



MD of Provost No. 52

BUSINESS PLAN 2014

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The MD of Provost No. 52, in conjunction with its long-established mission statement and core principles, strives to continue to provide an excellent quality of life to its ratepayers via progressive development of public infrastructure balanced with predictable and equitable taxation.

This institutional philosophy, which stands on the twin premises of accountability and transparency of both operations and governance, is intended to provide steady, sustainable growth which provides a net benefit to all residents of the M.D.

This document is intended to serve as an adjunct to the M.D's mission statement; through the specific, annual identification of new and ongoing challenges and responses to same a targeted, quantifiable benchmark may be established in order to better fulfill Council's ongoing commitment to effective, responsible governance.

I am committed to achieving the objectives laid out in this business plan.

Tyler Lawrason, Administrator

January, 2014.

Mission Statement and Objectives

The Municipal District of Provost No. 52 continually strives to provide a rural environment where residents may enjoy an excellent quality of life.

Service Delivery Objectives

- To conserve agricultural land.
- To maintain and develop a viable Roads Transportation Network.
- To promote a diversified agricultural industry and environmentally sound natural resource development.
- To protect residents by providing effective emergency response and crime prevention services.
- To participate in regional partnerships that promotes the availability of health care, education and recreation services and facilities.
- To offer resources and support voluntary efforts to provide social programs.

SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES

The following have been identified as opportunities and challenges that both premise business plan goals and have the ability to influence the likelihood by which the business plan goals may be achieved.

Infrastructure Deficit

- The MD at present has 1784 kms identified as “gravel roads”, 234 kms of truck trails, 57 kms of oiled and stabilized road, 64 kms of oiled road, 7km of chipsealing and 71 kms of pavement. An increase in traffic volume and commercial vehicle size, coupled with age, state and composition of many of the roads in question has resulted in an infrastructure network which struggles to accommodate existing traffic patterns and dynamics.
- Demand for rural residential subdivisions will continue to create conflicts regarding access; likewise transfer of formerly contiguous parcels of agricultural land creates the escalating potential for similar access demands with respect to the development or upgrade of transportation infrastructure.
- Utilities services (water and sewer) for which the MD is responsible have been brought up to regulatory compliance and satisfactory condition via recent capital expenditure. However, the likelihood of increasing regulatory burden impacting future capital costs and the commensurate likelihood of enhanced operational costs remain concerning from a sustainability standpoint.
- Additional public facilities which are financed or subsidized by the M.D. – i.e. recreational facilities and libraries – have increased their operational burden to the point where decisions are forthcoming regarding the legitimacy of duplicating service vis a vis structural replacement costs.

Fiscal Stability and Institutional Viability

- A drastic reduction in high-expense, low-return projects and services – such as engineering and consulting - has progressively enhanced the ability of the MD to focus resources on effective delivery of basic services; however it has placed additional burden on MD staff with respect to workloads and responsibilities.
- A continuing high degree of reliance on a commodity-centric tax base emphasizes the importance of long-term planning and process. In light of the inherently cyclical nature of this revenue stream, over which the MD has minimal control, it is considered as a prime focus of Council to encourage all measures which promote stability of expenditure and – by extension – taxation.
- The aforementioned stability is intended, as an overarching philosophy, to provide a climate which does not dis-incent industrial and economic development through *ad hoc* expenditure and unidentified emergency allocations which inevitably lead to a fluctuating and onerous regime of escalating taxation.

- Further to the above, there remains significant incentive to continue building targeted reserve funds for the purpose of addressing future capital projects, without diminishing the capacity to sustain existing levels of service or unduly hampering the capacity for evolutionary expansion when necessary.
- Labour market competitiveness continues to exert increasing pressure upon the ability of the M.D. to attract and retain qualified staff, within realistic wage and incentive parameters.
- Regulatory interference from other levels of government, most notably at the provincial level, impact or have the potential to impact all facets of municipal sustainability and viability, often in an arbitrary and unpreventable fashion.
- A review of the *Municipal Government Act* by the Government of Alberta, in conjunction with an increasingly strident series of campaigns to address perceived “inequities” in property taxation – particularly linear and industrial – has the potential to seriously and irrevocably alter the long-term legitimacy of the M.D.’s primary revenue stream.

