

CITY OF LEDUC COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP REPORT

March 7th 2009



BACKGROUND

The need to balance economic, social, cultural, recreational, environmental and governance issues in decision-making is critical in creating places where people want to live, work and play. People want their communities to be safe, healthy, friendly and prosperous with high quality amenities such as health services, education, shopping and parks.

City Council has a lead role to play in bringing together citizens, service providers and other key players within the community to set the vision for our City and plan and facilitate the creation and maintenance of a sustainable municipality. Council believes strongly that our citizens, businesses, and other key stakeholders need to be engaged in planning the future of our City.

In March 2007 Council held a highly successful Community Visioning Workshop which engaged a wide range of community stakeholders and citizens at large to help set the future direction for our community. The results from the 2007 Community Conference were used by Council and Administration to develop the long-term Corporate Strategic Plan for the City.

At the conclusion of the Community Conference session in 2007, Council committed to holding another session in two years to report on progress made and to seek additional direction from community stakeholders and citizens for the purposes of refining and updating the vision and strategic plan. That session was organized and held on March 7, 2009.

Community Conference Objectives and Approach

The primary objectives of the 2009 Community Conference were to provide a brief report on progress made on Corporate Strategic Plan priorities since the 2007 Community Visioning Session and secure community input on five key topics to support the development of a long-term vision for our community. These topics were Telford Lake Development, Downtown Revitalization, Safe and Healthy Community, Environmental Friendly Infrastructure and Innovative Community Design, and Economic Diversity.

The Conference was organized to optimize opportunities for public discussion and input. A Conference Workbook, including background information and the key questions for discussion, as distributed to confirmed attendees in advance of the session; and six facilitated discussion groups were used as the primary vehicle for collecting community input. The flip charts summarizing the results from each of the six discussion groups were consolidated and an external consultant/writer organized the public input into key themes under the various discussion topics.

During the Conference members of Council circulated throughout the discussion groups to listen first-hand to what the public had to say. They participated in a panel discussion at the end of the session where they shared some of the important messages heard. At the conclusion of the session the Deputy Mayor and City Manager thanked participants for their participation, reviewed the next steps, and discussed how Council and management would use the data from the conference as a foundation for the development of a longer-term vision for the City.

Organization of the Report

The input from Community Conference participants is organized into five sections within this report:

A. Telford Lake Development: Identifies current features and strengths of Telford Lake; suggests changes and enhancements to the area; and describes key elements of a long-term vision or “preferred future” for Telford Lake.

B. Downtown Re-vitalization: Identifies current features and strengths of the downtown; suggests changes and enhancements to the area; and describes key elements of a long-term vision or “preferred future” for the downtown.

C. Safe and Healthy Community: Identifies current programs and services offered that are viewed as contributing to a safe and healthy community; suggests additional programs and services that should be considered; and describes the key elements of a long-term vision for a safe and healthy community.

D. Environmental Friendly Infrastructure and Innovative Community Design: Identifies current municipal programs and services that contribute to the preservation and protection of the natural environment; suggests key considerations when planning environmentally friendly developments in the future; identifies important environmental management and sustainability priorities for Leduc; lists key community design elements that set Leduc apart or creates a sense of connectivity to the community; and describes the key elements of a long-term vision for innovative and environmentally sustainable communities.

E. Economic Diversity: Identifies potential issues relating to Leduc’s current economic diversification initiatives and makes suggestions to advance the agenda for each of the key initiatives; and suggests additional economic diversification strategies for consideration.

Appendices: The results of the conference evaluation that participants were asked to fill out are included in Appendix 1 of this report.

A. TELFORD LAKE DEVELOPMENT

A.1 Current Strengths

The most commonly identified positive features about the current Telford Lake development included the following:

- **Natural Area Preservation:** The area is not over-developed; natural areas have been preserved; and the creation of a buffer zone around the lake helps to support the presence of birds and other wildlife in the area. “It is such a pretty place to be; you don’t feel like you are in a city.”
- **Low Impact Usage:** The focus on low impact usage; limiting traffic on the lake to non-motorized boats; and restricting any housing developments keeps noise down and contributes to the peaceful ambience of the area.
- **Visitor Destination:** Telford Lake attracts people from outside the community. It is a good place for residents to take visitors.
- **Accessibility:** The location near the heart of the City with good connections to neighbourhoods using the walking trails makes the park and amenities very accessible. The area has multiple access points and is also wheelchair accessible.
- **Well Maintained:** The area is well maintained and supported by the City and the community. People respect and appreciate what they have; e.g., very little vandalism, pride in the resource, etc.
- **Multi-way System:** The multi-way trail system is an important feature enjoyed by residents and visitors. It encourages active recreation and contributes to healthier lifestyles.
- **Amenities:** The following specific amenities were identified as positive components of the Telford Lake development: off-leash dog park; community gardens; the Lion’s Campground; Telford House; Stone Barn Garden and other cultural interests; and rugby and ball fields.

A.2 What Would You Change?

Community Conference participants identified a broad range of ideas and suggested enhancements for the Telford Lake area. These are grouped into four broad categories – policy directions, infrastructure and amenities, programming and operations.

- **Policy Directions:** Several policy-related recommendations were made including:
 - **Master Plan:** Develop a Vision and Master Plan for the long-term development of Telford Lake.
 - **Land Acquisition:** Acquire land around the lake for future walkways; and proactively reserve land required to accommodate future growth and development of the area.
 - **Development Philosophy:** Preserve, protect and expand natural areas for public use. Avoid urbanizing the area and creating urban lake lots. Maintain the current policy of not allowing housing development on the lake.
 - **Roadways:** Do not establish public roadways in the park. Establish smaller pathways/roads that could be used by service vehicles. Provide for parking adjacent to the park and consider using electric golf carts to connect parking areas and service park arteries.

