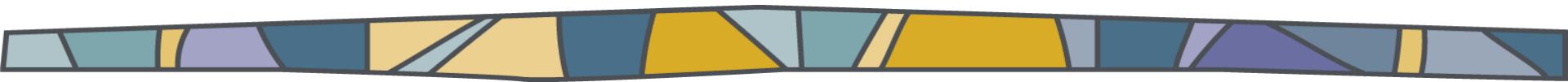


Flagstaff Intermunicipal Partnership

Update – December 5th



RECAP

What brought you here:

- Population decline
- Business decline
- Limited, and shrinking, tax base
- Limited borrowing capacity
- Aging infrastructure
- Reduced resources to replace infrastructure
- Reduced capacity to deliver services
- Reduced capacity to create growth
- Increasing expectations from citizens

SURVEY RESULTS

- A majority (**71%**) **want services maintained or enhanced**, and are willing to pay taxes at the rate of inflation or more to do this
- The public wants much **more**: multipurpose facility; spray park; walking/biking trails; indoor swimming pool
- 62% say their community **needs higher quality services/amenities**
- 87% say quality/variety of services/amenities is **important to attract** families and investment to the region
- 73% say they would **support** provision of more **region-based service** if it enhanced variety/quality of available services
- **Three times** more people say they have experienced **decreased services** than increased services
- 53% believe quality/variety of services will decrease in future

- A surprising number of people see the declining population and business base in the region as an indication that taxes will rise and service levels will decline.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

- Regarding the question about how a solution should be crafted by FIP member communities, the results were clear:
 - 80% of the respondents wanted the municipalities to ‘get on with it’
 - 12% wanted a solution to be a ballot question at the next election
 - 0% wanted the issue to become a campaign focus in the next election
 - Only 1 respondent said they wanted the entire process to stop
 - 6% of respondents would like further information on the final proposal
- There was ample public discussion in groups and in private at the town hall meetings. The collection of feedback, both written and orally acquired, can be summed up in a few generalized statements:

“I don’t want my taxes to go way up, I don’t want my services to go way down, and I want a representative in my area that I can talk to. If you can find a way to grow this area on top of that, I’m ready. Let’s get on with it.”

“Sometimes things seem pretty bleak here. I don’t know what can be done, but we must try something.”

“They are trying to push us all into the city anyway so I don’t know why we would bother with this. They are just going to haul the last of us into some big city retirement home anyway.”

“The only thing that seems to really work is when we do cooperate. The rest of what we are doing isn’t really improving our situation. Perhaps the time has come to cooperate more formally.”

- The lack of interest from the public should be construed as trust and understanding something needs to be done. People always show up for meeting when they are afraid or opposed to something.

THE STORY

Local people want more services, or to keep the services they have, and are willing to pay more if necessary. However, they are aware of the challenges and actually expect things will get worse. They believe the continue decline in population and businesses will mean their services will go down, and their tax rates to cover what is left, will go up.

They know the key to changing this story is to attract more people and more businesses/industry. That requires becoming more competitive on many fronts.

Taxes, regulations, and land development must be coordinated, streamlined, and made competitive on a regional basis. Business and industry are looking for competitive REGIONS around the world. That also means more services and amenities must be provided, since families look to live in a place with a good quality of life. Business and industry need people so they also look for locations that attract people, because it means a secure labour pool. That means business and industry also looks for locations with a good quality of life, on top of the regions competitiveness factors.

These are your goals if you want success . . . And that is why you have come this far.

- **The Current Situation Is Not Sustainable Into The Future**
- **The Current Situation Is Not An Option**
- **There Is No Guaranteed Solution To Our Challenges**
- **Solutions Can't Be About Today, They Have To Be About The Future**
- **Alone – We Aren't As Prosperous, Efficient Or Competitive As We Could Be**
- **Working Together Will Generate More Opportunity And Growth For Everyone's Benefit**



Flagstaff

*Daysland • Hardisty • Killam • Sedgewick
Alliance • Forestburg • Heister • Rughheed
Flagstaff County*

