



# County of Lethbridge

## *Integrated Community Sustainability Plan*

October 2009

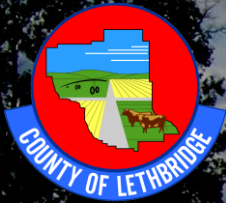
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*OLDMAN RIVER REGIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION*



# County of Lethbridge

## Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

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## Executive Summary



The County of Lethbridge Integrated Sustainability Plan is a visioning document intended to provide a blueprint for sustainability for the County and its residents.

The County of Lethbridge Integrated Sustainability Plan contains three critical elements for each of the sustainability pillars: governance, economic, environmental, social and cultural. First, a vision is outlined for each sustainability pillar. Next, the Plan grounds itself in reality by reflecting on where the County presently stands for each pillar. Third, the Plan lists a number of practical steps that the County and its residents can undertake to move from its present reality to its vision. All together the plan is a pragmatic, yet visionary approach to sustainability in the County of Lethbridge.

The plan was completed, in part, as a requirement for funding from the federal New Deal for Cities and Communities grant program. This grant funding will be instrumental in providing capital infrastructure in the County of Lethbridge that will result in cleaner air, cleaner water and fewer greenhouse gas emissions.





## Message from the Reeve



The County of Lethbridge is a vibrant, thriving municipality in the heart of southern Alberta. Our past success is due in large part to our ability to plan for the future and anticipate change. Today, we face new pressures and more rapid change than ever before. Economies, technologies, cultures and our environment are all changing at unprecedented rates. As such, the County of Lethbridge is in a similar position to many municipalities in that we must find new and innovative ways to manage these changes as best we can. These changes demand planning that better integrates the economic, governmental, environmental, social and cultural aspects of our lives. We cannot prosper in one area without considering how other areas of our society, community and environment are affected in the long term. The creation of an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan is a significant step towards integrated decision making and planning for the County of Lethbridge. The Plan will be a living, breathing document, updated as times change and when the County completes action steps in the Plan.

The Sustainability Plan sets out a blueprint where the County would like to be in the upcoming years and decades, as well as practical steps to ensure the County can reach its sustainability visions. It is a start that the County of Lethbridge and its ratepayers can build on in the future.

I believe that the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan is an important step to ensure that, despite changing times, the County of Lethbridge continues to be a lively, flourishing and healthy municipality for many years to come.

*Lorne Hickey, Reeve*



## Introduction

The below statements were taken from the County of Lethbridge Strategic Plan 2009. They reflect the vision, mission, purpose and values of the County of Lethbridge and its residents and were used to help guide this plan.

### ***Vision Statement***

The County of Lethbridge is an innovative and prosperous community offering a healthy quality of life.

### ***Mission Statement***

The County of Lethbridge provides services through sound and effective leadership.

### ***Purpose Statement***

The purpose of the County of Lethbridge is to govern through sound and effective leadership.

### ***Values***

The County of Lethbridge values:

- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Agriculture
- ❖ Managed Growth
- ❖ Our Staff



## Background

In 2005 the federal budget provided long-term, stable and predictable funding to municipalities as part of the Government of Canada's commitment to a New Deal for Cities and Communities. The New Deal sets out that federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments will work together with other stakeholders to develop long-term strategies for improving the sustainability of communities.<sup>i</sup>

Funding for the program comes from the allocation of a share of the federal gas tax revenues to Canadian cities and communities. Canadian municipalities must use the funds to support environmentally sustainable infrastructure projects such as water and wastewater treatment, public transit, community energy systems and the handling of solid waste.

The federal government report states that: "Municipal sustainability planning is an opportunity for municipalities to proactively address Canada's growing challenges and move towards a sustainable future, one where a strong *economy* and participative *governance* models protect *ecological* integrity, contribute to a vibrant *cultural* scene and strong *social* cohesion."<sup>ii</sup>



