
Preparing Parkland County's Organization for the Future

March 4, 2014

Prepared for

Organization Review
Steering Committee
Parkland County

Prepared by

Russ Heppell
Gabe Shelley



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1.0 Introduction

At its strategic planning retreat in 2013, Parkland County Council agreed that it required a review of its administrative organization. In the words of the Request for Proposal:

The County is interested in identifying ways in which municipal services can be delivered in the most responsive, efficient and cost-effective manner.

The County issued a Request for Proposal in July of this year and RSH Group was selected as the successful consultant to conduct this work.

The review was conducted in the period of September 2013 to February 2014. This report lays out the results of that work and provides recommendations to Council and Administration on meeting the intended objectives.

The consultants would like to thank the members of the Steering Committee for their time and guidance in this project:

- Mayor Rod Shaigec
- Councillor Phyllis Kobasiuk
- Councillor Tracey Melnyk
- Mr. Pat Vincent, Chief Administrative Officer

2.0 Executive Summary

At its strategic planning retreat in 2013, Parkland County Council agreed that it required a review of its administrative organization. The review was conducted by RSH Group Inc. in the period of September 2013 to February 2014.

The consultants conducted an overview assessment of the organization, using existing documentation, and high-level interviews. They also had managers complete data acquisition templates. The consultants identified over 100 opportunities, which they then categorized into ten major areas of opportunity for organizational improvement. The Steering Committee, comprising the Mayor, two Councillors and the CAO, then selected the areas that they directed the consultants to investigate in depth.

These in-depth assessments were conducted with further document review, interviews with managers and staff, and to the extent required, interviews with external stakeholders.

The work produced 24 recommendations, which were presented to the Steering Committee, and subsequently to the Mayor and Council.

The recommendations for improvement, sorted by category, are these:

Council Strategic Planning

Recommendation #1 – Council should review the visionary statements at each strategic planning session, and refine them to serve as the basis for its strategic planning work.

Recommendation #2 – Establish clear goals, strategies and targets and hold Administration accountable for reporting on progress to the outcomes.

Recommendation #3 – Administration should be charged with developing a set of projects that are drawn from the goals and strategies of the strategic plan.

Recommendation #4 – Council should be receiving meaningful reports on progress to achievement of its goals and strategies, and have a process in place to take corrective action.

Communications

Recommendation #5 – Ensure that every product of PC has been reviewed for professional correctness. This will require either a new administrative process, or training for staff.

Recommendation #6 – Decide if Communications is a strategic priority, and if so, invest in more resources, specifically to address website/intranet management and maintenance, and to provide professional management of community consultations.

Recommendation #7 – Review the Communications matrix, revise it, circulate to all staff and enforce its application.

Recommendation #8 – Create a strategic planning implementation role and move it out of Communications (specific structural recommendation to follow).

Information Management/Information Systems

Recommendation #9 – Create a separate business unit for IT with a full-time manager. The structural aspect of this will be addressed in the chapter on organizational structure.

Recommendation #10 – Building on Recommendation #9, create a vision for moving IT from the status quo to option 2 immediately and with an intent of landing on option 6 as soon as feasible.

Recommendation #11 – Develop an IT Master Plan that articulates:

- IT mission, vision and goals
- Strategies to be employed to achieve the goals
- Major initiatives to be undertaken
- The schedule to complete the initiatives
- The resources required
- Performance targets

Recommendations #12 – Concurrently assess the viability of partnering regionally (or more broadly) to deliver IT services.

Planning & Development

Recommendation #13 – Adopt a Planning Review Committee model that requires all relevant departments to review development applications and to meet on a regular basis to provide input on potential development agreement conditions.

Recommendation #14 – Appoint a Point Person to manage large, complex applications and advocate for the application throughout the organization and with the developer.

Recommendation #15 – Proceed with the move of Development Engineering into Planning & Development, with the goal of providing a seamless development application and approval process.

Recommendation #16 – Formalize fast tracking for significant developments to allow for a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining larger developers.

Recommendation #17 – Work with Communications to develop web-based tools for residents to support non-commercial development applications.

Development Engineering

Recommendation #18 – Involve developers in updating the municipal servicing standards, then agree, publish and put the material on the County’s website.

Administrative Performance

Recommendation #19 – Discuss and agree on a set of KPIs, and put in place a process to collect data, report and take corrective action. Report on performance against the KPIs to all affected stakeholders.

Recommendation #20 – Implement a capital project reporting system.

Recommendation #21 – Implement a business planning process with elements as indicated above

Revenue Opportunities

Recommendation #22 – Create a revenue generation unit within the organization responsible for identifying, investigating and planning the implementation of revenue opportunities.

Structure

Recommendation #23 – Implement the Customer Service Model as the new structure of Parkland County administration.

Other Considerations

Recommendation #24 – Conduct a ‘top-down’ organizational review every 3 – 5 years.

3.0 Overview of the Work Done

Several key concepts underlay the work done on this review. These are discussed in this chapter.

Context

No organization exists in a vacuum. It must be put into context. In conducting this review, the consultants were sensitive to the “rurban” nature of Parkland County. The team brought its knowledge of municipalities in general to this work, but also its specific knowledge of rural municipalities in Alberta and Parkland County specifically.

In addition, it does little good to design an organization for the past. Rather, it is important to have a sense of what the municipality of the future will require. The team developed a series of vision statements; these are discussed in the next chapter. These statements formed the foundation for the analysis and recommendations made in this report.

Materiality

There are at two general ways to do an organizational review. The first involves an exhaustive review of all activities with a view to identifying every possible improvement. This is certainly exhaustive, but it carries a number of disadvantages – it is costly, time consuming and risks losing the necessary strategic focus.

The other way is to use intelligence acquired through the process. In other words, review all of the organization broadly, and focus on those areas that would appear to carry the greatest potential for improvement. This allows a sweep of all of the organization horizontally, but devotes the resources of the consulting project to those vertical areas that have the potential for the most significant change.

In proposing our work plan, the consulting team opted for the latter methodology.

Process-Resource Model

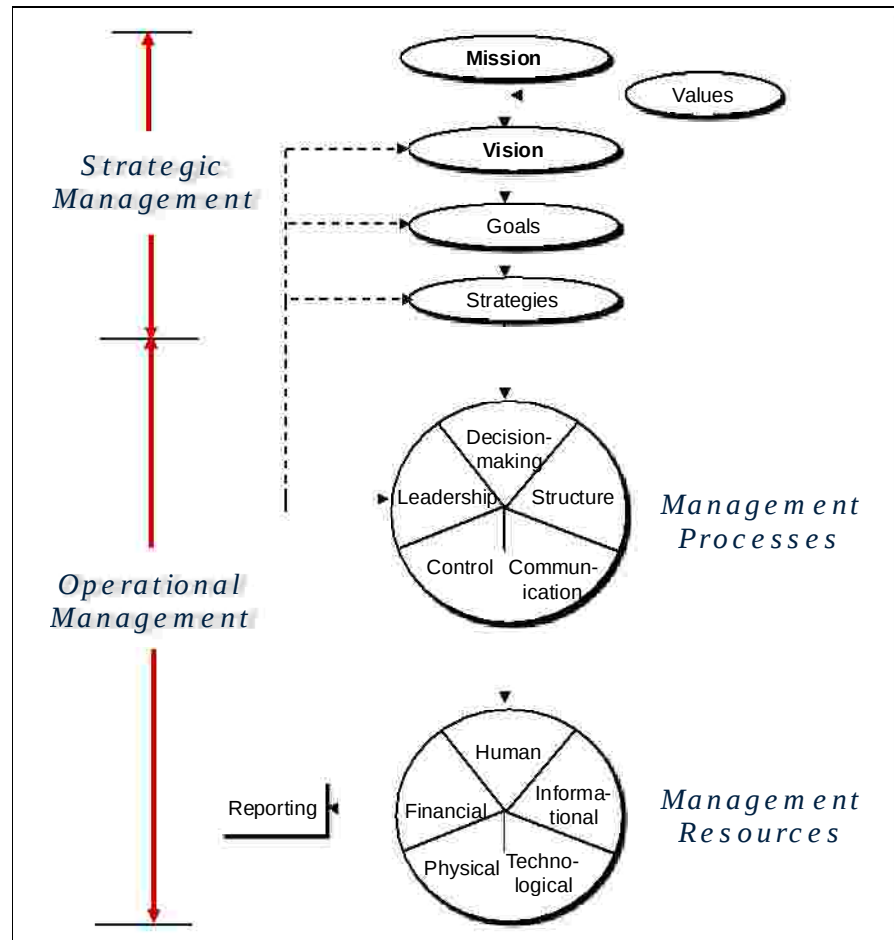
All too many organizational reviews produce restructuring without purpose. This results in disruption without necessarily improving performance or outcomes. Restructuring alone cannot do anything but disrupt the organization’s performance.

The consulting team used a model shown in the exhibit that follows. The key to this chart is to understand that structure does not stand alone. An organization must integrate all of its elements in order to be successful.

Beginning at the top, an organization needs a strategic vision of its purpose and its direction. It should also articulate the values that it will observe as it carries out its work.

Once these are in place, it must communicate all of this to its employees and its stakeholders. You have done all of the foregoing through the development and refinement of your strategic plan, the tying of that into your operational plans, and communicating regularly with your ratepayers.

Resource/Process Model



Carrying out the plan requires processes and resources. There are five key management processes, and they are inter-related. They are structure, leadership, decision-making, control and communications. As an organization works, it makes explicit or implicit decisions about how it works. For example, it might put in place a decentralized structure, but if it keeps decision-making centralized, it will confuse people and create frustration, and thereby produce inadequate performance. So, the five processes must work in tandem.

A similar argument can be made with the resources, of which there are also five – human, financial, physical, technological and informational. Once again, decisions are made to trade off one against another. Money is spent to acquire human resources, for example.

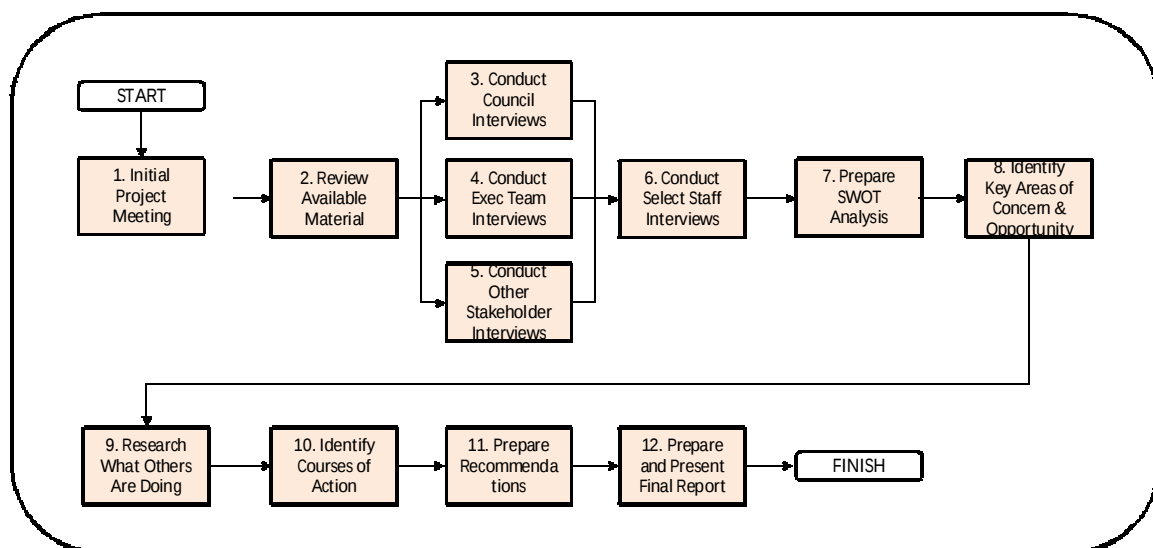
In summary, any organizational review must:

- Understand the strategic objectives and direction of the organization and take these into account as the review is conducted
- Look to see if the processes are in place and are being applied consistently and effectively
- Look to see if the resources are in place and are being deployed effectively and efficiently.
- Ensure that the whole works effectively together to achieve the intended purpose of the organization.

