

Town of Hardisty

2016-2017 and Beyond Strategic Planning Report

December 19, 2016



Civic Solutions Inc.

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Initial Strategic Planning Process

Civic Solutions Inc. responded to a request from Mayor Anita Miller to submit a proposal for a team building workshop and a strategic planning session. Associate Dorothy Moore, MBA, B. Ed. was assigned to facilitate the sessions.

Each member of Council and staff met privately with Dorothy Moore for interviews on November 3 or November 4, 2016. Along with diagnostic questions, the following questions were asked of participants:

- What would success look like in the next year and beyond?
- What would it take to get where you want to go?
- What does Council do well?
- What are you proud of accomplishing so far?
- Specific items that could be goals for Council and the Town this year?
- Is there a Council champion for goals?
- What outcomes (positive changes/conditions) would you like to create for your community and the individuals you serve?
- How would life be better?
- Who else can help us accomplish this future?

During the interviews, what participants saw as accomplishments, future goals and what success would look like were listed.

Environmental Scan

The Town of Hardisty is located in Flagstaff County in east-central Alberta, 111 kilometres (69 miles) from the Saskatchewan border, near the crossroads of Highway 13 and Highway 881, in the Battle River Valley. Hardisty officially became a Town on November 9, 1910. Along with most of the smaller municipalities in east-central Alberta, its population is down from the 2011 census. The population of 761 shown for 2011 was down to 639 in the last census. However, the number of dwellings has increased slightly during that time. Hardisty hosts a shadow population of about 5,000 workers in the oil industry and related services.

The 416.0 hectare area of the municipality has remained the same since 2011. However, equalized assessment from 2013 through 2015 shows a reduction in farmland assessment, but increases amounting to about eight million dollars in total equalized assessment in the other categories, reflecting the value of recent growth and new development.

The Town has improved relationships with neighbouring communities and both Flagstaff and Provost Counties. Hardisty participates in local, joint and regional services.

Town Council is transitioning from seven councillors with the Mayor elected separately to a five member council with the Mayor elected from among themselves. Many of the Town staff are relatively new to Hardisty administration, but speak positively about their jobs, other staff and their view of the future. Morale is good, and staff speaks well of the CAO.

In addition to the normal range of services provided by the Town, recreation and cultural facilities include a community hall, public library, curling rink, skating/hockey arena, nine hole grass green golf course and licensed clubhouse, baseball and soccer fields, lake with sandy beach, playground and campground with 47 campsites. The annual outdoor rodeo is said to be the biggest and best within the county. There are marked cross-country ski trails around the Town and golf course. There is a variety of businesses ranging from automotive service to restaurants and accommodations, groceries, health and beauty aids and medical assistance.

In the larger context of the current global, Canadian and especially Albertan and oil industry economic downturn, Hardisty appears statistically and visually to be an oasis of economic health and activity. This has not generated as much optimism among residents and Council as could be expected. A county wide survey of residents showed Hardisty participants to be among the most negative and pessimistic of all Flagstaff County area respondents. This gloominess was also reflected by residents and Council in their responses to queries about the services and amenities, where their good fortune of having unusually good services and amenities for their size was negated by complaints about the quantity, quality, hours, reduction from former conditions, price or appearance. If a person had accomplished something, there were often comments or criticisms about how it was done, things that weren't up to a high standard, or suspicions about ulterior motives or personal gain. An interesting and instructive comment was that one philanthropic person said he had just hoped someone would thank him (rather than receive public recognition at some event).

Accomplishments

Each of the interviewees provided what they felt were accomplishments that they could be proud of. Thoughtful responses provided an impressive aggregate list. Individuals may be surprised at the length of the list, the magnitude of the progress and how little credit they have given themselves for their accomplishments.

- Hardisty is doing very well financially, with actual reserve funds, not just land.
- Council tendered two large infrastructure projects, and gained huge savings:
 - 5,500 sq. meters of road contracted at 2011 price!