Community Sustainability

- At present, the MD retains direct responsibility for four Hamlets, and contributes substantially to the ongoing viability of three Villages and one Town.
- The direct subsidization of the aforementioned Hamlets is – out of necessity – to a degree that these communities cannot be considered self-sufficient, nor is there a readily apparent mechanism by which this can be achieved.
- Villages within the MD remain – at the current level of assistance – to be inherently unstable at best and at worst cannot be considered viable with respect to the potential for radical growth of taxation base/revenue. This potentially places a great deal of future capital and operational pressure upon the MD, including but not limited to a rapidly crumbling infrastructure, deferred maintenance, and suspect operational practices.
- To both a greater and lesser extent, the above can be applied to the Town of Provost; the potential repercussions of dissolution have greater implications to the MD given the amount of shared infrastructure and responsibility at present, but conversely the possibility of this dissolution has a greater potential of mitigation.
- The MD continues to experience strong industrial development, while at the same time is plagued by a steadily declining population. While enabling the continuance of service provision without a viable residential tax base, the danger inherent in maintenance of this status quo is self evident.
- The viability and concentration of service-based amenities, such as retail outlets, continues to be of increasing concern – while the attraction and retention of physicians and the sustainability of local healthcare initiatives remains of critical importance.

CORE BUSINESSES, GOALS, STRATEGIES & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Core Business One: To Conserve Agricultural Land

Goal

1

Responsible Development

What it means With industrial expansion continuing, and country residential development becoming more commonplace, a distinct need exists to premise land use policies to balance this expansion with the preservation of arable land in an equitable fashion.

Strategies

- 1.1** The MD's Land Use Bylaw currently reflects and recognizes the ongoing industrial development near Rosyth, via the Rosyth Area Structure Plan.
- 1.2** The LUB and the Municipal Development Plan have been updated to provide guidelines and criteria for the responsible development of commercial wind generation facilities.
- 1.3** Maintaining a firm commitment to inter-municipal cooperation on residential development, particularly given the increase in residential building permit value and activity in urban fringe areas.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (2013)	Target (2013)	Target (2014)	Target (2015)
1. Value Residential Building Permits	\$2.04 Million	\$3.4 Million	\$3.4 Million	\$3.4 Million
2. Value of Commercial Building Permits	\$12.6 Million	\$6 Million	\$7 Million	\$8 Million
3. Institutional Building Permits	\$125,105.00	N/A	N/A	N/A

Goal

2

Reclamation

What it means MD road and public infrastructure work will continue to be reclaimed in an expedient and efficient manner, so as to minimize the footprint of construction and its effect on arable land as well as enhancing the M.D's social license to undertake road construction.

Strategies

- 2.1 The Agricultural Field Man will continue to have primary responsibility for road construction reclamation and will continue to work in conjunction with Public Works and MD contractors.
- 2.2 Disturbed and borrow areas will be reclaimed as soon as possible, to a standard which is equal or better than the established pre-disturbance condition.
- 2.3 Competent third parties will continue to be contracted, when necessary, to make up for any delays or lack of in-house capacity to meet identified goals.
- 2.4 The ASB equipment roster will be enhanced, via planned capital acquisitions, to allow more thorough and responsive reclamation to take place.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (2013)	Target (2013)	Target (2014)	Target (2014)
1. Percentage of reclamation commenced in year construction takes place	100%	100%	100%	100%
2. Percentage return to previous condition	100%	100%	100%	100%
3. Return time to original condition (years)	2	2	2	2

Core Business Two: To Maintain and Develop a Viable Roads Transportation Network

Goal

1 Planning

What it means

The gravel road rehabilitation planning schedule is presently undertaken on a three year cyclical basis. This enables greater stability, consistency, vision and efficacy in the execution of necessary roadwork.

Strategies

- 1.1 Council will continue to review and ratify the gravel road rehabilitation program by December 31st of each year, identifying and codifying necessary work for the coming construction season, in addition to the two years which follow it.
- 1.2 Administration and Public Works, with the above direction consolidated, will solidify as soon as possible after plan ratification all necessary agreements with affected landowners, so as to prevent construction changes/delays.
- 1.3 Items in the above road program shall continue to incorporate, as a base philosophy, the full rehabilitation of 20 miles of primary gravel road surfaces per year.

Goal

2 Gravel Conservation

What it means Gravel, as a finite resource, is becoming increasingly costly to extract and apply. Consequently, long term strategies for systemic and permanent reductions in aggregate usage will play a large part in the M.D.'s planning and infrastructure development process.

