

# **City of Camrose**

## **Community Economic Development Plan**



**December 10, 2012**

# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Rationale for the Plan .....	5
2.2	Linkages of CEDP to City of Camrose Plans .....	5
2.3	Risks of Maintaining the Status Quo and Cost of Lost Opportunities.....	6
2.4	Economic Inhibitors.....	7
2.5	Synergies and Linkages to the Plans of Neighbouring Hamlets.....	8
2.6	Role of Community Engagement .....	8
<b>3</b>	<b>BACKGROUND AND COMMUNITY PROFILE .....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1	History of Camrose.....	9
3.2	Community Profile .....	9
3.3	Socio-economic Profile .....	11
3.4	Economic Drivers.....	13
<b>4</b>	<b>FOUNDATIONAL BUILDING BLOCKS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1	Community Economic Development Policy Context .....	15
4.2	Community-Appropriate Economic Development Strategies .....	16
<b>5</b>	<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METHODS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
5.1	City Council Interviews.....	17
5.2	Planning Session.....	17
5.3	Community Action-Planning.....	18
5.4	Draft Plan Review.....	18
<b>6</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN.....</b>	<b>19</b>
6.1	Community Assets.....	19
6.2	SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Summary.....	20
<b>7</b>	<b>COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>KEY OUTCOMES .....</b>	<b>22</b>
8.1	Outcomes.....	22
8.2	Setting Priorities.....	23
<b>9</b>	<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTION .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>MEASURING SUCCESS .....</b>	<b>28</b>
10.1	Key Economic Indicators .....	28
10.2	Key Social Indicators .....	29
<b>11</b>	<b>REPORTING ON PROGRESS.....</b>	<b>30</b>
11.1	Plan Review and Revision.....	30



# 1 Executive Summary

During recent years, population growth and development have firmly established the City of Camrose as a regional trading centre in east-central Alberta. Excellent highway and railway transportation links ensure residents and goods can easily move between major centres throughout central Alberta and beyond. Located just beyond the greater Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), Camrose has always been the service centre for the surrounding rural areas and the Camrose County. As such, Camrose has developed a growing population of over 17,000 residents (2011), a relatively balanced residential to commercial assessment base, and a full range of cultural, recreational, retail, health and institutional services catering to City and County residents. City Council has indicated that Camrose will continue to provide services to the broader regional population and will strive to maintain services and amenities at existing per capita levels as the City grows.

Recent regional retail developments, major industrial pipe plants, and current interest in new institutional development such as a regional convention centre, indicate that Camrose has become fully acknowledged as a regional service centre. Relatively high average growth rates are expected to continue in the future as Camrose becomes increasingly close to the expanding southeast edge of the Edmonton CMA and population growth throughout Alberta becomes increasingly focused within the Calgary to Edmonton corridor. Camrose will be one of a few recognized and growing regional centres within this corridor.

As a result of the changes that have taken place in the City, Camrose has committed resources to develop a Community Economic Development Plan for the City and market area. Key to this plan is to include socio, cultural, environmental and economic pillars, as well as to include input from community members into the plan. The purpose is to think critically about where they want to see their community in the future, and what they can and must do to reach their goals. Central to this plan are five key strategies with corresponding actions directed towards the specific needs of the community.

Investment in business retention and expansion by creating a development-friendly investment plan is of primary importance for Camrose. The success of this strategy will be to encourage and support new and innovative industries, as well as establish a formal business retention and expansion program to retain those important businesses already in Camrose. Collaboration and developing partnerships will be integral to the success of this strategy.

Communication and marketing is also a key strategy that Camrose should focus on. A renewed image strategy will attract new residents and businesses. Additionally, Camrose realizes the importance of developing communication tools and strategies to ensure residents, including youth, are aware of the services and programs offered by the City.

Another strategy that is important for Camrose to undertake is to encourage and promote community values and safety. Camrose can achieve this by encouraging volunteerism, engaging the youth, developing strategies for welcoming newcomers and promoting a safe and clean community. Furthermore, Camrose can engage in activities to maintain and expand the agriculture community and activities, as well as develop a strategy to promote Camrose as a center for business conferences/conventions and events.

Retaining quality of life remains as a top priority for Camrose and will be further built on by forming partnerships with various organizations. By developing a growth plan to include managed and sustainable growth, Camrose will ensure that its residents and businesses retain the lifestyle that attracted them to the City.

In keeping with the momentum and growth of Camrose and in helping to facilitate their vision for business development, the last strategy in this plan will investigate the need for municipal infrastructure and the implementation of a downtown revitalization program.

The City of Camrose will be involved in the process of socio-economic development. A high priority in this process will be that the City collaborates with social development groups and organizations. Socio-economic development will involve arts, culture, levels of employment, family lifestyle, human lifestyle and accommodation and services for all levels of citizenship. The primary action that should be taken if Camrose's Community Economic Development Plan is to be acted upon is that a formal commitment and expanded budget be in place to move forward the strategies. Without such resources and commitment, it may be difficult to implement the actions of the plan as community groups and associations are currently bearing the burden of workloads that are already too large to manage.



## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Rationale for the Plan

Municipal development over the past ten years have propelled the City of Camrose into a period of planning and potential expansion, making it not only one of east central Alberta's largest municipalities, but the fastest growing. In light of this recent growth, and in anticipation of the continued steady growth, there is a need to create sound regional economic development plans that enable sustainable development, diversification, and planned progress. The City of Camrose has great potential woven into its regional agriculture fabric, with abundant natural and human resources and some of the most innovative leaders in the country. With a goal of being a leader and example for other small rural cities, it is imperative that the City invest in all pillars of sustainability: a healthy environment, a rich culture, and abundance of social capital, and a strong economy. Thus, the City has commissioned the economic development department to develop a Community Economic Development Plan. The plans identify specific economic and community-based development goals and iterate the community's vision for its future and for its families. Goals and economic opportunities are aligned in this plan and a five-year action-plan has been developed to assist the communities in reaching their collective vision.