Only by tying all of this together can an organizational review produce meaningful results.

The Work Plan Carried Out

In support of the concepts above, the team developed and carried out the following work plan:



In overview, the first phase of work involved acquiring documents that provided a briefing on the organization and the specific functions and activities, as well as interviews of all of Council the CAO and the General Managers. As well, selected external stakeholders were interviewed. The consultants also developed a template for data collection on each of the service areas and asked Managers to complete these.

All of this input provided an overview of the organization, and where the potential for material improvement might lie. This was analyzed and the results presented to the Steering Committee for their review. Ten areas of potential improvement were identified. This meeting produced an agreement that seven areas (in addition to revenue generation opportunities) should be pursued for further investigation.

In the next phase, the consultants interviewed people in the organization responsible for these seven areas, collected more data, and, where required, comparative data from other municipalities was acquired.

This intensive analysis produced a second report to the Steering Committee. The conclusions and draft recommendation were discussed and refined.

All of the foregoing provided input to this report.

4.0 A Vision of the Municipality of 2030

As discussed earlier, the consultants developed visionary statements of the municipality of the future – in this case, we selected the year 2030. We are not trying to assert that all of this will come to pass, or that only these will come to pass. Rather, the intent of these statements is to provide a foundation upon which to test the changes and recommendations proposed. It is our suggestion that these statements be reviewed by Council at its next strategic planning session, and be refined and confirmed. In fact, this should form the basis of future strategic planning sessions. As years go by, and more information is obtained on the evolving world, the statements can be continuously revised and become more valuable.

Recommendation #1 – Council should review the visionary statements at each strategic planning session, and refine them to serve as the basis for its strategic planning work.

The statements are shown below.

Overall
• Younger people will continue to migrate into bigger centres;
○ Some will want to work from a natural setting, but this will be the exception
○ Opportunity exists to satisfy the desires of many to participate in natural recreational activities (i.e. escape the city for a day); but this will also create controversies on use and respect for the environment and rights of others
• Baby Boomers will continue to demand more services, but they will be dying out as this time period approaches
○ They will expect municipalities to be more involved in providing social services and health-related services as other orders of government download or abandon service delivery.
• Environmental issues will be more prominent
○ Increased legislation
○ Greater community expectation of municipalities to be involved
○ Opportunity to lead by example

• The use of technology in all aspects of life will continue to increase and likely accelerate
○ Demand by residents for better processes
○ Opportunity to be a “first mover”, and thereby set expectations for residents and become a model for other municipalities
• PC may both grow and shrink:
○ Edmonton may annex PC lands, reducing PC’s geographic size and political influence
○ Potential consolidation of smaller municipalities may add mandate to PC
• Continued urbanization and shift of electoral power to the cities
• Rebalancing of revenues between rural and urban municipalities – i.e. Revenue Sharing
○ Likely mandated by the GoA
• Need for rurals to market their lifestyle to attract residents
○ New residents will want the advantages of city life
• Continued shift from heavy industries to intellectual businesses
• Opportunity for new revenue sources (e.g., new taxation powers)
• Increased competition with other municipalities in attracting development
○ Economic development will become more professional – moving from broadcasting the message to focusing on target opportunities where the municipality has an advantage
• Likely more disruptive events; e.g.
○ Climate change leading to hurricanes, flooding
○ Human tragedies like train derailments
<i>And an expectation that PC will be able to respond expeditiously and efficiently.</i>
Governance
• Mayor and Council much like today

• Elected for four-year terms
• More authority given under the MGA
○ More taxation powers (e.g. fuel, hotel)
○ More devolution from the GoA (e.g. policing)
○ Incentives from the GoA to cooperate among municipalities
• Big cities will have unique charters; smaller municipalities will continue to argue for similar powers
• Further integration with other municipalities
○ Regional governance
○ Co-operation agreements on providing basic (and perhaps, all) services
○ Best practices identified and contracted out to other municipalities
• Expectation that Council will lead at a higher level (i.e. strategically, bigger vision)
• Continued need to modernize infrastructure, but continued financial gap in ability to do so.
Administration
• IT much more pervasive
• Greater portion of administrative investment in real-time IT/IM systems
• Residents tied in to administrative processes through IT
• Real-time performance measurement
• More contracting out to best-practice organizations
• Artificial intelligence used to make decisions (e.g. when snow will fall and when to clear it)
• More comparative performance metrics and action resulting from that (i.e. less isolationism)
• Routine tasks automated; expectation of employees to provide value-added
• Need for sophisticated communications processes to get through the “noise” that residents

experience
• Service orientation will either require more customer-directed technology, or modular facilities closer to the residents (with potential for less central space)
Residents
• Greater involvement through direct democracy
• Continued increase in sophistication and education
○ Commensurate increase in demand for service levels, and/or new services
• Continued densification in certain areas, requiring new processes to adjudicate
• Expectation for higher level of service
○ Quicker response time
○ Fewer errors
○ Greater use of technology in interacting with PC (expectation that PC will provide the same level of service as successful online retailers)

5.0 Phase 1 Results

SWOT Analysis

The first output of Phase 1 was a SWOT Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This was based on our interviews, our review of the background documents provided and our knowledge and experience with the local government sector.

Strengths

Parkland County (PC) is well positioned as a “rurban” municipality, and is seen as a leader in many areas. It has sufficient funds to continue to invest in maintaining its leadership position and improving its services levels. Staff is seen to be skilled, experienced and willing to work in teams. In general, there is a “can-do” attitude throughout administration. Strong policies are in place to guide the organization. Council and staff are seen to work well together, and Council is seen to be cohesive. The County has a good image with residents. PC has a strong strategic planning process and sets “good direction”. And finally, the diversity of the tax base is seen as strength.

Weaknesses

Rising expectations on the part of residents and Council means that the pace of work has to keep up with these expectations. There is a sense of complacency that arises from the many strengths mentioned above. There is concern that the relationship between the strategic plan and operational activities is not strong. As the County grows, it needs new processes to keep pace; this is true in certain areas such as communications. There is a tendency to bureaucratic behaviour, resulting from risk aversion and some inflexibility. Many people mentioned that Council needs to take more of a leadership role in setting the strategic agenda and in direction setting. And while there is satisfaction with the strategic plan, there is concern that performance measurement and management to results is largely missing.

Opportunities

There is a general sense that PC can be achieving more with its resources – performance improvement was mentioned frequently. The relationship with external stakeholders needs to be improved and this could be done with some process redesign. PC should look at alternate service delivery models and potentially some regional delivery models. People feel that there are prospects for cost displacement and cost avoidance, as well as a large number of revenue generation opportunities.

Threats

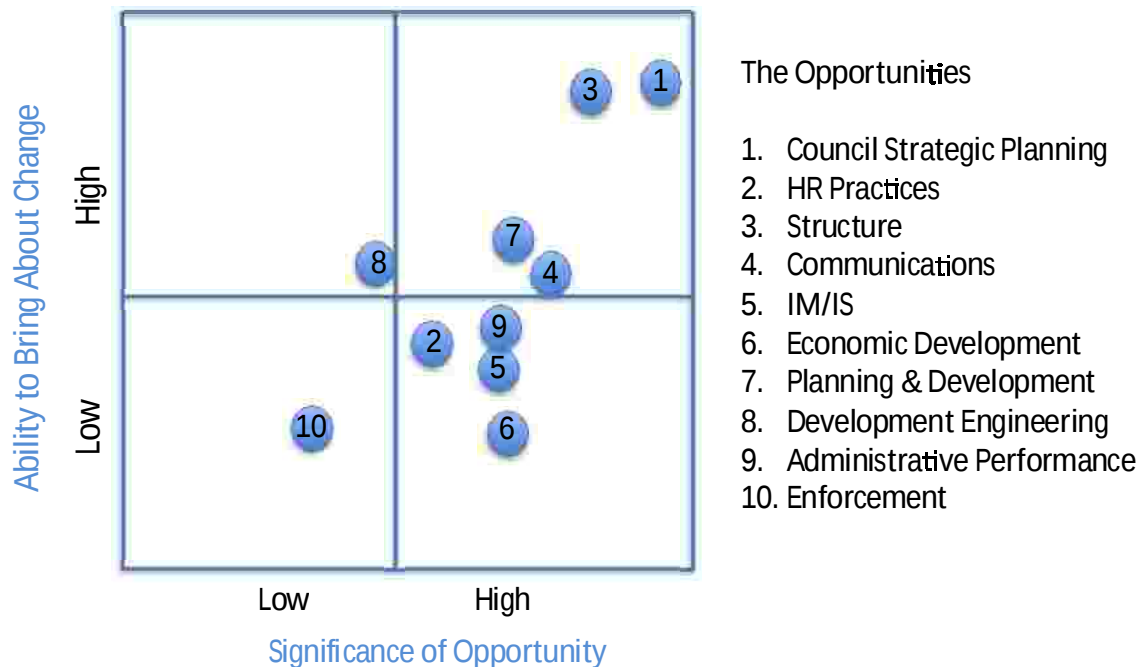
PC faces a number of threats. Perhaps the largest is the need of its eastern neighbor for more space. Rising expectations by PC's residents and businesses will be a huge challenge. Villages within the perimeter of the County might fail, leaving PC with new responsibilities. The presence of the Capital Region Board will likely have influence on PC's ability to control local development. As all of the foregoing takes place, there is a threat that PC will lose influence with the provincial government. Significant as well, is the shift to more regional funding by other orders of government.

Opportunity Identification

The second output of this first phase was the identification of areas of Administration for further analysis. We identified more than 100 potential improvement opportunities. We then grouped these into 10 major areas and presented these to the Steering Committee. We categorized each by two factors:

- The significance of the opportunity
- The ability of PC, in our opinion, to bring about the intended change.

We show the ten areas charted in the exhibit below:



Based on our categorization, and the Steering Committee's priorities, it was agreed that the following areas would be subject to in-depth analysis:

- 1 – Council Strategic Planning
- 3 – Structure

- 4 – Communications
- 5 – IM/IS
- 7 – Planning & Development
- 8 – Development Engineering
- 9 – Administrative Performance

In addition, we gathered and collated numerous revenue generation opportunities that are discussed in the second phase.