- Lagoon upgrade obtained for \$179,000- engineer estimated \$300,000!
- During this economic downturn, Hardisty approved 14 development permits, valued at over \$1 million.
- Did 47th Street (infrastructure) and will do more in spring.
- The Hardisty Rodeo was the biggest event in the County- and the best.
- The MegaMovie was successful. Everyone pulled together (staff and Council). Good feedback.
- Two open houses. Good communication strategy- open discussion.
- Saved acute care by taking over the medical clinic. Two doctors with one more coming.
- Staff is getting along well and very pleased with:
 - The level of skills
 - Enhanced computer coding that tracks projects, costs and time spent on each activity
 - Positive attitudes
 - Infrastructure projects on the way
 - Contributing to team, and
 - Learning a lot.
- Completed a water/wastewater master plan that allows for development and access to grants-ready to go to AB Environment. Only one completed within Flagstaff County.
- 14 Town Bylaws and 15 Policies redone.
- Home Hardware built bigger and now sells lumber.
- Flagstaff Intermunicipal Partnership (FIP) - dramatic positive change from where it was to where it is today!
 - Council on board for FIP
 - Positive feedback from the public
- Good working relationships with:
 - Five local urban municipalities
 - Regional water operators/SCADA
 - Area CAOs
- Great relationships and good companies and people like GCS Energy help- not just with dollars, but with their time, too.
- Hardisty has an impressive song. It was created and performed locally.
- Hardisty will be hosting a provincial hockey tournament-possibly two! (They have put in a bid and expect to get it. Hardisty/Hughendon collaboration. In March)
- Town wide cleanup was successful- people liked it and it spurred others on! Others have said they would help with it next year.

In addition to this list, refer to the pictures in Appendix A which illustrate fulfillment of many of the community's Municipal Sustainability Plan Objectives. Again, impressive progress of which the community as well as Council and administration should be justifiably proud- and celebrate!



No Vision or Mission Statements

The Town of Hardisty had Vision and Mission statements in the past, but had put those aside in the 2014-2017 Strategic Planning process. However, participants were interested in expressing the surprising qualities of Hardisty. Participants decided to add to the “Discover Hardisty” slogan by adding “More than You Imagine”, which expresses the mystique of the “paradise in the middle of nowhere” that visitors and new residents discover.

New Attitude

Although the Town of Hardisty Council and staff decided against Vision and Mission statements, they decided to take action that could have much more of an impact in both the short and long term. Since there seems to have been a pessimistic and critical attitude among Hardistarians (if that is a designation), participants sought to begin to “Turn the frown upside down”, and become the champions of a more thankful, cheerful, optimistic and healthier perspective.

One member of the group remarked that a resident who had done a significant service to the community didn’t want ceremony- he just hoped for a “Thank you”. After considering other congratulatory or recognition programs, participants concluded that a “Thank you” was appropriate in all known circumstances when someone has done something noteworthy.

“Thank you” Positivity Initiative

Participants decided to put the words “Thank you” nicely on a business card size card, along with Town of Hardisty. Council and staff will hand them out, giving people a boost along with themselves, and hoping that the cards and the positivity will be passed on and spread throughout the community and beyond.

Finding opportunities to thank and congratulate people of all ages will encourage them and others to do more. The success of positive action by leaders was already demonstrated by Council when they did the Town Wide Cleanup earlier this year. Not only did people like it, but it spurred others on to participate and others have said that they would help and participate next year!

If positive thinking and thanking neutralizes the former pessimism and critical attitudes, and thankfulness and service to others spurs others to pass it forward, then Hardisty should become a paradise of optimism and neighbourliness as well as a recreational lake paradise in the middle of nowhere.



Perhaps Council could choose who the first recipients of the Thank You cards should be. A few could be given with the recognition of being presented by a designated council member “On behalf of Council” to local financial supporters, volunteer fire fighters, business owners who have invested despite economic conditions, etc. Perhaps someone could thank a landlord who really makes a property look nice- like this one.



Further Community Building Possibilities

SONG

Council recalled and played an impressive and upbeat Hardisty song that was created by locals and performed by the Grade Five class several years ago. It may be possible to create a new version of the song with current residents/students which could be promoted through modern media methods. Councillors will consider approaching those who originally created and worked on it, others who may be interested or have relevant skills and the school teachers and students.

SIGN

Council mentioned signs that could be utilized for messages. Local residents or groups may be interested in volunteering to continually post positive, encouraging and celebratory messages on a sign provided by the Town in a prominent place. Participants were able to provide many examples of positive messages. Appendix B is a list of leadership quotes that may provide additional inspiration.

Instead of a SWOT

Since a Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats analysis was done for the previous Strategic Plan, and there had been more than enough focus on weaknesses and threats, the recommendation was accepted to get the WT (weight) off our agenda, and to focus on Hardisty’s strengths and opportunities (SO). The future for Hardisty is potentially much brighter than for most small Alberta municipalities, particularly those away from the central corridor.

Council and staff saw the following as Hardisty’s strengths:

STRENGTHS

- Volunteers run their facilities and do it well. Good partnerships with volunteers.
- New accommodations. Hotels/Motels.