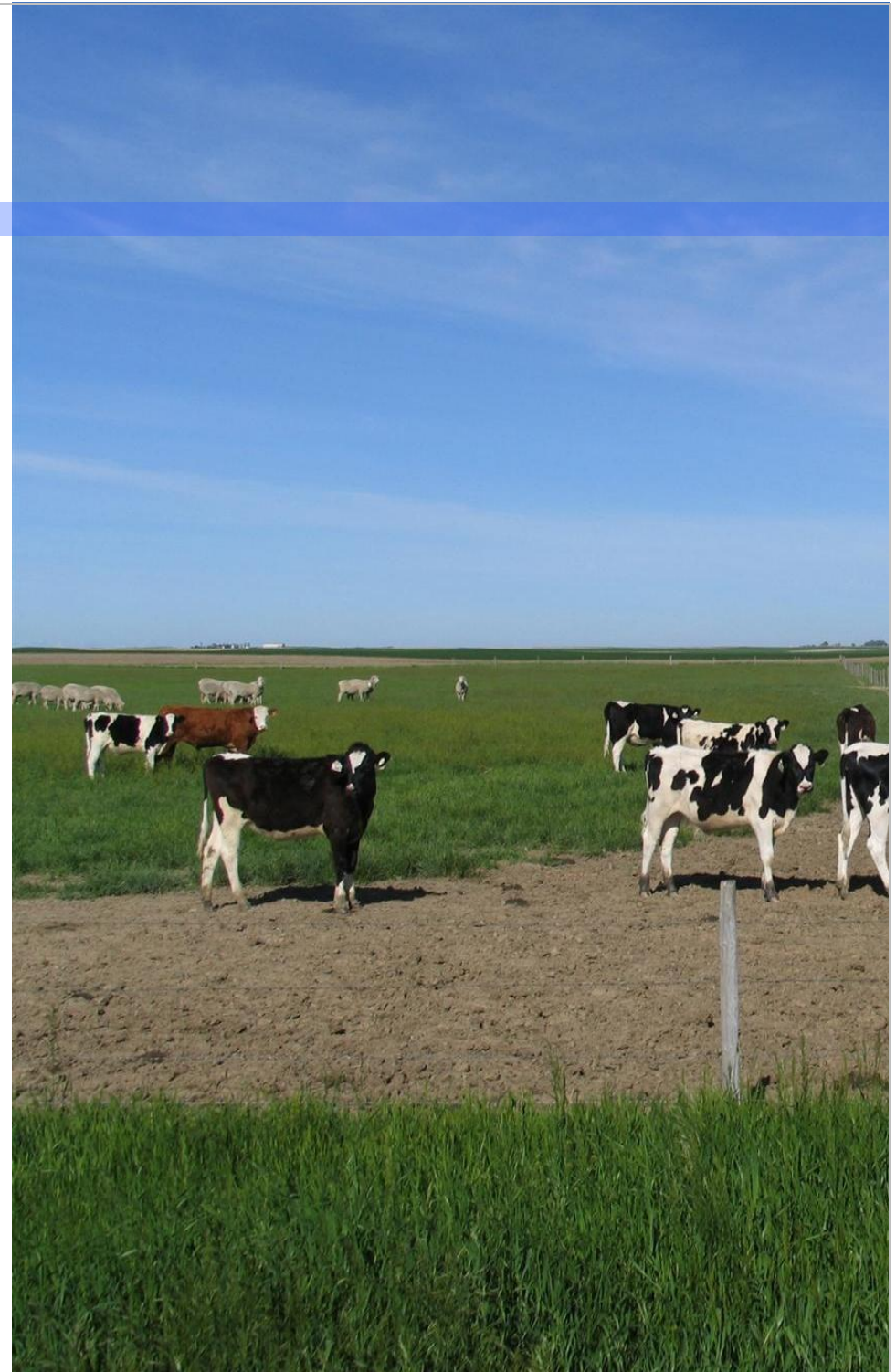


## County of Lethbridge

In Alberta funds are distributed through Alberta Transportation on a per capita basis to eligible municipalities. Under this program, the Alberta Government sets the criteria by which projects qualify for funding and the municipality sets the individual priorities for those projects that meet eligibility criteria.

The funding is intended to cover capital costs only and may not be used for maintenance costs, operating costs, debt reduction, or replacement of existing municipal infrastructure expenditures. The desired outcomes of the program include: cleaner air, cleaner water and lower greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>iii</sup>

One of the requirements for municipalities to receive funding under the New Deal for Cities and Communities is the creation of an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP).





### **What is an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan?**

The Federal New Deal for Cities and Communities describes an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan as:

*“Any existing or new long-term plan developed in consultation with community members, for the community to realize sustainability it has for the environmental, cultural, social and economic dimensions of its identity.”<sup>i</sup>*

In addition, the County of Lethbridge Integrated Sustainability Plan will be a living document, able to be adapted to changing circumstances and conditions within the County. Thus, the plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it reflects the values and vision of residents in the County of Lethbridge.





### ***What is the Purpose of this ICSP?***

The purpose of the County of Lethbridge Integrated Community Sustainability Plan is five-fold:

1. **Define sustainability** for the County of Lethbridge.
2. Create a sustainable **vision** for the County of Lethbridge in the areas of governance, economy, environment, social and culture.
3. Define specific **actions** to achieve sustainability in the areas of governance, economy, environment, social and culture.
4. Integrate aspects of existing municipal documents (Municipal Development Plan, Strategic Plan, Transportation Plan, etc.) into a **single visioning document** that is accessible to County residents.
5. Fulfill the requirements for an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan in order to **receive funding** through the New Deal for Cities and Communities.

### ***How does the ICSP fit with other planning documents?***

The County of Lethbridge ICSP is an overarching document that provides an integrated vision for all other municipal documents, such as the County of Lethbridge Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, Intermunicipal Plans, Strategic Plan and others. As municipal plans and documents

come up for review the County will ensure that any changes conform to the ICSP.

As the ICSP is a non-statutory document, the County will attempt to implement the steps necessary to fulfill the various visions through policy changes in other County plans and documents as well as through budget allocations and expenditures.

To create a **successful sustainability plan** that is an effective, active document for the community, the plan should be built on the following fundamentals:

- ❖ accurately reflect the community's values,
- ❖ be innovative and flexible,
- ❖ be realistic, in the sense of being attainable,
- ❖ be logically implemented through various municipal policies, legislation, decisions and plans.