The results of the analysis are presented in the following chapters. Structure is presented last, as it benefits from input from the analysis of each of the other projects.

6.0 Council Strategic Planning

Overview

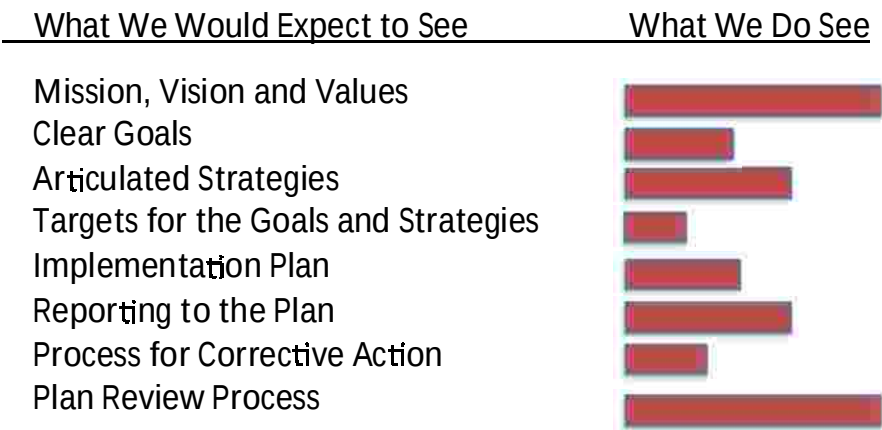
The work in this project involved reviewing PC’s strategic plan, interviewing the Mayor and CAO, reviewing Council and GPC minutes, reviewing update reports on the plan, and comparing what we found to what we would have expected in a well functioning organization developing and implementing a strategic plan.

We were satisfied that PC had a well developed mission, vision and set of values. It had goals, but we found that these tended to be general, as opposed to specific and measureable. As a result, the articulated strategies could have benefited from more precision and clarity. We did not find targets for the goals or strategies, and this would make measurement of progress difficult. There exists an implementation plan, but without the elements mentioned above, it lacks an ability to hold people accountable. The quarterly reporting is quite good, but needs to be tied to a process for corrective action. And finally, the plan review process is excellent, with Council and senior administration meeting annually in a retreat to review the plan and adjust as required.

Terms of Reference

- Is it working on strategic issues?
- Is it setting its own agenda?
- Does it meet on its own?
- Does it establish priorities?
- Does it set expectations for results?
- Has it established a long-term view (20 or more years out)?
- Does it measure progress on the strategic plan?
- Does it take corrective action?
- Is the plan taken into account in making all decisions?
- Does it spend its time working on high-level topics?
- Does it have a sense of urgency about results?
- Does it hold the organization accountable?

We show our overall assessment in a conceptual graph below.



The Planning Continuum

We show in the chart below the planning continuum. It moves in sophistication from left to right – it starts with basic operational planning, to more corporate perspective in

business planning, through short-term strategic planning, and to long-term strategic planning.



We find that Parkland County operates at the short-term strategic planning location. Much of the current plan is based upon today's assumptions. It does not make assumptions about the future, and yet Council knows of the major issues likely to affect the County. We believe Council and senior administration should develop a scenario (or several) of the future and incorporate these into its planning process. This is consistent with Recommendation #1 presented in Chapter 4.

Goal Setting and Targets

We mentioned that goals and strategies are general, not specific. While general goals are useful, at some point these have to be brought to a level where they can be used to develop specific strategies and targets.

For example, Goal 1 is: Parkland County will mitigate its revenue risk through diversification of its revenue stream. This goal makes sense and one would then expect specific strategies to make this happen. The first strategy is: Parkland County will promote itself to all industry sectors as a great place to do business. This seems wide-ranging and all-inclusive. It is unlikely to be successful in an age in which focus and prioritization is essential to make best use of resources and to build upon the strengths of the County.

We ask, 'what would success look like in this strategy?' What would Council expect to see in a year, or five years? Without clarity, and without targets, it is unlikely to result in anything more than reports on activities, not outcomes.

Recommendation #2 – Establish clear goals, strategies and targets and hold Administration accountable for reporting on progress to the outcomes.

Relationship between Plan and Administration

Continuing with the example of Goal 1, Strategy 1, we note that three projects are being undertaken by Administration:

1. Enhance our online presence to better promote Parkland County
2. Increase online services offered to County residents and businesses
3. Develop mobile applications to make information and communications more accessible

All of these are worthwhile projects, undoubtedly, but it is not clear that they will move the County closer to achieving its goal in this case. How are these projects related to the goal and the strategy? It appears to us that these are administrative projects that need to be done, but they are not related to the goal. They seem to be an assembly of on-going work activities (bottom-up), rather than a critical assessment of what projects will meet the intended goal (top-down)

Recommendation #3 – Administration should be charged with developing a set of projects that are drawn from the goals and strategies of the strategic plan.

Reporting on Progress

Council receives quarterly reports on progress against each goal, strategy and project. We note that there are 75 projects identified, 72 of which are reported upon in the first quarter of this year. That number reduces to only 17 in the subsequent quarter. It would appear that there was initial enthusiasm for the projects, and that this has reduced with subsequent quarters. It has become an administrative burden. We note as well that the reports are more an assemblage of activities rather than a clear statement of how far along the road to completion a project has traveled.

Recommendation #4 – Council should be receiving meaningful reports on progress to achievement of its goals and strategies, and have a process in place to take corrective action.

7.0 Communications

Overview

The work in this project involved meeting with the manager of the unit as well as the assistant, reviewing documents (including the Communications Guidelines and public products of Communications, and meeting with the Mayor and CAO.

Our observation is that the Corporate Communications Guidelines seem appropriate and comprehensive. They lay out the format of PC products and identify the roles of Communications and the Divisions in preparing and distributing communications products. We note that there is some confusion about roles and this is addressed below.

We note as well that the PC website is a bit of an orphan. While Communications has overall responsibility for it, the content is the responsibility of each of the Divisions. In other words, if a Division does not update its information, no one is responsible for making sure that this is done. There is no Webmaster in the organization. This might be a Communications responsibility, but with only two staff, it is unlikely to capture enough attention among many other priorities. The same is true of the Intranet that is used within the organization. It is old and likely requires update.

Our review of the products of Communications found that while the quality is high, it is annoying to encounter many typos. This detracts from the professional appearance that Council wants to present.

Recommendation #5 – Ensure that every product of PC has been reviewed for professional correctness. This will require either a new administrative process, or training for staff.

Strategic View of Communications

Council sees communications as a key tool in doing its work. As society embraces more tools and technology advances, it is important for the County to have resources to communicate with its residents and other stakeholders.

Many organizations are investing in this area, involving such aspects as social media, managing websites and providing professional consultation services.

Terms of Reference

- Is there an opportunity to improve the:
 - Image of Parkland County presented
 - Responsiveness to Council's needs
 - Responsiveness to needs of residents
 - Ability to respond to ever-increasing demand for more information
 - Involvement of residents?
- Is there an opportunity to work with Stony Plain/ Spruce Grove on communications?
- Is Communications in the right structural place?
- Is this the best place for strategic planning management?

The current communications resourcing does not allow for much of this work. If Council wants more, it will have to invest in this area on a strategic basis.

Recommendation #6 – Decide if Communications is a strategic priority, and if so, invest in more resources, specifically to address website/intranet management and maintenance, and to provide professional management of community consultations.

Structural Placement

There is much talk within the organization on where Communications should be placed. We looked at several options:

- Reporting to the CAO – This would provide more visibility for the function and allow for direct contact with the CAO in order to ensure that the highest level administrative priorities are served; but it would load more responsibility onto the CAO. We found examples in other municipalities where this structure is in place
- Reporting to Council – This would position the function at the highest level and would provide it with more influence than it enjoys today; but it would also result in less supervision, and perhaps make it less sensitive to the needs of the organization.
- Leave it in the current location – Communication is a natural fit with Corporate Services, although it suffers from lack of influence, and may not have sufficient contact with the highest needs of the organization. Attending Council meetings and occasionally the Executive meetings would resolve this.

In summary, we do not see a compelling reason to move the function, and feel it should stay in its current structural location.

Review of Roles

There is a certain organizational tension within the organization. Communications wants to manage the process and ensure that every product is professional and consistent in appearance. Divisions want the freedom to manage their communications with their stakeholders. This tension is healthy and can be ameliorated by a set of rules. Such a set does in fact exist (in the Corporate Communications Guidelines manual) and is reproduced below:

Communications Need	Impacts to County operations	Public concern/ support	Financial impacts	Potential for media coverage	Public safety risks	Impacts to reputation
No support required	Some service interruptions /service enhancement possible	No public concern or support	No financial impacts	No coverage	No public safety hazards	No impacts to reputation of corporation
Brief communications, communications will monitor	Service interruptions / enhancement likely	Possible concern or support	Possible impacts to budget but not to taxpayers	Local coverage	Some public safety risks possible	Possible risks or opportunity for positive impact to reputation
Communications plan required, communications will monitor	Inability to provide service for day or more / New service offering probable	Probable concern or support	Probable impacts to property taxes (including savings/ tax reduction)	Provincial coverage	Public safety risks probable	Positive or negative impact among key stakeholder groups likely
Communications plan and active ongoing support	Some service interruptions /service enhancement plans	Significant public concern or support	Significant impact to property taxes (including savings/ tax reduction)	National coverage	Risk of fatality	Broad negative or positive impact among various audiences

We reviewed the matrix and applied it to current communications issues. We found that although the matrix is well conceived, there were circumstances in which we found it difficult to identify the cell into which a situation would fall. Our conclusion is that this matrix should be reviewed by the Executive Committee to ensure that it acquires a full organization-wide perspective and be modified in order to be applied from the perspective of the users. Then it should be circulated to all staff and its application enforced.

Recommendation #7 – Review the Communications matrix, revise it, circulate to all staff and enforce its application.

Strategic Planning Implementation

The on-going overview of the strategic plan is the responsibility of Communications. This unit is responsible for collecting data on progress and creating the quarterly reports that go to Council. The Manager also attends strategic planning sessions. We do not see this as a natural fit with Communications, and certainly not in an organizational unit with constrained resources.

We would expect that the management of the implementation task would require someone with strategic planning experience, with project management skills and with

sufficient authority to clear obstacles and move projects along. This might take 30-40% of someone's time. The Communications Manager spends 5-10% of her time on this. If the strategic plan is to be a living part of Administration's activities, it will need a more dedicated focus.

Recommendation #8 – Create a strategic planning implementation role and move it out of Communications (specific structural recommendation to follow).

8.0 Information Management/Information Systems

Overview

The work in this project involved a meeting with the Manager and with designated staff, a review of documents (the 2013, 2015 business plans for IM, ITS and GIS, and the IT Project List), and a review of organizational models used in other municipalities for best practices. We also looked at cloud computing models to gauge their applicability to PC.

