

Four Municipalities, One Vision for Regional Collaboration

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From left: Town of Peace River Mayor Shelly Shannon, Northern Sunrise County Reeve Claude Rodrigue, and (back row): County of Northern Lights CAO Gerhard Stickling and Reeve Terry Ungarian, Northern Sunrise County Deputy Reeve Jason Javos, Town of Peace River Deputy Mayor Brad Carr, MD of Peace Reeve Robert Willing and CAO Brian Allen. (Front row): County of Northern Lights Deputy Reeve Kayln Schug, Town of Peace Reiver CAO Kayla Pasons, MD of Peace Deputy Reeve Sandra Eastman, and Northern Sunrise County CAO Cindy Millar.

Four Peace region municipalities have launched a new regional collaboration initiative that could result in Alberta's first four-municipality Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework.

In early September, the Town of Peace River, the County of Northern Lights, the MD of Peace, and Northern Sunrise County took the first steps toward establishing a four-municipality Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) agreement. Initial discussions focused on each council's shared desire to find efficiencies and establish a unified vision for intermunicipal collaboration in the Peace Region.

“Bringing all four municipalities to the same table gives us an opportunity to have open, constructive conversations and make decisions with our residents’ best interests at heart. Our goal is to leave the table feeling confident about the decisions we have made and knowing that, despite our different municipal boundaries, we are working toward the same goal: a strong and sustainable region for everyone.” — Claude Rodrigue, Reeve, Northern Sunrise County

ICFs recognize that communities function beyond municipal boundaries. Residents may live in one municipality, work in another, use services in a third, and rely on infrastructure like roads, water, emergency services, and recreation facilities that serve multiple jurisdictions. Aligning shared regional priorities clarifies responsibilities, enhances transparency among partners, and provides long-term benefits through improved access to services.

“As a group, we recognize that we are trying something that hasn’t been done before. A single ICF between four municipalities will be the first of its kind in Alberta. We can take this new approach because we share the desire to work outside the box and find homegrown solutions that benefit our region.” — Shelly Shannon, Mayor, Town of Peace River

Coming together to establish a shared commitment to cooperation and a willingness to think beyond traditional two-or-three municipality ICFs demonstrates the collective desire to efficiently manage tax dollars through reduced duplication and coordinated planning around service delivery.

"This region has demonstrated that strong leadership can bring municipalities together to work toward the common good of all residents. While each municipality has its own unique characteristics and priorities, we also recognize that we share many common facilities, services, and challenges." — Terry Ungarian, Reeve, County of Northern Lights

"It is gratifying to see such a diverse group of municipalities come together to create an agreement for municipal infrastructure and services funding. Regional cooperation has become an absolutely vital component for the long-term benefit of our residents and creates healthy relationships between municipalities within the area. This sets the tone for future collaborations between all of the members and creates a dynamic and vibrant region for all." — Robert Willing, Reeve, MD of Peace

Over the coming months, representatives from the four municipalities will continue discussions to examine shared priorities, identify opportunities for collaboration, and develop the framework for a future regional agreement. Provincial legislation requires municipalities to review and update existing ICF agreements by March 31, 2027. This legislative change gave the four municipalities an opportunity to explore a new regional approach.

What is an ICF?

An intermunicipal collaboration framework (ICF) is a formal agreement that explains how neighbouring municipalities will work together on shared services, infrastructure, and planning across municipal boundaries. Under the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), rural and urban municipalities that share a border must enter into an ICF. The agreement provides a structured way to collaborate and address issues that affect more than one community.

About Town of Peace River



Peace River is a vibrant regional service centre and economic hub serving northern Alberta and the surrounding rural communities. Home to approximately 7,000 residents, Peace River offers a unique combination of small-town values, regional influence, and significant opportunities for growth. Stay up to date with Town of Peace River news on our website, peaceriver.ca.



About County of Northern Lights The County of Northern Lights has a rich history that dates back to December, 1913 when it was first established as Large Local Improvement District 122. Later in 1995, it was incorporated as the Municipal District of Northern Lights No. 22, more commonly known as Md of Northern Lights, before being renamed the County of Northern Lights in 2010, at the request of the Council to the Lieutenant Governor. Geographically, the County spans over 20,627 km² and stretches from the BC border to Clear Hills County in the west. On the east side, it follows the winding path of the Peace River. Its borders extend north to Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement and south to the Town of Peace River and the MD of Peace, near Grimshaw.



About the MD of Peace Nestled alongside the mighty Peace River, the Municipal District of Peace #135 is a small agriculturally based municipality with a population of 1581. The M.D. was incorporated in 1916 and features a mix of urban amenities along with country residential options. Agriculture forms the backbone of our economy mainly through grain farming, mixed farming, bee keeping and a strong cattle farming industry. To learn more about our municipality and what we have to offer visit our website: www.mdpeace.com



About Northern Sunrise County Northern Sunrise County is a vibrant rural municipality in Alberta's Peace Region, spanning approximately 21,000 square kilometres of fertile agricultural land and unspoiled wilderness. Rich in natural resources, the County's diverse economy is supported by agriculture, oil and gas, forestry, and tourism. Its welcoming hamlets and communities offer a strong rural quality of life, abundant opportunities for outdoor adventure, and a promising environment for continued economic growth.