### 2.2 Linkages of CEDP to City of Camrose Plans

The Community Economic Development Plan was composed with consideration given to the Municipal Sustainability Plan (MSP), Roadmap to 2015, Municipal Development Plan (MDP), Visitor Friendly Camrose Study and Area Structure Plan (ASP). The plans are all community documents providing guidance and direction to the City to set community economic development goals and priorities. Economic Development will incorporate the various links from the reports to the CEDP

- The MSP gives an overarching plan for sustainable development for Camrose. This plan considers all elements of sustainability as it seeks to address the problems associated with growth while retaining cultural integrity and supporting social stability throughout all of its member communities. The Strategic Plan will encourage collaboration with City Centre Camrose, Alberta Main Street Program, Chamber of Commerce, CRE, Tourism Camrose, Camrose County and various other organizations. This strategic plan will accomplish the short term and medium term goals from the MSP. The plan includes the following key points:
  - Develop a strategy for the City to support existing businesses and small business succession.
  - Ensure that all economic activity contributes to the quality of life without compromising the natural environment.
  - The residents of Camrose contribute to creating economic diversity.
  - Increase awareness of the potential of arts, culture heritage and sport to contribute to community and economic development.
- The Roadmap to 2015 can be seen similarly as an umbrella plan for the region, setting out the priorities for the City of Camrose as set out by the defined shared vision for the community. The plan will ensure the City is a welcoming and supporting business environment while protecting the interests of the City. This plan offers the following long-term goals for economic development:

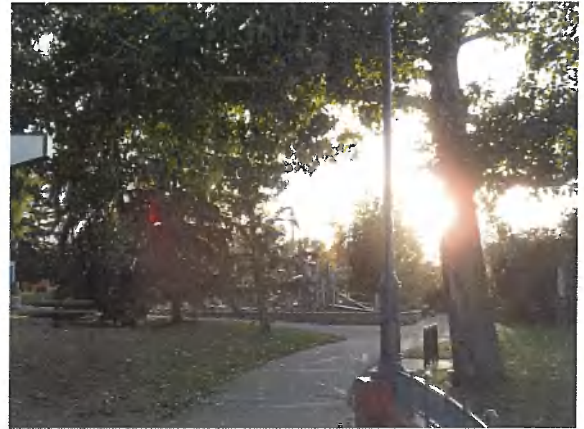


- Increase job creation in all fields especially those that will retain or attract skilled people.
  - Diversify the local economic base.
  - Strengthen Camrose's role as a regional centre.
- The MDP provides goals, objectives and high level policies to guide and coordinate future urban growth decisions. The strategic plan will continue to promote and create a supportive business environment which maximizes the use of City facilities, diversifies the local economic base and strengthens the City's role as the regional centre of east central Alberta. The following are key points of the plan:
    - Building a balanced economic base by protecting a sufficient supply of long-term future industrial lands to attract business and business support services.
    - Continuing to support the growth of Camrose as an important regional, economic centre.
    - Providing a competitive climate to encourage business investment and growth as a regional centre in the fields of health care, education, retail, industry, agriculture, leisure, events, tourism and arts and culture.
  - The Visitor Friendly Camrose Study recognizes tourism as a contributing industry to the economic environment. The Visitor Friendly action plan is a tactical approach to addressing some of the most apparent opportunities to improve visitor friendliness in Camrose. This plan is a starting point for further communication and collaboration between Economic Development and Tourism Camrose.
  - The ASP provides a plan to guide future development and to create policies to foster business, industrial, and commercial growth.
    - The ASP deals with land designation and development, while the CEDP addresses how business and economic initiatives will utilize the spaces provided. The ASP and CEDP work hand in hand to guide the community's growth and development across all sectors of the local economy, and all tenants of residents' life.
  - The Social Development Strategy through the Social Development Committee (Formerly known as Social Planning Advisory Committee- SPAC) has a social development strategy which Economic will use as a resource document for addressing the socio-economic aspects of economic development. The strategy covers health and wellness, infrastructure and accessibility, safety, arts, recreation and culture, literacy, employment, education and housing. Economic Development will collaborate with the committee for partnership opportunities.

## 2.3 Risks of Maintaining the Status Quo and Cost of Lost Opportunities

The City has experienced steady levels of population growth during the past decade. This growth has placed tensions on the historical values and "way of life" of the community. There has been increased pressure on the limited amenities and services within the community. The quiet and peaceful "rural life style" has been challenged with the influx on new service businesses, neighbours, cultures, activities, demands and values. The City is somewhat different than it once was, and it now isn't possible to return to its small rural pre-development status.

Nevertheless, at this point in time the City may be faced with a crucial decision point: should the City actively seek to retain the current status quo; or embrace the new opportunities and challenges that the emerging developments will bring? New growth will require more plans and the associated planning that comes with zoning, regulations and bylaws. While these are necessary to support orderly business, commercial, industrial, institutional and residential development; they do place restrictions on personal freedoms and historical norms practiced by the community.



The retention of the status quo may provide City residents with their current City rural lifestyle, however, not without several potential high costs. The pressure for additional residences and businesses on land within the City will increase the population and the possibility of conflicts around lifestyle preferences and community values. The lack of resources, due to lack of business and commercial growth, will leave the communities challenged to address their current and emerging economic and social challenges. In addition, the conflicts in values and lifestyle could result in demographic shifts within the community and with these the possible loss of some of their existing social capital as residents choose to live elsewhere.

The lost opportunity of growth is not only economic, but also impacts the ability to build social capacity within the community. At the present time most of the City volunteers are at maximum capacity, community organizational capacity and connectivity that need addressing. In addition, there is a potential lack of opportunities for youth. There is a need for additional human and capital resources in the City. There is also potential for further erosion of historic and cultural values and traditions of the communities unless the benefits beyond the status quo are realized.

## 2.4 Economic Inhibitors

There are a number of economic inhibitors that may adversely affect the strategies in this plan and are outlined below. There may be additional inhibitors in the future and this will be a living document to manage economic development.

- Impact of the recession – Although Alberta has emerged from the recession from 2009, the province remains vulnerable to downturns in global economic activity as well as financial and currency market instability. Although Alberta has more stability than the other provinces in Canada, it is not immune to global risks, which remain elevated due to uncertainty around the debt crisis in Europe and the United States. An escalation in the crisis could result further slowing of the global economy.
- Drop in oil prices – A drop in oil prices would most likely lead to a decrease in oil exports and investment which could have detrimental effects on the economy. Although demand for oil from emerging markets should keep oil prices elevated, geopolitical uncertainty is likely to continue to impact oil prices.
- Aging seniors – The increasingly aging population is a concern for the City of Camrose. The aging population has an impact on the labour force and can put a strain on the social and health services in the City.

## 2.5 Synergies and Linkages to the Plans of Neighbouring Hamlets

The City of Camrose has a large market area stretching in all directions with a large number of people using Camrose as a business and recreation hub coming from various areas of Alberta (market population of 140,000+). The municipalities surrounding Camrose and included in the market region varying in size and in geographic isolation as well as community capacity and level of influence over other communities in the region. The City in building the CED plan should consider the degree to which they might impact or benefit from this rural region.