- New development. Duplex/houses.
- Semi-strong economy, even with downturn.
- Located by major oil hub: Jobs/business.
- Better relationship with Flagstaff County.
- Connector of Counties: Flagstaff/Provost/Wainwright.
- Counties border.
- Medical Clinic.
- Doctors/Physicians.
- Hospital.
- School.
- Library, arena, curling rink, theatre.
- Wide range of councillors, work well together.
- Council continuity.
- Administration staff with various skillsets.
- Public works staff. Good personnel to operate.
- Our own water system and lagoons.
- Infrastructure assessment complete.
- Essential business services/Key businesses.
- Tenants in professional building.
- Industrial area and undeveloped industrial land.
- Good industrial support relationships.
- Active seniors group.
- Hospitality.
- Location- attractive and has lake.
- Recreation facilities and diversity.
- Rodeo.
- Street Fair.

OPPORTUNITIES

The list of worthy opportunities was categorized into subject areas. These have been re-ordered according to the level of participants' support for the category as a priority, and as much as possible in order of vote support for individual strategies.

- **Medical**
 - Medical Foundation.
 - Specialized medical services/clinics.
 - Make Hardisty the medical hub- the sky is the limit.
 - Invest in weed- explore avenues for marijuana- It's the future.
 - Fitness center/club.
- **Growth**
 - Future growth opportunities/potential.
 - Renew main street to attract business.
 - Promote shop local.



- Increase population. More people= more business and better downtown.
- Entice people to move here- offer lots for next to nothing- it will pay off.
- Keep the town neat and tidy.
- 48 acre subdivision on the way.
- Battlevue development “local investors”.
- Vacancy in rental properties.
- **Increase Collaboration**
 - Teamwork with various counties.
 - Build on existing relationship with MD of Provost.
- **Infrastructure**
 - Build plan with lower costs and sensibly.
- **Lake Development**
 - Watershed development.
 - Water for Life.
 - Spray park.
 - Use more:
 - Swimming lessons
 - Cabins/tiny homes to rent
 - Races: Mini-triathlon, Marathon
 - Concerts at the lake
 - Lake /campground/golf course.
- **Tourism**
 - Work to re-open the ski hill.
 - Partnerships with hotel owners/ Staycations.
 - Host events at facilities- Provincial hockey tournament.
 - Arena floor available off season for sales/events/auction.
 - Re-open theatre (like Daysland- community group.)
- **Volunteerism**
 - Coming together community celebration.
 - Lots of opportunity to get involved.
 - Active older population.
- **Youth**
 - Youth program/young population.
 - Have day care for families.
- **Manor**
 - Work with Bethany- the Manor could be better utilized if it was re-vamped.

Goal Setting Process

Participants voted for their first, second and third choices among the opportunities that they had identified. As with award ribbons, blue is for first choice, red for second and yellow for third choice.



Growth and Medical each received eight votes, but Growth received four blue, two red and two yellow votes, outranking Medical which received six red and two yellow votes.

Infrastructure also received eight votes, but with just two blue first choices, one red and five yellow votes.

The Increase Collaboration category received four votes, two blue, one red and one yellow.

It should be noted that although Watershed Development and Water for Life strategies under Lake Development garnered just three votes, they were all blue first choices. It is the top priority for three participants, and a worthy perspective that the Associate believes all of Council supports.

Participants agreed to the top four priorities. Teams of two, one Council member and one staff member, filled out goal implementation sheets for the goals and strategies as follows:

Priority/Key Goal: (SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-based)

Strategies to accomplish Goal:

Action Plan to accomplish Goal:

1. What action(s) or change(s) will or should occur?
2. Who (or what position) will carry it out?
3. When will it take place, or for how long, or start or due dates?
4. What resources (financial, people, equipment, information) will it require?
5. Communication: Who should know what and when?
6. Potential barriers or resistance?
7. Any possible collaborators, contributors or partners?

Goals

1. Growth: (People/Business/Promotion)

Strategies:

- a. Increase population: more people=more business= better downtown.
- b. Entice people to move here- low price lots.
- c. Encourage workers' wives to visit, fill vacant rentals.
- d. Lot incentives, whether buying empty lot or rehabilitating existing.
- e. Tax incentives to bring in new downtown business.

2. Medical

Strategies:

- a. Create foundation: Improvement of medical services.
- b. Specialized medical services/clinics.



3. Infrastructure

Strategies:

- a. Lagoon- in place.
- b. Paving- 48/Meadowlane- in place.
- c. Underground- 48th Street- Sewer/water- Engineer \$- Water/Wastewater Master Plan.
- d. Arena Renovations- Plan in place.

