

Council's Strategic Plan 2024 and Beyond



Photo by Shawn Elliot

COUNTY OF NORTHERN LIGHTS

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Photo by Diane Denison

INTRODUCTION

The County of Northern Lights is located within the Treaty 8 territory and is comprised of close to two million hectares of agricultural and forested lands. The County surrounds the Town of Manning and shares borders with Mackenzie County and Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement in the North, Clear Hills County in the West, the Municipal District of Peace No. 135 and Town of Peace River to the south, and Northern Sunrise County across the mighty Peace River to the east.

The County has an abundance of crown land as well as very productive agricultural lands and timber. Our residents enjoy a rural lifestyle with relatively low land and housing prices in a safe region.

We work co-operatively with our neighbors and are proud of our regional relationships.

We seek to attract business and development, while protecting our environment and preserving our agricultural heritage.

Photo by Aarin Sorensen



OUR VISION, MISSION, VALUES

Our Vision

It is the Vision of the Council of the County of Northern Lights, to be a great rural community of natural beauty and prosperity.

Our Mission

It shall be the Mission of the County of Northern Lights to efficiently provide services and infrastructure to ensure the quality of life for residents.

Our Values

At the County of Northern Lights, our values guide our decision-making. We value:

Good Leadership: We cultivate proactive leadership in an environment of constant change by anticipating and delivering intelligently on the needs of our municipality.

Visitors/Tourism: We recognize and cherish the natural beauty of our region and take steps to encourage visitors to the area.

Opportunities: We understand that both threats and strengths provide opportunities for growth and change.

Transparency and Openness: We ensure that our residents are aware of the decisions made by Council and the reasons behind them and take steps to ensure the information is available.

Business and Industry: We support our business and industry stakeholders and involve them in consultation matters affecting their operations.

Natural Resources: We believe it is our responsibility to assist with the sustainability of our natural resources to ensure they are here for future generations.

Regional Relationships: We are leaders in regional collaboration and respect and understand our regional partners – rural, urban and indigenous.

Safety: We keep the safety of our region and our residents at the forefront of our decisions by supporting emergency services at all levels.

Rural Lifestyle: We cherish the rural lifestyle and strive to protect it for future generations, preserving and protecting natural resources and agricultural producers.

Our Employees: We recognize the value of our employees in our operations, and their contributions toward our success.

Fairness: We believe in the fair and equitable delivery of services to all residents wherever possible.



Our Legislated Mandate

Alberta's Municipal Government Act legislates the broad purpose of the County:

- Provide good government
- Foster the well-being of the environment
- Provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality
- Develop and maintain safe and viable communities
- Work collaboratively with neighboring municipalities to plan, deliver, and fund inter- municipal services.

Building the Plan

In order to craft this Strategic Plan, the Council came together as a group and undertook an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as well as the outside influences affecting our operations including political, economic, social, technological and legislative. From this they were able to create a list of priorities. This information was considered in formulating this plan.

Councillors used their own experiences and interactions with residents of their wards to provide their input, as well as input from previous discussions with our stakeholders. The plan was updated in October 2023.

“Vision
without
action is
merely a
dream.”

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Strategic Priorities drive the vision of the County. We have used the following strategic priorities to establish our objectives:

- Municipal Infrastructure
- Effective Government
- Regional Economy
- Financial Sustainability

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The strategic objectives provide detailed insight about the specific areas Council would like Administration to focus their efforts. They clarify when and where improvement needs to occur and what will be achieved with those improvements. The results of some of these objectives will be seen short term, while others may take much longer.

1. Maintain Municipal Infrastructure at current levels

The County is here to serve, and we believe infrastructure should be provided in a manner that meets the needs of its users.

Results we want to achieve:

- Review and analyze new grant opportunities

2. Collaborate with other orders of government to serve the interests of the County

In order for the County to provide effective government, our elected officials must have an understanding of not only municipal policies, but Provincial and Federal as well.

As Councilors, we see these relationships as an opportunity to manage our county costs, as well as a chance to deliver greater benefit to both our residents and partners in a manner that none of us could achieve alone.

Results we want to achieve:

- Follow the advocacy/lobbying plan
- Evaluate Emergency Management and bring forward options by April 2024

“Efforts and
Courage are not
enough without
purpose and
direction”

JFK

- Review Town of Manning Municipal Services Agreement before December 2024

3. Support and diversify the economy of the County

Results we want to achieve:

- Advocate for Provincial and Federal policies that impact Northern Alberta and improve the local economy.
- Identify potential agricultural lands to ensure agricultural lands are not frozen by future provincial Land Use Planning

4. Maintain Fiscal Responsibility

As Councilors, we believe the financial sustainability of our County is a requirement if we are to maintain services and regional partnerships.

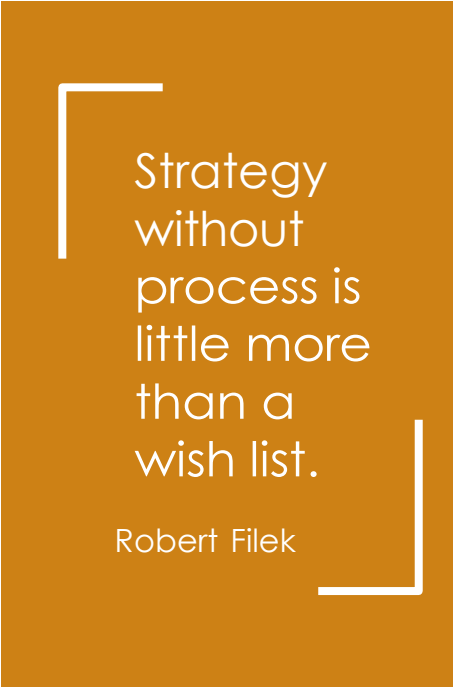
Results we want to achieve:

- Council to review and establish specific goals annually following each Provincial budget
- Ensure mill rate is reviewed annually at budget time with the intent of minimizing any required tax increases

Where We Go From Here

The Strategic Plan is the high-level document guiding our direction at the County of Northern Lights; it sets the vision for the next 3 years.

The goals have been established to assist administration in carrying out the goals of the County Council. The Strategic Plan and a status of the goals will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. They will drive each individual department's planning and provide key information on our successes and challenges — all of which will be made publicly available.





Strategy without process is little more than a wish list.


Robert Filek


STRATEGIC PLAN



 **Council**
Long-term vision (20+ years)
Goals and results (15 – 20 years)

 **STRATEGIC PLAN**
Executive Team
Interprets the Strategic Plan and provides corporate direction on how the Plans goals will be carried out in the next 3 years. Council endorses the plan.

 **DEPARTMENT BUDGETS**
Departments
Align their budgets with Strategic Plan

 **PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**
Departments
Report on the progress of their goals.