- **Improved Infrastructure and Amenities:** Suggestions to improve the physical infrastructure and amenities within the Telford Lake area included:
 - **Lake Improvements:** Clean up and improve the quality of water circulation and the “health” of the lake. Evaluate dredging and raising the banks of the lake as options to improve water quality, while ensuring negative environmental impacts are mitigated.
 - **Multi-way Expansion:** Extend the multi-way all around the lake.
 - **Swimming Area:** Develop a swimming area with supporting infrastructure.
 - **Bridge:** Construct a walking bridge over the middle of the lake.
 - **Day Use Areas:** Increase the number of day use and public picnic areas around the lake, including the provision of washroom facilities and parking.
 - **Whiskey Hill Area:** Clean up the “Whiskey Hill” area and turn it into park space.

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- **Fishing Area:** Assess potential to stock the lake with fish and create a fishing area.
 - **Shoreline Access:** Provide access to the shoreline behind North Telford homes.
 - **Golf:** Build a Par Three nine-hole golf course on the southeast end of the Lake.
 - **Multi-purpose Building:** Develop a multi-purpose building to support a range of educational and recreational activities/programs.
 - **Community Garden:** Increase the size of the Community Garden.
 - **Forestry Area:** Leave the forestry area on north side intact; plant more trees around the lake.
- **Programming:** Suggestions for enhanced programming included:
- **Environmental Awareness Programs:** Use the Telford Lake venue to support environmental awareness and stewardship - educational programming, student engagement, research, etc.
 - **Winter Use:** Expand the use of the lake to include winter activities; e.g., skating facility to put on skates and warm up, etc.
 - **Package Events:** Package activities/events to attract people to the area as a destination.
 - **Farmers' Market:** Explore potential to add an agricultural component; i.e., a farmers' market to the area.
- **Operations:** Suggestions focused on improving how the park was maintained and operated included the following:
- **Parking:** Deal with parking related issues, including rules for nearby rugby and ball fields; and reduction of the volume of cars parked in residential areas near the lake.
 - **Washrooms:** Improve access to and monitoring of public washroom facilities.
 - **Signage:** Improve signage within the park.
 - **Storage Facilities:** Remove or fix up existing storage facilities to make them more attractive and compatible with the area.

- **Emergency Boxes:** Install emergency boxes at key locations within the park.
 - **Maintenance Building:** Move the maintenance building away from area or make it more attractive and compatible with the park surroundings.
 - **Lighting:** Provide more lighting on some of the trails.
 - **Weeds:** Mitigate the weed infestation in the lake.
 - **Enforcement:** Solve issues of a drinking spot at Whiskey Hill.
 - **Chemical Usage:** Limit or restrict the use of chemicals that may have negative environmental or health impacts.
- **Other Observations and Comments:** Other observations and comments included the following:
- One participant noted that given the rate at which the glaciers are receding and the threat this poses to the water supply for the province, the long-term existence/viability of the lake may be in question. Alternate strategies such as the development of an urban forest may need to be considered in the future if the water levels recede significantly.
 - Some felt that consideration could be given to locating a post secondary institution such as Grande Prairie College, Red Deer College or the Camrose trade school within the Telford Lake area.
 - Some felt that Telford Lake could become Leduc's equivalent to New York City's Central Park.
 - A small number of participants did not support any significant development of Telford Lake, preferring it be preserved as a wilderness area.

A.3 Our Vision – 25 Years and Beyond

Telford Lake...a natural oasis in the heart of the city

Telford Lake will be an oasis in the heart of the City of Leduc – a place where people of all ages experience the beauty and tranquility of nature. Pristine natural areas will be preserved creating a refuge for birds and other wildlife that can be accessed by walking paths, carefully designed to minimize their impact on the natural habitat.

The lake will be surrounded by a variety of mature trees and shrubs that frame the lake's clear and clean waters. Interventions to improve the quality of the water and make the lake safe for swimming, fish and waterfowl will have been subtle and harmonized with the goal of preserving the natural beauty of the area. The absence of motorized watercraft will contribute to quiet enjoyment of the park.

Development within the park will be limited and carefully controlled to ensure all facilities and structures are compatible with and seamlessly integrated within the natural environment. Care will be taken to ensure the skyline is preserved; and commercial and residential development will not be permitted within the park.

A well developed and maintained multi-way system will support walking and bicycle access to the park from the downtown and most Leduc neighborhoods. Parking areas will be carefully planned and vehicular access to the park restricted to service vehicles to minimize noise and air quality degradation. Park and ride electric carts will be used to connect parking areas to a network of primary trails.

The park will have the amenities to support a range of compatible passive and active leisure, recreational and educational activities including: walking and cycling trails, viewing areas for events, a rowing venue, swimming area, day use picnic areas, rugby and baseball fields, an outdoor amphitheatre for festivals and performances, canoeing and kayaking venues, cross-county ski trails, a natural winter skating area, a recreational garden, a mobile event trailer, an educational/multipurpose centre, and adequate public washroom facilities.

The park will be effectively maintained and managed to ensure this important community asset is preserved and developed for the peaceful enjoyment of current and future generations.

B. DOWNTOWN RE-VITALIZATION

B.1 Current Strengths

The most commonly identified positive features of the current downtown were as follows:

- **Old Town Feel:** The organization and layout of the downtown provides an “old town feel.”
- **Unique Shops:** The presence of a number of small, unique retail shops with highly personalized service is a major strength.
- **Attractive:** The downtown is clean, attractive and well maintained by the City and the business owners. The floral displays, light standards, themed benches, Christmas decorations and other decorative elements add to the appeal of the area; and the prompt removal of snow on the sidewalks contributes to safety and appearance.
- **Variety:** There is a good variety of public service agencies and commercial retail business outlets in the downtown. For example, banks are a strong draw; businesses are alive and vital and usually locally owned.
- **Historical Character:** The preservation of historical elements contributes to the “old town” feel; e.g. the landmark grain elevator, older buildings, older growth trees, etc.
- **Walkability:** Low speed limits (30 kilometers) and well maintained sidewalks encourage pedestrian and bike traffic.
- **Downtown Progress Association:** The Downtown Progress Association is actively engaged in trying to make the downtown more attractive and appealing.
- **Parking:** Parking is adequate and free; and the use of angle parking tends to slow down the traffic.
- **Alexandra Park:** Amenities provided in Alexander Park add to the appeal of the downtown area.