GOVERNANCE SOLUTION SEEKING CHECKLIST

- Coordinates resources to potentially improve, enhance or add services
- Coordinates resources to deliver efficient and more affordable services
- Avoids duplication of administration
- Avoids duplication of regulation and policy
- Avoids duplication of taxation and services
- Reduces internal competition
- Reduces internal conflict
- Improve opportunity for service offering growth
- Improve opportunity for economic growth
- Improve opportunity for population growth
- Improves administrative ability to address challenges
- Improves elected official ability to address challenges
- Improves the ability of elected officials to address long-range issues
- Improves the ability of elected officials to respond to growing constituent expectations
- Improves administrative capacity to create and capture opportunities
- Improves elected official capacity to create and capture opportunities
- Coordinates economic growth initiatives
- Coordinates investments in infrastructure
- Coordinates resources for greatest efficiencies in services
- Coordinates external marketing opportunities
- Eliminates lines in the sand that divide neighbours
- Strengthens the voice of the communities/region to the province
- Strengthens the voice and authority of locally elected officials within the region
- Provides local representation and regional governance without being territorial and divisive
- Encourages local representatives to work together as a more effective and more authoritative team
- Encourages partnership thinking and action among elected officials
- Provides the ability to meet local and regional needs
- Provides the ability to deliver quality services at competitive rates
- Provides the ability to be flexible and creative in delivery services
- Frees up administration from less productive time consuming paper trail tasks
- Focuses elected officials on high level strategic priority of attracting families, businesses and industry



THE OPTIONS

Commissions and Service Agreements

- Small extension of what you have now
- Coordination of services and service delivery on a regional one-off contract basis
- Agreements can be made around services and growth initiatives
- Agreements can be broke – because of politics and personalities
- Commissions (companies) can be created around particular and timely objects
- Commissions (companies) are more durable and binding
- Doesn't address challenge of attracting new people to elected office
- Doesn't address challenge of attracting qualified people to administration
- Doesn't provide an opportunity for focused, strategic and committed decisions around the future of the region
- Doesn't address the issue of competitiveness with regulations and taxation
- Doesn't address the issue of coordinating growth initiatives to change the story
- Doesn't ensure a reduction of internal strife
- Only provides assurances until deals expire or elections transpire

Two Tier – Service Provision Based

- Regional and Sub-regional services are provided by a regional government
- The model could entail contracted, fee for service, or requisition based funding
 - Water, fire, waste management, recreation
- Local services are provided at a local level by a local government
- No opportunity for coordinated initiatives to grow the region
 - Leaves the issue of declining tax base, reduced services and increase tax rates on the table
- Issue of duplication of administration and elected officials remains
- Increases the likelihood of infighting, not just between municipalities, but between the two levels of municipal authority
- No provincial precedence or provisions, which makes it doubtful it can be attained before the next election (start over)

Two Tier – Growth Initiatives Based

- Regional Growth Initiatives are coordinated and provided through a regional government
- The model could entail contracted, fee for service, or requisition based funding
 - Tourism, marketing, land use development
- Local growth initiatives (if any) are provided by a local government
- Service provision is done through local governments and current arrangements, though there is the opportunity to allocate service provisions to the Upper Tier Municipality
- Issue of duplication of administration and elected officials remains
- Taxation and Responsibilities are split between the two levels of municipal government
- Incredibly complex model for municipal revenue and expenditure sharing
- Potential for passing over responsibility without passing over taxation
- Feeling there is no value for money for a community is common, since the offerings and results are softer
- No provincial precedence or provisions, which makes it doubtful it can be attained before the next election (start over)

Single Tier Amalgamation

- One municipal body for participating municipalities
- Focused on both service and growth initiatives
- Division of regional, sub-regional and local initiatives and services
 - Allows for local ownership of challenges and opportunities through sub-regional and local boards and sub-committees
- Eliminates duplication of administration, taxation and regulation
- Provides opportunity for coordination of investments, marketing opportunities, and growth initiatives
- Enhances influence with other governments – municipal, regional and provincial – with regard to education, health, and social services issues and initiatives

RECOMMENDATION: SINGLE TIER MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

One Council

1 mayor at large + 8 wards

Approaches a Full Time Job

One Administration

**Service Delivery and Growth Initiative
Coordination**

**Sub-regional and Local Boards
and Committees**

**Fair Taxes for
Quality Services**

**Coordinated
Taxation and
Regulations for
Business
Development**

**Investment
Attraction and
Economic Growth
Strategy**

**Local Ownership
of Issues**

**Regional
Coordination of
Solutions**

TIME TO CHOOSE A PATH

- One Committee – One Member Each – One Option
- Focus on Governance and Identity Details
- Flesh out Taxation and Services Principals
- Report – 3rd week of March
- Consultation in April with the Public
- Final Report – 1st Week of May
- Communities Pass Resolutions (or not)
- Submission to the Minister – 3rd Week of May