Strategies

- 2.1 The M.D. will continue, on an annual basis, to pursue the application of hard surface seal coats to stabilized gravel road surfaces so as to achieve an ongoing reduction in aggregate utilization.
- 2.2 Council will not pursue pavement projects unless substantial external financial assistance and/or incentive is made available, as a measure of cost effectiveness.
- 2.3 Council will continue to explore innovative and cost effective alternative methods of road surfacing and stabilization, while objectively evaluating the effectiveness of same. Cold mix oil will be abandoned in favour of progressive contracted products.
- 2.4 Council will premise the award of all contracts noted in Section 2.3 upon expediency, past performance, demonstrated quality of work, long term availability and compliance to all relevant statutes, to the best of its knowledge.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (2013)	Target (2013)	Target (2014)	Target (2015)
1. Miles of soil stabilization	12.5	12.5	6.0	15.0
2. Miles of chipseal	17.5	17.5	17	17

Goal

3 Gravel Quality

What it means Council, in conjunction with Administration, Public Works and the Gravel Committee, will continue to strive to enhance and improve the quality and quantity of gravel sources within the MD.

Strategies

- 3.1 As part of its annual road program deliberations, Council will continue to ratify application rates for gravel on each identified project area as proposed by the Gravel Committee.
- 3.2 Public Works and Administration will continue to tender all gravel crushing contracts, in accordance with identified specifications.
- 3.3 Public Works and Administration shall maintain existing testing protocols for crushing, with an emphasis on increasing training to allow effective monitoring and checking of gravel crushers.
- 3.4 Efforts shall continue to locate, secure and crush additional gravel sources whenever possible, on the recognition that expediency equals cost effectiveness.
- 3.5 Graveling shall commence as soon as practicable after the start of each new calendar year, and will continue uninterrupted as weather permits.
- 3.6 Winter graveling shall be executed in accordance with identified priorities, with preference given to newly rehabilitated road surfaces, major arterial routes and bus routes.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (2013)	Target (2013)	Target (2014)	Target (2015)
1. Percentage of gravel crush sieve tested and/or supervised	100%	100%	100%	100%
2. Cubic Yards of Gravel Crushed	140,000	200,000	200,000	200,000

Goal

4

Agricultural Access Improvement

What it means

At present, numerous partially-developed ‘truck trails’ within the M.D, the purpose of which is primarily agricultural access, are essentially inaccessible to oversize machinery, due primarily to narrowness and/or inverted ditch slopes.

Strategies

- 4.1 Council will pursue third party contractors to mitigate access issues on 15km, more or less, of agricultural access and ‘third tier’ rights annually.
- 4.2 Projects will continue to be premised on the criteria of enhancing agricultural access, and the projects will not be selected with the intent of re-classifying or substantially enhancing access for all-season commuter traffic.
- 4.3 Projects will be done in accordance with pre-determined specifications with respect to ditch slopes and width, which will be determined and ratified by Council on a case by case basis as per the above general criteria.

Goal

5

Staff attraction and retention

What it means The quality of staff is essential to productivity, morale and the continued ability of the MD to fulfill its identified mandate.

Strategies

- 5.1 The Administrator and Public Works/ASB will continue to adhere to the MD's revised personnel policies relative to recruitment and hiring.
- 5.2 Seasonal employees will continue to be selected in accordance with their merit.
- 5.3 Substandard performance will continue to be addressed in accordance with the tenets of progressive discipline and the MD's personnel policy.
- 5.4 Public Works and ASB management staff will continue to be subject to annual performance reviews by the Administrator and Council.
- 5.5 All staff will be expected to participate in and facilitate a culture of respect, integrity and foster at all times a positive working environment.

Goal

6

Infrastructure Experimentation

What it means Given the finite and non-renewable nature of gravel, and given the proven limitations of 'cold mixed' oil-based road surfacing, examination and trial of new technologies intended to stabilize road infrastructure and conserve gravel resources will remain an ongoing commitment of the M.D.

Strategies

- 6.1 Innovative infrastructure management technologies and products will continue to be sought out and applied on a trial basis, with preference given to those products providing a clear monetary or operational benefit to the M.D.
- 6.2 A full evaluation of said test projects will be conducted by Administration and Public Works on an annual basis, and presented to Council for consideration prior to the annual consideration of the road program.
- 6.3 Test projects will continue to be evaluated on an annual basis, and shall be pursued further whenever a clear and demonstrable benefit is obtained.
- 6.4 To establish the primacy of the M.D. as a leader in innovation and infrastructure management, the details of test projects and technologies shall be freely communicated with municipal partners and ratepayers at every opportunity.

