



County of
Grande Prairie No. 1

County of Grande Prairie

2023 Annual Report



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THE COUNTY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE BY THE NUMBERS



25,928
POPULATION

2022 – UP 4.83% FROM 2021



38
MEDIAN AGE



\$511,000
AVERAGE
VALUE

SINGLE FAMILY
RESIDENTIAL DWELLING
SOLD FROM JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 20, 2023



\$134,000
MEDIAN
HOUSEHOLD
INCOME



30 KM
PAVED
MULTI-PURPOSE
TRAILS



249
BRIDGES



3,646 KM
PAVED &
GRAVEL ROADS



30
PLAYGROUNDS



524 KM
PAVED ROADS
VERSUS 289 KM IN 2012



MESSAGE FROM **Bob Marshall**

On behalf of County Council and Administration, I'm pleased to present the 2023 County of Grande Prairie Annual Report.

Last year, the Dunes West Wildfire required unprecedented action from County staff and fire crews, as well as support from other communities and regions. We are incredibly grateful, but we also know 2024 has the potential to be another bad fire season. We should all be thinking ahead, prioritizing emergency preparedness and taking steps to reduce risks. For more information or to request a FireSmart Home Assessment, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/firesmart or call 780-532-9727.

Our strong relationships with the City of Grande Prairie and the Municipal District of Greenview are vital for effectively responding to emergencies, collaborating on regional issues, and raising our profile with provincial officials to secure support for economic development opportunities, transportation infrastructure, healthcare services, and more.

We asked County residents for their opinions,

and you overwhelmingly reported a high level of satisfaction with your quality of life here: 96 per cent rate it as very good or good. We know our volunteers are the backbone of this enviable lifestyle, and that's why County Council continues to provide grant funding to support sport, recreation and cultural organizations, and facilities.

Safety is one of our top priorities, so we're supporting the County's Crime Prevention Committee in its collaborative, innovative, and targeted interventions to reduce crime.

Council continues to keep a keen eye on maintaining vital services and programs while addressing inflationary pressures and growth. Looking to the future, we must also consider the impact of provincial adjustments, such as changes to assessment rules, a pause on taxes for new well and pipeline projects, and the elimination of the oil well drilling equipment tax — an impact of almost \$20 million.

We are proud to live in a County that offers a safe, affordable lifestyle surrounded by friendly people in a quiet, beautiful setting. Thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve you.



MESSAGE FROM **COUNTY MANAGER** **Joulia Whittleton**

To successfully provide a wide variety of high-quality services, the County requires dedication from staff at every level. This Annual Report highlights the services, programs, and projects we were proud to deliver in 2023 with the support of Council.

In particular, I want to highlight my appreciation to all County employees and volunteers who participated in the response to the Dunes West Wildfire and provided support to evacuees who were accommodated in our region during last year's emergencies. Staff often wore two hats, contributing to the emergency response, while also keeping day-to-day municipal operations running.

Last year also marked a significant change in the make-up of several departments that deliver services. We reviewed the County's organizational structure, framework, and

processes for continuous organizational development. That review resulted in changes to roles, responsibilities, expectations, and decision-making for some areas, all with the goal of improving service delivery and streamlining our operations. County residents, businesses, communities, and partners can expect to continue to receive a high level of service no matter how they interact with the County.

Our staff are committed to building a culture of innovation within the County. Their dedication helps ensure the County remains forward-thinking as we continue to find new ways to improve our service delivery and make a positive impact.

Above all, I want to thank County residents for their support, participation, and constructive advice that helps us be the best we can be.

COUNTY DIVISIONS & AREA COUNCILLORS

Your Councillor represents you and the division where you live or do business, and welcomes your feedback. Find out about the boards and committees they serve on at www.countygp.ab.ca/committees.



