assume program development and delivery responsibilities for Parkland County areas currently serviced by Drayton Valley, Leduc County and Yellowhead County. Current funding allocations are Drayton Valley \$35,000; Leduc County \$87,000 and Yellowhead County \$56,000.

Rationale

Option 2.0 supports all of the measures identified in Option 1.0 and moves \$178,000 in resources from municipal partners outside the County to be under the direct auspices of the County itself. This provides the opportunity for the County to be much more directly engaged with the communities listed above in determining issues, needs and capacities and in the development and monitoring of programs and services offered. Option 2.0 also provides a basis for consolidation of a region wide focus and collaboration by engaging municipalities as program partners who are wholly within the county boundaries.

This option would require that a program coordination function be established within the county administration and that the trade off in potential leveraging of resources (existing program delivery infrastructure in the current municipal partners) against the existing program support structures already in place in the county be considered (i.e. potential for reduced program operating overheads).

- 2.3 Investigate the feasibility of reciprocal access agreements with Drayton Valley and Yellowhead County to replace the current Parkland County resident access agreements.

Rationale

With one exception (Leduc County) the funding allocated to municipalities outside Parkland County borders support the agreement for access to programs and services by county residents delivered in those neighbouring jurisdictions. Some funding is used by both municipalities to fund “outreach” programs and services in locations in Parkland County. Leduc County uses the resources allocated to fund programs and services delivered within Parkland County borders. It is feasible that if the current programs and services are continued to be delivered by Parkland County that a reciprocal access agreement could be negotiated to replace the current agreements.

- 2.4 Engage county residents directly impacted by this change in a process to review the change, identify programs and services to keep, identify current issues and needs and develop program and service options for the respective areas. Areas directly impacted include the Graminia area, Hamlets of Entwistle, Tomahawk, Gainford, Fallis and Magnolia.

Rationale

The Parkland County Strategic Plan identifies community engagement as a core principal. Recommendation 2.4 incorporates the principal into practice in relation to engaging residents in understanding the change in program and service delivery and in addressing possible impacts and expectations and in setting forward a working relationship for ongoing program and service development and delivery.

Option 2.0 Resource Implications

Option 2.0 assumes implementation of the recommendations identified under Option 1.0 and would require the same allocation of 1.0 FTE in new resources for the functions identified in that option.

In addition, with the assumption of program and service responsibilities for the areas currently service by Leduc County, Yellowhead County and Drayton Valley, an additional 1.0 FTE (estimated) will be required for program

development and delivery coordination and 2.0 FTEs (estimated) for program and service delivery. These will be new FTEs to the County, the funding however will come from the funding amounts currently allocated to Leduc County, Yellowhead County and Drayton Valley.

Recommendation:

To allocate new staffing resources and budget to support 1.0 FTE to implement the recommendations identified in Option 1.0

To allocate staffing resources of 2.0 FTEs with the budget to come from funding currently allocated to Leduc County, Yellowhead County and Drayton Valley.

Option 3.0

Assume responsibility for all FCSS Programs and Services in Parkland County including community engagement and need assessment, community capacity and asset mapping, program and service development, delivery, evaluation and reporting and provision of management and administrative support.

Recommendations

- 3.1 Implement the recommendations in option 1.0 with the exception of those included in 1.2 and portions of 1.3 and 1.5 that do not apply.

Rationale

As described in the rationale for Option 2.0, many of the recommendations in Option 1.0 are strategies that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the current Parkland County FCSS operating model irrespective of who is delivering the programs and services. The recommendations also serve to provide more accurate and targeted data and information on county FCSS programs and services for program planning and development, continuous improvement and reporting purposes. Some recommendations do not apply as Option 3.0 does not include allocation of funding to other municipalities unless it is on a cost shared or fee for service basis.

- 3.2 Engage county residents directly impacted by this change in a process to review the change, identify programs and services to keep, identify current issues and needs and develop program and service options for the respective areas. Engage community service organizations and agencies where appropriate to deliver FCSS programs and services.