We also received a number of individual submissions regarding the processes, structure, resourcing and management of IM/IS.

The current IM/IS environment at PC comprises three entities:

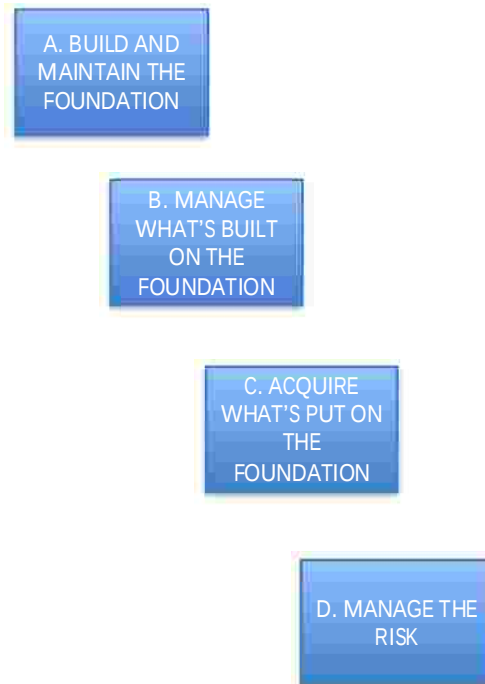
- Geographic Information System (GIS) – this service utilizes technology to deliver information to internal and external clients. It was moved from Engineering Services after having been moved from Planning & Development. GIS is an application of technology and will be discussed separately later in this chapter.
- Information Technology Services (ITS) – this is the centralized service that provides the technological environment to support the use of IT applications by clients. It deals with the technical foundation (network, servers, desktops, etc.), as distinct from the applications and data that are resident on the technology platform.
- Information Management (IM) – this is a series of services related to the capture, stewardship, archiving and retrieval of corporate information in all forms of media. It is the intent of IM to use technology to provide records management services. It also maintains the rules for the use of information (e.g. FOIP).

We show in the chart below a conceptual framework for the elements of IT that we would expect to see in a steady-state well functioning IT environment.

Terms of Reference

- Do these units support the needs of the organization?
- Is the GIS system up to date and supporting the organization?
- Are current technologies being employed? (e.g. BYOD, Legistar, Bellamy)
- Does the unit have the right skills and numbers?
- Is the service level appropriate?
- Are these units structured appropriately?
- Is there an opportunity for regional service delivery or contracting out?

- A. IT OPERATIONS
 - Network services
 - Desktop services
 - Database services
 - Help desk
- B. IT SERVICES
 - Project evaluation
 - Project planning
 - Project management
 - Risk management
 - Quality assurance
- C. IT SYSTEMS SUPPORT
 - Application development
 - Business analyst support
 - Business process support
 - System acquisition support
- D. IT STANDARDS
 - Technology standards
 - Application standards
 - Security standards
 - Data standards
 - IT Strategic Planning



As against this framework, we show below our assessment of what we found in PC's IM/IT environment:

ITS – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

- A. IT OPERATIONS
- B. IT SERVICES
- C. IT SYSTEMS SUPPORT
- D. IT STANDARDS



IM – INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- D. IT STANDARDS



We found most of what we have expected in IT Operations. We found limited project evaluation activity in IT Services. At most we found ad hoc support in IT Systems Support, and we concluded that there existed de facto technology standards in the last IT area, resulting from adoption of what had gone earlier.

We found presumed data and information standards in the IM area; e.g. Protection of Privacy, without any real publication of standards; e.g. electronic database standards.

The foregoing is provided by 3 FTEs in ITS, supplemented by 1 term position, all focused primarily on keeping the network operational; the IM function is staffed by 2.3 FTEs, and 1 term individual.

IS/IM is located within Legislative and Administrative Services, which carries a diverse set of activities with limited compatibility. This is a product of historical growth as opposed to planned growth for a defined future.

Our estimation is that the strategic importance of IT (both in the strategic plan and in the vision of the municipality of 2030) would suggest that PC would be better served by creating a more singularly focused IT business unit.

Recommendation #9 – Create a separate business unit for IT with a full-time manager. The structural aspect of this will be addressed in the chapter on organizational structure.

IT of the Future

Our assessment of the current situation is that PC is under-served for a municipality that views IT as a strategic resource. The IT units are doing a reasonable job on core services, but are unable to extend the breadth of services, or to meet the demand for new services and higher levels of service for current offerings.

There is no clear vision of the road forward using technology, other than within Intelligent Communities, which should be a model for such planning.

We find that there is no capability to exploit potential IT revenue generation opportunities. IT needs to be jump-started.

As we describe the possible futures for IT in Parkland County, we developed a ladder of possibilities, from basic through to fully functioning IT:

- Core services – this is the status quo. It allows Divisions to do what they want in IT, but it also puts the burden on them to manage all of their IT programs and processes. This is typically less efficient as it requires everyone to be a bit of an IT specialist.
- Add IT project services – this would relieve Divisions of the need to acquire project management skills, but it will require investment in more IT resources.

- Add IT systems support – this would relieve Divisions of the need to acquire business analysis skills, but again at the cost of more IT resources centrally.
- Add IT standards – this would help define future and corporate standards and ensure that growth is compatible across the whole of the organization, but it limits the ability of Division to do what they want.

Our conclusion is that PC will have to invest in all of these areas if it is to maintain its leadership position among Alberta’s municipalities, provide the level of service demanded by its residents and stakeholders, and take advantage of external revenue opportunities.

In moving from the status quo to a more viable IT future, we identified several potential steps, as described below:

1. Make no changes – as we have discussed, we do not see this as a viable future.
2. Create a separate department and add IT standards – this will require full-time management of the unit.
3. Add all of the functions shown in the chart on page ____ – this would create a full-service IT department, but will require significant investment in IT people.
4. Outsource all of IT – this can create an instant capability but, in our opinion, it is rarely a good idea to outsource the foundation of such a strategic service.
5. Create regional service delivery, partner with others to build a regional resource – economies of scale can work well here, but can take a very long time to negotiate, align and implement.
6. Adopt a Chief Information Officer Model– this involves a separate department with all of ITS, GIS and IM – this fully recognizes information as a strategic resource, but would be a huge leap from the current position.
7. Separate out the electronic data portions of IM and put with IT – this would centralize all of the electronics within IT, but it would also create confusion over who is accountable for what pieces.

Our conclusion is that the status quo is not sustainable, in meeting current needs, but also as a foundation for much of what is in the strategic plan and what we expect to see in the municipality of 2030.

Recommendation #10 – Building on Recommendation #9, create a vision for moving IT from the status quo to option 2 immediately and with an intent of landing on option 6 as soon as feasible.

Recommendation #11 – Develop an IT Master Plan that articulates:

- IT mission, vision and goals
- Strategies to be employed to achieve the goals
- Major initiatives to be undertaken
- The schedule to complete the initiatives
- The resources required
- Performance targets

Recommendations #12 – Concurrently, assess the viability of partnering regionally (or more broadly) to deliver IT services.

The Relationship between IT and GIS

These two functions are commonly positioned together. They have complementary skills, involving joint problem-solving, technical backup and provide more hands in an emergency. We see no compelling reason to move GIS elsewhere. We would see it as a sub-unit within the new IT function.

9.0 Planning & Development (P&D)

Overview

This project involved meeting with the Manager of the unit, conducting interviews with external stakeholders, reviewing documents (2013-15 business plan, CAO briefing on the P&D Department Review, related Provincial regulations and a report identifying best practices) and meeting with the Mayor and CAO. In addition, we examined the structure and processes of several other comparable municipalities.

Terms of Reference

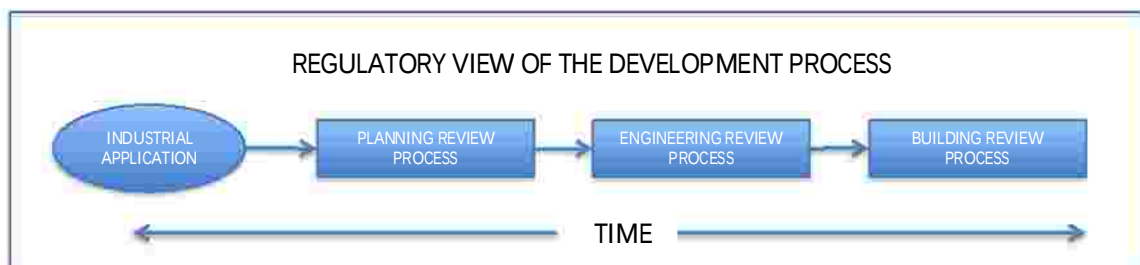
- Does the development application process support the strategic plan?
- Is it efficient and effective?
- Does this unit operate with a view to customer service?
- Is the relationship with Engineering effective?
- Is the process objective and consistent?
- Is it timely?
- Is there an opportunity to simplify the process for first-time applicants?
- Should there be a fast-track process?
- Is there an opportunity to streamline the development process? (e.g. development agreements, financial information, lot grading)
- Should the Development Engineering unit move back to Planning & Development?

P&D plays a key role in the economic growth of the County. As a result, it is the subject of much scrutiny to ensure that its gate-keeping responsibilities fulfill the safeguarding role but at the same time does not impede or deter development, especially in industrial growth. There is always a tension between the desire to attract investment and the need to be consistent in the application of standards. It should be noted that many of the activities related to development are regulated by provincial legislation, which limits to a certain degree the flexibility that P&D can exercise.

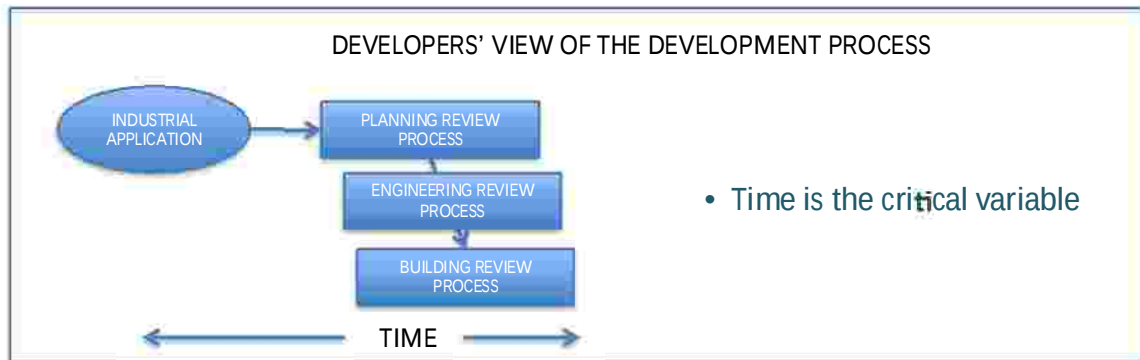
Several reviews of the function have suggested possible remedies to current obstacles, including the potential to fast track applications, specifically for those of an industrial commercial nature. This would create a different tension between the desire to attract and the intent to deal with applicants on a fair basis (first come, first served).