7

Division 7 Councillor and Deputy Reeve
Brian Peterson
780-228-0034
bpeterson@countyg.ab.ca



8

Division 8 Councillor
Karen Rosvold
780-831-0902
krosvold@countyg.ab.ca



9

Division 9 Councillor
Bob Chrenek
780-897-3577
bchrenek@countyg.ab.ca



2

Division 2 Councillor
Kurt Balderston
780-814-8404
kbalderston@countyg.ab.ca



5

Division 5 Councillor and Reeve
Bob Marshall
780-933-2053
bmarshall@countyg.ab.ca



6

Division 6 Councillor
Peter Harris
780-933-3074
pharris@countyg.ab.ca



4

Division 4 Councillor
Steve Zimmerman
780-831-0864
szimmerman@countyg.ab.ca



3

Division 3 Councillor
Leanne Beaupre
780-814-3121
lbeaupre@countyg.ab.ca



1

Division 1 Councillor
Amanda Frayn
780-518-3197
afrayn@countyg.ab.ca



ADVOCACY UPDATE

The County of Grande Prairie advocates to the provincial and federal governments on several issues that impact community well-being and quality of life.

County Council approved three Government Advocacy Priorities for 2023-2024: Economic Development, Transportation, and Health. These areas are crucial for maintaining and enhancing quality of life in the County; they shine a light on our community's urgent needs and help maximize available opportunities.

2023 - 24 Advocacy Priorities

1

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Create alignment with the Government of Alberta's Recovery Plan to gain economic development opportunities for the County. The focus is on job creation, workforce development and talent attraction, economic diversification, and infrastructure development.

2

TRANSPORTATION

Promote awareness of transportation infrastructure needs in the County with the provincial and federal governments to ensure supply chain resiliency and safety.

3

A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

To better meet local needs, the County seeks improvements to healthcare services, including attracting professionals to our area.

Read about additional advocacy priorities at www.countygp.ab.ca/advocacy.



2023 Successes

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- County officials met with the Premier and several Ministers to highlight key areas of improvement to provide a greater quality of life for our residents.
- The County is advocating for changes to electricity distribution rates. Our resolution was passed by the Rural Municipalities of Alberta, asking the province to adopt a new electricity pricing model for transmission and distribution that eliminates the disparity across Alberta.
- Our new Certified Site Program that ranks available properties for investment readiness received national recognition.

TRANSPORTATION

- Preparation work for Highway 40X was funded in the 2023 provincial budget and the County is continuing to advocate for construction funding. This crucial addition will connect Highways 40 and 43 to build on the region's economic growth potential while improving traffic safety.
- Highlighted the need for better air and rail service in discussions with the Premier and Ministers.
- Provided a letter of support to the province for tendering construction of the Bezanson roundabout following years of advocacy around intersection safety improvements.

A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

- The Mountview Health Complex has long been a Council priority. In December, County officials joined the Town of Beaverlodge for the province's announcement that construction will begin in 2024.
- The County continues to support efforts to attract and retain healthcare professionals in our communities, including a financial incentive to physicians.
- Approved the Crime Prevention Committee's Annual Work Plan to reduce crime and improve residents' well-being.

SHAPING TOMORROW TOGETHER
INSIDE THE COUNTY
OF GRANDE PRAIRIE'S

PLAN YOUR COUNTY INITIATIVE

How do you prepare an entire County for the future?

That's the ambitious question that the County of Grande Prairie is trying to answer with its innovative Plan Your County initiative – charting a course for the County's responsible development, making sure that all plans align with the values and goals of the people who live here.

To make this vision a reality, the County of Grande Prairie is turning to its most valuable resource — the people who call it home. The Plan Your County Team is seeking feedback from residents, landowners, and businesses, recognizing the significance of their perspectives in shaping policies that echo the unique character of the County.



STEP ONE

The Municipal Development Plan

At the heart of Plan Your County is the initial review and update of key planning documents, starting with the Municipal Development Plan (MDP). As the guide to the County's growth, the MDP sets the tone for other planning documents, some that already exist like the Land Use Bylaw, and others that need to be developed from scratch such as the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy that will focus on these important communities.

The first phase of the Plan Your County initiative focused on understanding the values and priorities of the community and what makes the County of Grande Prairie special. To do this, more than 300 residents contributed their feedback in the spring and summer of 2023, identifying three main priorities: outdoor recreation and nature, community and people, and low taxes.