B.2 What Would You Change?

Community Conference participants identified a broad range of ideas and suggestions for downtown re-vitalization including:

- **Traffic Management:** More effectively manage traffic movement in and around the downtown. Related ideas and suggestions included:
 - **50th Avenue/50th Street:** Resolve traffic problems at the 50th Street and 50th Avenue corner; businesses are too close to the street resulting in unsafe conditions than do not promote a walkable community.
 - **65th Avenue Overpass:** Develop the 65th Avenue overpass to alleviate traffic problems – do this now before the costs re-escalate. Repair 47th Street to alleviate safety issues and then direct south traffic down 47th Street.
 - **One-way Streets:** Consider moving to one-way streets to help overcome limitations relating to narrow streets.
 - **Ring-road:** Establish a ring-road route to divert traffic and ease congestion on the main street.
 - **Outdoor Plaza:** Establish several blocks as traffic-free areas and develop the streets as a cobblestone plaza area. This could include outside vendors in the summer, a picnic area, a meeting area, public square concept – similar to the Stephen Avenue Mall in Calgary.
 - **Parking:** Establish parking structures with paid parking off the main street and divert traffic and parking off the main street.
 - **Increase Walkability:** Make the downtown more pedestrian and bike friendly. Develop pedestrian bridges; re-plan roads to accommodate senior pedestrians; and more effectively accommodate individuals with mobility problems, including handicap friendly signage and signals, and improved wheelchair access.
- **Residential Development:** Encourage more people to live in the downtown core by creating municipal development policies that support increased densification and mixed-use developments; e.g., medium rise apartments and condos, mixed commercial and residential buildings, etc. This will also help create a critical mass of people in the downtown to help support local businesses.

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- **Master Plan:** Develop a vision and master plan for downtown re-vitalization including a clearly defined geographic boundary. It will be necessary to: ensure alignment and connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods; provide for multi-way connections; provide for future public transit; and facilitate easy travel between the downtown and the LRC, Commons and other key facilities.
 - **Architectural Theme/Guidelines:** Work with planning consultants and the local business community to establish a unifying theme and architectural guidelines for downtown re-vitalization projects. Establish strict development guidelines to ensure coordination and consistency with the theme and preservation of historical buildings and landmarks. Include green areas, linear parks, public art, and people friendly streetscapes.
 - **Business/Service Growth:** Encourage and support the growth of existing businesses and attract new services and commercial retail in targeted areas; e.g., patio developments to increase usable space, more restaurants and coffee shops, boutique shops rather than strip malls, services for seniors and youth, and entertainment options and shops that appeal to young people.
 - **Destination Area:** Attract a critical mass of restaurants, bistros, boutiques and apartments over retail, etc., to the downtown; and market the downtown as an attractive shopping destination similar to the profile enjoyed by Whyte Avenue.
 - **Incentives:** Provide incentives for businesses to locate in the downtown and to upgrade the streetscape and store fronts in accordance with a selected theme; e.g., tax breaks, free advertising, grants, etc.
 - **Vacant Buildings:** Establish policies and bylaws to effectively deal with vacant buildings; e.g., requirements to develop within specified timeframes, taxation policies that discourage leaving the building vacant, etc.
 - **Festivals:** Host world/provincially renowned festivals and events downtown to attract people and business. Decide on “Best Festival” and focus energy on creating a national reputation and profile.
 - **Themes:** There was strong support for using a common development theme for the downtown re-vitalization project. Suggestions for downtown development themes:
 - **Black Gold Theme:** This would be consistent with and speak to growth and opportunity tied to the history of Leduc.
 - **1940s Theme:** Encourage businesses to adopt the look of the 1940s.

B.3 Vision – 25 Years and Beyond

Leduc's downtown...an energizing and unique experience

Leduc's downtown will be an "urban village" developed around a unifying theme, supported by the application of "smart" planning principles and strict architectural guidelines. Green design will be encouraged and supported; building codes and design standards will be enforced; and higher density development, including mixed retail and residential, will optimize the use of municipal services and infrastructure and help to reduce our carbon footprint.

The downtown will be a blend of unique shops, restaurants, character buildings, walkways and green areas that makes visiting, shopping and browsing an adventure for residents and tourists alike. High quality, well designed venues for entertainment and cultural activities will draw people to the downtown and facilitate the hosting of interesting cultural events and festivals. A traffic-free cobblestone public square and outdoor plaza will be a place for people to meet, stroll, picnic and sample the wares of street vendors.

Historical buildings and landmarks will be preserved and effectively integrated into the development theme. Public art will embrace and celebrate the history, culture and unique character of the City of Leduc and its people. Roof gardens, linear parks, designated green spaces, and creative use of potted trees and plants will add visual appeal and linkages to nature.

Vehicular traffic patterns will be carefully managed to ensure the area is walkable and pedestrian friendly. Well designed parking structures within easy walking access to the downtown area will be in place; and the downtown will be linked to Leduc neighborhoods through the City's signature multi-way system and well designed public transportation services.

An active, engaged and thriving downtown business community will work collaboratively with the City and community service agencies to bring the vision and plan for downtown to life. Vibrant and energized, the downtown core will be a magnet for people, entertainment and commerce.

C. SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY

C.1 Current Programs – Most Important to Creating a Safe and Healthy Community

Community Conference participants were asked to identify current municipal services that contribute the most to a safe and healthy community.

Most Frequently Identified

The most commonly identified programs and services included:

- **Protective Services:** Fire, Ambulance Services, Police, Emergency Preparedness, Bylaw Enforcement and Dangerous Goods Services.
- **FCSS:** FCSS does a great job.
- **Recreational Facilities:**
 - The LRC;
 - Multi-ways;
 - Swimming Pool;
 - Library; and
 - Skateboard Park.
- **Recreational Programs/Services:**
 - Boot Camp;
 - Health and Wellness Fairs;
 - Organized Sports;
 - Camps and City Summer Program for Children; and
 - Boys and Girls Club.
- **Seniors Programs:** Including active seniors, Canadian Tire services to seniors for walking, Seniors Outreach programs, etc.
- **Capital Health:** Hospital and health care services provided by Capital Health.

Less Frequently Identified

Less frequently identified programs and services included the following:

- **Green Initiatives:** Blue Bag Program, composting, etc.
- **School Partnerships:** Partnering with school boards to deliver joint or complementary services.
- **Preventative Measures:** Boys and Girls Club, Telford House, Seniors Citizens Club, Leduc Community Drug Action Committee.
- **Service Clubs:** Work with service clubs.
- **Maclab:** Partnerships with Maclab and cultural group.
- **Volunteers:** Volunteer organizations/groups.
- **Drug Prevention:** Initiatives to keep Leduc drug free.
- **Communication:** Strong communication channels such as Community Connections.

C.2 Creating Walkable Communities

- **Encouraging Walkable Communities:** Community Conference participants identified the following as things the City should be doing to encourage the development of “walkable” communities:
 - **Compact Growth:** Make the City more compact – it takes too long to walk from outlying areas and suburbs. Design neighbourhoods using the “urban village” concept.
 - **Connect Schools:** Use schools as a focal point – ensure good connectivity between neighborhoods and schools through the use of well maintained pathways and sidewalks.
 - **Multi-way System:** Continue to expand and develop the multi-way system to encourage walking and biking, including increasing the number of public washrooms, enhancing lighting, and improving snow removal.
 - **Neighborhood Retail:** Provide for commercial retail areas for basic necessities as part of

neighbourhood design.

- **Downtown Densification:** Increase the number of people living in the downtown core.
- **Improve Sidewalks:** Improve the City's sidewalk system: build more sidewalks; ensure developmental controls require that sidewalks connect to buildings; keep walkways clean, safe and well lit; eliminate dead-end sidewalks; remove snow within 48 hours; and increase the connectivity of sidewalks and walking paths.
- **Parking:** Establish parking policies and practices that encourage walking and use of public transportation.
- **Telford Lake:** Continue the development of Telford Lake with a focus on encouraging people to walk and bike.
- **Pedestrian Friendly:** Make the City more pedestrian and bike friendly with better signage, and measures to slow traffic down. "Protect Our Future Leader" signs, more scenic pathways, improved wheelchair accessibility to walkways, wider paths to accommodate bike lanes, and pedestrian and bike overpasses at key locations.
- **Educational Programs:** Educate the public and students about the benefits of walking and healthy lifestyles.
- **Public Transit:** Develop public transit services within the City of Leduc.
- **Smart Development:** Discourage urban sprawl and venue-oriented developments such as Leduc Common that require vehicles to access.
- **Connect Neighborhoods to Work Places:** Provide walking/biking trails to employment destinations such as Nisku.
- **Destinations Accessible by Walking:** Major areas of the City should be accessible by walking. Higher priority areas identified included schools, the Leduc Recreation Centre, the downtown core, workplace locations and Leduc South Common.
- **Barriers to Walking:** Community conference participants identified the following barriers to walking and being active in Leduc:
 - Narrow, marginal sidewalks and streets;
 - Bus stop areas need redevelopment;
 - Dead-end sidewalks;
 - Unsafe congested intersections – 46th Street and 50th Avenue;

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- Public attitude - reliance on cars;
 - Highway 2;
 - Perception that walking is unsafe - parents often drive kids to school rather than letting them walk;
 - Distance of neighborhoods from the workplace;
 - Nasty weather conditions; and
 - North Telford Lake

C.3 Additional Suggestions/Priorities

- **Surveillance and Enforcement:** A range of suggestions designed to improve safety through increasing levels of surveillance and enforcement were tabled including:
 - Improve patrolling and supervision of the skateboard park to reduce incidents of bullying and drug use.
 - Increase the use of video cameras and enhance lighting to increase safety.
 - Strengthen bylaws to address bullying, fighting and littering and ensure they are consistently enforced.
 - Establish and enforce a zero tolerance policy for fighting and drug use in public spaces.
 - Increase the number of Community Peace Officers.
 - Pass a curfew bylaw similar to Sherwood Park's.
 - Ensure park and snow removal bylaws are enforced.
 - Pass a fire-pit bylaw to reduce smoke at neighbors' houses.
- **Traffic Safety Issues:** A number of suggestions designed to improve traffic and pedestrian safety were offered including:
 - Re-configure Highway 2 to discourage big trucks from coming through town.
 - Incorporate ring-road into the transportation master plan to more effectively manage traffic flow.
 - Address traffic and congestion issues at problem locations - 47th Street, 50th Street and 50th Avenue, etc.

