



# **TOWN OF IRRICANA**

# **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

## **Process & Summary Report**

**Nathan Cross**

Community Development Officer Alberta  
Culture & Tourism

On February 24, 2018, the Town of Irricana took part in a strategic planning workshop to establish the foundation for their 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. The session was facilitated by Nathan Cross, Community Development Officer, Alberta Culture and Tourism. This report captures an overview of the process as well as a summary of the results from the various discussions.

## Agenda Overview and Goals for the Day

To set the context for the session the facilitator reviewed the agenda and shared that it was developed based on information gathered during a pre-session discussion with the organization's CAO and Finance Officer, and the analysis of the pre-session surveys.



## Participant hopes for day

At the outset of the session, participants expressed what they hope to see as a result of the strategic planning process, as follows:

- Learn to talk more as a team, show more understanding
- Establish a concrete plan...ensure we follow it
- Encourage more teamwork – plans to go forward
- Harness our passionate people and set realistic timelines
- Establish a timeline and implement
- Ensure ongoing fiscal accountability

## Strategic Planning Overview

The facilitator provided an overview of strategic planning including the importance and benefits of strategic planning and the planning process.

## Connecting the Dots – Year in Review

Participants shared some of the major accomplishments (strengths) of the last 2-3 years. Some of the things they were proud of/encouraged by include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of the outdoor hockey rink two months ago</li> <li>• Cenotaph – completed last July</li> <li>• Splash park – summer 2018</li> <li>• New cohesive Council</li> <li>• SW development (and NE development)</li> <li>• Library – new building – mainstreet</li> <li>• Pharmacy, violets, new businesses</li> <li>• A number of grants/available funding in place</li> <li>• Trailnet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased community services – breathing new ‘life’ into community events</li> <li>• Volunteerism has increased</li> <li>• Streamline internal processes</li> <li>• Dentist in town – a new office building going up</li> <li>• Doctor</li> <li>• Finances have been cleaned up</li> <li>• Increase in campground use</li> <li>• Advertising and signage...more to come</li> </ul>
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Participants then shared some of the challenges (weaknesses) experienced over the last couple years:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant CAO turnover – 7 different CAOs over last 3 years</li> <li>• Lack of stability – always starting fresh due to turnover</li> <li>• Promotion – could do better at getting our name out</li> <li>• Town reputation</li> <li>• Maintain cleanliness look of town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No landfill</li> <li>• Taxes – too high</li> <li>• Tension between public and town (social media may be increasing these issues/real need for transparency)</li> <li>• Bylaws (many need updating)</li> <li>• Support each other – need to show ongoing loyalty and ensure we all have the right information before acting</li> </ul>
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Participants then discussed some overarching emerging issues, and some points to keep in mind throughout the planning process:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth and development – how best do we support this?</li> <li>• Proactively attract and sustain businesses – where do they go?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding the right balance – taxes and amenities (financial accountability)</li> <li>• Need to be realistic and keep things achievable</li> </ul>
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## Vision for the Future

Participants worked in two groups to systematically assess two possible futures for the Town of Irricana. While hypothetical, these two futures were based on some of the feedback received from the pre-session survey. (\* denotes agreement with point made)

	<b>Future A:</b> Irricana does not actively pursue growth. Change is not necessary to ensure a good quality of life. Maintain our current way of life, appreciated by those who are already here.	<b>Future B:</b> Irricana strives to grow and thrive, attracting businesses, families, professionals and associated amenities. Seeks ongoing modernization and expansion.
What's good?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower taxes (possibly? Or higher...)</li> <li>• Closer tight knit community*</li> <li>• Lower crime*</li> <li>• Look out for eachother*</li> <li>• No traffic jams*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brings taxes down*</li> <li>• Creates jobs/shop local*</li> <li>• Puts Irricana on the map*</li> <li>• More residents = a school*</li> <li>• Modernizing services keeps us up to date with trends = assists with attracting families and businesses*</li> <li>• Stops cycle of bad blood (families take ownership/entitlement) *</li> <li>• Seniors (more amenities)</li> <li>• Curb appeal</li> </ul>
What's not so good?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors leaving</li> <li>• Stagnancy</li> <li>• Lack of convenience/more travel*</li> <li>• No new families</li> <li>• Not as many jobs or businesses*</li> <li>• If we don't grow will not have police presence (added)</li> <li>• Taxes will increase (added)</li> <li>• Hillbilllys (outdated way of thinking)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If we grow too fast, can't keep up with services</li> <li>• Could lose sight of community</li> <li>• Increased crime*</li> <li>• Infrastructure needs</li> <li>• Minimal land/space available*</li> </ul>
What can this scenario tell us about our desired future state? (insights)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eventually the town will just die out*</li> <li>• Turn into hamlet and go backwards</li> <li>• Aging population will have no access to health care services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We should modernize but maintain our history*</li> <li>• Increase population but maintain small town feel and don't increase cost of living</li> <li>• With more population, we need more opportunities such as recreation</li> </ul>

