

Meeting Date: July 10, 2024

Subject: Bylaw No. 24/015 – Municipal Development Plan
2024-2044

Approvals: Amanda Haitas

Director

Henry Hunter

Chief Administrative Officer

Recommendation(s):

1. THAT Bylaw No. 24/015, being the Municipal Development Plan 2024-2044, be read a first time; and
2. THAT the required Public Hearing be scheduled for September 10, 2024.

Summary | Background:

Section 632 of the *Municipal Government Act* requires every Municipality to adopt a Municipal Development Plan (MDP). An MDP is a high-level, long-term statutory plan that provides direction on managing regional growth and development for the next 20 years.

The current MDP, approved in 2011, contemplated exponential growth and aimed to achieve a population target of about 231,000 residents by 2030. It was adopted when the Region was experiencing a boom and focused heavily on creating infrastructure to accommodate the projected annual 7% population growth for the next 20 years. Despite the MDP's ambitious goals, the Region has undergone economic, cultural, and social changes. In addition, the 2013 and 2020 floods, 2016 and 2024 wildfires, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a global downturn in oil prices have all contributed to a pause in the Region's development.

The current MDP no longer provides adequate direction for the Region's growth and development as it does not align with the realities, needs, and challenges the Region faces today. To ensure the Municipality has an MDP that guides its growth in alignment with the current context, a new Municipal Development Plan is proposed to be adopted.

The authority to adopt an MDP is vested with Council under the *Municipal Government Act*.



MDP Preparation Process

Background Research: Detailed background research and analysis was undertaken to ensure the proposed MDP conforms to industry standards, includes best practices, and incorporates new trends. The exercise involved studying long-term plans for over 15 cities nationally and internationally. The cities were selected based on several factors, such as population, area, industry, location, and development trends.

Public Engagement: After gaining an understanding of the recent trends, Administration engaged with various stakeholders and the public in three (3) phases of engagement.

- The first phase of engagement focused on getting ideas from the public and stakeholders on their vision and goals for the Region.
- The second phase focused on confirming the vision, goals, and strategic directions.
- The third phase included confirmation of policies in the proposed MDP.

Altogether, the three (3) phases of engagement included 77 stakeholder meetings, 32 workshops, and 10 open houses with over 3,400 participants. Analysis of the social media campaigns confirmed that over 204,000 connections were made with people to raise awareness about the MDP project (171,154 social media impressions and 33,000 flyers). The online public survey results indicated that 96.3% of the respondents agreed with the proposed draft plan.

Policy Framework: The proposed MDP considers the present-day condition of the Region and adopts a ‘place-based approach’ that focuses on maximizing and building on the remarkable opportunities the Region already has.

It provides policies to improve the social fabric of the Region and creates opportunities for the Region to grow in a responsible way, where residents have a sense of belonging, businesses and industries thrive, Indigenous values and practices are respected, community and cultures are celebrated, and development is responsible and intentional while protecting and caring for the environment.

The MDP’s vision, “a flourishing region and community of choice with a strong sense of identity, history, and optimism, to call home, today and tomorrow”, would be realized through the implementation of action items identified in six (6) different goals that are crafted to address the current needs of the Region. The proposed MDP also provides an implementation framework, with performance measures that the Municipality can use to assess the performance of the MDP over the next 20 years.



Budget | Financial Considerations:

The proposed MDP identifies an implementation framework that recognizes specific action items that the Municipality must undertake in an immediate (within 1 year), short (1 to 4 years), medium (5-10 years), and long (10 to 20 years) term. Since the plan aims to improve and grow the Region, it creates financial implications for the Municipality. A range of timelines in the MDP empowers Council to decide their priorities and choose when and how to implement action items.

Strategic Plan Alignment | Impact:

The proposed MDP is in alignment with all the Values in Council's Strategic Plan, being:

- Fiscal Management
- Building Partnerships
- Rural and Indigenous Communities and Relationships
- Local Economy
- Downtown Visualization

Rationale for Recommendation(s):

An MDP is a blueprint that guides the growth and development of the Region. In addition to addressing the changing needs and aspirations of a community, it must reflect and address the economic, social, and cultural needs of the Region. Responsible and informed decision making based on specific goals and a vision crafted from input by the residents and stakeholders, is imperative to grow together as a region. By adopting a new path based on best practices, recent trends in development, and stakeholder input, Council will be better positioned to make decisions that drive the Region forward.

The proposed MDP responds to the Region's new realities and challenges and provides a strategy to grow intentionally with reasonable expectations and affordable investments in the Region's social and physical infrastructure. It outlines a path forward to harness and build on the Region's abundant opportunities and natural resources. Various growth scenarios in the MDP allow the Municipality to manage varying levels of growth in the Region and ensure an increase in population can be accommodated in a responsible way while still providing a high quality of life and respecting the natural environment.

The MDP also proposes policies to encourage economic development, business growth, and investments in the Region by building on local skills and knowledge, activating tourism, supporting local innovation, and diversifying the regional economy. It also allows the Municipality to respond more effectively to Calls to Action under Truth and Reconciliation.

The implementation of the MDP aims to make the Region a great place for its residents to call home today and in the future.



Attachment(s):

1. Bylaw No. 24/015 – Municipal Development Plan