Rationale

Recommendation 3.0 is a significant change in the operating model for Parkland County FCSS. It retains over \$500,000 of funding currently allocated to municipal program partners to be allocated directly by the County on the provision of FCSS programs and services to county residents. Under this model the County will be directly engaged with communities, residents and program and service providers in all aspects of program development,

delivery and evaluation. Any funding that is paid to partner municipalities would likely be on a fee for service basis for specific and targeted programs and services.

The Parkland County Strategic Plan identifies community engagement as a core principal. Option 3.0 will require incorporating the principal into practice in relation to engaging residents in acknowledgement of the change in program and service delivery and in addressing possible impacts, expectations and setting forward a working relationship for ongoing program and service development and delivery.

The trade off in potential leveraging of resources (existing program delivery infrastructure in the current municipal partners) against the existing program support structures already in place in the County will need to be considered (i.e. potential for reduced program operating overheads).

3.3 Develop and put in place the necessary program operation and administrative support systems to provide FCSS programs and services to Parkland County residents.

3.3.1 FCSS program and service delivery will require leadership and management resources, program need assessment, program development and delivery, information and registration services, evaluation and reporting, linking with community and provincial based resources and financial management.

3.3.2 Administrative support will include supervision, human resource and financial service support, technology support, advertising and promotion, etc.

Rationale

Under the current model the municipal partners provide most of the program operation and administrative support. Option 3.0 provides the greatest level of leadership and management of FCSS resources by the County, the highest level of direct community engagement and the most direct knowledge of program effectiveness and results. There will be a trade-off for the County between the portion of current funding allocations to municipal partners that supports administrative and program overheads and the administrative and the cost to the County to provide administrative and program support. A deeper level of analysis will be required to determine if the benefit would be in favour of the County.

3.4 Investigate the feasibility of reciprocal access agreements with municipalities in the county to replace the current Parkland County resident access agreements.

3.4.1 Establish record keeping to support evaluation of reciprocal participation.

3.4.2 Consider a “fee off-set” payment for county residents attending municipal programs and services and vice versa.

Rationale

Under option 3.0 it is likely that current municipal program partners will not continue the access support to county residents current provided for in the agreements (reference Findings Report page 17). Programs and services offered by Parkland County may be of interest to the municipalities for their residents and attendance accommodated in a reciprocal agreement. Cost shared program options between Parkland County and the municipal FCSS Programs may be an option as well.

Option 3.0 Resource implications

Option 3.0 assumes implementation of the recommendations identified under Option 1.0 and would require the allocation 1.0 FTE in new resources for the functions identified in that option.

Under Option 3.0 the County assumes sole responsibility for over \$860,000 of FCSS related program and service resources without the accountability measures and processes in place with each of the current program partners.

The County also assumes responsibility for all issue and need assessment practices, program development, delivery and evaluation. In order to ensure accountability for and effectiveness of these resources and the resulting programs and services, management and supervision functions are required. A portion of these resources will be able to be identified from the funding previously allocated to municipal partners however additional county funding will also be required.

In order to provide the diverse range of program and service types available from a number of locations across the county to county residents 2.0 FTE (estimated) program development and coordination resources, in addition to those identified in Option 1.0, will be required. The funding for these positions should be able to be drawn from the funding previously allocated to the program partners.

Although difficult to calculate without detailed program planning work it is estimated that 7.0 to 10.0 FTEs in program delivery FTEs (and casual contracts) will be required to deliver FCSS programs and services under Option 3.0. The funding for these resources will come from the funding currently allocated to FCSS partner municipalities.

In addition corresponding County Human Resource, Information Technology, Communications and Finance resources will be required.

Recommendation

Allocate new staffing resources and budget to support 1.0 FTE to implement the recommendations identified in Option 1.0

To allocate new staffing resources and budget to support 1.0 management FTE to provide management and supervision to the Parkland County FCSS Program.