## Vision Statement

Based on the previous group discussion, participants collaboratively identified the vision statement for the Town of Irricana. The group identified three possible vision statements and melded them to the final version:

**“Irricana: A refreshing and thriving community that presents an escape from the city, filled with potential for families and businesses alike to enjoy the safe and quiet country surrounding, overlooked by Alberta’s big blue sky.”**

## Environmental Scan, Mission Statement, Values

Building on the earlier discussion regarding the town’s strengths and weaknesses, participants assessed the Town of Irricana’s current opportunities and threats (SWOT).

Opportunities (external)	Threats (external)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bring in ‘big ticket’ item/facility</li><li>• Seniors housing</li><li>• Beiseker has some amenities we do not – can leverage</li><li>• Need a ‘hook’ – a big ‘something’ that makes us unique</li><li>• Drive-in theatre?</li><li>• 2500-3000 population for a school</li><li>• Antique shops, similar to Nanton</li><li>• Mainstreet revitalization</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beiseker – businesses go there instead?</li><li>• Might attract wrong businesses (but can worry about this later)</li><li>• Space limitations in and around town</li><li>• General increase in rural crime across province</li><li>• Public perception – need to manage expectations, public has ‘bullied’ town in past, sense of entitlement</li></ul>

## Mission Statement:

Participants were asked to review the town’s existing mission statement. It was determined that the existing mission no longer meets the needs or direction of the organization and was revised, as follows:

**“The Town of Irricana takes great pride in providing a variety of municipal and community services. We maintain accountability to our residents, businesses and visitors while continuing to be a clean, safe and family-friendly environment”.**

## Values:

Participants reviewed the organization’s existing values, and decided they were still meaningful and applied to the organization. One small change was noted and incorporated below:

**Sustainability:** We strive to provide sustainable municipal services ensuring social, environmental, cultural and economic integrity for present and future generations.

**Leadership:** We recognize the importance of leadership in achieving common goals for the benefit of our community.

**Respect:** We uphold the principles of fairness, equity and inclusiveness.

**Communication:** We will be open, transparent and accountable.

**Social Well-being:** We promote initiatives that foster the health, safety, and security of our community.

**Community Pride:** We celebrate our history, multiculturalism, and quality of life.

**Volunteerism:** We recognize the important contribution that volunteers make to our community.

**Partnerships:** We build strong collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders.

## Priority Goals

The purpose of this exercise was to have the participants identify broad priority goals they want their organization to focus on for the next three years. The participants identified the top 10 initiatives that they should focus on prior to the session. These 10 initiatives were written on cards, and sorted according to broad similar outcomes. The groups were then named to indicate the broad priority goal.



The results of the exercise are captured in the following table. Participants were each provided with one red, one green and one blue dot. Each placed their respective dots on the cards they felt were:

- Red: Must do in next 12 months ●
- Green: Should do in next 3 years ●
- Blue: Not necessarily a priority ●

Initiatives to Complete	Named Priority Goal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willie Loader <span style="color: red;">●●●</span></li> <li>• Foundation at Plant <span style="color: blue;">●</span></li> <li>• Crosswalks <span style="color: blue;">●●●●●●</span></li> <li>• <span style="color: blue;">●</span></li> <li>• Radio Frequency <span style="color: green;">●</span></li> </ul>	<p><b>Efficient Municipal Infrastructure Support and Maintenance</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer Site <span style="color: red;">●●●</span> <span style="color: green;">●●</span></li> <li>• Re-branding/wayfinding <span style="color: blue;">●●</span></li> <li>• Rec Centre/Community Hall <span style="color: green;">●●●●</span></li> </ul>	<p><b>Create Excitement and Convenience</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NE Development <span style="color: red;">●●●●</span></li> <li>• SW Development <span style="color: green;">●●</span></li> <li>• Seniors Housing <span style="color: green;">●●</span> <span style="color: blue;">●</span></li> </ul>	<p><b>Develop Land and Spaces to Create Homes, Retail Opportunities and Infrastructure Chances for the Town to Grow</b></p>

## Action Planning

Participants then worked in groups to develop action plans for their three priority goal areas (see attached).

## Next Steps

1. The facilitator will:
  - a. Complete the process and result summary report within 10 business days.
2. The Town of Irricana will:
  - a. Draft a letter to residents
  - b. Include a progress report on website for top 5 priorities.