

# Future of Agriculture Study

September 15, 2015  
Planning & Development Services

# PURPOSE

- Parkland County is preparing a Community Sustainability & Development Plan (CSDP).
- The Future of Agriculture Study will be a document used to inform the CSDP and other internal County departments of the needs and trends (current and future) of Agriculture in Parkland County.

# Future Of Agriculture Study will:

- clarify current and future agricultural characteristics, practices and resources in the County;
- provide a vision and develop principles for a healthy agricultural system;
- provide direction on diverse agricultural opportunities the County should/could pursue currently and into the future;
- develop scenarios and recommendations for the enhancement, diversification and security of agricultural land and practices in Parkland County;
- provide policies and procedures for the implementation of the chosen recommendations for the ongoing security, enhancement and diversification of agricultural activities in Parkland County.

# The Who



- In June of 2015 Parkland County entered into a contract for the Future of Agriculture Study with:
  - ❖ Toma and Bouma Management Consultants
    - ❖ Stantec
    - ❖ Serecon
- These consultant have vast experience and knowledge in the fields of agriculture, planning and GIS mapping.

# Phases to date

- **Phase 1** – Inventory, gap analysis and profile of the current and future state of agriculture.
  - ✓ Inventory
  - ✓ Gap analysis
  - ✓ County profile
  - ✓ Current/historical state of the County's agriculture
  - Future State of the County's agriculture – Seeking Direction
  - Update GIS agricultural mapping of the County – In Progress
- **Phase 2** – Recommendations, Scenarios and Policies: Options for Future of Agriculture in Parkland County
  - Recommendations - In Progress
  - Scenarios – Seeking Direction
  - Options for Agriculture – In Progress
  - Policies, tools and incentives – In Progress

# Timelines

- Phase 1

- ✓ Inventory
- ✓ Gap analysis
- ✓ County profile
- ✓ Current/historical state of the County's agriculture
- ✓ One-on-One focus group meetings

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- Future State of the County's agriculture -----
  - Update GIS agricultural mapping of the County-----
- November 2015
- Public Open House - end of October/first week of November

- Phase 2

- Recommendations-----
  - Scenarios-----
  - Options for Agriculture-----
  - Policies, tools and incentives-----
- January 2016



# Future of Agriculture Study

**Parkland County**

**Presentation to Council**

**September 15, 2015**



# Overview

- Who have we talked to?
- Key Trends/Statistics
- What did we hear?
- Opportunities & Challenges
- Implications for Parkland County
- Possible Scenarios
- Discussion



# Who have we talked to?

Stakeholder/Group	Number
One on One Interviews	26
Ag & Rural Life Advisory Committee + ALUS	22
West Parkland Farm Focus Group	8
East Parkland Farm Focus Group	10
Equine Focus Group	10
Value Added/Specialty Interviews	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88 personal interviews</b>

# Key Trends

Trend	Implication
Growing world population/growing middle class	Strong long term demand
Increased specialization & scale	Fewer/larger farms
Growing demand for local foods	Opportunity for local suppliers - specialty operations
Advanced quality control/traceability systems	Entry standards more challenging - professionalization of the sector
Growth in agritourism/experience	Opportunity to build on emerging capacity
Preserving ag. Land a hot issue	Need for regional approach
<b>Summary</b>	<b>Clear set of opportunities for Parkland County</b>

# Setting the Stage: Major Trends

## Statistics:

1. Most significant 'positive' changes
2. Most significant 'negative' changes
3. Changes relative to the Capital Region

## Table 1: Major 'Positive' Changes

Measure	2001	2011	% Change	Implication
Average Farm Size (acres)	416	514	<b>+23.6%</b>	Trend to larger farms
Average Gross Receipts/Farm	\$72,000	\$125,000	<b>+73.7%</b>	Trend to larger farms
Farms with more than \$1 million in capital	223	374	<b>+67.7%</b>	Reflection of larger farms and increased value of land.
Canola Acres	19,738	36,667	<b>+85.7%</b>	Shift to higher value crop across province
Potato Acres	1,576	2,642	<b>+67.6%</b>	Favourable location for seed potatoes
Vegetables (acres)	37	47	<b>+27.0%</b>	Very modest growth and scale. Note: the number of growers have increased (1 in 2001 to 15 in 2011)
Area of Nursery Products	271	376	<b>+38.7%</b>	Reasonable growth—a reflection of location
Greenhouse area (Sq. Ft.)	169,797	197,465	<b>+16.3%</b>	Modest growth. However since 2011 several operations have closed
Sheep & Lambs (hd)	5,531	10,422	<b>+88.4%</b>	Overall a small livestock enterprise in Alberta but favourable growth in Parkland
Horses (hd)	3,840	3,923	<b>+2.1%</b>	Sizeable and stable horse population—the largest in the Capital Region