A highlight of this initial work involved working with junior high school students through the 'Planner for a Day' program. This unique opportunity allowed students from five schools to contribute their ideas by designing fictional communities inspired by the Grande Prairie region.

In addition to the work on the MDP, work also began on the County's first Hamlet Resiliency Strategy looking at the long-term needs for the County's rural hamlets as unique parts of the community. A final draft of this strategy will be considered by County Council in 2024.

The Plan Your County journey is far from over. Draft policy options for the County's MDP are expected to be released for public feedback in the spring of 2024, with work beginning on other planning documents to follow.

The County of Grande Prairie appreciates the contributions of everyone who participated so far and looks forward to hearing even more feedback.

To read the 'What We Heard' report and stay informed and involved, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/PlanYourCounty to help ensure that the collective voice of the community continues to shape the destiny of the County of Grande Prairie.

ELEMENTS OF PLAN YOUR COUNTY

Municipal Development Plan (2023-2024)

The MDP guides how all aspects of the County work together and evolve to meet everyone's needs to create a great place to live for generations to come.

Hamlet Resiliency Strategy (2023)

A special strategy looking into the needs of some of the County's rural hamlets. This document will look at the future development needs in these areas, as well as what other types of amenities hamlets could benefit from such as trails, cultural spaces, or economic development activities.

Land Use Bylaw Review (2024)

This bylaw outlines the standards (e.g., zoning) when someone is developing a site, such as building a house. Since the County's first zoning bylaw in 1955, this document has been updated five times. It is important to regularly review the Land Use Bylaw to make sure that it continues to align with the community's needs. The Land Use Bylaw review will be initiated following completion of the Municipal Development Plan.

Area Structure Plan Reviews (2024)

These plans provide direction for long-term land use and details on the growth and development within a defined area in the County.

Educational Programs (2025)

The County will develop an educational program to help applicants easily navigate the planning framework.

Other Planning & Development Documents (2025)

This includes a wide range of documents such as policies, non-statutory plans, and bylaws related to development in the County.

1,500+
VISITS TO
countygp.ab.ca/engage

450+
PEOPLE
ENGAGED

485
LETTERS
TO HAMLET
RESIDENTS

20
IN-PERSON
EVENTS

11
EMAIL
UPDATES

2
SURVEYS

A UNITED RESPONSE

DUNES WEST WILDFIRE

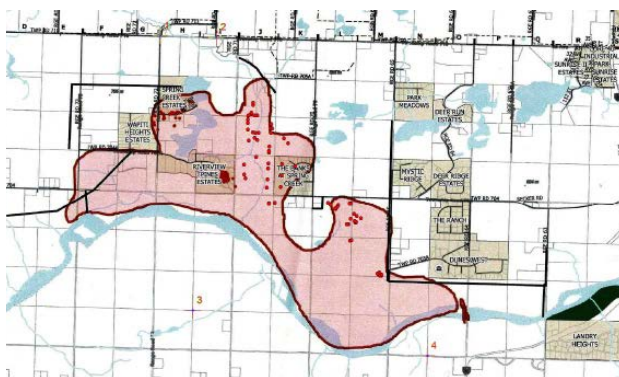
On May 5, a lightning strike near the Wapiti River ignited the Dunes West Wildfire, consuming 1,400 hectares and prompting the evacuation of more than 1,900 residents and 440 homes.

Investments in emergency preparedness, speedy mobilization and a quick response meant no lives were lost, and firefighters saved all but four homes in the evacuation area. Our hearts go out to the families who lost cherished memories.



GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (GPREP): A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Our joint emergency management model fosters unity and resilience across the region – and proved invaluable in the wildfire response. As with other crises, seasoned professionals formed a team to coordinate the Incident Command Post, Emergency Coordination Centre, Call Centre and Reception Centre, providing tactical response, frequent updates, emergency accommodations and supports to more than 900 evacuees. As the fire progressed, an evacuee information session offered residents an opportunity to ask questions and hear reports from officials involved in the fire response. As part of the re-entry plan, GPREP safely completed damage assessments of hundreds of homes so residents could return, and critical infrastructure was evaluated for safe use. These collaborative efforts were instrumental in navigating the Dunes West Wildfire.