As the size and growth of the surrounding municipalities will impact the scope and scale of commercial and recreational amenities, the City should consider the size and location of facilities and services to service other communities. The eastern communities in particular have the opportunity to benefit from sharing resources in developing business support and training programs, a commercial centre, recreational facilities, emergency response, library facilities, transit service and cultural activities and events. Consequently, the City should develop a Regional Economic Development Plan with the County of Camrose.

## 2.6 Role of Community Engagement

The community plans are comprised of the personal views and lived experiences of community residents and stakeholders, collected through interviews and two focused community planning sessions. In addition, a literature review was conducted by the consultants so that the community's culture and history were accurately represented, and so previous plans and reviews are reflected in the current CED plan. Upon its completion, the plan was presented to City Council for use as a guide to the economic development process, and tools for measuring the community successes were included to gauge progress. As this plan is meant to be implemented for five years, but will affect the community for much longer, working with youth, adults, and seniors in the process was necessary to ensure equal and adequate community representation. Therefore, all demographics were invited to participate in the process. By personally engaging with community members in the planning process, the consultants were able to ignite their interest in future community projects, and encourage people to invest in their education and attain the life skills necessary for a balanced, fulfilling, and prosperous livelihood.

Once all the necessary information was collected for the City it was integrated into an overarching plan, demonstrating a comprehensive overview of community economic development in the municipality. The final plan was presented to the City Council and the Economic Development Branch of the City.



## 3 Background and Community Profile

### 3.1 History of Camrose

The area in and around the present City of Camrose, once rich in furs was at one time the home of the Cree Indians. Originally known as Sparling which was named after the Reverend Dr. Sparling a physician from Winnipeg, Manitoba, had the first home built in 1893. The Hamlet of Sparling was incorporated as the Village of Sparling on May 4, 1905. Because the name was often confused with the towns of Sperling and Stirling in Western Canada, in 1906 the village council changed the name to Camrose. There is no factual evidence available to indicate the reason for the selection of the name of Camrose, but it is generally accepted that it was named after a town in South Wales.



In the original survey of the town site, the main street's 100-foot width is mainly due to the farsighted planning of a pioneer citizen and first Justice of the Peace, Francois Adam. Generally referred to today as "Father of Camrose", his foresight is much in evidence as the main street of Camrose is a great source of pride to the local citizenry. The "uncluttered" look that downtown encompasses is a result of its wide main street. This, combined with the orderly development throughout the City, has resulted in Camrose earning the enviable reputation of being one of the "nicest" cities in western Canada. Site: [www.downtowncamrose.com](http://www.downtowncamrose.com)

### 3.2 Community Profile

#### Location

Camrose is a City located in East Central Alberta, 100 km southeast of the provincial capital City of Edmonton. Highway 13, which runs through the centre of Camrose, connects to the Queen Elizabeth II Edmonton - Calgary corridor 60 km to the west. The Edmonton International Airport is located 70 km northwest of Camrose via Highways 21 and 625.

Highways 26 and 56 also terminate in Camrose from the east and south. Camrose is located at latitude 53/01 N and longitude 112/50W. Its altitude is 740 m or 2430 feet above sea level.

## Demographic Profile

In the 2011 Census, the City of Camrose had a population of 17,286, a 10.6% increase from its 2006 adjusted population of 15,630.

**Table 1: Population City of Camrose**

	Total	Male	Female
Population in 2011	17,286	8,265	9,020
Population in 2006	15,630 <sup>A</sup>	7,385	8,235
2006 to 2011 population change (%)	10.6	11.9	9.5

<sup>A</sup> adjusted figure due to boundary change-The boundaries of geographic areas may change from one census to another. In order to facilitate comparison, the 2006 Census counts are adjusted as needed to take into account boundary changes between the 2006 and 2011 censuses.  
Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006, 2011 Community Profiles – City of Camrose

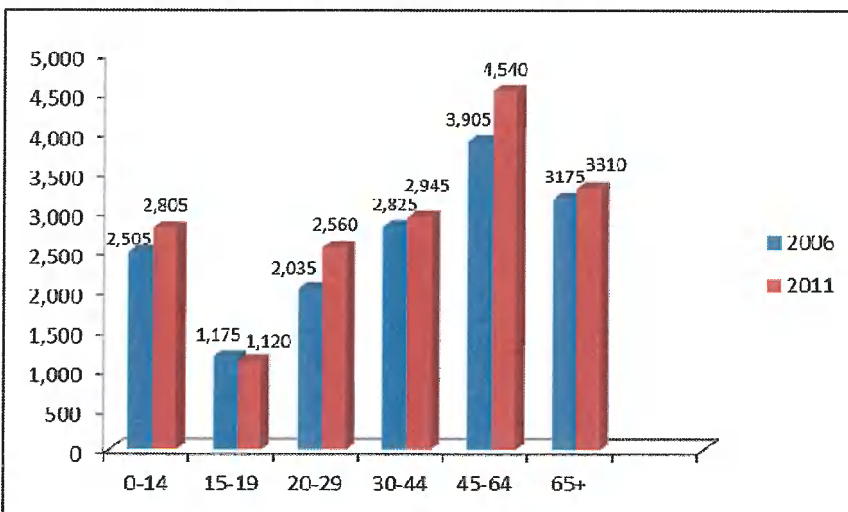
While the land area increased from 2006 to 2011 (31.14 km<sup>2</sup> to 42.50 km<sup>2</sup>), the population density decreased from 501.6 people per square kilometer to 406.7 people per square kilometer. Total private dwellings in Camrose increased by over 14% from 2006 to 2011. The table below indicates that the median age remained fairly unchanged from 2006 to 2011, however when looking at the specific age groups (Chart 1), there was a larger increase in the population in the 45-64 (16%) and 0-14 (12%) age groups from 2006 numbers.