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- Create more separation between sidewalks and the street to reduce risk to pedestrians.
 - Improve lighting on pathways and parks.
 - Ensure sidewalks are maintained in a safe condition with snow and debris cleared in a timely manner.
- **Noise Abatement:** Develop berms, tree landscaping and other noise abatement structures to help mitigate challenges posed by Highway 2 and the airport. Consider reducing the speed on Highway 2 as it goes through Leduc to help reduce traffic noise.
- **Smart Compact Growth:** Encourage smart compact growth; stop urban sprawl; preserve prime agricultural land; increase densification to reduce our carbon footprint and more efficiently use high cost municipal infrastructure; and encourage the development of more walkable self contained neighbourhoods. Ensure land use planning principles support smart growth and development agreements are enforced.
- **Active Healthy Lifestyles:** Many of the recommendations urged a continued strong focus on encouraging our residents to live active and healthy lifestyles:
- Capitalize on the LRC and other excellent recreational and cultural amenities to develop programs that keep people fit and healthy.
 - Continue the development of our multi-way system.
 - Issue physical activity and participation challenges to other communities.
 - Work in collaboration with schools, Alberta Health Services and other community groups to educate the public and promote healthy living.
- **Facilities Development:** Keep expanding and enhancing protective services, health care and educational facilities to match the needs of our growing population; e.g., second fire station, schools in major neighborhoods, maintain a viable community hospital, etc.
- **Attainable Housing:** Maintain a strong focus on ensuring access to attainable housing and dealing with related social problems.

- **People Support Services:** A range of suggestions were made relating to continued or new support services to individuals, families, youth and seniors including:
- Enhance FCSS programming and services for individuals and families.
 - Develop and nurture partnerships with church groups to support programs and services for people.
 - Increase programming to keep youth active and engaged.
 - Increase focus on early intervention services and prevention programming.
 - Create a City Ombudsman to deal with citizens' concerns.
 - Establish a local women's shelter and a teen/youth shelter.

C.4 Vision – 25 Years and Beyond

Leduc...a safe, active and healthy community

Leduc will be healthy, secure, inclusive and vibrant. Crime rates will be low, vandalism and illegal drug use will be virtually non-existent; and police, fire and ambulance services will be visible, responsive and effective. People will feel safe in their homes, walking and commuting within the City day or night.

Citizens will have access to the high quality health care services they need when they need them. Enlightened environmental management policies and selectivity in the types of industry the City seeks to attract will assure good air and water quality. High quality, accessible recreational, educational and cultural opportunities will promote active and healthy lifestyles.

Our transportation infrastructure will be planned and designed within the broader capital region context to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Eco-friendly and accessible, the system will include well-developed public transportation options and support the development of “walkable” communities. The land surrounding the airport will have been carefully managed to mitigate potential negative impacts on the quality of life for residents; and traffic congestion and safety issues associated with Highway 2 will have been resolved.

A broad range of effective, accessible services for people will enhance the quality of community life for individuals and families across all age groups. Active community agencies and volunteer groups will augment the excellent programs provided by the municipality and other levels of government. Leduc will be a socially conscious community where people care about each other.

Citizens will take pride and ownership in their community. Individuals, families, schools, church organizations and the business community will be engaged and committed to building a great community where people want to live, work and play.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE AND INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY DESIGN

D.1 Current Priority – Environmental Stewardship Programs

Community conference participants identified the following municipal programs and services currently provided in the City of Leduc as most important to the preservation and protection of the natural environment.

Most Frequently Identified:

The most frequently identified environmental programs included:

- Blue Bag/cardboard recycling program;
- Composting service/area;
- Tree shredding, including Christmas tree recycling;
- Toxic round-up – needs expanding;
- Urban reforestation – planted 700 trees in one area already but do it again;
- Communities In Bloom;
- City tree preservation and replacement; school seedling planting program, etc.;
- Regional landfill/recycling programs
- LEAB efforts;
- Use of non-toxic pesticides – should include an assessment of risks of spraying vs. not spraying; and
- Environmentally friendly buildings – efforts to ensure we develop energy efficient and environmentally friendly buildings needs to be an ongoing priority.

Less Frequently Identified

Less frequently identified environmental programs included:

- Bottle depot;
- Naturalized areas in Leduc;
- Watering restrictions – summer program;
- Investigate use of hybrid vehicles;
- Road work – asphalt and gravel gets crushed and recycled;
- Telford Lake – mitigate weed infestation
- Wildlife area behind recreation area protected; and
- Community gardens.

D.2 Planning Environmentally Friendly Future Developments

Community Conference participants offered a range of suggestions for the City to consider when planning environmentally friendly future developments. These have been grouped into several general categories as follows:

- **Compact Growth:** Many suggestions focused upon higher density more compact growth as a vehicle to optimize the use of municipal infrastructure and reduce the impact on the environment. Specific examples included:
 - Ensure higher density development in east end.
 - Reduce urban sprawl.
 - Plan self-contained walkable communities.
 - Develop the urban village concept.
 - Increase density in the downtown.
 - Include increased densification as a priority when re-vitalizing older neighbourhoods.
- **Preserve Green Space and Natural Areas:** Many participants emphasized the importance of preserving green space and natural areas. Specific suggestions included:
 - Preserve and protect the natural appeal of Telford and Saunders Lakes as the ecological heart of the City.
 - Ensure green space is provided for in all of our neighbourhoods and manicured areas are adequately maintained.
 - Develop tree-lined boulevards and tree canopies.
 - Be more thoughtful in our planning to ensure protection of wetlands and natural area.
 - Encourage homeowners to maintain green space and healthy trees in their yards.
 - Develop and protect our urban forests.
- **Green Building Design:** A range of suggestions were offered designed to make our buildings more energy efficient including:

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- Use LEED technology to improve building design.
 - Consider sod roofs with garden areas to save energy and reduce the carbon footprint.
 - Apply solar and geothermal heating and cooling technology in the design of city facilities and neighbourhoods. Pilot the development of a new carbon neutral community.
 - More carefully control the development of residential structures and yards.
- **Eco-friendly Transportation System:** Many session participants emphasized the need to reduce reliance on cars by developing energy efficient local and regional public transportation options. Specific suggestions included:
- Increase access to an efficient and eco-friendly public transit system.
 - Provide a public transit service between Leduc and Edmonton.
 - Use an integrated light rail system to move people and goods within the region.
 - Design communities and the transportation networks to encourage active transportation - walking and bike trails.
 - Ensure public and assisted transportation for seniors/disabled remains a high priority.
- **Water Management:** The management of water resources was viewed by many as a significant priority. Specific suggestions included:
- Continue to use storm water retention ponds as a vehicle to conserve/preserve water resources.
 - Continue to use water consumption reduction strategies such as controlled lawn watering and implement new approaches such as low flush toilets.
 - Use natural filtration systems in ponds and lakes.
- **Development Policies and Practices:** A range of policy related suggestions and recommendations were made that were viewed as contributing to environmentally friendly development including:
- Continue the current policy of supporting mixed housing development in residential neighborhoods.

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- Make a commitment as a municipality to be carbon neutral by a fixed date.
 - Place high priority on protecting and preserving natural areas and green spaces.
 - Ensure residential and industrial developments are appropriately separated to mitigate health risks.
 - Facilitate/encourage the use of new green technology in residential developments and City buildings.
 - Require developers to build walkways, plant trees and establish green belts early in the development process.
 - Protect good agricultural land to the west and encourage development to the south on poor agriculture land – east side of Highway 2/2A.
 - Consider shutting street lights off at certain times to preserve energy.
- **Environmental Education:** Several participants identified environmental education as a priority. Specific suggestions included:
- Provide more public education on environmental options, energy conservation, low flush toilets, etc.
 - Increase public awareness regarding long-term environmental issues such as air quality, water conservation and sustainable neighbourhood design.
 - Increase public awareness of incentives for homeowners to make their homes more energy efficient and eco-friendly – federal/provincial government programs.
 - Consider hiring a City environmental specialist dedicated to increasing environmental awareness and facilitating the planning and implementation of environmental sustainability programs.
 - Model environmental stewardship in City operations – facility design and maintenance, use of non-toxic pest control options and herbicides, energy efficient vehicles, etc.
 - Encourage home composting, including the opportunity to buy more compost from the City.

D.3 Most Important Environmental Management and Sustainability Priorities

Session participants were asked to identify the most important environmental management and sustainability priorities for Leduc. The most frequently identified priorities were:

- **Transportation Infrastructure:** Enhance our regional and local transportation infrastructure with a view to reducing the negative impacts on our environment:
 - Improve roadway design to reduce traffic congestion and bottleneck.
 - Develop commuter transportation options to reduce vehicle traffic and emissions.
 - Develop sustainable public transit/transportation options.
- **Public Awareness:** Increase public awareness regarding environmental management and sustainability issues:
 - Develop and deliver focused public education programs in key areas; e.g., water conservation, energy conservation, walkable communities, reduced reliance on cars, etc.
 - Facilitate/encourage public discussion of environmental sustainability issues, challenges and opportunities.
 - Partner with the public school system and adult educational institutions to help deliver and reinforce key messages.
 - Develop and complete an environmental conservation report card with annual priorities and results reporting.
- **Water Conservation:** Develop and implement a comprehensive water conservation program – public education, incentives to adopt best practices, rebates for low flow toilet conversions, storm water management systems, etc.
- **Energy Conservation:** Develop and implement a comprehensive energy conservation program – encourage use of alternate energy sources such as solar panels and micro-generation; offer public education programs to help reduce energy consumption; etc.

- **Climate Change Adaptation:** Plan for and significantly reduce the emissions carbon footprint of the City – smart growth principles and strategies including “green building design”.

- **Other Priorities:** Other less frequently noted priorities included:
 - Provide for regular community clean up and City beautification initiatives.
 - Design roadways to accommodate future public transit options.
 - Ensure airport development plans are environmentally sustainable.
 - Restrict development on prime agricultural land.
 - Expand park land and parks to accommodate future growth.
 - Implement solid waste reduction and management strategies, including construction and industrial waste management.

D.4 Current Innovative and Leading Edge Community

Design Elements

Session participants were asked to identify key community design elements the City of Leduc offered that set it apart or made them feel connected to their community. These are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Most Appreciated Distinctive Community Features	
➤ Multi-way System	➤ Nisku Industrial Park
➤ Telford Lake	➤ New lawyers building
➤ Lede Park	➤ White House North Telford – Heritage House
➤ Eco Chill (LRC)	➤ Close proximity to airport
➤ Performing Arts Centre	➤ Safe friendly community
➤ Leduc Recreation Centre	➤ Small town feel
➤ Stone Barn Garden	➤ Recreation facilities/hosting events
➤ Leduc Diamonds	➤ Supportive business community
➤ Grain Elevator	➤ Leading edge programs and services
➤ Dr. Woods Museum	➤ Innovative and engaged people
➤ Plane at the Legion	➤ Growth potential
➤ Reservoir	➤ Good air quality
➤ Community Gardens	➤ Active Arts community
➤ City Hall	➤ Fringe Festival
➤ Windrose entrance	➤ Music Festival
➤ Fred Johns Park	➤ Naming parks after important people
➤ Boys & Girls Club – Heritage House	➤ GWA Program
➤ Lions Club Campground	➤ Rooftop designs/gardens
➤ Skateboard Park	

