

Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Public Consultation Report



Background

Over the span of two days in December 2017, Innisfail Town Council and members of the Town's senior administration gathered to deliberate, discuss and determine the Town's strategic direction for the next four years and beyond. As a result, the 2018-2021 Town of Innisfail Strategic Plan was created.

The draft plan was formally presented to Council during a special meeting open to the public on Monday, Jan. 29. The plan was approved in principle, and a period of public consultation commenced. Direction was given for administration to present results of the public consultation process at the March 5, 2018 Agenda and Priorities meeting.

Methods of Engagement

Print copies of the plan were made available at various locations throughout town (Town Office, Chamber of Commerce, Seniors Drop-In Centre, Library), while an electronic copy was made available for viewing and download on the Town website. A link to the online edition was shared via Facebook and Twitter, and promoted with a website 'feature block'.

Members of the public were encouraged to review the plan and submit feedback: (1) Online via an electronic feedback form (www.innisfail.ca/strategicplan); (2) In person at the Town Office; (3) By phone; or (4) By engaging members of Council and administration during special events and otherwise. A number of print feedback forms were also made available at the Seniors Drop-In Centre, while events such as Family Day and 'Speed Dating' at the Innisfail Library were also used as platforms on which to solicit feedback.

Where possible, members of Council and administration also carried out their own individual stakeholder engagements.

Notice of the public consultation process was advertised in the Town Voice (weekly newspaper advertisement), on Facebook, Twitter and the Town website, and through a media release disseminated throughout Central Alberta.

An internal engagement with Town staff was also carried out — the results of which are included in this report.

Feedback & Responses

The following is a summary of the feedback received during the five-week consultation period. Any personal information and/or information that could identify authorship has been removed.

Written Responses

The following written responses were submitted online and in person:

1

"For the most part I feel this plan covers a wide range of relevant issues for Innisfail. However, I feel that an important aspect of Innisfail's Sustainability lies in its ability to attract and engage young families and youth in what is otherwise an aging community. The plan addresses some areas that may affect this demographic, however I think there could be a stronger focus on recreational groups and activities, and facilities to tempt families to come to and stay in Innisfail. Much of the 'community building' seems focused on long-time or older residents and should be engaging this younger demographic."

"I also question the Town's intention to develop more land for residential housing. Have steps been taken to engage developers in these projects? With the Town already responsible for the development by Dodds Lake and Napoleon Meadows, and many of those lots sitting empty, I wonder if it is fiscally responsible to launch new, expensive development when the focus should be on selling many of the lots already developed. I recognize that the proposed development is aimed at a very different type of housing, but wonder if it could be implemented without the Town acting as developer."

2

"I appreciate the council's focus on a few particular areas, namely the serious pursuit of a multiplex, enhancing/expanding the trail system, encouraging a net growth of new business, and giving weighty consideration to more major park events (such as the hugely successful Canada Day party last year). I would like to add that, as part of efforts to beautify the downtown core, that we consider ways that we can encourage new tourism. Would council please consider what options we would have to add a beachfront to Dodd's lake to increase summer traffic? This, in conjunction with an enhanced trail system around the lake would do wonders for encouraging new families to visit Innisfail during the summer months and help bolster local business."

3

"1) multiplex. Our town will die if we don't aggressively pursue this."

"2)make it attractive for small businesses to invest here."

"3) make innisfail a destination. IE, make Dodd's lake a swimming hole, with a nice sandy beach."

"4) Enhance the trail system"

"5)Increase festivals, ie, like the canada day festival. Perhaps do a winter festival, with a polar bear plunge in dodds lake (to help promote the new beach)."

4

"Looks good, love to see more on growing our population, that will in turn increase all areas of Sustainability. Growth should be the number one focus."

5

"-multiplex, asap!!!! -dodds lake turned into a beach -active recruitment of businesses"

6

"Looks like a well thought out, workable plan. My concern is the lack of vision to support youth actives, minor sports, finalizing the skateboard park. I know there hasn't been much of a voice during this election cycle. The parents who I speak to are of the attitude 'why bother, nothings going to happen'. You can look up all the joint user group meetings with the town and minor sports to see the suggestions that haven't happened. I would love to see a small field storage/change room/concession either at the high school or behind the arena to support soccer/football/skating. An addition to the pool to make an Abbey Centre type physicality seems like a good long term goal as well. To build strong youth that will be our future, they need opportunities to learn life skills and sports is a good way to do that. And not all kids will play hockey. Thanks for an ear!"