To allocate staffing resources of 2.0 FTEs for program and service coordination with the budget to come from funding currently allocated to FCSS partner municipalities.

To allocate resources to support 7.0 to 10.0 FTE program and service delivery resources with budgets to come from funding currently allocated to FCSS partner municipalities.

Note: further analysis will need to be required into the most effective program and service delivery methodologies to determine if casual staff, contracts, grants or a combination of all methods are the most effective means to deliver specific FCSS programs and services.

Review Conclusions and Implementation Recommendations

Conclusions

The overall conclusions from this review are based on the conditions identified in the Collaborative Action Group (CAG) Terms of Reference, the Parkland County Strategic Plan and the Scope of Work for the Review captured under the “Basis for Change” on page 5 above. In summary these are:

- There are directions, strategies and actions identified in the CAG Terms of Reference that have not yet been implemented with respect to Parkland County FCSS and its municipal program partners;
- That the Parkland County Strategic Plan does not identify or acknowledge the contribution of the FCSS Program and investment of significant county and provincial resources in contributing to the goals, commitments and results of the Plan;
- A need has been identified to determine if the current FCSS resource allocation model is relevant and effective in meeting the social needs of Parkland residents; and
- Determining if the dollars invested with municipal program partners are creating good value for money.

Parkland County requires a strategic framework from which to identify and communicate the direction and goals of its investments in FCSS programs and services in the county. The Framework will not only provide the basis for decision making and resource allocation but also for evaluation of program and service results and outcomes to the County, municipal program partners and county residents.

Most of the information the county has with respect to the social needs of residents and program and service results comes from the municipal partners. Based on this level of information the allocation model is an effective means of distribution of resources and collection of the basic information required by to continue receiving FCSS funding from the province. In order to increase the information and knowledge required to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Parkland County FCSS programs and services additional county specific data collection, analysis and program management, on an ongoing basis, are required.

The recommendations in the Review Report will increase the coherence of the FCSS resource allocations and investments in relation to their contribution to achieving the results identified in the Parkland County Strategic Plan. These “contribution results” should form a key part of the social return on investment reporting to County Council.

The Sierra Report (2010) and internal surveying of county residents has provided basic information from a small sample of residents on their level satisfaction with social programs and services in the County. The indicators from these activities are that a low number understand the programs and services that are available, many respondents would like more information and those who were aware of what was available were satisfied with the programs and services in place. To increase the effectiveness of FCSS programs and services in the county, county specific data and information is required on an ongoing basis to help understand issues and needs and provide direction for allocation of resources to municipal program partners and for direct delivery by the county.

The question of value for money is difficult to answer comprehensively considering the level of data and information currently available. The current indicators that help to address the question include:

- All programs and services offered by municipal partners result from formal or informal needs assessment by the respective municipalities;
- It is likely that Parkland county residents experience many of the same issues and have many of the same needs;

- Parkland County residents are attending most of the programs and services offered by the partner municipalities. The participation percentages average from 10% to 40% although these numbers require further clarification and analysis. With the caveat that further analysis is required, these numbers are relatively consistent with other municipalities that also allocate funding to municipal program partners (20 – 30% participation) ;
- Program participant evaluations conducted by the partner municipalities generally show positive participant satisfaction;
- Resident surveys generally show positive satisfaction with FCSS programs and services; and
- All FCSS programs and services offered by the partner municipalities meet the mandate and criteria of the FCSS Act and Conditional Funding Regulation.

The additional data, information and analysis identified in the Report recommendations, including developing a process for measuring program and service outcomes, will enable a much more comprehensive ability to answer the question of value for money and enable an effective continuous program improvement business practice.

Review Overall Implementation Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Undertake the development of a Parkland County Social Development Plan.

This approach aligns social planning and development in the County with the other high level strategic and action plans that the County has developed to date. This approach also provides the highest level of resident and community organization engagement and participation in relation to identifying social issues and needs and building community capacity to resolve them. The Plan will provide County Council and administration with the basis on which provide leadership and set direction with respect to social policy, practice and allocation of resources in the County.