LIVESTOCK PROTECTION

The County's Livestock Emergency Response Plan (LERP) was established to provide an effective way to inform property owners and manage livestock emergencies. Being part of the LERP means the County can find and identify animals in emergencies, which was critical during the Dunes West Wildfire.

More than 560 animals, including cattle, horses, and chickens were evacuated during the wildfire. County staff fed animals that had to be left behind and reassured evacuees with photos of animals that survived fire-ravaged areas.

County Agriculture staff were present at various locations — the Reception Centre, Emergency Communications Centre, Incident Command Post, and Call Centre — to ensure there was always someone who understood the agricultural perspective of evacuees.

STRATEGIC FIRE RESPONSE

The County's Wildfire Mitigation Strategy follows FireSmart vegetation management guidelines. Our comprehensive "fire fuel" management plan was put to the test.

Fire services from each of the GPREP municipalities collaborated to combat the blaze, with support from contractors, firefighters from communities in Alberta and Oregon, and a group from the military. They also responded to an additional 40 calls during the first three days and worked day and night on creating a perimeter around the fire.

Collaboration like this is only possible because common command systems, training, terminology, and familiarity allow for a unified response. It's also why our fire team members have been able to assist at every major fire in Northwestern Alberta since 2011, bringing a wealth of experience to the table. This experience was evident as our crews positioned themselves between the fire and homes, significantly reducing losses.

Residents complied with evacuation orders, allowing firefighters to focus on saving homes instead of rescuing people. The County worked closely with RCMP and Regional Enforcement Services to ensure security checkpoints were in place during evacuation. When it was safe, a permitting system helped residents visit their properties.

The initial line of the Southeast Grande Prairie Firebreak was completed ahead of schedule at the end of May. This 30-km corridor was funded by a \$5 million commitment from the Government of Alberta and an additional \$1.25 million each from County and the City of Grande Prairie if required. With its construction, people and property receive an added measure of protection during fire season, which is key for community safety and safeguarding critical public infrastructure.

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

The County of Grande Prairie shared crucial updates several times a day via media releases, call centre, evacuee bulletins, in-person meetings, and online video messages. We invested time to clarify misinformation. When evacuees returned home, we provided a Welcome Home Guide.

REFLECTIONS ON THE UNIFIED RESPONSE

Overall, the coordinated response to the Dunes West Wildfire was a remarkable display of unity, resilience, and operational excellence. County staff wore two hats: supporting the wildfire response and getting evacuated residents back home within two weeks, all while keeping municipal day-to-day business running.

The success of the response can be attributed to the deep trust placed on GPREP and the County, built on the solid foundation of effectively managing several past emergencies like evacuations, floods, fires, and the pandemic. We saw incredible teamwork and leadership in action.

WHO IS GPREP?

GPREP brings the County and City of Grande Prairie and the towns of Beaverlodge, Sexsmith, and Wembley together in managing emergency situations. With just four employees, the organization tirelessly prepares us for disaster responses through annual exercises and continuous training. When crises hit, GPREP springs into action, establishing an Incident Command Post to support first responders, orchestrating emergency plans, and marshalling resources across all partner municipalities — ensuring an unwavering 24/7 response. Learn more at www.gprep.ca.

REGISTER FOR THE LERP

The Livestock Emergency Response Plan (LERP) and its database of livestock in the area helps reduce risk to people and animals in an emergency. Depending on the type of emergency, assistance may include transporting or feeding animals. To learn more and to register: www.countygp.ab.ca/lerp

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Dunes West Wildfire was a pivotal event that is refining our emergency response planning. With the threat of increased severity and frequency of climate events, it's essential to consider our strategies for long-term sustainability.