## Table 2: Major 'Negative' Changes

Measure	2001	2011	% Change	Implication
Number of Farms	1,144	782	<b>-31.7%</b>	Trend to larger farms
Total Area Farmed	475,926	401,863	<b>-15.6%</b>	Loss of substantial land area
Total Crop Area	227,729	180,512	<b>-20.7%</b>	Loss of substantial cropping area
Number of Farms with less than 400 acres	807	533	<b>-48.6%</b>	Rapid decline of small farms
Number of Farms with Gross Receipts below \$50K	797	539	<b>-32.4%</b>	Rapid decline of small farms
Alfalfa Acres	77,454	52,070	<b>-32.8%</b>	Loss of hay and grazing land
Tame Hay Acres	39,303	20,802	<b>-47.1%</b>	Loss of hay and grazing land due to reduced beef cow numbers
Cattle Numbers (hd)	79,084	45,353	<b>-42.6%</b>	Due to post BSE crisis, low prices, low returns
Beef Cow Numbers (hd)	31,471	17,601	<b>-44.1%</b>	As above

## Table 3: Changes in the Capital Region

Selected Indicators	2001	2011	% Change
<b>Total Area of Farms (Acres)</b>			
<b>Parkland</b>	<b>475,926</b>	<b>401,863</b>	<b>-16%</b>
Sturgeon	499,567	481,583	-4%
Lamont	524,636	595,608	14%
Strathcona	256,270	220,184	-14%
Leduc	564,298	589,978	5%
<b>Number of Farms</b>			
<b>Parkland</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>-32%</b>
Sturgeon	1,055	823	-22%
Lamont	910	753	-17%
Strathcona	896	658	-27%
Leduc	1,464	1,255	-14%

# Parkland in the Capital Region

## Total area farmed/crop acres

- Parkland lost the most land (16%) relative to the other counties. Strathcona lost 14%; both Leduc and Lamont grew 5% in areas farmed
- Parkland also experienced the greatest loss of crop acres (21% vs. little change in the other counties)

# What did we hear?

1. Major concerns with sub-divisions & land fragmentation (loss of agriculture)
2. Strong sense that eastern part of Parkland has a limited future for agriculture; similar questions emerging in the western part of the County
3. Farmers experiencing many nuisances: vandalism; complaints; traffic safety - a big concern!



# What did we hear?

4. Equine sector - unrealized potential
5. Parkland County - ideally located for opportunities
6. Land use policies need to change but a controversial/tough issue!!!
7. Agriculture is not well known, respected or considered and a low priority within Parkland County (residents, Council?)

# What does the 'Future' look like?

**Overview:** Many farmers see a limited future for agriculture in Parkland County.

## What we heard:

1. Fewer, larger farms (mostly crop; some beef)
2. Specialty operations (vegetables, fruits) but niche in scale
3. More fragmentation, non-farm residents, conflicts
4. Parkland County - a destination for equine events both indoor and outdoor
5. Value added - good location; will take effort

# The 'Opportunity' Areas

1. Large scale field agriculture (including dairy)
2. Grazing: specifically for the beef cow-calf sector
3. Specialty operations: potatoes, produce production, fruit, specialized livestock (sheep, goats, bees, etc.)
4. Agritourism including equine: destinations, stables, event centre, dedicated park
5. Value added operations: primary processing (oil seed crushing), food, beverage, bio-products, services

# The Major Challenges

1. The over-riding trends:
  - The inexorable trend to fewer, larger farms
  - Strong demand for 'local foods' yet slow to emerge
  - Lack of public awareness, appreciation and visible ag support
2. Current land use policy and the direct and indirect implications: Parkland County is losing land rapidly
3. Future of mining lands?
4. Lack of strong ag land use policy: provincially/CRB
5. Economic and market development support required to advance developing/opportunity sectors
6. Infrastructure investments required to support above

# Implications For Parkland County

1. Agriculture is changing rapidly: larger farmers; specialty operations
2. The trends (and input received) suggest that Parkland County is not well positioned for a sustained presence in either area
3. Three areas require attention:
  - land use policy
  - economic and market development
  - strategic infrastructure investment

# Integrating the new Strategic Plan

1. **Agriculture:** Parkland stewards a viable community and is leading a progressive local agribusiness industry
2. **Economic Development:** ..... Leverage local assets..
3. **Enhanced Connectivity:** ..... Invests in and promotes connectivity
4. **Environment**
5. **Healthy Communities**
6. **Regional Strategy:** ....balances the needs of both urban and rural residents....

# Integrating the new Strategic Plan

## **Agriculture: Key Results**

1. Increase agri-business
2. Create and expand entrepreneurial opportunities for product sales and innovation
3. Maintain a viable agricultural industry
4. Create agri-business clusters

# Four Scenarios

Potential differing degrees of planning policy changes, infrastructure investment, economic development, etc.



# Key Questions to keep in Mind

1. Does the Scenario achieve the intent of the Strategic Plan?
2. Is there a single most important scenario (or an element within a scenario)?
3. What policy considerations or changes are required?
4. What investments will be required?