The process to develop a Parkland Social Development Plan will accomplish all of the strategies identified under Option 1.0 above.

Following the completion of the Social Development Plan, and based on the resulting strategic direction and alignment the County may wish to consider the relevance and effectiveness of the strategies identified under options 2.0 and 3.0 above.

Recommendation 2

Implement the Current Model Efficiency and effectiveness Approach and Base Recommendation and Option 1.0

If the Current Model Efficiency and Effectiveness Approach is taken then we recommend the strategies in the Base Recommendation under the Approach be implemented. The work identified in the Base

Recommendation provides an essential basis to move forward with any of the following Options. This Approach and Base Recommendation will enable the County to identify and communicate the intent of, and set direction for, FCSS Programs and Services. Completion of this work will provide a basis on which to set priorities and make decisions between program and service options and create a framework for evaluation of FCSS program and service and funding allocation results.

Once the strategies identified under the Base Recommendation are completed then implement the strategies under Option 1.0. This Option recognizes the evolution of the County as an engaged program partner in the development and delivery of its FCSS programs and services as identified in the “Basis for Change”. The recommendations build on and ensure that excellent political and management structure and processes are in place to set direction, operate and evaluate FCSS programs and services that best meet the needs of residents and address social issues and opportunities in the community.

Recommendation 3

Once either the Social Development Plan Approach or the Efficiency and Effectiveness Approach are completed we recommend that the County consider the merits of implementing Option 2.0 and/or Option 3.0

Option 2.0 consolidates the direction setting, resource allocation and evaluation of FCSS programs and services currently operated from outside the County to within the County. This will increase the ability of the County to engage residents in the identification of needs and creation of community based program and service options. It will provide an opportunity to undertake more direct program and service evaluation and direct continuous improvement program development processes.

The experience, data and information that will be gained through implementing Option 1.0 is required to fully evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of Option 2.0 including potential administrative and program operation trade-offs.

It is recommended that consideration and evaluation of this option begin in June of 2016 with potential implementation in January of 2017.

All funding for additional program and service delivery resources and support will come from the funding currently allocated to partner municipalities outside the county borders.

Option 3.0 creates a situation where Parkland County is fully responsible for the implementation of FCSS programs and services within the County. This is a significant change to the Parkland County FCSS operating model and to the program partnerships and relationships with municipalities within the County.

The experience, data and information that will be gained through implementing Option 1.0 is required to fully evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of Option 3.0 including potential administrative and program operation trade-offs. Option 3.0 will also require assignment of Parkland County administrative support services to be effectively implemented as well as additional program coordination and management resources.

Option 3.0 could be considered and implemented in place of Option 2.0 with an evaluation of the option (based on the information and experience gained through Option 1.0) in June of 2016 and implementation January 2017. Option 3.0 could also be considered after implementation of Option 2.0 with an option evaluation date of June 2017 and a potential implementation date of January 2018.

Funding for implementation of Option 3.0, other than county administrative support Services, would be allocated from funding previously allocated to partner municipalities.

Attachments

- 1. Parkland County FCSS Review Findings Report**
- 2. FCSS Annual Report Analysis**
- 3. Sample Parkland County FCSS Program Outline (for discussion purposes only)**
- 4. FCSS Related Committees Attended by Parkland County**
- 5. FCSS Program Efficiency and Effectiveness Approach Base Recommendation – Preliminary Cost Estimate**