# Sustainability Plan

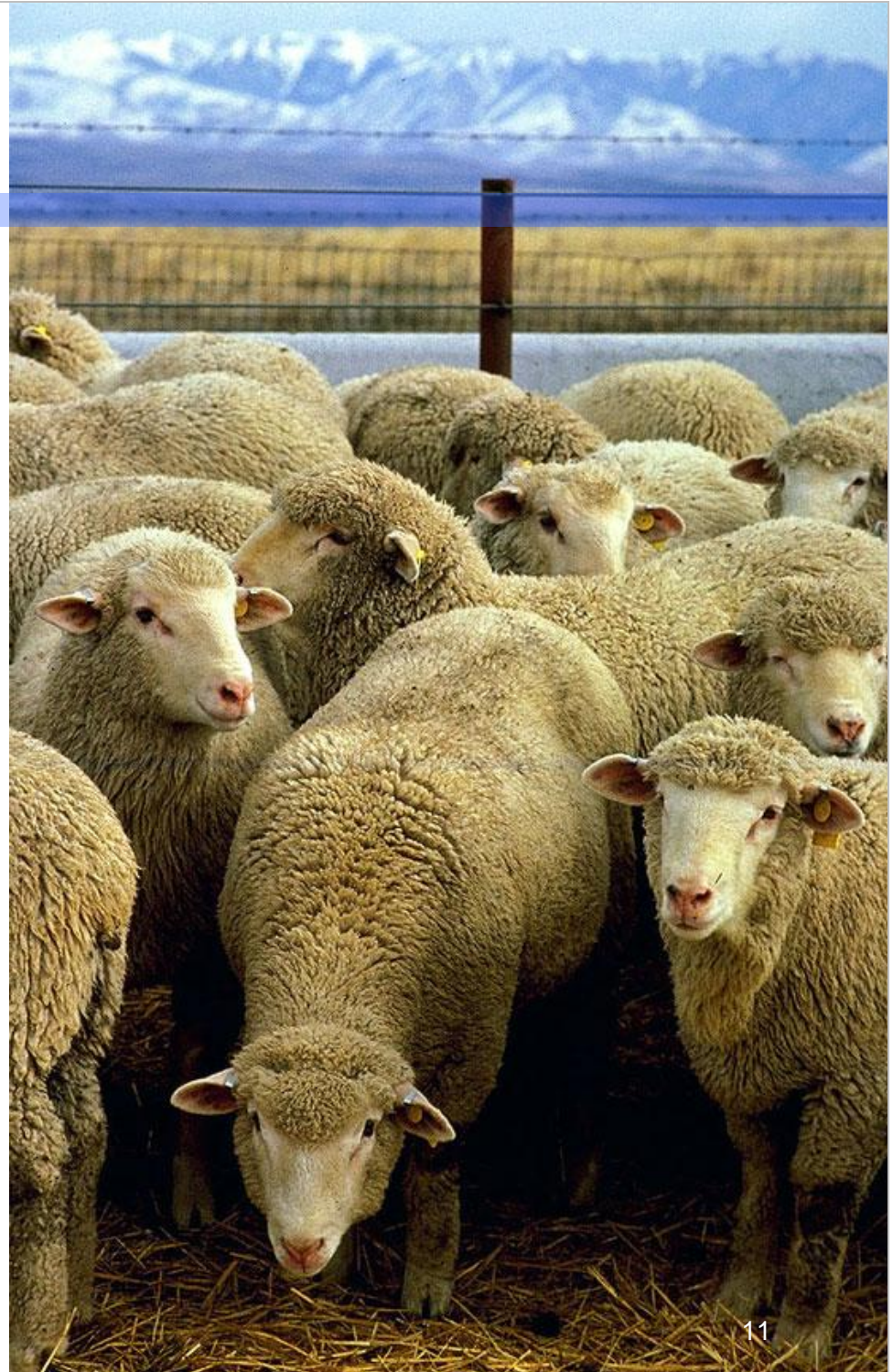
## *How was the Plan created?*

The County of Lethbridge Integrated Community Sustainability Plan was created under the leadership of the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan Working Group. The ICSP Working Group was made up of County administrators and municipal planners from the Oldman River Regional Services Commission.

The working group received input for the ICSP from a variety of sources, including: community questionnaires, County Council, County Administration, existing Strategic Plan, official plans (e.g. Municipal Development Plan, Intermunicipal Development Plans), as well as input from other County documents, plans and reports.

County of Lethbridge Council reviewed the draft plan, provided input and ratified a final plan on October 15, 2009.

This process fulfills the requirement that an ICSP be “any existing or new long-term plan developed in consultation with community members”, as put forth in the federal report *New Deal for Cities and Communities*.<sup>i</sup>





# County of Lethbridge

## County Profile

The County of Lethbridge covers a total of 2,839.28 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located in southern Alberta and borders the rural municipalities of Vulcan County, Municipal District of Taber, County of Warner, Cardston County, Municipal District of Willow Creek and the Blood Indian Reserve. In addition six urban municipalities exist within the geographic boundary of the County of Lethbridge, including: the City of Lethbridge, the Towns of Coaldale, Coalhurst and Picture Butte and the Villages of Barons and Nobleford.

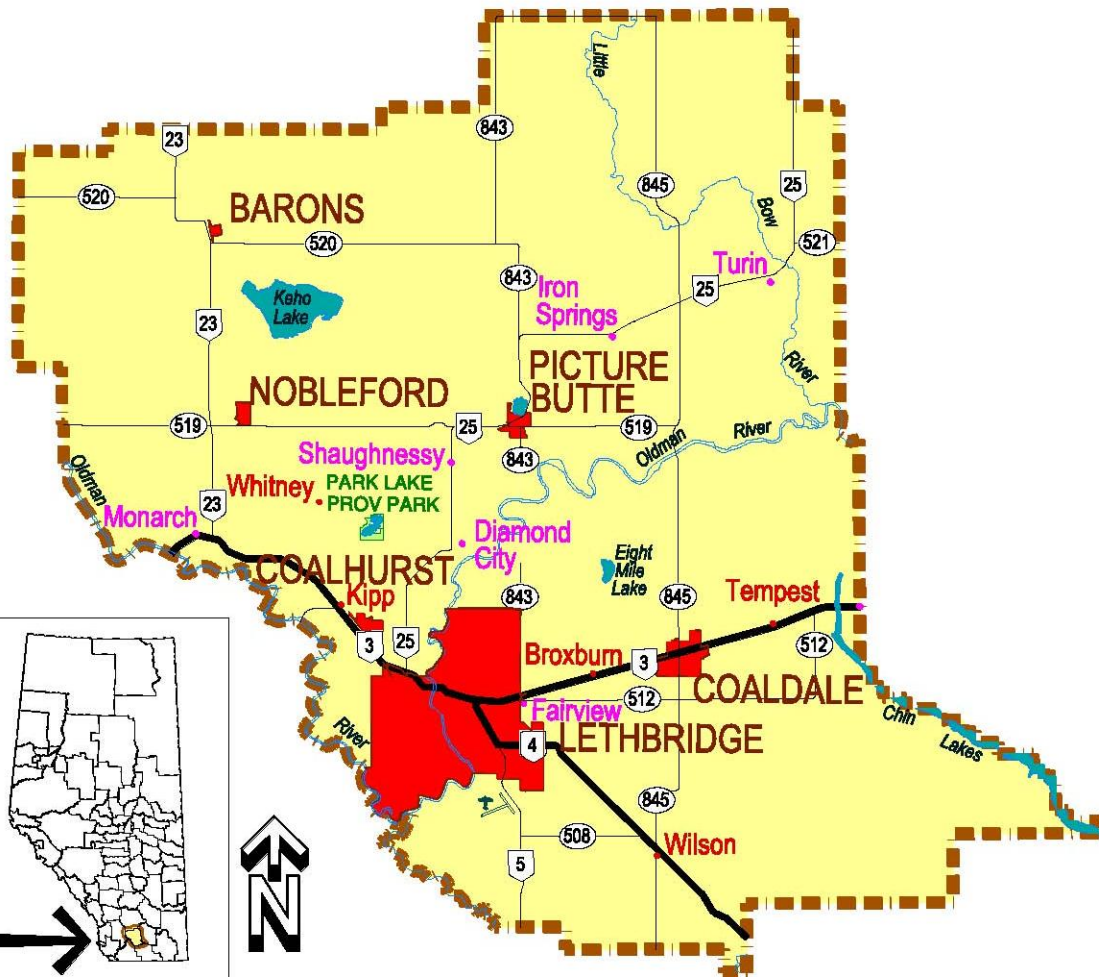
Significant geographic features within the County include the river valleys of the Oldman River and the Little Bow River. Agriculture is the main land use in the County and is supported by two distinct irrigation districts. The Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District covers 172,387 acres while 124,900 acres are contained within the St. Mary River Irrigation District.<sup>4</sup>

The 2006 Canada Census population for the County was 10,302, reflecting the significant growth that occurred in the past two decades. Population growth in the County is largely due to an increase in country residential households. Employment in agriculture is declining while growth in other sectors of the economy is attracting new residents to the region.





# Sustainability Plan





## Sustainability Pillars

The County of Lethbridge has adopted the following definition of sustainability:

*“The ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>5</sup>*

For the purposes of this ICSP the County considered five different pillars of sustainability: governance, economic, environmental, social and cultural.

### **Governance Sustainability**

The County of Lethbridge believes that strong government leadership and participative decision-making processes will create an open atmosphere that empowers citizens to take action on sustainability.

### **Economic Sustainability**

The County of Lethbridge believes that economic sustainability is a crucial pillar to all elements of sustainability. A vibrant economy enables citizens to contribute to a healthy environment, strong social fabric and a vibrant cultural scene.