# Scenario 1: Status Quo

**Overview:** No change to current policies and patterns

**Outcomes:** Continued 'urban' development throughout the County

Increased fragmentation, nuisances, loss of agriculture community

Further decline in agricultural activity

Strategic Plan key results not realized

## Scenario 2: Land Use Policy Changes

**Overview:** Changes made to protect agriculture;  
concentrate/intensity development.  
Will require a 'set' of policies

**Outcomes:** Large scale crop farms continue to  
operate

Resurgence of beef cow-calf sector

Development is more concentrated

Nuisance/fragmentation is minimized

## Scenario 3: Strategic Infrastructure Investment

**Overview:** Commitment to one or more major investment projects such as the equine sector; establish an irrigation district

**Outcomes:** Clear message that sector(s) are important to Parkland County's future

Increased private investment and related business activity

Parkland County - a leader as a local food supplier

## Scenario 4: Economic & Market Development

**Overview:** Parkland County commits to be a leader in 'rural' economic development & diversification

**Outcomes:** Recognized experts

Focused long term strategies

Strategic alliances with key educational institutions

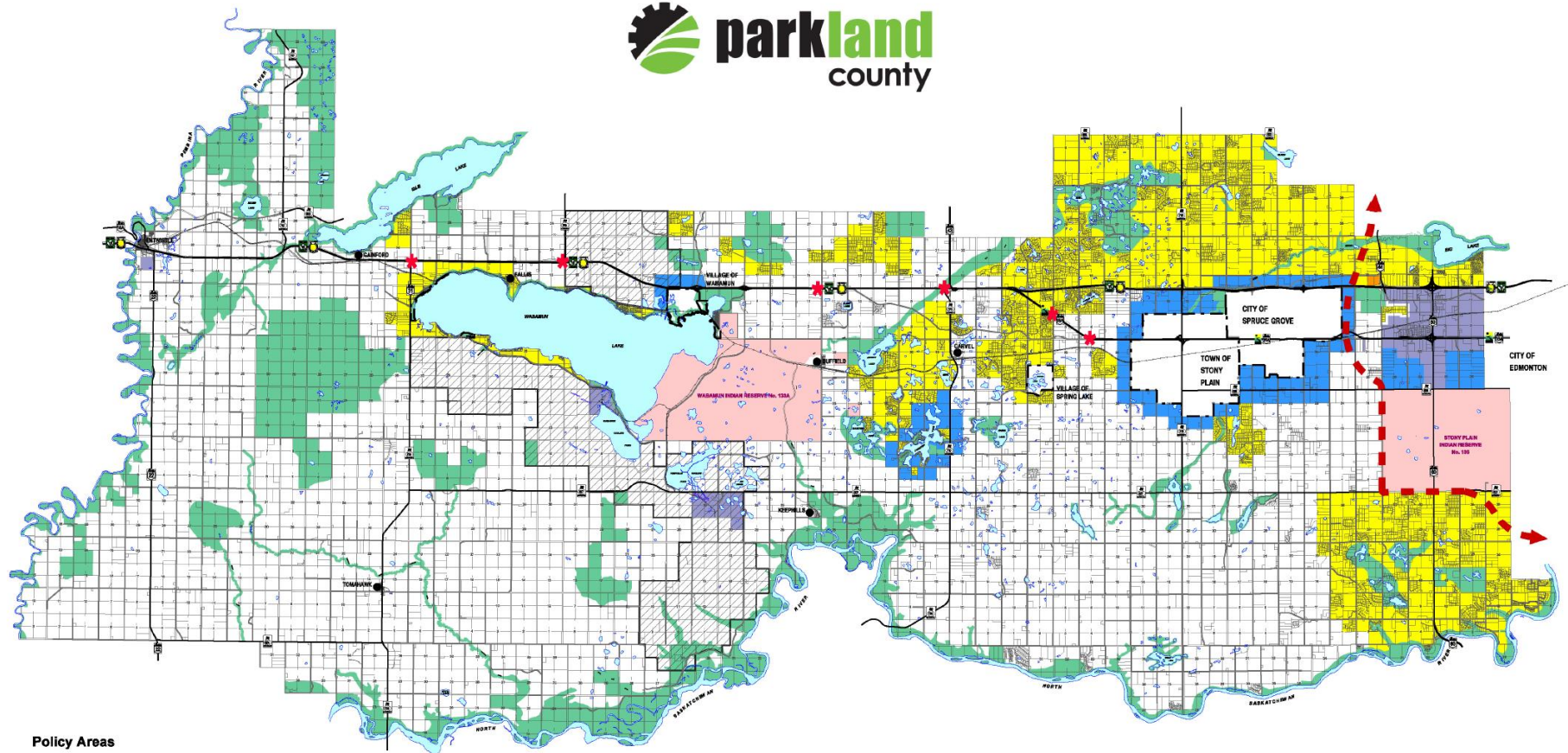
Success in attracting new agri-business as well as an expanded value-added sector















# Future of Agriculture Study

## Discussion





#### Policy Areas

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Country Residential Core         |  Highway Commercial         |
|  Fringe                           |  Agriculture                |
|  Industrial / Commercial          |  Major Resource Extraction  |
|  Environmentally Significant Area |  First Nations Reserve      |
|  City/Town/Village Boundary       |  Highway Commercial Cluster |
|  Hamlet                           |  Proposed Outer Ring Road   |

**MDP MAP 2**  
**LAND USE CONCEPT MAP**



# CLI Map (Land Classes)

MAP 5: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY OF SOILS