Parkland County FCSS Review Findings Report

	Total Participants	Parkland Residents	Percentage Parkland
Yellowhead County			
Children and Youth	212	76	35.8
Families	58	31	53.4
Adults	302	122	40.4
Seniors	50	12	24.0
Community Development	56	5	8.9
Drop in Programs			
Total / Average %	678	246	36.3
Drayton Valley			
Children and Youth	120	18	15.0
Families	994	99	10.0
Adults	207	14	6.8
Seniors	903	16	1.8
Community Development	2500	200	8.0
Drop in Programs			
Total / Average %	4724	347	7.3
Stony Plain			
Children and Youth	0	0	
Families			
Adults	140	11	7.9
Seniors	385	69	17.9
Community Development	0	0	
Drop in Programs			
Total / Average %	525	80	15.2
Spruce Grove			
Children and Youth	2381	755	31.7
Families	188	72	38.3
Adults	148	24	16.2

Seniors	651	179	27.5
Community Development	330	50	15.2
Drop in Programs			
Total / Average %	3698	1080	29.2

Parkland County	Totals	9625	1753	18.21
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County of Parkland FCSS Program Description and Outline

(example for discussion purposes only)

Parkland County FCSS (alignment with Parkland County Strategic Plan)

Mission

The mandate of FCSS is to provide locally-driven, preventative, social initiatives to enhance the well-being of individuals, families and the community.

Values / Principles

Local people can influence things that affect them

Communities can be innovative and creative

Citizen participation, self-help and volunteerism are encouraged

Human growth and potential are enhanced

Goals

FCSS connects communities through the programs, services and information we can provide. Even more importantly, we're a spark in every community, encouraging people and partners to come together to figure out their needs. When one person feels safe and healthy, they contribute to a stronger family. When families are strong, they're a bigger part of their community. And when communities are healthy, they're motivated to give - of their time, of their compassion - to support individuals.

This is how Parkland County builds our community, a real community not just of streets and houses but of people who care about their community and help and support each.

Program Description

Parkland County FCSS is a Partnership between the City of Spruce Grove, Town of Stony Plain, Town of Drayton Valley, Leduc County, Yellowhead County and Village of Wabamun.

As part of Community and Protection Services, Parkland County Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) provides programs for seniors, youth, adults and families. Many programs are delivered through

partnerships with local businesses and other community based agencies. FCSS thanks all its partners and sponsors for their generous support.

Our programs enable people of all ages to improve their quality of life and their ability to prevent and / or deal with crisis situations should they arise. Our Information and Referral Specialists connects people with programs and services.

Delivery Sites

Parkland County FCSS programs and service are delivered by, and available to, residents through:

- City of Spruce Grove
- Town of Stony Plain
- Village of Wabamun
- Town of Graminia
- Entwistle
- Tomahawk
- Summer Village of Seba Beach
- Parkland Village

Programs Available to Parkland County Residents

Note: not all programs operate at all times of the year

FCSS related committees Attended by Parkland County

FCSS Provincial Director's Network Association

TRI-MUNICIPAL Initiative

FCSS Collaborative Action group CAG**

Parkland & Area Community Partnership - collaboration of human service agencies committed to development of a more complete continuum of services for families children & youth.

Administrative sub-group -administration, two or three speakers per year and the poverty simulation

Critical Connections –front-line staff meet monthly share info to assist in serving their mutual clients **

Response to Family Violence Society – create a more comprehensive & effective response to FV

First Five Forever coalition * – EC Map & childhood development

Tri-Regional Housing Committee - homelessness **

Seniors Interagency *

Drug Strategy

Turning Points

Youth Shelter

Our Tri-regional Emergency Social Services collaborative response - pending

Edmonton-Evergreen FCSS Regional*

Alberta FCSS/FCSSAA*

Alberta Poverty Reduction Network

Attended occasionally *

Attend regularly **

FCSS Program Efficiency and Effectiveness Approach

Base Recommendation – Preliminary Cost Estimate

Strategic Priorities Process

- Working sessions with county staff and selected agencies
- Identification of FCSS mission, goals and preliminary priorities

2400.00

Development of Parkland County Purpose and Mandate

- Identify preliminary outcome and evaluation template
- Identify alignment opportunities with Parkland County Strategic Plan

3600.00

Analysis of program partner budget allocations and County resident participation

1800.00

Materials and supplies

250.00

Estimated Total

\$8050.00