The Challenge

The regulatory view of the development process has a set of sequential steps, as shown below:



Developers would like to see an application move much more quickly, something along the lines of the chart below:



There are number of hurdles to the Developers' View model. Federal, Provincial and local laws and processes preclude some of these moves. Using this model would also introduce risk – financial, litigation and infrastructural ones.

We identified three possibilities:

- **Pattern a process along the Developers' View** – Developers would start the design activities early, and all relevant internal departments, including Development Engineering would be involved right from the concept stage of the application.
- **“One window”** -- Staff would be centralized into one department to make all approvals required occur in one place, minimizing the requirement to “move” applications across Divisions.
- **“Point Person”** – appoint an individual with the authority to facilitate the movement of an application through the approval process. This person would work as an advocate for the application and would have the authority to bring all parties to the table when an issue arises.

We see merit in adopting, to the regulatory extent possible, the Developer View approach. We have seen in other municipalities an approach that calls for affected departments to review and then collectively meet in what is called a Planning Review Committee. The objective of this approach is to identify and evaluate potential development agreement conditions as early in the process as possible.

On the other hand, we conclude that the one-window approach would require significant disruption of the organization.

Given the small number of applications that currently require expeditious approval, we suggest that adopting a Planning Review Committee model along with appointing a point person would work to resolve the greatest issues.

Recommendation #13 – Adopt a Planning Review Committee model that requires all relevant departments to review development applications and to meet on a regular basis to provide input on potential development agreement conditions.

Recommendation #14 – Appoint a Point Person to manage large, complex applications and advocate for the application throughout the organization and with the developer.

Placement of Development Engineering

A long-standing issue is the placement of Development Engineering. It has been in Planning and Development Services and subsequently moved to Engineering Services. There is now discussion of moving it back, in order to eliminate one of the cross-organizational steps in the development process.

Leaving it in Engineering Services allows for the maintenance of a professional engineering environment, but at the cost of this cross-organizational requirement. Moving it to Planning & Development would allow for physical and process integration, as well as consistent priority setting, but might cause a lessening of the professional engineering culture.

Recommendation #15 – Proceed with the move of Development Engineering into Planning & Development, with the goal of providing a seamless development application and approval process.

Other Areas

We found two other areas that could improve the overall development process – fast tracking and use of online tools to expedite routine applications.

Recommendation #16 – Formalize fast tracking for significant developments to allow for a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining larger developers.

Recommendation #17 – Work with Communications to develop web-based tools for residents to support non-commercial development applications.

10.0 Development Engineering

Overview

The work in this project involved meeting with the Manager, conducting interviews with external stakeholders, reviewing documents and meeting with the Mayor and CAO.

Development Engineering plays a key role in the development application process. Over the past five years, significant process improvements have been implemented to address issues related to timeliness, consistency and integration with Planning & Development.

The activities, policies and practices are continuing to evolve and appear to be reasonable – with the exception of the municipal servicing standards; the published version on the web dates to 1999. Work continues to be done to update these standards, and this should be done in consultation with developers.

Recommendation #18 – Involve developers in updating the municipal servicing standards, then agree, publish and put the material on the County’s website.

Terms of Reference

- Is the relationship with Planning & Development effective?
- Is there an opportunity to contract out some or all of this work?
- Does it operate with a view to customer service?
- Is the process objective and consistent?
- Is it timely?
- Is there an opportunity to simplify the process for first-time applicants?
- Should there be a fast-track process?
- Is there an opportunity to streamline the engineering process?
- Is the number of development engineering staff adequate?
- Is the number of Long-Term Planners adequate?

Resolving Application Issues

Many applications move through the process without incident; however, a small number encounter issues. The comments from Council and from developers is that Development Engineering (DE) is risk averse and inflexible, that standards are imposed as rules rather than guidelines, and that DE does not operate with a view to customer service. These perceptions are exacerbated by issues of timeliness, a desire by all to streamline the process, and the out-of-date standards mentioned above.

As a result, the current process involves a developer working with DE until he is frustrated at the perceived lack of progress. At this point, it is not unusual for the developer to approach the General Manager or CAO with a request to intercede, or even to involve a Council member. This typically results in a resolution of the specific issue but at the cost of time and trust.

Our review finds that the practices followed by DE in the development and application of standards appear reasonable, and consistent with what we would expect to find, but they need to be updated to 2014.

The solutions for addressing conflict relative to the application of standards could be to:

- Continue with current practice -- as indicated earlier, this is dysfunctional
- Issue a policy directive allowing for more flexibility – it is extremely difficult to articulate a flexible standard
- Develop a process for conflict resolution – although this might be an improvement, it could equally result in more time consumed as a new process is introduced
- Utilize the Point-Person approach discussed earlier.

Our conclusion is that the Point-Person has the greatest potential to deal with the issue and make a significant improvement. This, together with published and updated standards, and the movement of DE to Planning & Development, should satisfy all parties that the County has the best interests of developers and proper regulatory behaviour in balance.

11.0 Administrative Performance

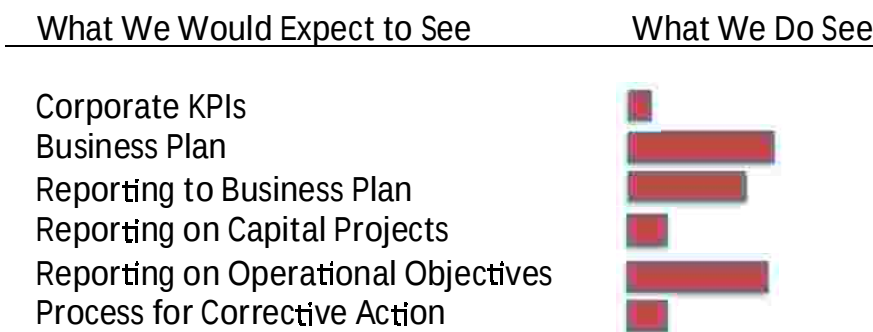
Overview

We met with each of the General Managers in the first phase, and discussed performance measurement, reviewed reports, both corporate and Divisional, and interviewed the Mayor and the CAO.

We show in the chart below our analysis of what we would have expected to see and what we found in the area of performance measurement and management.

Terms of Reference

- Does the organization have performance standards?
- Does the organization measure performance?
- Does it hold staff accountable for performance?
- Does it produce timely and quality deliverables?
- Are the General Managers managing or are they working on their own projects?
- What should be the KPIs?



Business planning and reporting on operational objectives appear to be well done; some of the other areas require improvement.

Key Performance Indicators

KPIs are important for several reasons. Council (or the CAO for that matter) does not have the capacity to be involved in everything. At the same time, organizations tend to be overwhelmed with data and cannot easily separate out the important items from those that are less significant. Both Council and the CAO must focus on the things that make a difference. As the old maxim has it – no amount of work on lesser things will make up for not managing the most important things.

It is not an easy task to identify those most critical items. This is a task at the strategic level of the organization, and should be done by Council with the CAO, likely at the annual strategic planning retreat. Once the measure have been identified, a process needs to be created to collect data on progress for each of these items, a report prepared and presented to Council and the CAO, and a process for corrective action put in place.

In our experience, something in the range of 10-30 measures is required. We developed our own view of what these might be, but caution that these must be Council’s measures,

not the consultants’. We suggest that the table below serve as a starting point in developing Parkland County’s KPIs.

Unit	Area	Measure	Values		
			Current Period	Previous Period	Target
Corporation	Financial	Performance to budget			
	Resident liason	Resident satisfaction survey			
		FOIP requests			
	Capital budget	Project completions as % of total			
	Strategic plan	Performance to targets			
Community Services	Revenues	Revenues from outside sources as % of total			
	Inter-municipal cooperation	Value of projects			
	Fire services	Mean response time			
	Enforcement services	Number of incidents			
Infrastructure	Development Engineering	Mean time from application to approval			
	Construction Projects	On time on budget			
	Transportation	Number of complaints			
Development Services	Planning & Development	Mean time from application to approval			
		Number of sub-division application appeals			
	Intelligent Communities	% of households receiving hi-speed service			
	Economic Development	Value of new businesses attracted			
		Value of new revenue streams			
Corporate Services		Green development as % of total			
	Human Resources	% of Staff Complement in place			
	Assessment	Number of appeals			
	IT	Master Plan attainment level			

Finally, we suggest that these could be communicated to the residents and serve as one of the reports to them on Council’s and Administration’s performance.

Recommendation #19 – Discuss and agree on a set of KPIs, and put in place a process to collect data, report and take corrective action. Report on performance against the KPIs to all affected stakeholders.

Capital Projects

In our experience, capital projects are as important as operational matters, and we would expect to see a capital project reporting system. This would involve monthly reports on each project above a certain size, with exception reporting for projects that are in trouble – exceeding budget, delayed or meeting implementation issues. This could be a single page report to the CAO and Council, listing the major projects and their status.

Recommendation #20 – Implement a capital project reporting system.

Integrated Planning

In our view, planning is a continuum. It starts at the top with strategic planning. At the bottom is operational planning. Both strategic and operational plans input to the corporate business plan – the strategic plan provides the framework for the business plan, the operational plan provides information on the current commitments and resource availability. The business plan is then the execution plan that translates the strategic plan into projects and identifies how the organization will achieve the strategic priorities while meeting operational commitments.

As a result, we would expect the divisional business plan to have the following elements:

- Description of the unit
- Current resources and commitments
- Strategic and operational initiatives
- Resource requirements
- Deliverables and timelines
- Reporting on progress

These would then be summarized into the corporate business plan. This document would be the control for review and corrective action throughout the year.

Recommendation #21 – Implement a business planning process with elements as indicated above

12.0 Revenue Opportunities

Overview

A revenue opportunity is any potential action that results in the incremental flow of dollars to Parkland County – either an expansion of existing sources of revenue or the exploitation of new sources.

Generally, these are categorized into three main groups:

1. Core Revenue Sources:
 - i. Taxation
 - ii. Grants from other orders of Government
 - iii. Fees/Sales/Rentals
2. Providing Municipal Services to others:
 - i. On-going operational services
 - ii. Project based service.
 - iii. Fees/Sales/Rentals
3. Non-traditional Services
 - i. For Profit Businesses.
 - ii. Joint Ventures
 - iii. Others

Terms of Reference

- Interviews with Council and CAO
- Interviews with General Managers
- Surveys and interviews with administrative staff
- Reviews of background materials
- Our observations and conclusions based on what we have found in other municipalities.

Assessing the Opportunities

We collected a large number of revenue generation opportunities, more than 100 in total. We then categorized these into a smaller number of major opportunities. We further categorized each into one of three stages:

- Identification – an opportunity has been identified but not researched or examined fully to determine advisability of pursuit
- Evaluation – the opportunity is currently being actively appraised to determine costs and benefits
- Exploitation – the opportunity is being pursued with the intention of generating net revenue to Parkland County.

On this basis, we categorized 34 opportunities. These are listed in Appendix C with their stages as well as comments.

Our next step was to evaluate the opportunities according to a set of factors:

- Is this a new service or does it enhance existing services?

- Is limited or no investment required?
- Does it represent a significant market size?
- Will it have limited or no negative effect on the private sector or residents?
- Will it generate sufficient revenue to make a difference? (we used \$100,000 in net annual revenue as the hurdle)

The ranking of an opportunity depends upon how many positive responses it garners for the questions. The table below shows the ranking for the opportunities.