**Table 2: City of Camrose Census Information 2006, 2011**

	2011	2006
Land area (km <sup>2</sup> )	42.50	31.14
Population density / km <sup>2</sup>	406.7	501.6
Median age	41.2 (males: 38.7, females: 43.7)	41.8 (males: 39.7, females: 43.6)
Total private dwellings	7,945	6,962

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006, 2011 Community Profiles – City of Camrose

**Chart 1: City of Camrose Total Population by Age**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006, 2011 Community Profiles – City of Camrose

In 2011 the housing statistics were as follows:

- 4928 Homes
- 314 Duplexes
- 877 Condo units
- 97 mobile homes not in a mobile home park
- 132 Mobile homes in a park
- 210 Townhouses

### 3.3 Socio-economic Profile

#### Sports and recreation



The new Recreation Centre, a multi-purpose sporting facility, officially opened on September 28, 2007. The complex includes the 2,500 seat Encana Arena and a 300+ seat Border Paving arena. The Recreation Centre also boasts a three lane fitness track, fitness centre, health and wellness centre that includes PCN, physiotherapy clinic and a physiotherapy lab. The centre also features meeting rooms, offices, and food and beverage facilities. Attached to this multi-million dollar facility is the Max McLean Arena and the Camrose Aquatic Centre and curling rink.

Other recreational facilities include the Camrose Community Centre (walking track and indoor soccer centre), spray park, Camrose Skate Park, Kinsmen Park (which includes tennis courts, three fastball fields, football field, beach volleyball courts, and a 2.2 km walking path), and Rudy Swanson Park, home to various soccer facilities and recreational groups.

Camrose has a large urban trail system which winds through Stoney Creek Valley and connects to various trails in the City. Camrose has 39.1km paved pathways, 12.99 km of nature trails, and 5.56km of shale trails. The total trail length is approximately 57.65

Camrose is also home to a wide variety of sports clubs including figure skating, baseball, fastball, hockey and swimming to name a few. The Camrose Ski Club, founded in 1911, is the oldest cross-country ski club in Canada, and has produced many elite level athletes including several Olympians.

#### Parks

Camrose is known colloquially as the "Rose City" due to the large number of wild roses which grow in the surrounding parklands. Developed to withstand the drastic Alberta climate, the Camrose Rose was introduced to the City in 1995. Local rose grower Jerry Twomey bred and patented this beautiful rose to honour his birth place. An elegant tea rose, the variety boasts abundant pink blooms and rich green foliage, making it the most stunning flower in the rose beds. It may be seen on display at the Bill Fowler Centre.



- Jubilee Park is often used by the community, located in a valley and featuring barbecue shelters, a wandering stream and wide open space.
- Mirror Lake sits in the centre of the City. Once a reservoir for the electrical plants which powered the City, the man-made lake is now home to two species of swan; the trumpeter and the Polish mute. Located on the edge of Mirror Lake, is the home of the Bill Fowler Centre which contains the Chamber of Commerce office and the Tourist Information Centre. The Bill Fowler Centre features a nature mural carved out of red brick. The mural features many of the animals which are indigenous to the Mirror Lake area.
- Mirror Lake flows from Stoney Creek, which wanders through the City, and provides a river valley for viewing wildlife through paved walking paths.



## Education

Two authorities provide schooling in Camrose, including the Battle River School Division (BRSD) and Elk Island Catholic Schools (EICS). The BRSD operates 37 schools in Camrose and the surrounding area. EICS operates 2 schools in Camrose.

The primary post-secondary institution in Camrose is the Augustana Faculty of the University of Alberta (formerly known as Augustana University College). Established in 1910 by Norwegian settlers, under the name Camrose Lutheran College, Augustana is still inspired by convictions that are part of its pioneer legacy: that personal wholeness emerges from a liberal education, that the proper end of leadership is service to others, and that the spirit of cooperation so crucial to rural life invigorates human endeavor.

As a Faculty of the University of Alberta, Augustana continues to build on its reputation for high-quality teaching in a friendly, caring, residence-based setting. In doing so, it provides a distinctive small-campus undergraduate experience within one of Canada's leading universities. Augustana remains mindful of its heritage open to a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds, and responsive to the rural region in which it is located.

At Augustana, students learn much more than the required courses in a Bachelor of Arts, Sciences, and Management in Business Economics, Music or the combined Science and Education degree program. Their curriculum is designed to educate the whole person and produce graduates who can seize opportunities wherever they are found.

The University of Alberta typically places in the top 5 Canadian universities, and is one of the top 100 post-secondary institutions in the world. By receiving a University of Alberta degree, our alumni are prepared to take advantage of any opportunity they face, knowing their credentials are among the best.

### *Lakeland College*

Lakeland College has a location in Camrose for Emergency Training. The program was transferred from the University of Alberta's Augustana campus to Lakeland College Emergency Training Centre in March 2009. Lakeland College provides a well rounded education from Lakeland's emergency medical technician program that prepares students to join the workforce after graduation.

Established in 1913, Lakeland College also has campuses in Vermilion and Lloydminster and offers more than 60 programs in the areas of university transfer, agricultural sciences, business, environmental sciences, fire and emergency services, health and wellness, human services, interior design technology, tourism, trades and technology, and academic upgrading. For information on the college and its programs, visit [www.lakelandcollege.ca](http://www.lakelandcollege.ca)

### *Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute*

The Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute is a Lutheran Discipleship Training Centre. It was founded in 1932. Its mission is to train, equip and empower servant leaders of all ages within the context of Christian community. From this community, leaders are sent out to serve in locations throughout Canada and the world. The Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute has 40 students. (2012-2013)

## **3.4 Economic Drivers**

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture is a major economic driver in and around the City of Camrose as the area consists of significant agriculture diversity and a number of livestock operations within close proximity to the City. Camrose's central location, proximity to the Edmonton market, proximity to highway #2 and excellent rail and highway infrastructure contributes to a number of opportunities.

The City should prospect for processing businesses in niche markets such as specialty cheeses, jams, jellies, lentils/beans, etc. The opportunity also exists for a manure processing facility as the surrounding area has over five significant livestock operations including three large commercial cattle operations. Livestock manure is processed to produce an organic soil amendment which is an organic fertilizer like product that is pelletized and marketed as a soil nutrient. Additionally the heat from a cogeneration plant is used to produce electricity, which can be sold to the power grid.

Camrose has a major advantage over other communities in Alberta as it is a major regional hub with a trading area that extends south and eastward towards the Saskatchewan border as well as its proximity to the north/south highway and railway system. Opportunities exist for the City to be an intermodal hub for storage or distribution of agriculture products.

## Education

The primary post-secondary institution in Camrose is the Augustana Faculty of the University of Alberta (formerly known as Augustana University College). Camrose also hosts the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute. Camrose is fortunate to have a post-secondary education facility so the youth are not lost to the larger centers as they pursue higher education. The location of Augustana in the City of Camrose presents tremendous opportunity to collaborate with the Faculty on initiatives to entice students to pursue their careers in Camrose upon graduation, instead of moving to larger centers for career opportunities. One of the most dramatic evidence of rural meltdown is that of losing the most talented young people at the same time that their skills are required as farming and industry is changing. The City can also help facilitate linkages between the high-school and Augustana and map existing opportunities onto regional economic goals.