D.5 Other Innovative Community Design Features

Community conference participants were asked to identify other leading edge community design features that they had seen in other communities that could be considered for Leduc. These are reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Other Innovative Community Design Features	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Thematic designs based upon a historical theme; e.g., Old Scottsdale, Old Montreal, Old Town in Quebec City ➤ Retention and enhancement of the older architecture and buildings ➤ Iqaluit - sidewalks marked, cultural elements, a community square, stone carvings, public art ➤ Okotoks - sustainable communities housing development ➤ Kingston, Ontario - historic buildings and storefronts ➤ Canmore - theme-based development Pedestrian overpasses on busy roadways ➤ Las Vegas - water conservation focus ➤ Banff - architectural controls on storefronts ➤ Edmonton - elms on boulevards (97th Street) ➤ Cochrane - pioneer theme downtown ➤ Calgary - Stephen's Avenue Mall ➤ Tribute Community - Terwillegar Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Calgary - McKenzie Town ➤ Beaumont - French Village Theme ➤ High River - park out of Storm Water Management Facility (SWMF) draining system ➤ St. Albert - Children/Family Festival ➤ Edmonton - Fringe Festival ➤ Themed neighborhoods ➤ Town Square, community gathering places ➤ Boardwalk around Telford Lake - not to take away from natural environment ➤ Identify Leduc as oil capital ➤ 75 ft. Oil Derrick ➤ Outdoor bazaars - parking lot markets ➤ Shakespeare in the Park ➤ A town gazebo ➤ Cities with vibrant downtown - tourism shopping, baking restaurants (may need core number) ➤ A place for teens/youth to hang out ➤ Business incubation centre

D.6 Vision – 25 Years and Beyond

Leduc will be a series of interconnected urban villages, each with its distinct character and unique appeal. The application of smart neighbourhood design principles will create walkable, self-contained communities with easy access to a range of amenities and services. Increased densification and mixed-use developments will help to limit urban sprawl and facilitate more efficient and effective use of municipal infrastructure.

Innovative and leading edge building design, architectural controls and consistently enforced development policies will ensure neighbourhoods have high quality interesting buildings, people friendly streetscapes and abundant park and green spaces. A broad range of accessible services and amenities will enhance the quality of community life for individuals and families across all age groups and contribute to a strong “sense of place” for our residents.

Leading edge environmental management practices will reduce energy consumption, support responsible management of water resources, and protect and preserve green areas and natural habitats. Alternate energy sources such as solar panels and micro-generation will be developed and other options to reduce our “carbon footprint” implemented. The ultimate goal will be to become a “carbon emissions neutral” community.

An environmentally friendly local and regionally integrated transportation system will ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Roadway design will have been improved to reduce traffic congestion, eliminate bottlenecks and reduce accidents. Commuter transportation options will move people quickly and easily from their homes to workplaces and economic hubs across the Capital region.

A well-developed public transit system will connect neighbourhoods to the downtown, schools, the LRC and other amenities within the City. Well designed and maintained walking and biking paths will encourage people to live more active lifestyles by walking or biking rather than driving.

The City of Leduc will be a leader in the protection and preservation of our natural environment. There will be high levels of awareness among the public, the business community and political leadership of environmental issues, and a strong commitment to developing policies, programs and practices that ensure long-term environmental sustainability.

E. ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

E.1 Advancing the City Economic Diversification Strategy

The City is currently focused on the following economic diversification initiatives:

- **Port Alberta:** Ensure the City has the transportation and other economic development infrastructure in place to capitalize on the development of the Edmonton Regional Airport as a duty-free port.
- **Airport Planning - Aerotropolis Concept:** Develop in partnership with regional stakeholders, an approach and mechanisms to ensure responsible planning and development around the airport and adjoining lands.
- **Agricultural Food and Eco Industrial Park Development:** Work with Alberta Food Research Centre and the food processing industry to develop an agricultural food park.
- **Downtown Development:** Update and implement the Downtown Revitalization Plan.
- **Residential Mix:** Ensure development policies, plans and zoning bylaws are in place to achieve a good balance of residential development, including estate-sized lots as well as the traditional mix of single and multi-family housing.
- **Commercial and Industrial Land:** Ensure development policies, plans and zoning bylaws are in place to achieve an adequate supply of developed commercial and industrial land to support growth objectives.
- **Major Events/Sports and Agricultural Tourism:** Profile the Leduc Recreation Centre to attract major events and tournaments.

E.2 Suggestions to Advance Current Economic Diversification Initiatives

Community Conference participants were asked to review the City's current economic diversification initiatives and suggest ideas for advancing these.

➤ **Port Alberta:** Suggestions related to the Port Alberta Strategy included:

- Ensure the plan is aligned with a comprehensive, well designed regional and local transportation infrastructure master plan.
- Ensure the Port Alberta strategy is developed, taking into account the City's vision and strategic priorities. Since Port Alberta is not controlled directly by the City we must be diligent to ensure the development does not negatively impact the quality of life for Leduc residents.
- Create opportunities to engage the public at key points. We need to be careful that decisions are made taking into account the long-term impacts on our community. We do not want to be steamrolled by the Edmonton Airport Authority into decisions that have long-term negative impacts.
- Port Alberta represents a great potential economic benefit to the City, but it needs to proceed in a carefully planned and thoughtful manner. Public education and awareness is critical - we need to understand what is involved and the potential impacts, both positive and negative, on the City and surrounding area.
- Complete external research with other communities that have similar developments in order to capitalize on lessons learned and avoid mistakes.
- Work collaboratively with the County and surrounding municipalities to ensure effective and coordinated planning and development.

➤ **Airport Planning - Aerotropolis Concept:** Suggestions related to the Aerotropolis concept included:

- Ensure the plan is aligned with a comprehensive, well designed regional and local transportation infrastructure master plan.

