

2018

SYLVAN LAKE
OUR VISION. OUR FUTURE.
Municipal Sustainability Plan





Introduction

“Sylvan Lake, Our Vision. Our Future” provides a sustainable direction for the community as the Town commits to creating a better place for all residents today and into the future. This plan is an update to the Town’s original Sustainability Plan, which was adopted in 2010. The revision builds on the visionary work done in that plan, but recognizes that the path towards sustainability is a winding one; one that needs to be adaptable and flexible in order to resiliently move the Town forward.

This Municipal Sustainability Plan (The Plan) is a roadmap for the Town to follow, as decisions are made that impact the sustainability of the community. The Plan includes a vision for sustainability, supported by broad goals and objectives, and targets set for each objective that will challenge the us over the next 10 years. This approach is designed to ensure that sustainability is considered in all actions and decisions. The document should be used to help reflect on and evaluate the long-term consequences that short-term actions may have on the community. Eventually, thinking sustainably will become second nature and be woven into the day-to-day fabric of the municipal organization.

Developing a community that is resilient and able to positively respond to change takes forward thinking and a collaborative spirit. Our plan is to create an environment where challenges are tackled in innovative new ways, solutions are developed from a comprehensive systems-based approach, collaborative partnerships are created, and ultimately, boundaries are pushed so that we can approach things differently - ensuring our community stays a great place for future generations to come.



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SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is often defined as: “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (The Brundtland Report, 1987).

The goal of becoming a sustainable community means that future Sylvan Lakers will have the same opportunity to enjoy this great community as we do today. The pursuit of this goal must not come at the expense of the environment, our social equity, economic health, or our heritage and cultural identity. Sustainability is about striking a balance between the increased pressures for development, growth, and community services with the increased pressures of decreasing resources and increased strain on our natural systems.

Dealing with sustainability issues takes an integrated approach where all aspects are considered; problems cannot be solved in isolation. Although the sustainability objectives in this Plan are classified by goal area, they are interrelated and as a community, collaboration must exist if we are to find sustainable solutions.

A Municipal Sustainability Plan is a step in our long-term journey to becoming a sustainable community. A clear path forward is critical, as we strive for balance amid planning for growth.

The Sustainability Planning Process

We have learned a lot throughout the process of implementing the Town's 2010 sustainability plan. Future planning and prioritizing must be flexible and adaptable, timeframes need to be reasonable – but limited, collaboration is essential, sustainability is everyone's responsibility, and accountability needs to be built into the process. The methodology taken to develop this Plan, including the new document format and the implementation strategy, reflect these lessons learned.

Review and Evaluation

A thorough review and evaluation of the existing sustainability plan was completed to identify plan components we could build upon. This included a review of both content, as well as the approach to which it was written. Lessons learned were kept in mind throughout the process, and recommendations were made for improvements to not only the document, but the overall Town sustainability process.

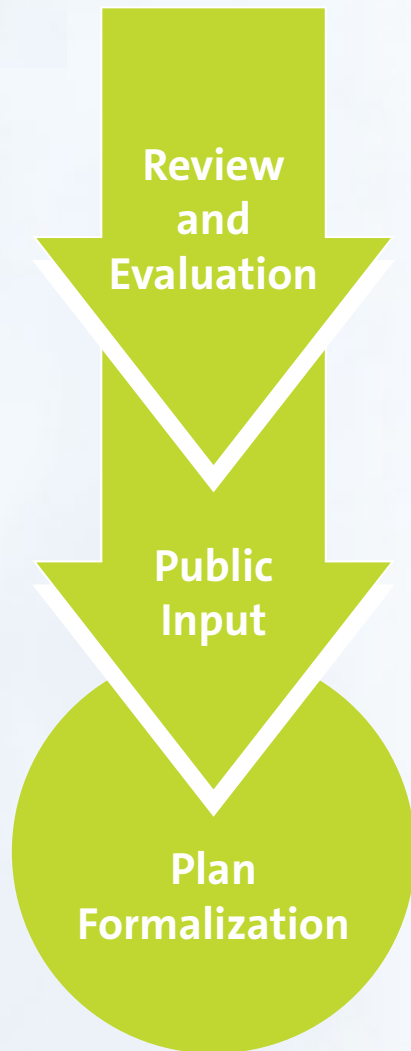
Public Input

Sustainability planning is a community endeavor; one that requires community involvement and input as an important part of the process. As a starting point, this Plan worked to build on the extensive community engagement originally undertaken as part of the 2010 plan. Visioning exercises, an online survey, and a public dotmocracy exercise were a part of the process.