# Sustainability Plan

## ***Environmental Sustainability***

A healthy ecosystem is viewed as essential to sustainability in the County of Lethbridge. The many goods and services provided by the natural environment, such as air, water and soil are the basis of all economic development and contribute to meeting both social and cultural needs of the community.

## ***Social Sustainability***

A sustainable community provides for all of the needs of its citizens. The County believes that social sustainability means that community members have opportunities to enrich themselves through social interactions, recreation, community events and the maintenance of their overall mental and physical well-being.

## ***Cultural Sustainability***

Each community has its own blend of cultures and histories. The County of Lethbridge has a unique blend of western and aboriginal cultures and histories. Ensuring that cultural and historical landmarks are maintained is an important element in cultural sustainability for the County of Lethbridge.





## Sustainability Plan Components

The following section outlines how the County of Lethbridge will work to achieve sustainability for the five pillars of sustainability: governance, economic, environmental, social and cultural.

### *Themes*

For each pillar (governance, economy, environment, social and culture) the County has presented various sub-pillars called 'themes'. These themes are specific areas that the County would like to focus its sustainability action steps.

### *Vision*

For each theme a vision has been stated that presents where the County would like to be in the future. The vision for the theme appears first because it is important not to get caught up in today's challenges or obstacles. The attempt is to be truly visionary.





# Sustainability Plan

## ***Present Reality***


Following the vision, the present reality for each theme is stated. A proper reflection on the present conditions and constraints allows citizens to understand the present, while at the same time remembering the future vision for the community.

## ***Steps to Realize Vision***

Lastly the plan outlines action steps that will move the County from its present reality to its vision. These steps are concrete achievable projects that citizens and the municipality have the authority, resources and initiative to undertake and complete.

While it may have been possible to create a much longer list of action steps, it was important to ensure that the action steps be realistic and achievable. As the ICSP evolves over time new steps will added as the present ones get completed. This process emphasizes taking the easiest steps first, so that as a community, the County can ensure that it is continually moving forward towards its sustainability visions.





County of Lethbridge

## Public Input

During the creation of the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan public input was sought through the distribution of a citizen sustainability questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed in July 2009 to citizens through the Sunny South News, as well as being available in the County of Lethbridge administration building and on the County website. The questionnaire asked citizens to reflect on the present sustainability of the County of Lethbridge, as well as to provide input into the priorities for future sustainability actions in the County.

Although the response rate was lower than expected, possibly due to the summer season and other recent County initiatives for public feedback, the input received from citizens was thoughtful and helped develop the sustainability visions and actions found in the ICSP.

Furthermore, as an integrated plan the ICSP draws not only from this most recent citizen feedback, but also on the public consultation completed during the creation of other official plans, such as the Municipal Development Plan, Intermunicipal Development Plans, Capital and Strategic Plans. The ICSP brings together these plans and public consultation efforts into a single integrated vision for sustainability in the County of Lethbridge.

## Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire results show that while the County of Lethbridge has made many efforts towards sustainability, County citizens expect even more, especially in the areas of environmental, social and cultural sustainability (see Chart 1 – Appendix). The top issues identified by respondents included: confined feeding operations, intermunicipal cooperation and recreational opportunities.

Confined feeding operations were identified as the number one issue affecting the local environment (see Chart 2 - Appendix) and the third most important issue affecting municipal infrastructure. Inter-municipal cooperation was rated as the top priority to achieve greater sustainable governance in the County of Lethbridge (see Chart 3 - Appendix). The questionnaire revealed a fairly high level of dissatisfaction with the recreational opportunities available within the County of Lethbridge (see Chart 4 - Appendix).

Overall, the questionnaire provided an opportunity to gather public response to some important sustainability issues within the County of Lethbridge. Responses indicate that further investigation is warranted into issues such as confined feeding operations, recreational opportunities, intermunicipal cooperation and communication. The County thanks everyone who completed the questionnaire and offered input.



# Sustainability Plan

## The Plan

The following section contains an integrated sustainability action plan for each of the five sustainability pillars: *governance, economic, environmental, social and cultural*. A chart has been created for each of the five sustainability pillars. The first column is the **sustainability pillar** and any relevant sub-themes. The second column is the **vision** for the County for that particular pillar or sub-theme. Following the vision, the chart outlines the **present reality**. The final column is a **list of steps** that the County has decided to undertake to realize its vision for that particular pillar or sub-theme. In some cases the steps will not completely realize the vision, but will continue to move the County in the desired or proper direction.

### Example:

Sustainability Pillar	Vision for County	Present Reality	Steps to Realize Vision
<b>Governance</b>	<b>Be a leader in sustainable governance</b>	The County could do more to improve sustainable governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find efficiencies</li><li>• Improve communication</li></ul>





### **Sustainability Pillar #1: Governance**

Sustainability Pillar	Vision for County	Present Reality	Steps to Realize Vision
<b>Governance:</b> <i>Green Leadership</i>	<b>County Council is a leader in reducing the environmental impact of its operations.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County council and administration are looking at ways to gain efficiencies and reduce the environmental impact of its activities.</li> <li>• The County office building currently has a recycling program throughout its building.</li> <li>• The County is presently involved in converting old inefficient lighting in its office building to new high-efficiency lighting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County council and administration will, where possible, endeavour to use <i>green</i> sources of energy in County facilities and vehicles.</li> <li>• The County office will continue to expand the recycling options offered in its buildings and facilities.</li> <li>• The County will ensure the completion of the lighting conversion project – replacing all inefficient lighting with new high-efficiency lighting throughout the County building.</li> <li>• Administration should review operations and create an energy efficiency plan to reduce the carbon footprint and long-term operating costs – by addressing fuel, lighting, recycling, technology, paper usage, automated electronic devices, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance:</b> <i>Long-term Planning</i>	<b>County Council will provide leadership through strong long-term planning.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County is in the process of completing or amending various long-term plans and documents. Completion of these plans is important to the long-term sustainability of the County.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure completion of the <i>Infrastructure Management Plan</i>.</li> <li>• Direct the finalization of the <i>Transportation Management Plan</i>.</li> <li>• Implement and monitor the success of the new <i>Engineering Guidelines and Minimum Servicing Standards</i> document.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance:</b> <i>Technology</i>	<b>The County is a leader in creating efficiency through the application of new technology.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County is presently involved in using a Geographical Information System (GIS) to map layers of spatial data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate operation processes and increase the use of technology and software to better integrate information, file sharing and storage among departments and to help create operation efficiencies.</li> <li>• Expand GIS to help record municipal capital infrastructure and to estimate the life cycle and replacement of various infrastructure.</li> </ul>



