

Topic: Sustainability Initiatives

Introduction:

This briefing provides an overview of the sustainability initiatives that are currently underway, as well as a summary of those previously conducted and potential future opportunities based on available funding and regional trends.

Facts (Background Information):

Parkland County's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) provides general guidance and direction on the sustainability initiatives implemented by administration. Since 2019, capacity has been the limiting factor to service delivery. Currently, our service delivery is primarily focused on meeting regulatory requirements, natural asset conservation and restoration to support cross-departmental efficiencies, sustainability policy and planning, and providing the ALUS program to farmers and ranchers. The majority of environmental outreach programs are delivered through partnering NGOs who we may support either through small monetary contributions or in an advisory role. Climate change programming is limited to projects conducted at the regional level for which Parkland County can provide input.

Previously, the County has provided a slightly higher level of service including: delivering the Green Acreages program (now delivered through the Land Stewardship Centre), in-house extension and education programs, ICSP monitoring and reporting, climate change planning, and public lands naturalization. This level of service was supported by an additional FTE.

Fundamentally, the major shifts in services have been:

- No Climate Change planning, policy or programs
- Limited in-house provided engagement/education programs
- Shift from use of internal staff to consultants for environmental assessments and capital projects
- Ecosystem restoration/natural asset retention focused on improving municipal servicing delivery

Analysis:

There are a number of opportunities the County could pursue that would support ICSP outcomes including:

- Alberta's Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP)

- Incorporating climate change into asset management
- Local climate adaptation implementation
- FCM's PCP Program
- ICSP KPI Reporting
- Wetland Management Plan/Policy
- Wildlife corridor mapping
- Land conservation plan/program
- Urban agriculture (Wabamun)
- Community engagement

Funding to support these outcomes exists in the following areas:

- Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund
- FCM's Green Municipal Fund
- Federal Gas Tax Funding
- Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (WRRP)
- Wetland Replacement Program (WRP)
- Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC)

In order to capitalize on these opportunities Parkland County would require additional capacity.

Alternatives:

1. Continue business as usual with no additional programming.

Conclusion/Summary:

Administration recommends Council support the motion to accept the Sustainability Initiatives Update for information, as presented.

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