Augustana Campus maintains approximately 1000 students. When examining the enrolment of students in 2012, over 22% are from the local area (City of Camrose and surrounding area (60km radius)). The figures below indicate the largest percentage of these local students are from Camrose, followed by Wetaskiwin.

**Camrose = 115**, Wetaskiwin = 40, Bashaw = 5, Bawlf = 7, Bittern Lake = 3, Daysland = 6, Ferintosh = 2, Gwynne = 3, Hay Lakes = 7, Kingman = 4, Millet = 10, New Norway = 3, New Sarepta = 3, Ohaton = 3, Round Hill = 1, Tofield = 13,

Total = 225

## Medical/Health

Camrose offers first-class health care services to residents of all ages. The Healthy Living Centre was developed in partnership with the University of Alberta – Augustana Campus and Alberta Health Services. The facility which is located in the Recreation Centre is a central point for residents to access community rehabilitation services, and for the delivery of programs and services designed to assist residents in their journey towards healthier lifestyles. Camrose also has a Primary Care Network with services developed by physicians and healthcare providers who work in the community and understand residents' needs in order to deliver coordinated, quality primary care. Quality health care and the availability of health care services is an excellent quality for communities and is a large attractor for residents to the City.

The City of Camrose has over 20 general physicians and various specialists which include:

- General Surgery
- Diagnostic Radiology
- Obstetrics/Gynecology
- Orthopedic Surgery
- General Surgery
- Internal Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Plastic Surgery



## 4 Foundational Building Blocks

### 4.1 Community Economic Development Policy Context

There are a number of plans and policies in place that set the course of the future development of the City of Camrose. These documents provide context for the development of a community economic development plan.

#### Municipal Sustainability Plan

A Municipal Sustainability Plan provides an opportunity for a community to focus on what sustainability means to them specifically and move toward their visions of a sustainable future. It is an opportunity to look long-term at the community they want and take proactive steps to move there. The main points in the MSP include the following:



- Development of a strategy for the City to support existing businesses and small business succession.
- Ensure that all economic activity contributes to the quality of life without compromising the natural environment.
- The residents of Camrose contribute to creating economic diversity.
- Increase awareness of the potential of arts, culture heritage and sport to contribute to community and economic development.

#### Going Forward: Roadmap to 2015

This plan is intended to outline the strategic priorities and goals for the City from 2011 to 2015. In 2010, Council adopted the City's first ever Municipal Sustainability Plan: Getting Camrose to 2055 and Beyond, which sets out short, medium and long terms goals to help the City achieve sustainability in 5 pillar areas: economic, social, cultural, environmental and governance. The plan includes the following key points:

- Increase job creation in all fields especially those that will retain or attract skilled people.
- Ensure the City is a welcoming and supportive business environment while protecting the interests of the City.
- Diversify the local economic base.
- Strengthen Camrose's role as a regional centre.

#### East Gateway Area Structure Plan

An Area Structure Plan (ASP) for the East Gateway plan area is being developed. The goal of this plan is to guide future development and to create policies to foster business, industrial, and commercial growth.

- The ASP deals with land designation and development, while the CEDP addresses how business and economic initiatives will utilize the spaces provided. The ASP and CEDP work hand in hand to guide the community's growth and development across all sectors of the local economy, and all tenants of residents' life.

### **Municipal Development Plan**

The City of Camrose 2011 Municipal Development Plan (MDP) provides goals, objectives and high level policies to guide and coordinate future urban growth decisions. It sets forth a set of land use concepts and policies to achieve appropriate development of public and private land within the City by the following:

- Building a balanced economic base by protecting a sufficient supply of long-term future industrial lands to attract business and business support services.
- Continuing to support the growth of Camrose as an important regional, economic centre.
- Providing a competitive climate to encourage business investment and growth as a regional centre in the fields of health care, education, retail, industry, agriculture, leisure, events, tourism and arts and culture.

### **Visitor Friendly Assessment and Action Plan (2011)**

The City of Camrose recognizes tourism as a contributing industry to their economic and community development strategy. Camrose has many important assets that draw visitors including interesting events, a vibrant downtown, outstanding parks, arts and culture facilities, excellent sports teams and superior recreation facilities. As Camrose grows it must ensure not only that it can draw visitors but also that those who do visit have an outstanding experience; and experience that will compel them to visit again and become promoters of the City.



## **4.2 Community-Appropriate Economic Development Strategies**

The other plans developed by the City have defined the social and physical infrastructure for development of economic and social services, thus underscoring that the Economic Development Branch will be in good position to assist in the implementation of the Community Economic Development Plan in Camrose. Community economic development investment in the community is necessary, as Camrose experiences continued growth and will be impacted as a service centre and an industrial hub in the region.

Trends that could impact Camrose over the next 5-10 years have been identified as follows:

- **Industrial development of the agriculture industry and small manufacturing.**
- **Continued population growth driven by service, education and industrial development.**
- **Increased demand for housing, improved infrastructure and services.**
- **Increased pressures on recreational, environmental, and cultural facilities and services.**

## 5 Community Engagement Methods

Community planning sessions in the development of this plan was a priority for the project. As such, a community engagement plan was developed at the outset of the project to ensure engagement from a wide cross section of the community. Community engagement included City Council interviews, planning sessions for SWOT, visioning and community strategies and actions. The community planning session was advertised through the Camrose Booster, Camrose Canadian, the City website and social media. The City of Camrose will continue with various community engagement methods.



### 5.1 City Council Interviews

City Council represents a wide diversity of the community who have unique, local-based knowledge of Camrose.

An interview guide was designed to gather the following information:

- Human resources issues, including required skills, educational needs, skills, gaps, and available training opportunities
- Business climate as it relates to taxation, regulation, and government administration, and business support services available
- Quality of life in relation to housing, health, social services, and recreation
- Identification of gaps and opportunities with respect to each community's economic development activities
- Identification of needs and deficiencies related to the community as an economic centre
- An idea of stakeholders' vision for the community
- Any additional information that interviewees were willingly to share may also be reflected in the final summary reports

### 5.2 Planning Session

Focus groups are meetings with small groups of community members to discuss specific topics related to the development of the community economic development plan. In the case of Camrose, focus groups were held to discuss the assets of the community and determine vision elements for the future of the community.