Sustainability Pillar	Vision for County	Present Reality	Steps to Realize Vision
<b>Governance:</b> <i>Intermunicipal Cooperation</i>	<b>The County works cooperatively with its municipal neighbours and collaborates on major projects.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County of Lethbridge has six municipal neighbours: Villages of Barons and Nobleford, Towns of Picture Butte, Coalhurst, Coaldale and the City of Lethbridge. County residents would like to see improved intermunicipal cooperation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County will pursue increased cooperation with municipal neighbours and adherence to existing Inter-municipal Development Plans.</li> <li>• The County will seek ways to provide citizens with increased opportunities through intermunicipal cooperation.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance:</b> <i>Regional Partnerships</i>	<b>The County will create partnerships to deliver mutually beneficial services with a regional perspective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County of Lethbridge is presently a member of a Regional Waste Authority and the Oldman River Regional Services Commission for planning assistance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create economies of scale, cost savings and regional perspectives by creating and continuing to be a member of services commissions and cooperatives whenever possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance:</b> <i>Communication</i>	<b>All residents are well-informed about events in the County and happenings at the County office.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although much work has been done, there are still some gaps in the communication between Council leadership and residents.</li> <li>• The County hosts annual ratepayer meetings but the attendance is sometimes low.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the possibility of a quarterly printed newsletter distributed to residents.</li> <li>• Continue to undertake regular ratepayer meetings.</li> <li>• Maintain funding for County residents to receive complimentary subscriptions to the Sunny South News.</li> <li>• Improve and expand upon the County website.</li> </ul>

## **Sustainability Pillar #2: Economic**

<b>Sustainability Pillar</b>	<b>Vision for County</b>	<b>Present Reality</b>	<b>Steps to Realize Vision</b>
<b>Economic:</b> <i>Agricultural Sector</i>	<b>Ensure the continued viability of the agricultural sector within the County.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While still largely relying on traditional crops the agricultural sector is looking for new ways to diversify.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the introduction of a variety of alternative crops in order to stabilize the cyclical nature of crop prices and the economic difficulties it presents to County residents.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic:</b> <i>Technology</i>	<b>Supports the provision of high speed internet to all residents.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many residents do not have access to high speed internet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the provision of high speed internet to all residents within the County through cooperation with internet providers.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic:</b> <i>Sustainable Growth</i>	<b>Sustainable economic development that is a balance between agricultural, industrial and commercial sectors.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The balance between agricultural, industrial and commercial sectors is changing in the County as employment moves from the agricultural sector to other sectors of the local economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue an economic balance between agricultural, residential, industrial and commercial employment nodes and services.</li> <li>Cooperate and continue to be an active member with SouthGrow Regional Initiative and Economic Development Lethbridge to address Southern Alberta growth and development potential.</li> <li>Encourage businesses/ industry that use local materials or products in operations/ manufacturing.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic:</b> <i>Energy</i>	<b>The County provides innovative ways to balance both traditional and alternative energy sectors.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current energy resources capitalized within the County include oil and natural gas extraction, coal, wind energy and an emerging biofuels sector. Potential energy exploration exists within solar and geothermal.</li> <li>The County's Land Use Bylaw has provisions for wind energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and strengthen alternative energy production as well as foster the development of a viable biofuels industry.</li> <li>Continue to support Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS) to be established within the County.</li> <li>Continue to support biofuels advocacy and market awareness via the Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Economic:</b> <i>Airport</i>	<b>Support the Airport Authority's vision "to be a thriving air service centre providing the Southern Alberta Community with a gateway to the world."</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Economic Impact of the Lethbridge County Airport 2006 Report</i> stated that the airport contributes directly or indirectly to 1900 full-time jobs, more than \$70 M in labour income and over \$210 M in value-added GDP.</li> <li><i>An Airport Master Plan</i> helps give direction on the management of airport operations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the use of the airport to southern Alberta residents and develop a marketing program.</li> <li>Develop an agreement with the City of Lethbridge on the LCA.</li> <li>Continue to update and review the Master Plan to maximize use and revenue of airport lands.</li> <li>Explore and possibly change name of airport to "Regional", to signify its regional importance.</li> </ul>



### **Sustainability Pillar #3: Environmental**

<b>Sustainability Pillar</b>	<b>Vision for County</b>	<b>Present Reality</b>	<b>Steps to Realize Vision</b>
<b>Environmental:</b> <i>Housing</i>	<b>Limit the fragmentation of good agricultural lands by subdivision and country residential development.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and subdivision is dominated by country residential use applications.</li> <li>• County residential households generate economic activity while at the same time substantially impacting the County's ability to provide infrastructure &amp; services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct country residential development to appropriate areas as identified in the Municipal Development Plan.</li> <li>• Locate Grouped Country Residential near existing serviced areas &amp; hamlets so as to minimize the economic and environmental costs of these developments.</li> <li>• Encourage Smart-growth and cluster development practices for new developments.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental:</b> <i>Open Space &amp; Design</i>	<b>Ongoing sustainability of air, water and soil to support agricultural productivity.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County residents are concerned about the ongoing sustainability of the air, water and soil in relation to agricultural productivity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the design of residential areas that provide open space and incorporate natural areas while safeguarding the environmental sustainability of the area under development.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental:</b> <i>Irrigation</i>	<b>Agricultural practices in the County actively safeguard water through protection of water quality and a modern irrigation system.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lethbridge Northern and St. Mary River Irrigation Districts provide service to areas within the County of Lethbridge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the protection of the quality of water in the irrigation systems.</li> <li>• Encourage ongoing modernization of the irrigation system.</li> <li>• Participate in studies into water quality issues in the Oldman River Basin when and where possible.</li> <li>• Attempt to limit impacts of developments on irrigation systems through good planning practices, which may be outlined in the Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental:</b> <i>Soil Conservation</i>	<b>The County of Lethbridge is a leader in sustainable agricultural practices that promote soil conservation.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ASB is mandated by the Alberta Soil Conservation Act to “prevent the loss or deterioration of soil from taking place.”</li> <li>• Many landowners are not aware that the ASB can provide equipment to address soil conservation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase community knowledge of the equipment (bale processor, straw crimper, chisel plow equipped with Lister shovels and heavy equipment equipped with rippers) available to assist landowners address soil conservation, especially during winter months and periods of high winds.</li> </ul>