EVALUATING REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES								
	OPPORTUNITY	EVALUATION FACTORS						MOST HIGHLY RANKED OPPORTUNITIES
		NEW SERVICE OR ENHANCES OWN SERVICE	LIMITED OR NO INVESTMENT	SIGNIFICANT MARKET SIZE	LIMITED OR NO NEGATIVE EFFECT	ANNUAL NET REVENUE > \$ 100,000	YES COUNT	
		LEVELS	REQUIRED					
	CORE REVENUE SOURCES:							
1	REVENUE BASED ASSESSMENT	N	Y	Y	N	Y	3	
2	ERP - PARTNER WITH SP FOR RCG	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	4	ERP - PARTNER WITH SP FOR RCG
3	FEE SCHEDULES COST NEUTRAL	N	Y	Y	N	N	2	
4	ENSURE BUSINESSES ARE LICENSED	N	Y	N	N	N	1	
5	COST RECOVERY TIPPING FEES	N	Y	Y	N	Y	3	
6	SALE OF COUNTY OWNED GRAVEL	N	N	Y	N	Y	2	
7	HIGHWAY FINES SECONDARY HIWAYS	N	N	Y	Y	Y	3	
	EXPAND MUNI SERVICES TO OTHERS							
8	EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	4	EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS
9	HEALTH AND SAFETY	N	N	Y	N	Y	2	
10	PEACE OFFICERS	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	4	PEACE OFFICERS
11	PEACE OFFICER TRAINING	N	Y	Y	Y	N	3	
12	TOWER CO-LOCATION	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	4	TOWER CO-LOCATION
13	FIREFIGHTER TRAINING	N	Y	Y	Y	N	3	
	NEW MUNI SERVICES TO OTHERS							
14	ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	4	ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
15	COMPUTER SUPPORT	Y	N	N	Y	Y	3	
16	CAO SERVICES	N	N	N	Y	Y	2	
17	ASSET MANAGEMENT	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	4	ASSET MANAGEMENT
18	HEAVY DUTY MECHANICS	N	Y	N	N	N	1	
19	PARKS MAINTENANCE	N	Y	Y	Y	N	3	
20	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	N	Y	N	N	Y	2	
21	EMERGENCY RESPONSE	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	4	EMERGENCY RESPONSE
22	FIRE SERVICES	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	4	FIRE SERVICES
23	PACKAGED ASSET MGT APPROACH	N	N	Y	Y	Y	3	
24	ROAD CONSTRUCTION	Y	N	N	N	Y	2	
25	COLD MIX PAVING OF SUB-DIVISIONS	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	4	COLD MIX PAVING OF SUB-DIVISIONS
	NON-TRADITIONAL SOURCES							
26	GRAVEL CRUSHING AND HAULING	Y	N	Y	N	Y	3	
27	RURAL UTILITIES	Y	N	Y	N	Y	3	
28	PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT	Y	N	Y	N	Y	3	
29	HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTRE	Y	N	N	N	Y	2	
30	BIO-FUEL DIESEL PLANT	N	N	Y	N	Y	2	
31	THEME PARK	Y	N	N	N	Y	2	
32	EDEN LAKE DEVELOPMENT	Y	N	N	N	Y	2	
33	MARKET GARDENS -FARMERS MKT	Y	N	N	Y	N	2	
34	RECYCLE CENTRE	Y	Y	N	Y	N	3	

Based on this analysis, we find that there are nine opportunities that should be advanced without delay.

Moving Forward with the Opportunities

It is unclear to us who is responsible for developing revenue opportunities. Economic Development appears to coordinate some of the opportunities, but the activities related to

evaluating opportunities falls to individual departments. The Parkland County Development Corporation (PCDC) will be involved with business parks, but not all revenue opportunities.

We see the need to define a process and an organizational component for revenue generation.

We propose that a unit be established as follows:

- Revenue Development Officer – this would be the person in charge, with skills in project management, financial analytical modeling (e.g. cost-benefit analysis, feasibility studies, and benefit realization) market research capability and negotiations experience.
- Revenue Development Assistant – an analyst with skills in financial modeling and report/presentation preparation.
- Administrative Assistant – likely a part-time position, or one shared with another unit to provide administrative services.

The location of this unit is addressed in the next chapter on structure.

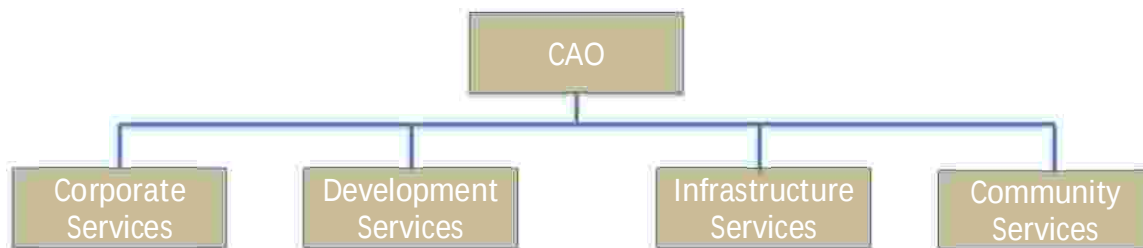
Recommendation #22 – Create a revenue generation unit within the organization responsible for identifying, investigating and planning the implementation of revenue opportunities.

13.0 Structure

Overview

We reviewed the current structure, interviewed the Mayor and the CAO, interviewed all Councillors and General Managers, reviewed the recommendations from the other projects, developed optional structures, and identified issues below the top level of the structure, then made recommendations for all.

The current structure comprises four Divisions as shown in the chart below:



Corporate Services provides necessary administrative services to the organization, as well as to residents. The other three are service-delivery divisions. This is a fairly traditional structure, based on services provided, rather than a strategic view of the future.

We note that some other municipalities, for example, have combined Development and Infrastructure, while others have split Community Services into Enforcement and Recreation. There is no magic in any of these structures; they are decisions taken locally based on preference or temporal priorities.

We mapped the structure to the strategic plan, looking for the presence of an individual or a unit accountable for each goal within the plan. We found most of the plan within the structure, with two notable exceptions:

- Revenue opportunities, as mentioned in an earlier chapter
- Environment has one contracted employee. We understand that there is a plan to make this position permanent, but given the significance of this subject in the strategic plan (and other plans), it seems to be under-developed and under-resourced.

We looked at the recommendations from the other chapters and identified structural implications arising:

Terms of Reference

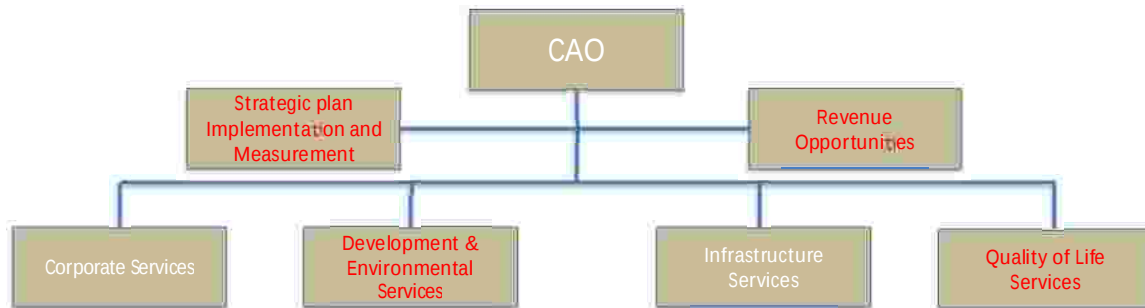
- Is the organization structured for:
 - Achieving the strategic plan?
 - Customer service?
 - Expedient decision making?
- Is four Divisions the right number and are the four the right ones?
- Is the growth in staff numbers commensurate with volume increases or service improvements?
- Are there the right number of levels in the organization?
- Are there horizontal processes to integrate behaviour? (i.e. no silos)
- Should H&S be in Public Works?
- Should Intelligent Community be a separate unit or company?
- Should the operational part of Intelligent Community be handed off?
- Should Safety Codes Officer and Administrative Coordinator be consolidated?
- Is Legislative & Administrative Services appropriately grouped?
- Is there a focal point for revenue generation opportunities?

- Strategic planning implementation should be moved from Communications and needs a person who has planning experience
- Overall performance measurement and management needs a resource who has experience in this area, including KPIs
- Development Engineering should be placed within Planning & Development
- A Development Application Point Person should be appointed for priority development applications.

Structural Options

Based on the foregoing, we developed three structural options and explain their advantages and disadvantages in this section.

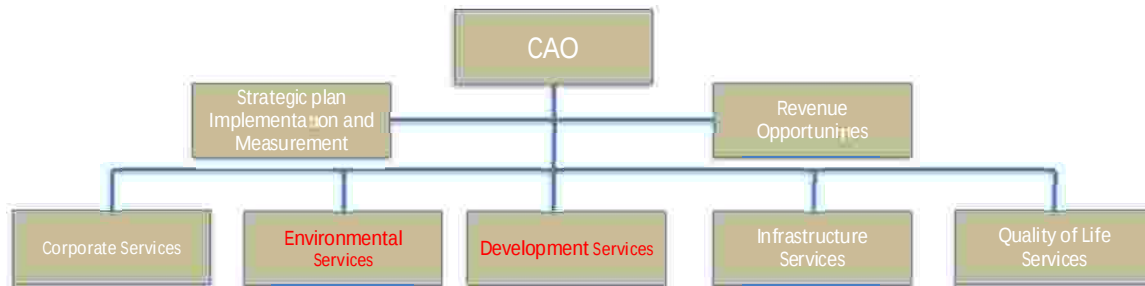
Option 1 is shown below. We call this the Structure Aligned with the Strategic Plan with 4 Operational Units.