## **Community Asset-Mapping**

Community asset-mapping sessions were designed to identify unique and vital community assets. Assets are features that the community values, wants to retain, and possibly build upon for future generations to enjoy, and can be categorized as: natural, built, social, human (knowledge, skills or education), economic, or service-based. Asset-mapping provides the background for further engagement work and value-added input to the plans by the engagement participants.

## **Community Visioning**

The community's vision statement represents the community's dreams and goals for its development over the next twenty years. A visioning session was designed to hear the core values of the community and identify opportunities, recognize challenges, and set priorities. The target audience for this session included community members, youth, elders, local businesses, service providers, leadership, regional bodies, and others as identified by the community.

The primary tool used in this session was the Visioning Workbook. This workbook was used to invite discussion on the future of the community in terms of business and community services, education, housing and infrastructure development, land-use, and overall expectations for quality of life.

## **5.3 Community Action-Planning**

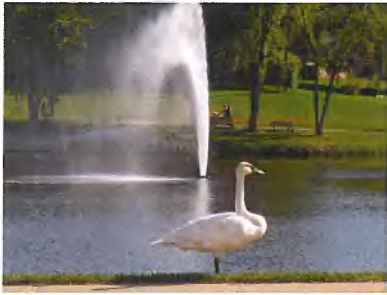
The purpose of community action-planning was to establish a set of goals and objectives for the community, to verbalize a number of actions to address those goals, to prioritize the actions into short, medium, and long-term projects, and to assign responsibility for the actions so that accountability can be maintained.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, based on previous community work and interviews was presented to the community. Actions and priorities were designed to incorporate this information. Action-planning sessions were held on June 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> with twelve and thirty seven participants, respectively.

## **5.4 Draft Plan Review**

The draft Community Economic Development Plan for Camrose was made available for consultation at the Camrose City Hall on September 24 2012. Council members had the opportunity to review the plan prior to the meeting so that they could bring their comments and feedback to the consulting team, and all feedback received on the day of the engagement session was incorporated into the final CEDP.

## 6 Environmental Scan



In order for a community to know where it is going, it must understand where it currently stands. An environmental scan helps people become more aware of their surroundings, as well as realize community assets and potential. Camrose's environmental scan brings unique traits and qualities to light, and provides the basis for the CEDP.

### 6.1 Community Assets

- **Unique skills and knowledge of community members:**

Leadership and management skills, agriculture based community, rural attitude – growing urban centre, social compassion, education and educational opportunities, leaders – people & organizational skills, sharing spirit

- **Physical attributes of the community:**

Small rural community pride, residential lots and housing for various incomes, excellent highway transportation routes and rail network and related opportunities, trees, parks and recreation, diversity in housing size and style, little traffic flow pollution in relation to Edmonton, quiet neighbourhoods, friendly/welcoming residents, schools, open space, cleanliness, hub for smaller communities in the region

- **Characteristics that best represent the community and its members as a whole:**

Volunteerism, compassion, innovation, cooperativeness, creativeness, friendliness, community involvement, rural spirit, recreational/sports oriented

- **What makes Camrose unique from others in the municipality:**

Creative problem solving, distance from Edmonton, recreation for adults/children, history/origins of community, rural setting/location/attitude, cooperative – working with neighbours, family atmosphere, volunteers – new people getting involved

- **Groups and networks that are active in the community:**

University of Alberta Campus, Tourism Camrose, Chamber of Commerce, Battle River Alliance for Economic Development (BRAED) Camrose City Centre (CCC) Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ), Rural Alberta Business Centre (RABC) and Alberta Business Family Institute (ABFI) churches, schools, school board, social media web sites (e.g.: Twitter/Facebook), service clubs, and the community economic development office

## 6.2 SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Summary

Western Sky Management Associates held an action planning session with City of Camrose Council and senior administration on June 13, 2012 and a public open house in Camrose on June 27, 2012. During the sessions, the participants were guided through a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the City of Camrose. There were many common themes between the answers provided by the City and the public.

The most frequently mentioned strength for the City of Camrose is the abundance of amenities and events. The City has great facilities (indoor and outdoor), Agriculture Centre, Augustana University and popular events such as the Big Valley Jamboree. This leads to a sense of pride in the community and a generous volunteer culture. The location is indicated as both a strength and weakness. Its central location, along with CP and CN rail systems, makes it a regional hub; however presents a challenge due to Edmonton's close proximity and ensuing competition. The increase in the age of citizens along with a decline in the number of younger people in the City presents both opportunities and challenges. Lack of transportation services is also a weakness for the general public and seniors.

As the tax base in Camrose is primarily residential, there is an opportunity to build a larger tax base by attracting industry and immigrants. Due to the close proximity to Edmonton and surrounding communities, Camrose can attract companies that don't have room to expand in these larger centers. Expanding businesses can also benefit from the abundance and quality of business space in the City. However, Camrose must remain focused on retaining the existing businesses they already have. There is also an opportunity to focus on social and economic development planning initiatives as the two are closely linked. The high quality of life and abundance of amenities are good attractors for both residents and businesses and should be endorsed more by the City. To retain youth it is important to involve them in the community and link their education to local jobs upon graduation. Impending threats faced by Camrose is the lack of water, aging infrastructure and meeting the needs of businesses and residents while maintaining its current growth rate.



## 7 Community Economic Development Vision

The community vision was drafted by the community members during the City Council and Staff session of June 13<sup>th</sup> as well as the Public Session of June 27<sup>th</sup>. Key vision words and phrases were identified during the sessions and the consultants were asked to develop a draft vision.

### Vision for Economic Development

*Camrose is a diverse City, rich with business opportunities in both the private and public sectors. Future growth and economic opportunities are built around the key community drivers of innovation, leadership, education, sustainability, and social well-being welcoming and open to all.*



## 8 Key Outcomes

### 8.1 Outcomes

The community identified six key outcomes for community economic development initiatives in Camrose, which were termed “portfolios” for the Strategic Direction. These portfolios encompass the community’s values and identity, as well as the steps towards reaching their collective goals.

While the individual strategies are organized according to these five portfolios, the actions within these strategies all take on one of three different natures. The purely economic actions make up the Economic Development component, the actions with a social focus are defined as the Community Development component, and the actions pertaining to both social and economic development are of the Socio-Economic Development component. Through a synergy of these goals and their varying, but related actions, the Community Economic Development Plan may fulfill its potential.

#### ***Portfolio 1: Investment in Business Attraction, Retention & Expansion***

- Formulate a dynamic plan to address the retention of both the present businesses and also strategies to attract new business and innovative industries.