Sustainability Pillar	Vision for County	Present Reality	Steps to Realize Vision
<b>Environmental:</b> <i>Environmental Impacts</i>	<b>The County has sustainable funding to address the impacts of Confined Feedlot Operations.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The County is facing an increasing number of Confined Feedlot Operations (CFOs) which fall outside of the jurisdiction of the municipality. County residents are increasingly concerned about the environmental impacts of CFOs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the Natural Resources Conservation Board with requirements for consideration when approving CFOs, to be outlined in the MDP.</li> <li>Actively lobby the provincial government for funding to address impacts of the high density of CFOs in the County.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental:</b> <i>Environmental Impacts</i>	<b>The County's successful Shelterbelt Program: enhances wildlife, mitigates climate change and saves energy.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shelterbelt Tree Program is underway in cooperation with the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) – success of the program is moderate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase awareness of the Shelterbelt program and the availability of equipment from the Agricultural Services Board (ASB) (tree planter, mulch applicator, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental:</b> <i>Environmental Sensitive Areas</i>	<b>Residents are proud of the unique geographic areas of local, provincial and national importance and they work to preserve these features on the landscape.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The County contains unique geographical areas that are of local, provincial and national importance as outlined in the Cottonwood Report 1987<sup>6</sup>. The quality of this natural environment is an integral component of the quality of life enjoyed by residents within the County.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake communication programs to increase public awareness regarding activities within Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs).</li> <li>Investigate the feasibility of updating municipal mapping to include ESAs.</li> <li>Explore conservation of ESAs through the use of environmental easements, environmental reserve and municipal reserve.</li> <li>Update the Land Use Bylaw to enact legislation to request Environmental Impact Assessments and reclamation plans when required</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental:</b> <i>Wetlands &amp; Stormwater</i>	<b>The conservation of wetlands will play an integral role in the ecological health of the County, benefiting wildlife, stormwater management, water quality, flood mitigation and drought prevention.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A significant proportion of wetlands in the County of Lethbridge have been converted or removed from their natural state for other land uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the conservation of wetlands or the return of wetlands to their natural state through the creation of policies in official plans, such as the Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan.</li> <li>Work with intermunicipal neighbours to address stormwater issues, such as the Malloy Drain</li> <li>Encourage natural wetland design in new subdivisions.</li> </ul>



### Sustainability Pillar #4: Social

Sustainability Pillar	Vision for County	Present Reality	Steps to Realize Vision
<b>Social:</b> <i>Recreation</i>	<b>Residents enjoy a high quality of life from a variety of recreational and community service opportunities.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County contains natural and man-made resources that offer recreational opportunities including the Oldman River Valley, campgrounds, golf courses, picnic areas, hiking trails, and the many irrigation reservoirs.</li> <li>• County residents require more recreational opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with intermunicipal neighbours to provide increased recreational opportunities to citizens.</li> <li>• Consider recreational development on poor agricultural lands in conjunction with residential developments.</li> <li>• Encourage community service developments that are proven to demonstrate operational and environmental sustainability.</li> <li>• Encourage citizens to use recreational opportunities within the County.</li> </ul>
<b>Social:</b> <i>Human Health</i>	<b>The County of Lethbridge ensures that all residents have access to safe, clean and constant water supply.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Health Department works to provide safe, clean and constant water supply for all treated water systems.</li> <li>• A rise in intensive land uses in the County may require increased diligence to issues of water quality and quantity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the Environmental Health Department has sufficient resources to address the rise in intensive land uses in the County.</li> <li>• Investigate ways to promote conservation of water quality and quantity in the County.</li> <li>• Support the Environmental Health Department in looking into the future to develop emergency plans and optimize facilities.</li> <li>• Investigate long-term water supply options which take into consideration the Environmental Health Department’s view that the future will see the establishment of large regional treated water systems.</li> <li>• Promote co-operation and support Environmental Health Department initiatives to ensure development does not interfere or contribute to problems of surface and ground water contamination.</li> <li>• Continue to cooperate with the City of Lethbridge to supply potable water to the County for <i>selective</i> residential use.</li> <li>• Investigate upgrading of hamlet sewer systems to provide for the sustainable and safe dispersal of sewage.</li> </ul>

Sustainability Pillar	Vision for County	Present Reality	Steps to Realize Vision
<b>Social:</b> <i>Protection Services</i>	<b>The County of Lethbridge safeguards its citizens through the provision of a highly professional and highly maintained emergency service fleet.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The County maintains an extensive emergency fleet to safeguard citizens from fire and health emergencies. Some of the fleet vehicles are getting older and will eventually require replacement. Staffing at times is also an issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to monitor and upgrade the emergency fleet as Council deems necessary and seek partnerships with neighbouring municipalities when available.</li> </ul>
<b>Social:</b> <i>Community Services</i>	<b>The County supports its citizens and non-profit groups in enhancing the quality of life for residents.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are a number of organizations and non-profit groups that provide community services, some with little or limited resources available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage non-profit groups and provincial service agencies to establish or enhance the level of community services in the County.</li> <li>Continue to support and work in cooperative agreement with other government agencies or service clubs to help provide various community services to residents.</li> </ul>
<b>Social:</b> <i>Community Events</i>	<b>The County supports a wide range of special events catering to all age groups and a variety of interests.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The County provides opportunities for bird watching, car racing, wind surfing, corn maze and numerous museums.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the use of local attractions, including the Prairie Tractor museum, Lethbridge Corn Maze, Gem of the West museum, Birds of Prey centre and Bridge County Raceway.</li> <li>Investigate how to co-promote special events at these local attractions.</li> </ul>



### Sustainability Pillar #5: Cultural

Sustainability Pillar	Vision for the County	Present Reality	Steps to Realize Vision
<p><b>Cultural:</b> <i>Historic sites</i></p>	<p><b>The County of Lethbridge is a leader in the preservation of significant cultural sites: whether they are natural, prehistoric, paleontological or historic.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Environmentally Significant Areas in the Oldman River Region</i> report (<i>Cottonwood Report 1987<sup>6</sup></i>) identifies the presence of a significant set of natural, prehistoric, paleontological and historic sites that are of interest to both the general public and the scientific community.</li> <li>• The <i>County of Lethbridge Municipal Development Plan</i> suggests using municipal reserve, environmental reserve or environmental easements to obtain lands identified as significant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the preservation of identified cultural sites (natural, prehistoric, paleontological or historic).</li> <li>• Actively protect identified cultural sites through the use of environmental easements, environmental reserve and municipal reserve.</li> <li>• Investigate the development of special zoning mechanisms within the County's Land Use Bylaw to preserve significant cultural sites.</li> <li>• Educate citizens on the importance of cultural sites and provide information that explains how landowners can minimize the impact and loss of cultural sites on the land.</li> <li>• The <i>Cottonwood Environmentally Significant Areas in the Oldman River Region</i> report will be taken into consideration for subdivision and development proposals.</li> <li>• Subdivision or development proposals in areas of potential historic or archeological significance will be required to undertake historical resource assessments. The land use bylaw may be amended to include criteria which outline the requirements for this.</li> <li>• Hamlets are an important link to history and community, and the County will consider important hamlet resources – churches, schools, community halls, ethnic clubs – in its decision making in these urban areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cultural:</b> <i>Museums</i></p>	<p><b>Residents have ample opportunities to learn about the cultural history of the County of Lethbridge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Gem of the West museum and the Prairie Tractor and Engine Society museum provide opportunities to learn about the history of the County of Lethbridge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the awareness of local museums so that residents can learn about the cultural history of the area.</li> <li>• Coordinate opportunities for school children to learn about the history of the region.</li> <li>• Provide, wherever able, any necessary assistance for local museums to accrue funding or grants.</li> </ul>

## Implementation & Monitoring

To realize success in carrying out the sustainability goals of this plan, the County of Lethbridge acknowledges that the ICSP must be more than simply a guiding document for the visions and desires of the community. The plan must ensure that there are means by which the stated action steps within the plan are implemented and then monitored.