The changes from the current are shown in red. They are discussed as follows:

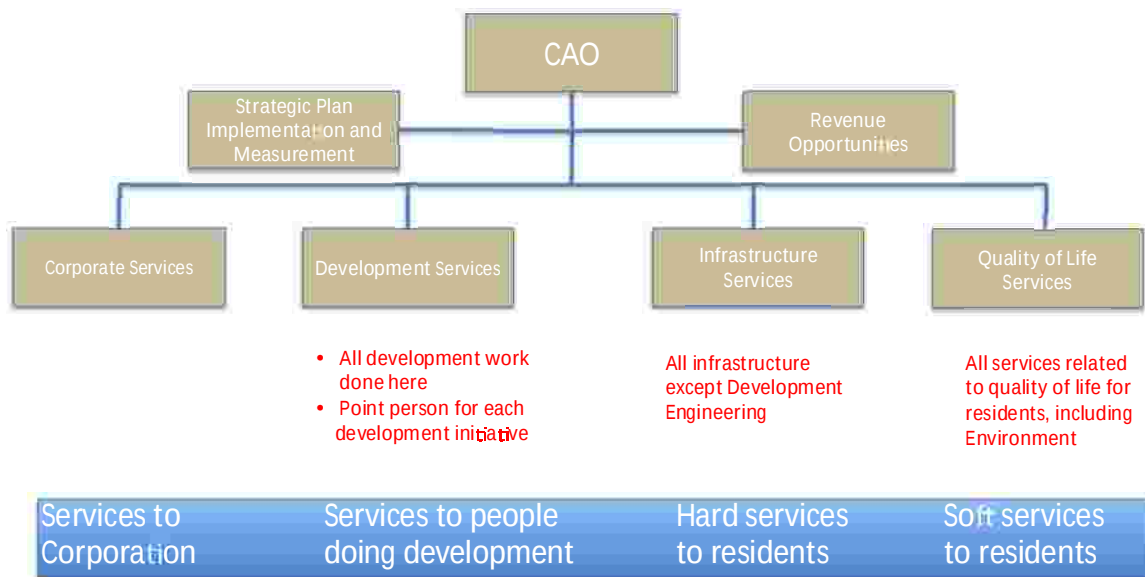
- Strategic Plan Implementation and Measurement – We see this as a staff position reporting to the CAO. One FTE should be sufficient for this task, with about 70% of the time devoted to managing the strategic plan implementation and reporting, and the balance to KPIs and business plan reporting.
- Revenue opportunities – this is the unit described in the preceding chapter, involving a Revenue Development Officer, a Revenue Development Assistant and an Administrative Assistant, for a total of 2.5 FTEs.
- Development & Environmental Services – this is a renamed Division, placing Environment in the title to encourage the balanced view of development that is fundamental to the strategic plan.
- Quality of Life Services – this too is a renamed Division. The task of this Division is to enhance the quality of life of the residents, not simply to deliver more and more services. This subtle shift will be in keeping with the emphasis expressed in the strategic plan.

The next option is similar to the one above but with five divisions. Again, given the emphasis on environmental stewardship, would it not be appropriate to have Environment with its own Division? This would give it the leverage to participate on discussions at the highest level and would signal that this is a key priority of the County.



Our conclusion is that this might be a model for the future, but not yet. Environment will have to mature beyond its current position before such a Division would be viable.

The third model is one we call Customer Service. The intent is to organize to best serve the needs of all stakeholders – residents, developers, and others.



In this model, we have moved all development work into Development Services, including Development Engineering and the Point Person. Infrastructure Services is focused on providing the best infrastructure-related services to residents. Quality of Life Division would include Environment, as this is seen as a critical element in the quality of life experienced by residents.

The blue box at the bottom of the chart shows the focus of each Division in this model.

Recommendation #23 – Implement the Customer Service Model as the new structure of Parkland County administration.

Animating the Organization

The structure works vertically, but organizations are tied together by horizontal processes. While reporting is a vertical process, creating a sense of organizational unity requires horizontal elements. We have heard comments about the need for more horizontal processes. We feel the following will address this need:

- Executive Committee will continue to provide this cross-organizational perspective. We have identified a number of issues in this report for them to address. By doing so, they will create more horizontal integration.
- The implementation of the Planning Review Committee will allow a cross-organizational view of development applications. In another organization, we have seen that this process is successful in bringing together divergent perspectives, serving not only to deal effectively with individual applications, but also creating dialogue of multiple mandates.
- Implementation of two staff functions – Strategic Planning Implementation & Measurement, and Revenue Generation – will provide more opportunities to bring people together from individual divisions to discuss opportunities, organizational progress and reporting.
- Other recommendations in this report – Webmaster, use of Communications responsibility matrix, investment in IM/IT – will all push for more integration of the organization overall.

We see all of the foregoing as providing a greater sense of organizational integration. Other horizontal processes might be implemented as the need arises in the future.

Issues below the Top Level

In previous chapters we have discussed structural issues with respect to Communications, Strategic Planning, IT/IM, Planning & Development and Development Engineering. As small number remain for discussion here.

There is a question about the placement of Health & Safety. While it provides services principally to Public Works, we see H&S as an administrative service, and conclude that it is best placed where it sits currently, within Legislative & Administrative Services.

We recommended in the Customer Service structure that Environment be placed within the Quality of Life Division. In addition, we feel that this function requires strengthening, and should have more resources.

Intelligent Communities is maturing into an operational, a contract and a strategic piece. The operational piece is managed by the private sector; the contract piece should likely be relocated, perhaps to ECC. The strategic piece should continue to be led, for the time being, by the person in charge currently.

Some decision will be required with respect to Economic Development. It is underperforming to expectations. It could be left where it is, moved into Revenue Opportunities (but we see this as a different business), moved to report to the CAO (but this would overload the CAO), or be moved to a separate corporation, perhaps integrated with PCDC. The last option is probably the best. As this was not one of the projects we were asked to examine in depth, we simply raise the issue here and suggest that Council and the CAO should discuss this and establish a course of action.

One outstanding issue is the positioning of the Development Application Point Person. Economic Development seems a logical place, as it is a promoter of development in the County. Ultimately, this decision should be one of administrative effectiveness. Our only point is that it should not be placed in Planning & Development, as this will be seen as a conflict.

14.0 Staffing Implications

All of the foregoing cannot be accomplished with the current staffing level. While it is up to Council to establish priorities and decide what will be funded and when, we have provided our thinking on the resourcing required to guide that discussion.

The table below shows the areas that require investment, the functions considered and the additional FTEs required, in our estimation. We recognize that budget considerations will have to factor into this.

Function	Activity	Additional FTEs
Communications	Web, Community Consultations	1
Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning Implementation and Measurement	1
Revenue Opportunities	Identification, Analysis and management of opportunity realization	2.5
Engineering	Development Engineering Officer	1
Environment	Additional resourcing	1
IM/IS (Option 2)	Management & Planning (1) Services Project Support (.5) Support Services Applications (.5) Data Standards (1) Operations Growth (1)	4
	Total	10.5

15.0 Other Considerations

This chapter deals with a number of topics that are not directly related to the content of the previous chapters but are relevant to the Organization Review process.

Staff Input

During the course of the review we received numerous submissions from individual staff members that, for the most part, were thoughtful and well intentioned. We were able, in a number of instances, to take that input and use it as support for our conclusions and recommendations.

While we did not always agree with what we were told, we were impressed with the passion and candidness of the opinions being expressed.

Involvement of Staff

One of the topics that emerged from the staff input is the concern that conducting a top-down review of an organization gives the impression that the opinions of front-line staff are under-valued in the process because not all staff was asked to be interviewed or to complete a survey.

This impression is unfortunate and as the preceding comments indicate, inaccurate. In retrospect we should have spent more time explaining how the review was to take place and how staff was to be engaged.

Management Style

Management style also emerged as a topic of concern not only from submissions but from our interviews and surveys as well. Of particular note is the perception that seldom are people held accountable for lack of performance. This shared opinion suggests that all levels of management suffer from a reluctance to be the 'bad-guy' and impose sanctions where performance or behavior is sub-par.

We did not job shadow individuals during the course of our review and cannot comment on the veracity of these opinions. The fact that this point was raised repeatedly suggests that there may be an issue that needs attention.

Human Resources

In our initial assessment we identified Human Resources as one of the administrative areas where there are opportunities related to the objectives of this review. We still

believe this to be the case. HR is the focal point for the attraction and retention of staff and will be key in supporting a performance-based organization.

Currently HR is primarily addressing what we traditionally think of as Personnel duties: compensation, benefits, employee evaluations, hiring practices, etc. As PC evolves and performance management throughout the organization becomes a reality, HR will need to be positioned as the linkage between the organization and the individual staff member – for example, the setting and measurement of individual goals/targets as they related to the organizational goals/targets.

We see HR as being under-developed and potentially under-resourced currently to carry out this mandate.

Organizational Review as a Process

We view doing organizational reviews as a process that should be carried out on a regular basis to ensure the continued alignment of the organization's activities and structure with the Strategic Plan.

Recommendation #24 – Conduct a 'top-down' organizational review every 3 – 5 years.

16.0 Summary of Recommendations

For ease of reference, we provide all our recommendations in this chapter.

Council Strategic Planning

Recommendation #1 – Council should review the visionary statements at each strategic planning session, and refine them to serve as the basis for its strategic planning work.

Recommendation #2 – Establish clear goals, strategies and targets and hold Administration accountable for reporting on progress to the outcomes.

Recommendation #3 – Administration should be charged with developing a set of projects that are drawn from the goals and strategies of the strategic plan.

Recommendation #4 – Council should be receiving meaningful reports on progress to achievement of its goals and strategies, and have a process in place to take corrective action.

Communications

Recommendation #5 – Ensure that every product of PC has been reviewed for professional correctness. This will require either a new administrative process, or training for staff.

Recommendation #6 – Decide if Communications is a strategic priority, and if so, invest in more resources, specifically to address website/intranet management and maintenance, and to provide professional management of community consultations.

Recommendation #7 – Review the Communications matrix, revise it, circulate to all staff and enforce its application.

Recommendation #8 – Create a strategic planning implementation role and move it out of Communications (specific structural recommendation to follow).

Information Management/Information Systems

Recommendation #9 – Create a separate business unit for IT with a full-time manager. The structural aspect of this will be addressed in the chapter on organizational structure.

Recommendation #10 – Building on Recommendation #9, create a vision for moving IT from the status quo to option 2 immediately and with an intent of to landing on option 6 as soon as feasible.

Recommendation #11 – Develop an IT Master Plan that articulates:

- IT mission, vision and goals
- Strategies to be employed to achieve the goals
- Major initiatives to be undertaken
- The schedule to complete the initiatives
- The resources required
- Performance targets

Recommendations #12 – Concurrently, assess the viability of partnering regionally (or more broadly) to deliver IT services.

Planning & Development

Recommendation #13 – Adopt a Planning Review Committee model that requires all relevant departments to review development applications and to meet on a regular basis to provide input on potential development agreement conditions.

Recommendation #14 – Appoint a Point Person to manage large, complex applications and advocate for the application throughout the organization and with the developer.

Recommendation #15 – Proceed with the move of Development Engineering into Planning & Development, with the goal of providing a seamless development application and approval process.

Recommendation #16 – Formalize fast tracking for significant developments to allow for a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining larger developers.

Recommendation #17 – Work with Communications to develop web-based tools for residents to support non-commercial development applications.

Development Engineering

Recommendation #18 – Involve developers in updating the municipal servicing standards, then agree, publish and put the material on the County’s website.

Administrative Performance

Recommendation #19 – Discuss and agree on a set of KPIs, and put in place a process to collect data, report and take corrective action. Report on performance against the KPIs to all affected stakeholders.

Recommendation #20 – Implement a capital project reporting system.

Recommendation #21 – Implement a business planning process with elements as indicated above

Revenue Opportunities

Recommendation #22 – Create a revenue generation unit within the organization responsible for identifying, investigating and planning the implementation of revenue opportunities.

Structure

Recommendation #23 – Implement the Customer Service Model as the new structure of Parkland County administration.

Other Considerations

Recommendation #24 – Conduct a ‘top-down’ organizational review every 3 – 5 years.