Moving forward, the Town continues to work on building community partnerships, and forging strong relationships with groups and organizations that can help successfully drive actions forward.

Plan Formalization

Sylvan Lake, Our Vision. Our Future is designed as a flexible framework, providing direction for decision makers and Town departments over the next 10 years. This Plan builds on previous sustainability planning with improvements based on what we have learned on our sustainability journey thus far. The new plan format is evidence of that, outlining only the direction to achieve the goals, not the specific steps to take to get there. Following the adoption of this Plan, the Town will create an implementation strategy, to use in tandem with this document, indicating the actions necessary to achieve our targets. Baseline measurements of the proposed indicators will also be established for each target, providing a clear snapshot of where we are now. On a three-year cycle, the indicators for the targets will be evaluated to assess our progress and if the actions are moving us closer to our end goals. This approach allows adaptability based on the current realities of the community, and ensures the Town is continually making forward strides. This process keeps The Plan moving forward – becoming an integrated component of the annual planning cycle for the organization.



Future Challenges and Trends

Future sustainability planning takes a clear understanding of where we are now, and what challenges will impact the community moving forward. Many of these challenges and pressures are already impacting the long-term planning for the community. Building the tools necessary to ensure the community is ready for whatever comes our way, is essential.

- Aging population, demographic shifts, new comers (immigrants);
- Population growth and Town geographical growth (sprawl);
- Affordability;
- Increased expectations for service delivery;
- Climate change;
- Limited staff, time, and resources;
- Changes in the Alberta economic landscape;
- Budget challenges – doing more with less;
- Technological changes;
- Costs associated with sustainability objectives;
- Funding and regulations related to higher levels of government;
- Resistance to change;
- Competition with surrounding municipalities.



VISION

FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The Town of Sylvan Lake is a vibrant lakeside community with a high quality of living that respects the natural environment, provides diverse economic opportunities, nurtures the arts, empowers citizens to engage in decision making processes, and where every individual is able to thrive and achieve their greatest potential.

Guiding Principles

Our Guiding Principles are intended to guide the Town's overall approach to sustainability. They are a reminder that we cannot solve today's problems with the same thinking that got us here. Creating the right environment to enable collaborative and creative thinking is critical to achieving success in the future.

Collaboration and Positive Relationship Building

As an organization the Town must work together, interdepartmentally, to address challenges and implement solutions that lead to sustainable outcomes. Collaboration must also include the community; the Town cannot reach our goals acting alone. Community groups and organizations must forge partnerships that can act as catalysts for real community change, and champion those actions as the community continues forward..

Systems Based Thinking

Understanding that sustainability requires analyzing decisions from multiple perspectives, and considering how one action impacts other areas of sustainability. Good decision making must be based on a holistic approach that considers all elements of sustainability together and systematically.

Innovation

Fostering an environment for creative ideas and new ways of doing things. An "out of the box" mentality should be supported, and progressive and creative thinking encouraged in order to find new ways to tackle complex problems.

Commitment

Commitment to the vision is essential at all levels of the organization in order for The Plan to succeed. Making the community a more sustainable place means making bold decisions, implementing the necessary actions, and striving to meet the targets and goals, as identified in this Plan. A solid commitment to the vision and the expectation that The Plan is used as a driver, as well as a framework to evaluate decision making at all levels of the organization.

Continual improvement and Adaptation

Establish an approach to achieve sustainability through continual improvement. In order to do this, the Town must evaluate the progress of The Plan. Evaluation includes tracking, reporting, and sharing our progress in a transparent and accountable way. This can be achieved by determining relevant indicators and targets that are then monitored for progress, determining where changes need to be made to reach those targets, and continually adapting where necessary. Taking time to reflect on the decisions and their outcomes provides an opportunity to determine where changes may need to be made.

GOAL

» HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT



The Town of Sylvan Lake protects the environmental integrity of the lake and enhances the biodiversity of its natural spaces. Clean air, land, and water are a community priority, and natural landscapes are valued as amenities that enhance the livability of the urban environment.

**WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY | AIR QUALITY | ENERGY EFFICIENCY
BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL AREAS | SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Objective 1: Water Quality and Quantity

Recognizing the importance of water quality and the health of the lake, and taking steps to promote water conservation and enhancement of the natural water systems within our watershed.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, Sylvan Lake's lake water quality continues to meet or exceed current standards for nutrient loading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nutrient percentages for phosphorus and nitrogen• Golf Course Creek monitoring
2. By 2028, the community's water usage will equal or be less than 7.1 m3 per capita per month.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M3 per capita
3. By 2028, the Town will decrease road salt usage by 10%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tons of salt used
4. By 2028, the Town will implement sustainable landscaping practices that reduce maintenance requirements, costs, and water consumption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amount of water used• Maintenance costs• Amount of fertilizer and pesticides used

Objective 2: Biodiversity and Natural Areas

Nature is valued as an important component of the community through the protection of natural spaces and enhancement of our ecosystems.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the Town will increase the urban forest canopy by 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of trees
2. By 2028, the Town will have developed a plan for the protection and enhancement of wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of wetlands
3. By 2028, there will be zero net loss of high rated environmentally significant habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of highly significant areas

Objective 3: Solid Waste Management

Reducing the amount of waste directed towards landfills, diversifying recycling opportunities, and practicing responsible waste management.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the amount of solid waste bound for the landfill will be reduced by 0.013 tons per year, per capita.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tonnes of waste going to landfill
2. By 2028, 65% of residents will actively participate in household recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of residents recycling

Objective 4: Ambient Air Quality

Residents recognize the importance air quality has on their health and well-being. The Town will ensure the degradation of urban air quality is minimized, and negative impacts to human health are considered.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the Town is implementing actions that help improve the overall ambient air quality.	• Ambient air quality

* The Town recognizes that air quality is an important factor in the overall health of our community; however, ambient air quality is measured for the Central Alberta Region, and the actions we implement may not have a direct link to improved air quality measurements within the Town of Sylvan Lake.

Objective 5: Energy Efficiency

Promoting alternative energy solutions, conserving energy and reducing our overall carbon footprint.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the Town is using energy derived from renewable resources	• Energy from renewable resources is being used
2. By 2028, the Town will implement strategies for increasing energy efficiency.	• Number of Joules (kilowatt hours)



GOAL

» COMMUNITY WELL-BEING



The Town of Sylvan Lake is a safe and healthy community where residents feel a sense of belonging. Diversity and creative self-expression are fostered, our heritage and the arts are celebrated, and recreation, culture and social opportunities are integrated into the fabric of our neighbourhoods. Services, programs, and facilities are accessible and affordable, and respond to the social, physical, and mental well-being of every individual.

**ACTIVE LIFESTYLES | SAFE AND HEALTHY | DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY
ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL CELEBRATION | FOOD SECURITY**

Objective 1: Active Lifestyles

Diverse leisure and recreational opportunities exist for all residents, year-round.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the Town will increase recreational programming proportionate to population growth and public satisfaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of rec programs
2. By 2028, recreational programming will include expanded options for those with physical and mental disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of rec programs for individuals with physical/mental disabilities
3. By 2028, recreational participation rates have increased proportionate to population growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation #'s• Membership #• User group stats
4. By 2028, the Town will diversify and expand recreational facilities and amenities, and enhance access to park spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of recreational facilities/amenities• Neighbourhood connectivity/ trails

Objective 2: Safe and Healthy

Residents are safe in the community, and have the supports necessary for physical and mental health.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the community will have a 10% decrease in the number of family violence cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of cases per capita• # of cases being reported
2. By 2028, the Town will support opportunities for youth focused positive relationship building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of opportunities for positive relationship building
3. By 2028, the number of residents that report the community as a safe place to live is 60% or greater.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of residents who feel safe place to live
4. By 2028, emergency service levels are maintained or improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency service levels
5. By 2028, an interagency approach to addressing mental health issues and challenges will be established within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agency collaboration

Objective 3: Diversity and Inclusivity

The Town is a diverse and socially inclusive community that supports and respects all residents.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, 50% of residents report a sense of connection to the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of residents that report

2. By 2028, the number of opportunities for youth leadership and engagement have increased by 10%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of volunteer opportunities
3. By 2028, 60% of the senior population is engaged in community programs/activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of seniors experiencing or reporting isolation • Senior participation #s • Senior centre membership #s
4. By 2028, the Town will be an age-friendly community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of housing options, physical accessibility to places, park design, sidewalks, transportation opt.
5. By 2028, the Town will audit all public spaces for universal accessibility and develop a strategy for increasing community accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit public spaces for accessibility, report # of accessible public spaces

Objective 4: Artistic and Cultural Celebration

Encourage and promote a sense of place by celebrating and promote local values, traditions, and beliefs within our built environment and public services.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the Town has a public art policy and program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public art program, # of installation/pieces
2. By 2028, 50% of residents report that participation in creative activities is an important part of their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of residents reporting
3. By 2028, new neighbourhoods will incorporate unique elements such as streetscapes, public art and signage to identify the community and provide a sense of place for the residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of new neighbourhoods incorporating unique elements
4. By 2028, the Town will increase the number of venues available for performances, gatherings, concerts, and events by 3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of new performance/gathering venues