- Engage the public quickly and throughout the planning process. There are significant potential impacts on the quality of life in Leduc that need to be factored into the planning process. Public awareness, transparency and information sharing is critical.
 - Responsible planning is a must – the health and safety of citizens **must be** the primary concern.
 - Control development on the lands surrounding the airport to ensure uses are compatible with adjoining residential developments; e.g., noise control, dangerous goods risk mitigation, air quality, traffic management, etc.
 - Work collaboratively with the County and surrounding municipalities to ensure effective and coordinated planning and development.
 - Consider developing light industrial areas to support Port Alberta, including services such as a parts depot and a servicing depot.
- **Agricultural Food and Eco Industrial Park Development:** Suggestions related to the Agricultural Food and Eco Industrial Park initiative included:
- Expand the value chain to include raw materials, food processing and distribution, and food research.
 - Capitalize on the Edmonton marketplace as a potential buyer of food products.
 - Establish linkages to smaller businesses as part of the supply, production and distribution chain.
 - Leverage food industry specialty technology effectively to support the agricultural food initiative.
 - Establish linkages to urban agricultural options and greenhouse and market garden businesses.
- **Downtown Development:** Suggestions related to the downtown development initiative included:
- Review municipal development policies to ensure the downtown core is an attractive location for businesses to locate or expand their operations.

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- Encourage the development of more coffee shops and food service amenities in the downtown core; e.g., a quaint book store and coffee shop combination, a health food store that serves natural drinks and smoothies, etc.
 - Encourage the development of attractions/amenities for youth; e.g., a band shell for outdoor concerts, billiards and video games facility (Wii games, etc.), a band shell for outdoor concerts and folk festivals, etc.
 - Establish architectural controls that encourage diverse interesting store fronts with an established theme.
 - Find a productive use for the vacant building on Main Street.
 - Ensure buy-in from residents and the business community in the development and implementation of the downtown revitalization plan.
 - Engage planning experts and architects that worked in similar communities to help develop plans for downtown.

Note: See more detailed suggestions in the Downtown Vision section.

➤ **Residential Mix:** Suggestions related to residential housing mix included:

- Ensure an adequate supply of attainable housing, including multi-family developments and cooperative housing complexes.
- Ensure an adequate supply of multi-family and higher density residential development is integrated into our neighbourhoods.
- Review building codes and housing bylaws to ensure safety and adequately manage fire risks; e.g., distances between houses, exterior building materials, etc.
- Increase access to a range of seniors housing and supportive living options.
- Maintain a reasonable balance between residential and commercial development.

Note: See other suggestions in the Safe and Healthy Communities section of this report.

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- **Commercial and Industrial Land:** Suggestions related to commercial and industrial land mix included:
- Ensure an adequate supply of serviced commercial and industrial land to accommodate business and economic growth.
 - Increase retail outlets and options in neighbourhoods to make them more walkable and self-contained.
 - Focus marketing/economic development efforts on attracting green or knowledge-based industries that have minimal negative impacts on the environment and the quality of life in our community.
 - Attempt to achieve a reasonable balance between the residential and commercial/industrial tax base.
 - Keep the public educated and informed about developments through a range of communication vehicles; e.g., newspapers, open houses, websites, state of the union presentations, town hall meetings and sessions like today.
 - Encourage the business and amenity development to attract creative people to the community.
- **Major Events/Sports and Agricultural Tourism:** Suggestions and comments related to major events, sports and agricultural tourism included:
- There is huge potential to further develop the tourism industry – we are just scratching the surface of tourism.
 - Use our natural amenities to expand eco-tourism opportunities.
 - Further develop Telford Lake as a tourist destination for regattas, rowing events, etc.
 - Develop Saunders Lake; e.g., bobsled opportunities/concert area.
 - Use the LRC and enhanced sports and recreational amenities to host ball and hockey tournaments and other sporting events.
 - Partner with local hotel operators to host major educational meetings and conferences.

E.3 Additional Economic Diversification Strategies

In addition to suggestions to advance existing economic diversification initiatives, Community Conference participants identified a range of additional economic diversification strategies including:

- **Government Offices:** Encourage developers to build high quality, purpose built office and warehouse space for lease to government departments and agencies in designated business parks. Encourage the Province to locate a department(s) or a government agency in Leduc.
- **Education:** Continue efforts to attract a post-secondary educational institution to the City of Leduc. The college/institution could provide a range of educational programs for people across the age continuum, attract students to the community and provide high quality jobs in the community. It could also include an employee educational training centre to support local businesses – oil industry, agri-business, construction, food processing, etc.
- **Stimulus Funds:** Assess federal and provincial economic stimulus funds to jump start development of required municipal infrastructure.
- **Green Design:** Invest in green components for all new facilities and encourage upgrading of older facilities to reduce carbon emissions.
- **Regional Cooperation:** Continue efforts to work collaboratively with regional partners and the provincial and federal governments to develop regional transportation infrastructure.
- **65th Avenue Overpass:** Lobby government to construct the 65th Avenue overpass and redesign traffic flow patterns to reduce congestion and traffic, noise and improve safety.
- **Engage Leaders:** Engage community leaders, post secondary educational institutions, and other expert resources to develop creative and innovative approaches to encouraging sustainable and smart economic growth.
- **Workforce Development:** Ensure the City of Leduc attracts and maintains a motivated, skilled and well educated workforce that industry/business needs to develop and prosper.
- **Economic Hub:** Profile and market the City of Leduc as an economic hub with excellent amenities, reasonable housing costs, strategic location near airports and major transportation networks and access to major markets. Promote Leduc nationally and internationally as a great place to do business and a healthy and attractive place for people to live and raise their families.

- **Leduc County/City Amalgamation:** Explore potential amalgamation with the County to create productive service delivery synergies and increase attractiveness of the area as a potential location for new businesses.
- **Clean Industries:** Maintain a strong focus on attracting clean, green businesses and industries to Leduc. Create incentives for green technologies/industries.
- **Research Centre for Green Technology:** Establish Leduc as a research and innovation hub for green design and technology. This could include initiatives such as developing a waste diversion and recycling plant industry and piloting the development of a carbon neutral community.