4. Increase Collaboration with Counties/other Towns

Strategies:

- a. Communication between the governing bodies.
- b. Knowledge of need, resources, partnerships.
- c. Regional Initiatives.

Action Plans

The Council/staff teams submitted Action Plans to accomplish the above goals. The following tables detail the participants’ responses to the questions from the Goal Implementation Worksheets.

Goal:	Growth: (People/Business/Promotion)
Strategies to accomplish goal:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Increase</u> population: more people=more business=better downtown 2. <u>Entice</u> people to move here- low price lots. Lot incentives- whether buying empty lot or rehabilitating existing. Beautify Main Street (trees/Pocket Park). Improve exterior of buildings. Approach property owners to update/enhance frontage. Cost savings incentive (ladder). Tax incentives to bring in new downtown businesses. 3. <u>Encourage</u>- get workers’ wives to visit, fill vacant rentals, fill empty buildings.



Goal:	Growth: (People/Business/Promotion)
<p>1. What action(s) or change(s) will or should occur?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy to promote infill 2. Letter- Invite/intrigue (Theme) 3. Website/newsletter- intrigue all. 4. Tax incentive/cash back to tear down and build. 5. Monetary incentives by town to encourage growth. 6. Entice workers' wives and family with Staycation room and activities.
<p>2. Who (or what position) will carry it out?</p>	<p>Council create policy, administration deliver.</p> <p>Council to approach property owners and create letter and theme for website/newsletter. <i>(Regarding beautification)</i></p> <p>Town Council would need to implement. <i>(Regarding monetary incentives)</i></p>
<p>3. When will it take place, or for how long, or start or due dates?</p>	<p>First Quarter 2016: Tax incentive/Cost Saving in Budget.</p> <p>Second and Third Quarters 2016: Develop materials/program to entice and encourage people to come.</p>

Goal:	Growth: (People/Business/Promotion)
<p>4. What resources (financial, people, equipment, information) will it require?</p>	<p>Infill- may lose minimum tax on a few properties for a few years.</p> <p>Administration to print and distribute packages for Staycations. (It could be set up as a “Town Pass”. City Pac has 4 or 5 main attractions for one price to be used over 2 or 3 days.)</p> <p>For approaching landowners to update/enhance frontage with incentive ladder – Landowners/Council/administration and financial min/budget.</p> <p>For Main Street beautification: Council/residents/admin. Financial /budget</p> <p>Advertise- make people aware.</p>
<p>5. Communication: Who should know what and when?</p>	<p>Hotels/ activities to get together and develop the offers.</p> <p>Community- January 2017- News release after first contact with business owners.</p> <p>Everyone should know; informed by town staff; real estate agents and employers.</p>
<p>6. Potential barriers or resistance?</p>	<p>Businesses (hotels) may not cooperate. The Town does not own many lots or the old houses.</p> <p>Change- lack of cooperation- financial cost- absentee business owners.</p> <p>Cost to town; people angry because they did not receive.</p>

Goal:	Growth: (People/Business/Promotion)
7. Any possible collaborators, contributors or partners?	Local businesses and golf course, lake, hairdressers, restaurants, etc. Town/business owners/contractors (local)- Use of local contractors.

Goal:	Medical: A: Create Medical Foundation
Strategies to accomplish goal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together at all levels • Communication • Knowledge in areas of expertise
1. What action(s) or change(s) will or should occur?	Develop Foundation- seek volunteers, website, Facebook, newsletter and face to face.
2. Who (or what position) will carry it out?	Council- implement start- gather information- recruit members-will set governance. Hospital Auxiliary to assist in recruitment of members and assist with legislation.
3. When will it take place, or for how long, or start or due dates?	March 30/2017- within 3 months.



Goal:	Medical: A: Create Medical Foundation
4. What resources (financial, people, equipment, information) will it require?	Hospital Auxiliary working with other foundation from other municipalities, doctors, churches, RPAP, Medical Affairs, Administration staff, Council, clinic staff.
5. Communication: Who should know what and when?	Admin staff need to know the people on the Foundation. Council directs how governed. Knowledge and ways of already practising. Clinic staff- knowledge. Doctors- needs/wants expressed. District staff. Hospital staff.
6. Potential barriers or resistance?	Cost, people's feedback, loss of control, Interest, Knowledge base.
7. Any possible collaborators, contributors or partners?	Programs involved, specialized services such as PCN, clinic staff, Hospital Auxiliary, Medical Affairs, hospital staff.

Goal:	Medical: B: Specialized Medical Services/Clinics.
Strategies to accomplish goal:	Progressive/Aggressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell to new medical practitioners to come to Hardisty. • Get <u>our</u> residents to use our services.
1. What action(s) or change(s) will or should occur?	Encourage more medical services or clinics to come to Hardisty.