Objective 5: Food Security

Residents have consistent physical and economic access to nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and preferences.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, local food production is supported by the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of residents who support • # of gardens
2. By 2028, 1 new location has been developed for community gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of gardens

GOAL

» ECONOMIC RESILIENCY



The Town of Sylvan Lake has an attractive business environment that strives to create a unique sense of place through diverse, balanced opportunities where businesses have a mutually supportive relationship with the community. Visitors are celebrated as an integral part of our economy and year-round tourism opportunities enhance our vibrant community.

**DIVERSIFY, ATTRACT AND RETAIN | DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION
YEAR-ROUND TOURISM**

Objective 1: Diversify, Attract and Retain

Sylvan Lake is a great place to do business with a prosperous business environment that supports diverse industry sectors, and attracts new development and economic partnerships.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, there is an increase in the diversity of business sectors in Sylvan Lake.	• # of business sectors
2. By 2028, 85% of businesses in Town report that they are satisfied or very satisfied with doing business in Sylvan Lake.	• % of businesses reporting
3. By 2028, the Town will have a tax split of 85% residential and 15% non-residential.	• Tax split %

Objective 2: Downtown Revitalization

The Town has a vibrant and active downtown that meets the needs of residents and attracts visitors.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the vacancy rate in the downtown is less than 15%.	• Vacancy rate
2. By 2028, the Town has managed the amount of commercial development outside of the downtown area to an amount sustainable to the population and future growth.	• Hectares of commercial land to population
3. By 2028, residential density in the downtown area will increase 15% to support commercial activity and efficiently use infrastructure.	• # of new residential units
4. By 2028, a new anchor tenant will be attracted to downtown.	• # of anchor tenants

Objective 3: Year-Round Tourism

The Town maximizes its ability to host events and offers unique experiences, making the community a vibrant year-round destination.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, year-round occupancy in hotels is at 65% (annual average).	• Year-round hotel occupancy (based on participating hotels)
2. By 2028, year-round tourism expenditures have grown by 30%.	• Year-round tourism expenditures
3. By 2028, the Town is hosting at least 30 festivals and events annually.	• Number of festivals and events

GOAL

» SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE



The Town of Sylvan Lake is a community that empowers its citizens to be active in the decision making process, and values efficient, inclusive, and transparent government. As a corporation, the Town operates efficiently, and with a culture of progression and innovation, striving for continual improvement.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS
EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY | COLLABORATION**

Objective 1: Community Engagement

Communication and engagement responds to the diversity of the population, ensuring transparent and open government.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, 25% of the eligible voters in town participate in the municipal election process.	• # of voters
2. By 2028, Town communication and public engagement will be delivered in a variety of methods that respond to opportunities arising from technology.	• # of methods of communication
3. By 2028, 60% of residents report that resident input is used by the Town in decision-making related to projects, services, and initiatives.	• % of residents reporting
4. By 2028, 70% of residents report that information about various Town decisions is easily accessible.	• % of residents reporting
5. By 2028, the Town will have adopted a community engagement policy and have 100% compliance with policy direction.	• Compliance with policy

Objective 2: Fiscal Responsibility and Effectiveness

The Town has sufficient resources to deliver high quality services to the community.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the Town will ensure total debt does not exceed 70% of the approved borrowing capacity limit.	• Total debt
2. By 2028, the Town will ensure a minimum of \$15 million is in reserves and is maintained at each fiscal year end thereafter.	• Amount in reserves
3. By 2028, the Town will ensure that 100% of annual franchise fee revenue will be allocated to reserves and capital projects.	• % of franchise fee revenue put into reserves
4. By 2028, the Town will budget an annual operating contingency of 1% of the total municipal tax levy.	• Annual operating contingency as a % of the municipal tax levy
5. By 2028, the Town will budget 1% of the annual tax levy for building maintenance reserve.	• % of tax levy being put into building maintenance
6. By 2028, asset management will align with corporate strategic and financial planning processes.	• Asset management being used

Objective 3: Efficient Service Delivery

The Town uses tax dollars to serve the needs of the community, while achieving maximum efficiencies and maintaining public confidence.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, more than 80% of residents are satisfied with the level of Town services provided.	• % of residents satisfied
2. By 2028, more than 70% of residents report receiving fairly good or very good value for their tax dollars.	• % of residents reporting good value