APPENDIX A – Documents Reviewed

Overall

Acheson Breakfast Survey Results
2012 Audited Financial Statements
Council Agenda
Departmental Overview and Budgets
Final Report Governance Review
Financial Indicator Graphs
GPC Minutes
Notes from Management Planning Session 2013
Organizational Charts with Names
CRC Partnership Proposed Inventory - May 10
Resident Satisfaction Survey Results
Strategic Plan Q1 Q2 Report 2013
Strategic Plan 2013

Community Services

Enforcement Services Review
ICSP 2011
ICSP Q4 Report complete
Fire Master Plan

Development Services

2009 - 2013 Economic Development Strategic Plan
P&D Dept. Review Report Implementation Status
Final Policies, Practices & Fees Report Oct08
ABA Survey results
P&D Department Review Final Report
Planning & Development Review Final Report

Infrastructure Services

Detailed Organization charts
Departmental Summaries

Corporate Services

Information Technology Survey
Communicator October 2013

APPENDIX B – Service Evaluation Templates Received

Corporate Services

- Assessment
- GIS
- Information Management
- Information Technology
- Elections
- Health & Safety
- Legislative / Admin
- Communications
- Finance

Infrastructure Services

- Road Maintenance
- Fleet
- Solid Waster
- Facilities
- Water / Waste Water

Development Services

- Planning & Development
- Environmental Services
- Economic Development
- Intelligent Community

Community Services

- ECC
- Enforcement Services
- Agricultural Services
- Fire Services
- Parks Recreation & Culture

APPENDIX C – Revenue Opportunities

Opportunities - Identified

We provided our assessment of the current disposition of Revenue Opportunities using a three-stage model:

- 1. Definition – an opportunity has been identified but not researched or examined fully to determine advisability of pursuit.
- 2. Evaluation – the opportunity is currently being actively appraised to determine costs and benefits.
- 3. Exploitation – the opportunity is being pursued with the intention of generating net revenue to Parkland County.

LEGEND:

DEFINITION	EVALUATION	EXPLOITATION
		

Opportunities – Core Revenue Sources

Taxation opportunities:

-  1. Adopt revenue-based assessment for facilities as appropriate – using Income Approach to arrive at market value for selective properties.

Revenue from other orders of Government:

-  2. Partner with Town of Stony Plain to share cost of Information Technology replacement, e.g. ERP - qualify for Regional Collaboration Program funding...

Direct Sales:

-  3. County owned Gravel

Fees:

-  4. Ensure fees schedules are cost neutral to PC – fees schedules are reviewed periodically and adjusted if necessary to ensure full cost recovery.
-  5. Ensure all businesses operating in PC are licensed –
-  6. Introduce cost recovery tipping fees at solid waste collection sites
-  7. Develop a Highway Traffic Unit -

Opportunities – Providing Municipal Services to Others

On-going operational services to others – expand current client base:

-  8. Emergency Communications Centre services – on-going promotion through Communications, targeting the private sector as well
-  9. Health and Safety Services – Contract in place with one municipality, potential to add more customer.
-  10. Community Peace Officer Services - ?

Project/Event Services – expand current client base:

-  11. Community Peace Officer Training – courses offered to other municipalities.
-  12. Tower Co-location – on-going marketing of network
-  13. Firefighter Training Program

On-going operational services to others – new:

-  14. Administrative Services (villages, summer villages)– expression of interest from Wabamum
-  15. Computer Support Services – expression of interest from Devon
-  16. CAO services (villages, summer villages)
-  17. Asset Management
-  18. Heavy Duty Mechanics
-  19. Parks Maintenance
-  20. Planning & Development Services
-  21. Emergency Response (planning & coordination)
-  22. Fire Services

Project/Event Services – new:

-  23. Package Asset Management approach
-  24. Road Construction – Feasibility study be conducted by consulting engineers.
-  25. Cold Mix Paving of Sub-Divisions for Developers

Opportunities – Non-traditional Services

For Profit Business:

-  26. Gravel Crushing and Hauling – under investigation
-  27. Provision of Rural Utilities (telephone, internet, fibre) - ?
-  28. Property Development (Land Acquisition) - ?

Joint Ventures:

-  29. Hotel and convention Centre
-  30. Bio-Fuel Diesel Plant

Others:

-  31. Theme Park
-  32. Eden Lake Development
-  33. Market Gardens-farmers market
-  34. Recycle centre at Waste Facilities

Moving Forward with Opportunities

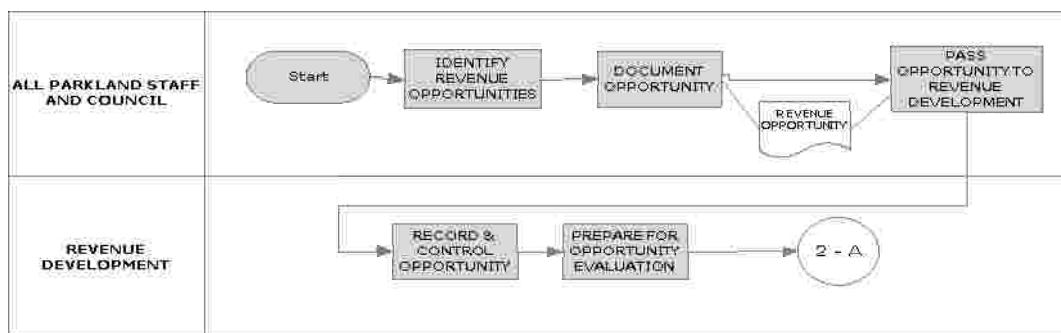
Proposed Process for Development of Revenue Opportunities

The following slides depict a high-level process flow for activities related to Revenue Development:

1. Revenue Opportunity Development
2. Initial Assessment of Viability
3. Establish Revenue Development Project Team
4. Conduct Feasibility Study
5. Prepare Plan to Harvest Benefits

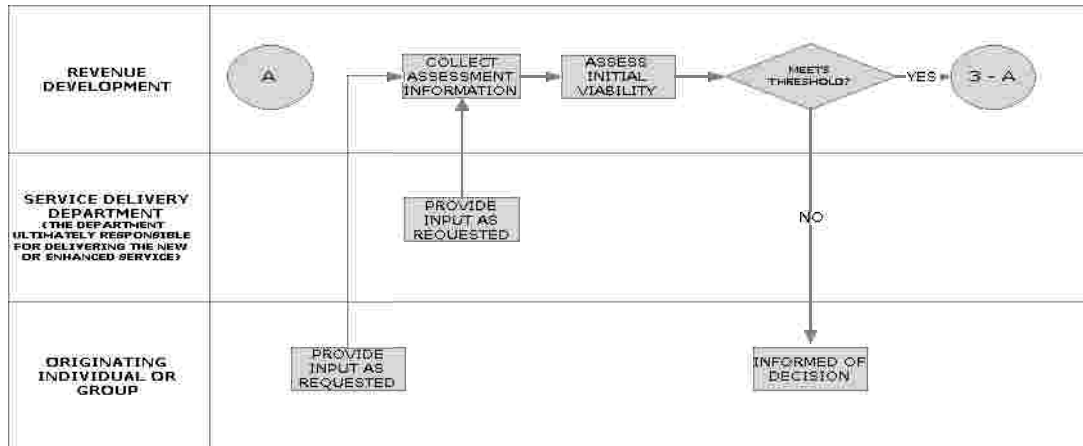
Proposed Process for Development of Revenue Opportunities

1. Revenue Opportunity Identification



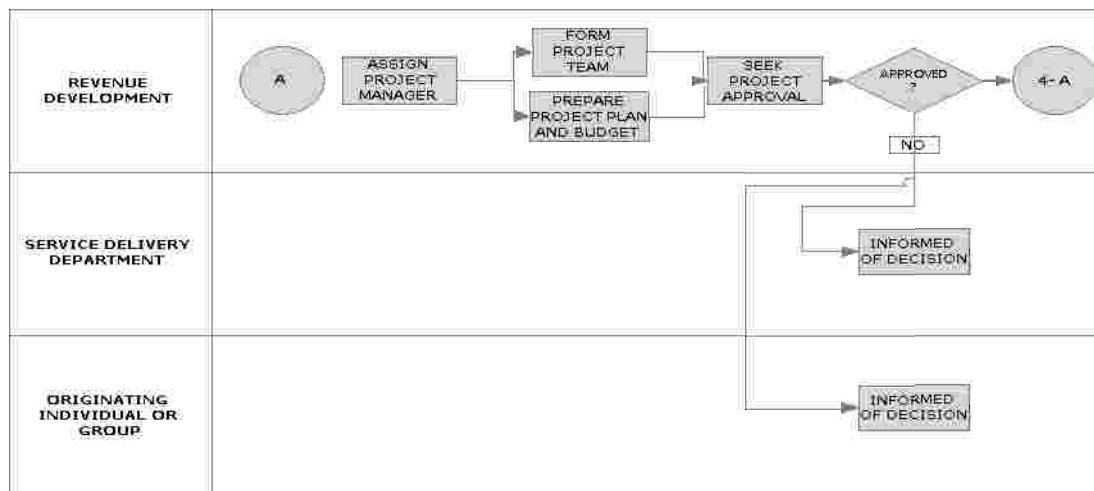
Proposed Process for Development of Revenue Opportunities

2. Initial Assessment of Viability



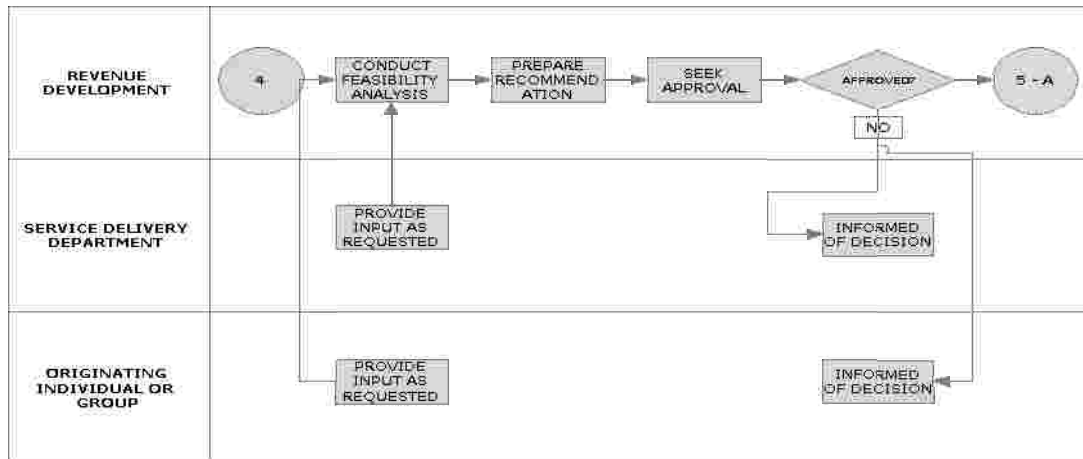
Proposed Process for Development of Revenue Opportunities

3. Establish Revenue Project Development Team



Proposed Process for Development of Revenue Opportunities

4. Conduct Feasibility Study



Proposed Process for Development of Revenue Opportunities

5. Prepare Plan to Harvest Benefits