To that end, the County of Lethbridge will undertake to monitor the implementation of the action steps for each of the five pillars of sustainability. This may include the creation of working groups or committees to oversee the implementation of this plan. In addition, this may incorporate periodic review of this plan to ensure that it is an accurate reflection of the values and vision of the citizens of the County of Lethbridge.

In consideration of these issues and to help achieve success with realizing the goals of the plan, the County will use the following process as a guide to implementation:

1. This plan and its steps to sustainability should be considered regularly by administration and county staff in decision making and everyday project/work implementation.
2. This plan should be used as a guide for forming future policy in land use plans, strategic plans, management strategies, and capital works projects or long-term plans.

3. As new information and innovative technologies become available to the municipality, these may be considered and added to this plan in the appropriate pillars of sustainability, provided they meet the overall values and vision of the County and its citizens.
4. The municipality will attempt to increase local awareness of community service, environmental and sustainability opportunities, such as through developing a community services calendar, newsletter or through its website or other media.
5. The municipality will endeavour to monitor the implementation of the action steps for each of the five sustainability pillars on a yearly basis.
6. In order to achieve tangible results on specific actions within the plan, Council and the municipality may consider implementing certain actions through the amendment or creation of municipal legislative documents, such as the Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, Transportation Master Plan, etc.
7. The municipality and County Council should undertake a complete review of the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan every 3-5 years to determine if the visions and action steps are being met and if the sustainability visions and policies should be amended or expanded upon. This review is necessary to ensure that the plan is an accurate and up-to-date reflection of the values and vision of the citizens of the County of Lethbridge.



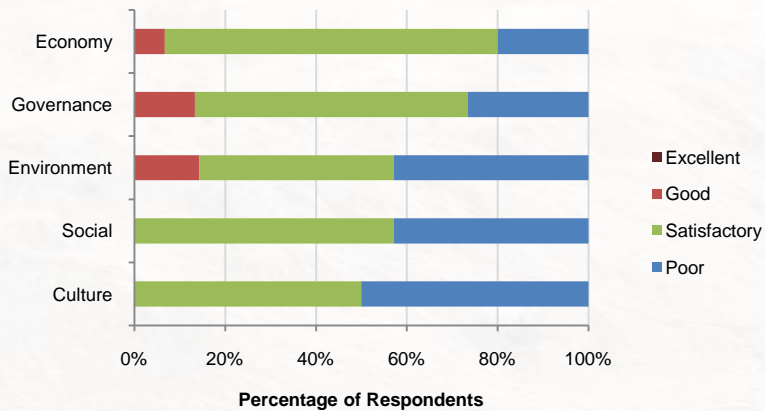


## Appendix A:

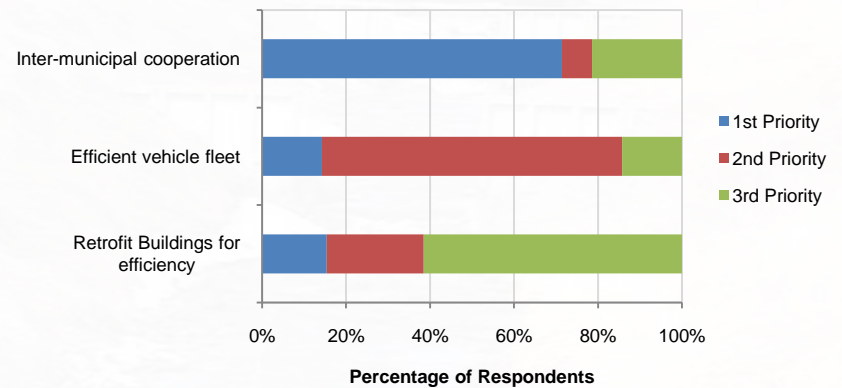
Public Questionnaire Results

## Questionnaire Results

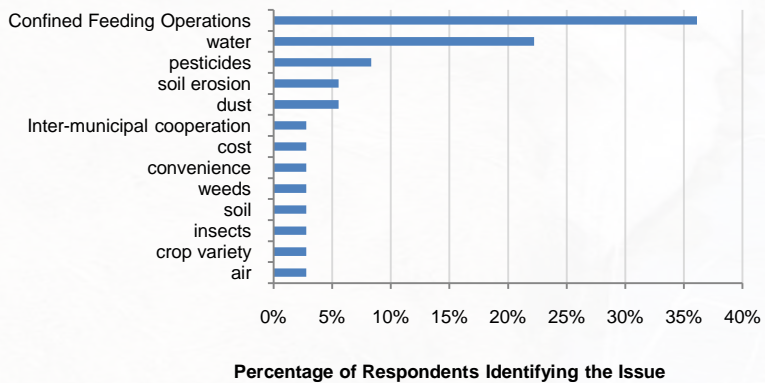
**Chart 1: Sustainability Ratings for the County of Lethbridge**



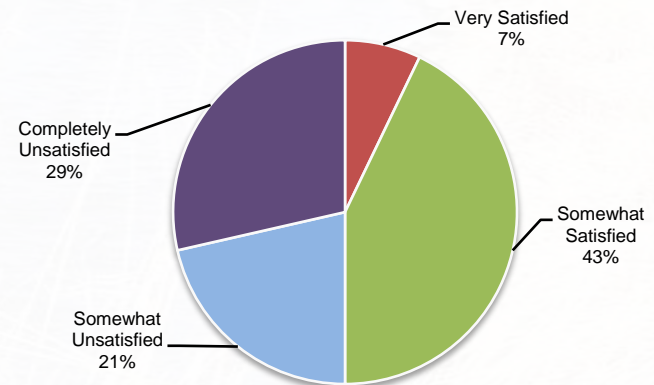
**Chart 3: Inter-municipal Cooperation rated as top priority for sustainable governance**