Objective 4: Collaboration

The Town strives to develop partnerships with community organizations, government agencies, and municipal neighbours to advance sustainability initiatives through collective actions.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, a culture of interdepartmental collaboration exists within the Town built on open communication, support for innovation, and the desire for continual improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interdepartmental projects and initiatives• Sustainability working group meetings
2. By 2028, the Town will strengthen relationships with local committees, organizations, and community groups and empower them as champions to help drive community goals forward.	• Collaborative initiatives being advanced by community groups as leaders
3. By 2028, the Town has co-operative and mutually beneficial relationships with other governments in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intermunicipal agreements• Number of regional committees



GOAL

» SMART GROWTH



The Town of Sylvan Lake supports healthy growth through an efficient use of land and existing infrastructure. Increased transportation options, mixed use development, and intensification opportunities allow community growth in a manner that reduces the loss of farmland and green spaces.

DIVERSE TRANSPORTATION | HOUSING OPTIONS
COMPACT DEVELOPMENT | PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective 1: Diverse Transportation

Mobility options are available for residents and visitors to access services and amenities in and surrounding the community, which reduces car dependency.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, subsidized transportation options available to low income residents and individuals with limited mobility will be enhanced.	• Subsidized transportation options available
2. By 2028, bike infrastructure will be expanded to create greater accessibility and availability where it is required.	• # of collector roads with bike infrastructure • # of bike racks provided near entrances and points of interest
3. By 2028, all dead-end sidewalks will have been identified and 50% will be completed and connected.	• Number of “incidents” fixed (%)
4. By 2028, charging stations for electric cars will be installed within the community.	• # of charging stations

Objective 2: Housing Options

A variety of housing options exist for people of all demographics and income levels.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the number of residents spending more than 30% of their household income on housing will decrease by 5-10%.	• # of residents spending more than 30%
2. By 2028, the number of affordable housing units will increase by 25%.	• # of affordable housing units
3. By 2028, housing will be developed that responds to an aging population and new house design allows for aging in place.	• Age friendly house options exist

Objective 3: Compact Development

Using land and infrastructure efficiently and encouraging development that promotes walkability by providing amenities and services within a walkable distance.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, all new neighbourhoods will provide access to amenities within the local area to encourage walkability and decrease car trips.	• # of walkable neighbourhoods
2. By 2028, the Town will identify strategies for residential intensification in existing neighbourhoods.	• # of new infill developments • Strategies developed

Objective 4: Public Infrastructure

Town infrastructure is designed and managed so that residents have access to reliable municipal services that are affordable.

Target	Indicator
1. By 2028, the Town's wastewater quality will exceed Provincial and Federal standards and the Town will be a leader in source-control for municipalities of similar size.	• Standard of waste water quality
2. By 2028, the Town will implement a watershed management protection program to improve water quality and protect water sources.	• Number of independent wells • Implementation of management program
3. By 2028, the Town will ensure adequate water supply and storage capacity is available for consumption and community fire protection.	• Water supply and storage capacity
4. By 2028, the Town will be designing all infrastructure adequately to deal with future climate change impacts.	• New infrastructure design
5. By 2028, the Town will develop and implement strategies for water re-use.	• Strategies developed/implemented



Implementation

This document has been created to guide decision making for a ten-year period after which, a full review of the objectives and goals will occur, and new targets set to continue to move the Town forward in its sustainability pursuit.

Once this Plan is adopted, an Implementation Strategy will be developed to identify the short-term actions necessary to achieve our targets. This strategy will have a three-year timeframe, with actions recommended by administration and approved by Council. Three years provides enough time to plan, budget, and implement the actions, and allows administration to review how successful our actions have been in meeting targets. Three years also coincides with the Town's three-year budget process, and creates a clearly defined sustainability work plan for each Council term. The implementation plan will be developed following the creation of Council's Strategic Plan, ensuring actions are always aligned with Council's strategic direction. This process seamlessly integrates into the longer term financial planning for the organization.

Accountability is maintained throughout the process with annual monitoring of target indicators, and a progress report at the end of the three-year implementation cycle. Progress reports help the community stay informed, and provides an opportunity to recognize plan achievements and successes. Not all of the targets can be accomplished at once. Priorities are set in a strategic way, balancing the most important actions with what is essential in order to progress in a realistic manner. Our planned implementation approach allows us to try actions, monitor results, and adapt where necessary, to ensure we get the right solutions for the challenges at hand.

For our community, this Plan is a commitment to doing things better, so that the Town of Sylvan Lake remains a great place to live, work, and play for everyone.





2018

Municipal Sustainability Plan

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