#### ***Portfolio 2: Communication Networks, Marketing & Influence Strategies***

- Re-establish direct communication channels with the City of Camrose, develop networks with influential provincial, regional and industry decision-makers and establish the Camrose “Brand”.

#### ***Portfolio 3: Community Values, Traditions, and Cultures***

- Negotiate a system that allows us to retain our individual identities and lifestyles while we work together building our community.

#### ***Portfolio 4: Community Quality of Life (Safety, Recreation, Arts, Health, etc)***

- Continue to develop and implement plans to provide social infrastructural services and community-based amenities to all properties within reasonable proximity to residential districts. Collaborate with the Social Development Committee (SDC) and other quality of life committees.

#### ***Portfolio 5: Municipal Infrastructure (Rail, Roads, Buildings, etc)***

- Create opportunities that build off of the current transportation corridors within the region including roads, rail and air.

## 8.2 Setting Priorities

The five portfolios addressed in the Strategic Direction encompass a dynamic plan that incorporates key economic development strategies and actions together with significant “soft-services” or community capacity building strategies and actions. While each of the actions under each portfolio is directed towards specific needs identified by the community, they are not equally weighted with respect to costs or complexity to implement.

When the portfolios, strategies, and actions identified in the plan are viewed from community’s perspective they are seen as part of an organic system and, as noted above, there is need for a balance between Economic Development and Community Development.

This integration and complexity presents a challenge in measuring the success of the plan’s implementation. The costly economic development elements that would be of primary interest to Camrose include:

- seeking out and establishing businesses;
- securing and making available appropriately zoned land;
- conducting capital costing studies;
- more partnerships and commitments with industry;
- defining the order of priority for infrastructural services; and
- pursuing skill training facilities to train workers.

The “soft-services” elements that would be important to the community include:

- improved communication and dialogue with the City, Elected Officials, Economic Development Initiatives and the Public;
- formalize a community based network to create a better voice for the community and its businesses and services;
- improved infrastructural and safety services within the community, including education, awareness and programs;
- further increased recreational and learning opportunities in the communities
- and, the preservation of the communities rural cultural and historic values.

The progress on the implementation of all components of the plan needs to be measured and reported. The departments, organizations and people involved in the implementation of the program are only guidelines. The program may be able to proceed with more or less groups. The group will be organized once the program planning starts. Several select Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for both the “economic” and “soft-services” are noted below.



## 9 Strategic Direction

### Portfolio 1: Investment in Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion

To create a development-friendly investment plan that addresses the availability and cost of land, competitive fees for services, and a tax regime that is comparable for the area and reflects the services provided.



**Action 1:** Establish a formal business retention and expansion program (BRE). As part of the program Economic Development will continually visit businesses not only the downtown core but across the City.

Who: Economic Development, City Staff, Rural Alberta Business Centre, Community Organizations

When: Ongoing – Completion within a year

**Action 2:** Develop a new economic development brand for Camrose. This will need to involve all community organizations such as the City Centre Group, Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Camrose. This would require a task team led by City with adequate resources to take immediate action.

Who: Economic Development, Marketing Consultants

When: 1 year

**Action 3:** Encourage and support new innovative industries into the City region including value added agriculture processing, research innovative and technology industries. The City of Camrose will also support and prospect airport industries and business.

Who: Economic Development, provincial government agencies, Camrose County, BRAED, Federal Government

When: On-Going

**Action 4:** Collaborate with CCC to review and proceed with the Downtown Action Plan.

Who: City Staff, CCC, Downtown Business Leaders, Province of Alberta Heritage

When: Within 3 to 6 months

**Action 5:** Ensure that the Visitor Friendly Assessment and Action Plan are in progress.

Who: City Economic Development department, Chamber of Commerce Tourism Camrose

When: Within 1 year

**Action 6:** Develop a regional economic development plan with the Camrose County

Who: Economic Development, City of Camrose CAO, Representatives from Council, County staff, consultant if needed

When: 1-2 years

**Action 7:** Collaborate with BRAED for Eastern Alberta Development economic development initiatives.

Who: Economic Development, BRAED, BRAED members

When: Ongoing

## **Portfolio 2: Communication Networks, Marketing & Influence Strategies**

**Action 1:** Need to develop a renewed image strategy to attract a variety of people and investment opportunities. While Camrose has done an excellent job in developing and attracting a senior's community, the City would benefit by creating a business and family image to build on Camrose strengths. This new image would include social media coupled with a traditional marketing plan to establish a visitor friendly image.

Who: City Staff

When: 1-2 years

**Action 2:** Develop new City services communication tools to make residents aware of all services in the City including recreation, economic development, development permits, taxes etc. Communicate the fact that all of the information is on the website and can be accessed from home, smartphones and various businesses. This may include information booklets at various centres such as senior centers, etc.

Who: Economic Development, Communications, City Staff

When: 2-3 years

**Action 3:** Develop a Camrose youth strategy to include ways of communicating to youth, youth surveys, mentorship programs, youth council and networking, and youth retention programs.

Who: Economic Development, youth organizations, School Divisions, BRAED, Junior Achievement Program

When: 1-2 years

**Action 4:** Improve City of Camrose website to include the new brand, image, directions and vision for the future. It should include key messaging, progress being made, events, public services, recreational opportunities, business development etc.

Who: Communication Staff, IT Staff, Economic Development

When: Ongoing

## **Portfolio 3: Community Values Traditions and Cultures**

Continue to develop from the strong volunteer base.

**Action 1:** Work with various organizations to develop more marketing and communication materials on volunteering and volunteering opportunities.

Who: Social Development Committee, Chamber, City Centre, Non-Profit Organizations, (NPOs Volunteer Boards), social services/youth

When: 1-2 Years

**Action 2:** Focus on engaging youth in community. Knowledge based jobs/ industries to create attract youth employment. Communication/ID needs of youth / post secondary students (community based learning). Target for rural residency / medical. Encourage entrepreneurship / business incubator. Survey college youth / needs.

Who: Economic Development, / U of A/ Chamber / EDOs / NPOs & BRAED

When: 1-2 years

**Action 3:** Promote a safe clean community.

Develop a strategy that showcases key areas within City that reflects a clean and safe and green community. Develop a pride in the community to ensure that Camrose is known as a Green and Clean community.

Who: City to lead by example/Work with organizations such as, Green Committee, Social Development Committee and other similar groups.

When: Ongoing



**Action 4:** Welcome newcomers to Camrose.

Strategies developed to make new comers feel welcome. This could mean monthly wine/cheese with newcomers or a newcomer's breakfast. Establish a centralized place/location/time to interact. Also improve welcome wagon to increase access and awareness. Also, promote engagement of business owners with new employees.