Goal:	Medical: B: Specialized Medical Services/Clinics.
2. Who (or what position) will carry it out?	Council/Foundation to set up parameters of what services they want to go after and what are tangible financially.
3. When will it take place, or for how long, or start or due dates?	In tandem with Medical Foundation development. Take advantage of existing opportunities.
4. What resources (financial, people, equipment, information) will it require?	Possibly some medical equipment (i.e. chiropractic table, massage table- Foundation to raise money.
5. Communication: Who should know what and when?	Everyone (website Facebook, ad mail).
6. Potential barriers or resistance?	Financial, location?
7. Any possible collaborators, contributors or partners?	Work with FIP and Physician Retention and Recruitment Committee. Hospital Auxiliary. Handivan.

Goal:	Infrastructure
Strategies to accomplish goal:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lagoon – in place. 2. Paving- 48/Meadowlane- in place. 3. Underground- 48th Street- sewer/water- Engineer \$\$, Water/Wastewater Master Plan. 4. Arena renovations- Plan in place.



Goal:	Infrastructure
1. What action(s) or change(s) will or should occur?	Engineering, grants/tenders.
2. Who (or what position) will carry it out?	Admin/contractors.
3. When will it take place, or for how long, or start or due dates?	1 and 2: 2017. 3. As per Water/wastewater Master Plan (Water for Life).
4. What resources (financial, people, equipment, information) will it require?	Council/budget, Admin, Local contractors and Public Works, Engineering, Alberta Environment.
5. Communication: Who should know what and when?	Council/Community when information is available (admin).
6. Potential barriers or resistance?	Financial
7. Any possible collaborators, contributors or partners?	Town Council/Administration/Local contractor/ Engineer.

Goal:	Increase Collaboration (With MDs of Flagstaff, Provost or Wainwright or Town of Wainwright and collaboration of services)
Strategies to accomplish goal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication between the governing bodies. • Knowledge of need, resources, partnerships. • Regional initiatives
1. What action(s) or change(s) will or should occur?	Partnerships between the governing bodies. Knowledge of resources available.
2. Who (or what position) will carry it out?	Council members, public works foreman, administration staff.
3. When will it take place, or for how long, or start or due dates?	Start in First Quarter. Continue and develop framework.
4. What resources (financial, people, equipment, information) will it require?	Public works, input from Council, CAO.
5. Communication: Who should know what and when?	Council- budget setting, public works need prioritizing list. Communication develops along with collaboration.
6. Potential barriers or resistance?	Not enough money, not enough resources, timing.
7. Any possible collaborators, contributors or partners?	Flagstaff County, Town of Wainwright, MD of Provost, GCS Energy, other local supporters, Public Works, Council- setting budget.



Appendix B: Leadership Quotes

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success. - Henry Ford

We must all hang together, or assuredly, we shall all hang separately. - Benjamin Franklin

Teamwork: Simply stated, it is less me and more we. - Unknown

Teamwork is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results. - Unknown

Teams share the burden and divide the grief. - Doug Smith

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. - Margaret Mead

It is better to have one person working with you than three people working for you. Eisenhower

Light is the task where many share the toil. Homer

No member of a crew is praised for the rugged individuality of his rowing. Ralph Waldo Emerson

A group is a bunch of people in an elevator. A team is also a bunch of people in an elevator, but the elevator is broken! Bonnie Edelstein

A boat doesn't go forward if each one is rowing their own way. Swahili proverb

Wearing the same shirts doesn't make a team. - Buchholz and Roth

None of us is as smart as all of us. - Ken Blanchard

No man is wise enough by himself. Plautus

A group becomes a team when each member is sure enough of himself and his contribution to praise the skill of the others. - Norman S Hidle

All of us, at certain moments of our lives, need to take advice and to receive help from other people. Alexis Carrel, Reflections on Life

Teamwork doesn't tolerate the inconvenience of distance. - Unknown

A single arrow is easily broken, but not ten in a bundle. Japanese proverb

It is amazing how much people get done if they do not worry about who gets the credit. Swahili proverb

There is no I in Teamwork. - Unknown

You don't get harmony when everybody sings the same note. Doug Floyd

Wild ducks make a lot of noise, but they also have the sense to benefit from occasionally flying in formation. - Unknown

It is amazing how much you can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the credit. Unknown

Teamwork divides the task and double the success. - Unknown

None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful. Mother Teresa

Individual commitment to a group effort, that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work. Vince Lombardi