Core Business Three

To promote a diversified agricultural industry and environmentally sound natural resource development

Goal

1 Ag Service Board Integration

- What it means** The Ag Service Board, by way of the Agricultural Fieldman, plays a critical role in the operational integrity of the MD, and serves as a means of integrating infrastructure development with continued agricultural integrity.

Strategies

- 1.1 The Ag Fieldman will continue to act as an alternate Public Works manager, with the capacity to direct Public Works staff as appropriate, and vice versa.
 - 1.2 The Ag Fieldman and Public Works will place as a priority the coordination of road rehabilitation projects, particularly as concerns reclamation and fencing, so as to emphasize the importance of harmonizing agriculture with road infrastructure development.
 - 1.3 The Ag Fieldman and Director of Public Works will continue to develop a cooperative relationship as regards negotiation for and management of land acquisition, borrow areas and other intrusions upon agricultural land so as to maximize efficiency and minimize the potential for conflict with ag producers.
 - 1.4 The Ag Fieldman will assume, as per policy, responsibility for identifying and administering brush mulching programs on road rights-of-way within the M.D., in consultation with affected adjacent landowners.
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Goal

2 Non-Competitive Agricultural Service Provision

What it means The MD provides a series of services (for example, equipment rental) which have the potential to compete, conflict or unduly impact private enterprise through unnecessary duplication.

Strategies

- 2.1 The MD's Ag Service Board division will continue to provide equipment for rental, at minimal cost, to ag producers and associated members of the public as a public service.

- 2.2 Such rental will be focused toward and premised upon not duplicating with public funds equipment which is generally available locally from private enterprise or individuals, so as to not inappropriately compete with business and/or discourage agricultural entrepreneurship.
- 2.3 The above comments will also apply to the provision of services by the ASB department and its employees.

Goal

3

Industrial, Agricultural and Residential Harmonization

What it means Due to significant and escalating industrial (and associated commercial) development, significant risk of encroachment upon residential and rural residential areas could potentially occur.

Strategies

- 3.1 The MD's Land Use Bylaw will continue to be monitored closely to ensure that all potential industrial development within the MD's jurisdiction occurs appropriately and in harmony with existing landowners, residential dwellings and communities.
 - 3.2 The MD shall continue to pursue and foster a positive relationship with Provincial and Federal energy regulators and industry representatives, to ensure mutually respectful interactions where development is premised upon mutual respect.
 - 3.3 The MD shall continue to foster such cooperative relationships through the maintenance of a progressive and stable taxation structure.
 - 3.4 On matters of major public infrastructure –i.e. electrical transmission lines – over which the MD has no direct control, the MD shall give primacy of negotiation to affected landowners and shall refrain from advocating preferred routes or placements in the interests of universal fairness.
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Goal

4 Cooperative Development

What it means Given the geography of the MD, it is inevitable that a certain percentage of development will occur in close proximity to urban municipalities within the MD's borders. It is essential that steps be taken to minimize potential conflict and maximize potential gain from said development through the promotion of inter-municipal cooperation.

Strategies

- 4.1 Review on an annual basis with adjacent municipalities the legislative framework (the Land Use Bylaw) by which joint development is governed, and insure that said legislation continues to address emergent and ongoing issues.
- 4.2 Continue to participate in inter-municipal joint development committees, so as to obtain formalized recommendations to be used in development approvals and deliberations.
- 4.3 Pursue, where desirable and considered necessary, formalized agreements which dictate additional or more specific considerations relative to inter-municipal development.
- 4.4 Foster a climate where not only is rural development considered in an urban impact context, but also vice versa in keeping with the MD's core business of agrarian-friendly development.

Core Business Four

To protect residents by providing effective emergency response and crime prevention services.

Goal

1 Advocacy and Awareness

What it means Although direct responsibility for the provision and administration of most emergency services lies with other levels of government, advocacy is critical to insure that rural interests remain visible and considered in policy development.

Strategies

- 1.1 Continue to advocate for effective delivery of services administered by other levels of government (i.e. Ambulance, RCMP).
- 1.2 Maintain and continue to promote inter-municipal cooperation and participation in emergency services dispatch organizations (i.e. E911) so as to more effectively promote a rural perspective at the governance table.
- 1.3 Continue to foster relationships with local law enforcement, to facilitate the incorporation of local government ideals and objectives in the delivery of law enforcement and community policing.

Goal

2 Fire and Emergency Management

What it means The maintenance of an effective, adequate volunteer fire service is critical to the continued success of the MD, as is an ability to effectively respond to states of local emergency.