Who: Economic Development, Social Development Committee, Welcome Wagon, Various businesses

When: 6 months to 1 year.

**Action 5:** Maintain and expand agriculture community and activities.

- Develop agriculture programs at the U of A with partnership from City and County - This would include joint planning - BRAED/County/City.
  - Investigate opportunities for storage/distribution hub for agriculture and value added processing products due to highway and rail system (collection point).
  - Investigate opportunities in intermodal transportation - CPR/CN - Battle River Rail Opportunities.
  - Investigate establishment of an applied research centre (possibly through the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA))
  - Conduct gap assessment and investigate opportunities for value added agriculture processing
- Agriculture is a key economic driver for Camrose.

Who: Economic Development, U of A, BRAED, Camrose Regional Exhibition (CRE), Province of Alberta, Government of Canada, City Staff

When: 2-3 years



**Action 6:** Develop a strategy to promote Camrose as a centre for business conferences/conventions and events. Promote Camrose as an option to do business/conferences and attract sporting events/cultural/dance/art.

Who: Economic Development, Camrose County, City of Camrose, Camrose Tourism, Boomtown Trail

Resources: Hotel Levy other funding \$ 1/2 M, Travel Alberta etc.

When: 1 year to start - 2 year - 3 years and ongoing.

#### **Portfolio 4: Community Quality of Life (Safety, Recreation, Arts, Health, Social Infrastructure, Recreation and Education)**

City to partnership with various organizations such as U of A, Social Development Committee, and other organizations to build on the quality of life in Camrose. This will include focus groups, surveys and public meetings.

**Action 1:** Develop a growth plan to include controlled managed and sustainable growth. This would include:

- Encourage a walkable City like larger cities in Alberta.
- Initiatives to keep and attract new youth to communities to participate in all aspects of the City
- Need more child care centers throughout Camrose.
- City needs to add some green to empty lots and continue to clean any empty lots (bylaw).
- Need a culture change to be much more service oriented instead a build it and they will come culture.

Who: Economic Development, Social Development Committee, Community Organizations

When: 1-2 years

#### **Portfolio 5: Municipal Infrastructure (Rail, Roads, Buildings, etc)**

**Action 1:** Establish incentives to assist businesses to do facelift improvements of Camrose businesses. Camrose needs a vision of what needs to be done for the entire City socially, culturally, and economically.

Who: City Staff, Downtown Business Committee, Council

When: Ongoing

**Action 2:** Need to proceed with development of a new City Hall.

- Incentives for business owners all City buildings.
- Need a business brand or \*theme - color, adventure into a theme.

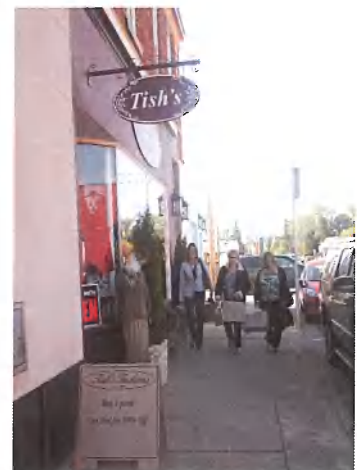
Who: City Infrastructure, Province of Alberta

When: 1-2 Years

**Action 3:** Need to implement the downtown revitalization program to create downtown as a venue/atmosphere/destination. This would attract artists, create the culture of downtown - plant trees etc. Need to re-use abandoned buildings.

Who: Economic Development

When: Within 1 year



## 10 Measuring Success



Community Economic Development (CED) is action by people locally to create economic opportunities and better social conditions, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged. CED is an approach that recognizes that economic, environmental and social challenges are interdependent, complex and ever-changing. The integration and complexity of three components presents a challenge in measuring the success of the plan's implementation, as progress on the implementation of all elements of the plan needs to be measured and reported.

Several select Key Performance Indicators for both the “economic” and “soft-services” are noted below. Economic performance indicators will gauge how well economic development projects are proceeding, and community capacity indicators will track the community's perceived well-being and spirit; both indicators should be utilized in reviewing the socio-economic actions and goals, as these blend the community and economic development interests.

### 10.1 Key Economic Indicators

#### Economic Performance Indicators:

The performance indicators for economic development will be most closely associated with “ED” activities. The following are economic indicators that should be measured and reported on:

- The amount and increased availability of land for residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and recreational use.
- The number of new businesses established in the community
- The net growth in the commercial and industrial assessments year over year.
- The partnerships with industry and their engagement in the community
- The increase in water and sewer services to the curb available to businesses and residents.
- Number of people employed Part time and full time in Camrose
- Medium Income of families in Camrose
- Vacancy Rates- Residential Commercial, Industrial

## 10.2 Key Social Indicators

### Community Capacity “soft-services” Indicators:

The performance indicators for the community Capacity or “soft-services” development will be more closely associated with “CD” activities. The following are “soft-service” indicators that should be monitored and reported on:

- A regular two way dialogue between the City of Camrose and the community and the resources in place to expedite the dialogue
- The establishment of a “Voice for the business community” by promoting website, semi-annual newsletters, and promote weekly page in newspapers
- Identified cultural events and the level of community support
- Become more involved in community organizations
- Increase community based networking and dialogue`





# 11 Reporting on Progress

## 11.1 Plan Review and Revision

The Community Economic Development plans are designed to be implemented within the next five years, however should provide for the community indefinitely. These are living documents for which routine amendment is expected. As the action items are exercised and as the community begins to change shape through these actions, the plan will need updating and remodeling to ensure that it still fits the needs and wishes of the community, and that it is responding to current trends.

The EDO should conduct annual reporting to the City of Camrose so that residents can see what they have achieved so far, and so that they find motivation to continue enacting the plan.

○ **Report on economic development and investment results:**

- The data and information relating to the economic and industrial development in and around Camrose is most readily available to the City. It is incumbent upon the municipality to collect, assemble and report this information to the community on an annual basis. It is recommended that this be done in collaboration with appropriate community organizations at a public meeting where the success can be celebrated and feedback given on areas of Community Economic Development Plan that still present a challenge.

○ **Report on community capacity growth and soft services enhancements:**

- The collection and reporting of the “soft-services achievements is a shared responsibility between community organizations and the City. The EDO should prepare a report on the community’s response and achievements in regard to the Community Economic Development Plan. These results should also be reported at the annual public meeting together with the City report on the economic development in the community.