**Chart 2: Top issues affecting the environment identified by respondents**

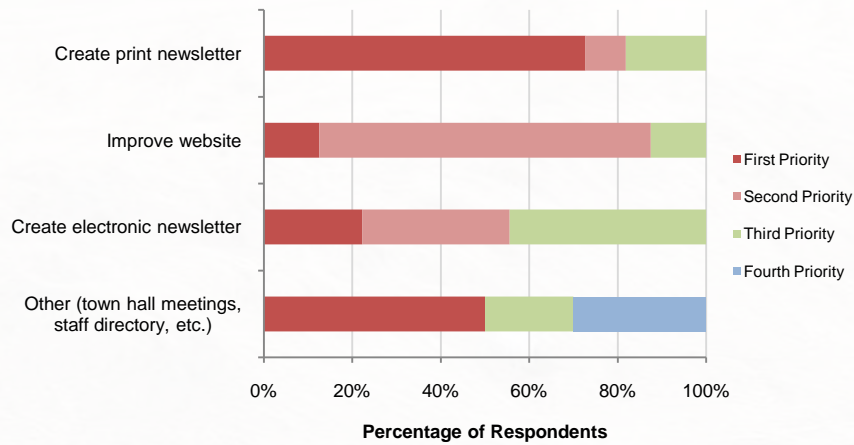


**Chart 4: Level of Satisfaction with County of Lethbridge Recreational Opportunities**

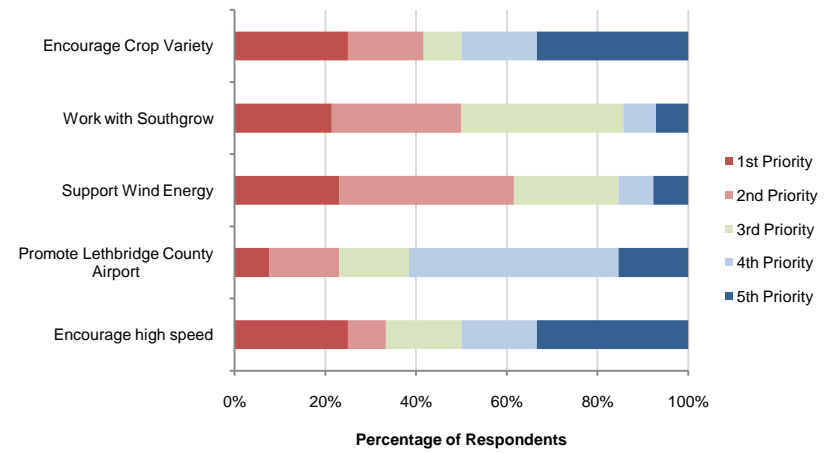




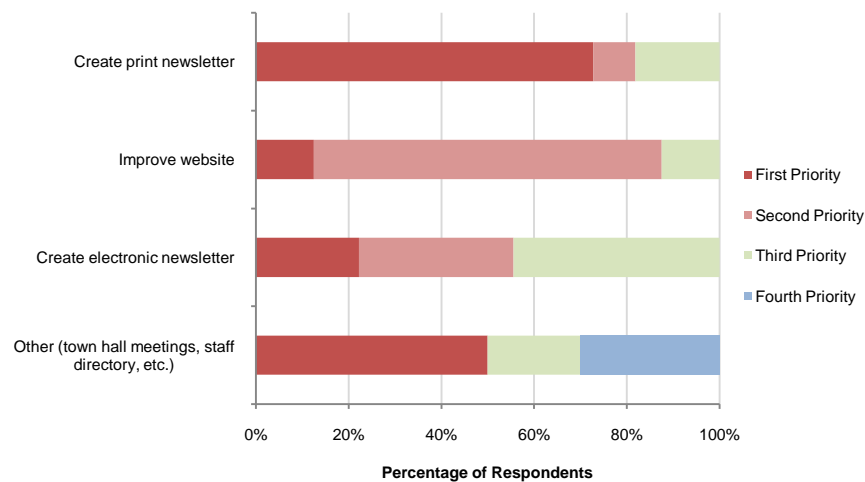
**Chart 5: Priorities to Improve Communication Between County Administration and Residents**



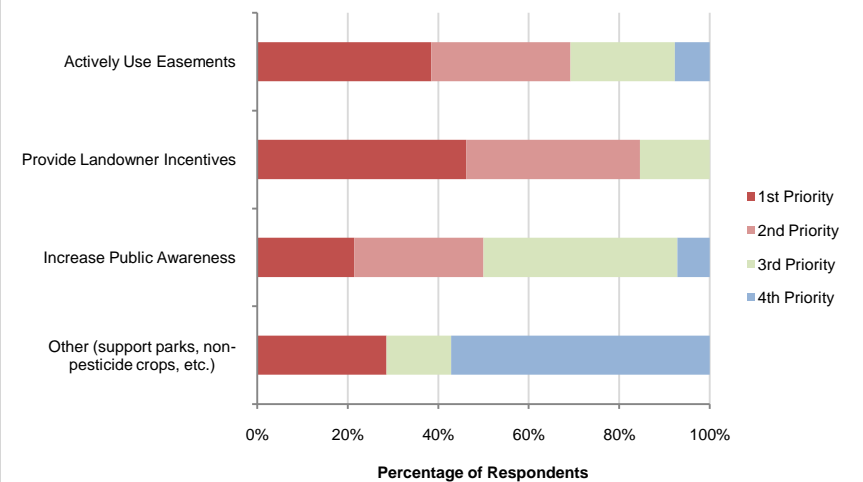
**Chart 7: Encouraging crop variety rated as top priority for economic sustainability**



**Chart 6: Priorities to Improve Communication Between County Administration and Residents**



**Chart 8: Active use of easements rated as top priority for preserving Environmentally Sensitive Areas**



## Cited Documents

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<sup>i</sup> Canada, Department of Finances (2005). A New Deal for Cities and Communities (Budget 2005). Retrieved online from: <http://www.fin.gc.ca/budget05/pamph/pacom-eng.asp>

<sup>ii</sup> Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (June 2006). Comprehensive Guide for Municipal Sustainability Planning.

<sup>iii</sup> Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation (January 2007). Administrative Procedures for the New Deal for Cities and Communities.

<sup>4</sup> Economic Development Lethbridge (March 2007). Business Investment Profile 2007-2008.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations (1987). Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. Retrieved online from: <http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Cottonwood Consultants Ltd. (1987). Environmentally Significant Areas in the Oldman River Region: County of Lethbridge. Prepared for: Resource Evaluation and Planning - Alberta Forestry Lands and Wildlife and Oldman River Regional Planning Commission.