Strategies

- 2.1 Maintain, as a minimum, existing levels of equipment and trained fire service personnel and continue to supply adequate funding for acquisition and maintenance of same.
- 2.2 Continue to promote inter-municipal cooperation to effectively coordinate service, training and capital purchases equitably between participating partners.
- 2.3 Pursue and review strategies for attracting and retaining volunteer emergency services personnel.
- 2.4 Consider and review standards of training and policy pertaining to fire services personnel responding to incidents within the M.D.
- 2.5 Continue to build on recent governance changes resulting in the West Fire Council, and advocate for complete consolidation of all fire and rescue infrastructure within the West Fire district.

Goal

3 Enforcement

What it means While major crime prevention and enforcement activities within the MD are tasked to the RCMP, the MD through Bylaw enforcement and rural traffic control plays a key role in community safety.

Strategies

- 3.1 Continue to employ, utilize and incorporate input from the MD's Community Peace Officer.
- 3.2 Strive to promote the presence of the MD Peace Officer through the continued acquisition of excellent, up to date equipment and training.
- 3.3 Promote stability in the position through the provision of competitive wage and high job satisfaction.

Core Business Five

To participate in regional partnerships that promotes the availability of health care, education and recreation services and facilities

Goal

1 Doctor Attraction and Retention

What it means The attraction and retention of physicians is a matter of critical importance for the well being and future viability of rural Alberta, particularly the MD of Provost.

Strategies

- 1.1 Continue to work with the Town of Provost and other relevant municipalities and jurisdictions, via formalized committee involvement, to exploit existing and pursue new avenues and ideas relative to physician attraction.
- 1.2 Work in a leadership capacity to formulate and propagate a marketing strategy to attract physicians.
- 1.3 Formulate a concrete position relative to existing healthcare infrastructure and incorporate conclusions into the M.D's capital planning cycle.

Goal

2 Recreational Partnerships

What it means The significant capital and operational expenses associated with recreational facilities presents a severe impediment to their creation without inter-municipal cooperation and cost-sharing.

Strategies

- 2.1 Continue to work with the Town of Provost, in accordance with existing agreements, to fund and encourage the efficient operation of the new Regional Activity Centre.
- 2.2 Continue to review, on an annual basis, the aforementioned agreement to insure that operational viability is balanced with accountability to the MD's ratepayers.
- 2.3 Pursue future cooperative arrangements with other municipalities within the MD to ensure sufficient lead time and appropriate allocation of future targeted reserves.
- 2.4 Continue to evaluate and evolve the newly implemented direct-delivery governance and funding model for West Recreation.
- 2.5 Continue to work with volunteer organization – such as the Shorncliffe Lake and Cap't Ayre Lake Associations – to foster the ongoing evolution of MD recreational facilities in a fashion that is responsible and accountable.

Goal

3 Targeted Capital Reserves

What it means Given the significant future capital and operational expense associated with as-yet unbuilt recreational facilities, coupled with the necessity of planning for these facilities given the deteriorating state of those currently in existence, it is incumbent upon the MD to build substantial reserves to defer future expenditures.

Strategies

- 3.1 Continue the existing commitment to build, through recreational taxation levies, a substantial capital reserve for West Recreation and supplement an East Recreation capital reserve with operational overflow.

- 3.2 Retain sole discretionary control over accumulating capital reserves, pending future agreements upon which allocation may be based.
 - 3.3 Evaluate on a bi-annual basis the core premise of each reserve fund, including the amount of the reserve target and the annual contribution.
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Core Business Six

To offer resources and support voluntary efforts to provide social programs

Goal

1 Agency Support

What it means The MD at present supports, philosophically and financially, a series of agencies and/or organizations which provide direct social assistance to seniors and vulnerable groups.

Strategies

- 1.1 Continue to work with participating municipalities to cooperatively fund and support the administration/governance of Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), in cooperation with Alberta Human Services.
- 1.2 Continue to promote and sustain the MD's policy of charitable donation to encourage fiscal support to eligible and worthwhile service delivery organizations.
- 1.3 Provide, as a first option, guidance and support of a non-intrusive, non-fiscal nature to service groups and clubs so as to incent and

encourage self-sufficiency without governmental intervention and/or subsidy.

Goal

2

Service Group Recognition

What it means

Further to the above, the M.D. remains committed to fostering, wherever possible, the ability of service groups and clubs to remain self-sufficient without fiscal subsidization while at the same time providing necessary support, guidance and recognition.

Strategies

1.1

Embarking on a program of volunteer recognition, through the hosting of various social events intended to recognize and show appreciation for volunteer efforts that substantively better individuals, facilities and communities in general.