7

"[...] when reviewing this document, [...] it is evident that there was a considerable amount of work and thought invested in the process. However it is a weighty document and it may be beneficial to have just an executive summary for the public

to comment on. As to the strategic plan, I have a few concerns with priorities, namely the Diversity Housing Option being given a medium rating. Diversity is also mentioned under the Social heading and my thoughts are as follows. If we do not have alternate housing options such as affordable senior housing or affordable options for young families, the community will see migration of the above demographics moving to communities that do provide these options. As seniors looking forward, housing options are a concern for us as we want to remain in Innisfail as we age. This was a subject that was in the forefront during the election campaign and one that is a frequent conversation with friends. I would also like to comment on Infrastructure as a medium priority. I think that it should always be identified as a maximum issue. Finally, I see a new community facility has been given a top spot. I do think that it is something that needs to be looked at, but rather than build a new facility, I would hope that council would look to partner (with the Legion for example) to expand on their facility so as not to compete but to enhance both the town and the club's ability to host large functions. I also think it would be an innovative way to grow capacity while being fiscally and socially responsible. I would like to commend the council and staff for the diligence given to this strategic plan. The document has captured the path forward. Thank-you for the opportunity to comment."

8

"Lots of good ideas for the future. Glad to see the trend toward being open to new ideas and suggestions from citizens. Good to see that you are taking things slowly and systematically with regards to the planning. Good luck with the plan!!!!"

9

"This Strategic Plan is very good!!"

"I especially like the use of color coded charts. It is easy to follow, easy to understand and clearly identifies who is responsible for taking the lead role. Members of our community need to know who to talk to so feedback can be directed to the right department/person. We rely too much on having someone else to pass the message along."

"The Strategic Plan indicates that there will be plenty of opportunities for community engagement which, in my opinion is not new but, is now improved."

"Appendix 3: Very nice this is added in. So often council is held responsible for everything."

"Thank you."

10

"Why are we building a solar farm? Why are we not partnering with all the home owners? We should be the first community to place a solar farm on our houses. Its already wasted square footage, major square footage that could be utilized. Imagine the contract, the town could rent the solar panels to home owners or home owners could purchase them as part of the town package. Imagine if almost every home in Innisfail had solar power? That is news worthy!"

11

"[...] the town has very little for seniors in cool and winter weather. Would be nice to have a multiplex like Penhold, for hockey and curling (Scottys) curling. Red Deer is getting rodeo for 10 years. All things could be involved with multiplex. If Calgary has Olympics (2026) Innisfail could possibly be supported. Or do you want us all to support Penhold?"

12

You need to offer some incentives for people to move/ build or open a business here. Also you need to build an indoor soccer/ lacrosse / gymnastics place. If you have activities here young families will want to live here.

Staff Engagement

The following is an abbreviated summary of the comments received during two staff engagement sessions held at the Library Learning Centre on Monday, Feb. 12. Staff of all Town departments attended and were invited to provide input:

- There is a lot of opportunity to grow community events
- Town garage sale
- Dino Centre is a good addition
- This is a good starting point
- Plan of bringing in 2 new businesses a year is great
- Trail system plan and entrance features is a good focus
- I like that there are timelines attached to the strategies
- Human resources strategy is only to be complete in 2019? The work has started sooner
- Need attainable starter homes in Innisfail. Market is not looking for older homes
- Could developers do something extra to give back to the community?
- Could the Town reach out to retail chains to get them opening stores here?
- Lack of shopping options, stores fail shortly after opening, people are opening the wrong businesses
- Is the focus on attracting families, or supporting seniors? Balance of both
- Need recycling drop off areas
- Cannot believe Red Deer County does not contribute funds toward the RCMP
- Wayfinding project is good, will there be neighbourhood entrance signs?
- Lack of housing for starter homes
- Why would you set up a business here?
- Entrance aesthetics are currently fast food places, and an old Innisfail sign a block into town
- Do we participate in communities in bloom?
- Where else does the Town have land/space available for new businesses to build
- Need to focus on what we do have and promote it. We do have a lot of great amenities, but are they being used to their full potential? Are they being marketed properly?
- Ice time at the arena is not being used
- Gathering spaces? Is that really an issue?
- Centennial park BBQ area and rental group area not marketed enough
- Shocked county does not pay for RCMP
- RCMP are too busy to respond
- Need to see actual follow through with this plan, not done in the past
- Regional public transportation project being worked on with Penhold, Springbrook, and Red Deer County. Grant funding is available to run a pilot project

Next Steps

It is recommended that further public consultation relating to the 2018-2021 Town of Innisfail Strategic Plan be carried out on an ongoing basis. Given the 'fluid' nature of the living document — and its significance in town planning — the time

for the provision of feedback and public input should remain unrestricted, with any results forwarded to Council in the form of quarterly updates. The plan should remain an important subject of the Town's public engagement efforts moving forward.

The results of this preliminary stage will be shared on the Town website, and linked via social media. Further notice will be published in the Town's various print mediums.