- **FireSmart planning and vegetation management:** We've secured a grant to update the County's Wildfire Mitigation Strategy and applied for another to extend vegetation management work in the Highway 40 West priority area, adding to ongoing efforts.
- **Doubling down on FireSmart:** Our enhanced focus on FireSmart involves reducing potential fire fuel, re-evaluating high-risk zones, and educating residents through free home assessments, workshops, and wood-chipping events.
- **Equipment upgrades and standardization:** We're looking at upgrades to our trucks to allow easy sharing of equipment across the region.
- **Enhancing air support readiness:** We're exploring strategies to have helicopters on standby during periods of high fire risk.
- **GPREP's evolution:** GPREP is reviewing its staffing model and looking for ways to leverage experienced community members.
- **Community support and volunteer empowerment:** We're developing training initiatives to better integrate volunteers in future responses.

The Dunes West Wildfire was a transformative experience, showcasing effective planning, regional collaboration, and robust community support. Lessons learned and strategies implemented will fortify our community against future challenges, making us safer and more resilient.

SPOTLIGHT ON EVENTS

The County of Grande Prairie is proud to host and facilitate events that celebrate residents' pride and Community spirit.

COUNTY OPEN HOUSES

Residents of all ages attended County Open Houses to engage with the County and provide feedback on initiatives. Everyone enjoyed connecting in person and sharing a barbecue meal. Open Houses were held at the Hythe & District Memorial Arena, Bezanson Community Event Centre, and County Crosslink Sportsplex.

WINTER FAMILY FROSTIVAL

This new addition to the County created unforgettable memories for residents of all ages who enjoyed a frosty day of winter wonder and family fun, including a bonfire, refreshments, sleigh rides, tobogganing, snow sculpting, and painting.

KIDS CAN CATCH

Always a fun time, Kids Can Catch in 2023 included fishing and learning about fish conservation as well as the grand opening of the International Paper and Arbor Day Foundation Grove at the County Sportsplex Pond, representing a \$50,000 gift to the County. Everyone enjoyed the new orchard with apple and cherry trees, Saskatoon and haskap berries, and shoreline planting beds.

SENIORS' WEEK

This annual June event featured a variety of events promoting intergenerational fellowship, entertainment and activities in a variety of locations in the County.

RECYCLING ROUND UP

Residents gather to safely and effectively dispose of everyday items that don't belong in the landfill, like household hazardous waste, electronics, appliances and more, while also learning about County recycling programs and entering to win prizes.



COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

The County of Grande Prairie invests millions of dollars in grants each year to enhance the wellbeing of its residents and to support committed local citizens who put the funds to work for their communities.

**\$8.7
MILLION**
TOTAL COMMUNITY
CONTRIBUTIONS
AND GRANTS



**\$2
MILLION**
IN OPERATING
ASSISTANCE
GRANTS



**\$1.8
MILLION**
IN CAPITAL
PROJECTS



\$345,000
TO SUPPORT
PREVENTATIVE
SOCIAL
PROGRAMMING
THROUGH
NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATIONS



\$187,000
TO SUPPORT
ACCESSIBLE
TRANSPORTATION
FOR RESIDENTS



\$48,000
IN CEMETERY
GRANTS

\$560,330 TO LOCAL RECREATION BOARDS, INCLUDING:	
Beaverlodge – Elmworth – Hualien Area Recreation Board	\$75,970
Clairmont – Bezanson Area Recreation Board	\$74,710
Grande Prairie Area Recreation Board	\$44,500
Hythe – Demmitt Area Recreation Board	\$197,580
Sexsmith – La Glace – Teepee Creek Area Recreation Board	\$126,780
Wembley – Saskatoon Lake – Dimsdale Area Recreation Board	\$40,790

**\$3.8
MILLION**
WAS ALLOCATED
TO NEIGHBOURING
MUNICIPALITIES
THROUGH
**INTERMUNICIPAL
COLLABORATION
FRAMEWORK
AGREEMENTS**



FUNDS AT WORK IN THE COMMUNITY



\$3 MILLION TO THE LA GLACE & DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

for the Regional Recreation Centre: \$333,333 per year over six years (2018-2023).



\$2.6 MILLION OVER 16 YEARS TO STARS

to support their life-saving work across the region. Current contributions include operational funding of \$200,000 per year (2019-2023) and capital funding of \$100,000 per year (2020-2024) to the fleet renewal campaign.



\$1.1 MILLION TO SUPPORT EVERGREEN PARK

including support for operations.



\$1 MILLION GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL HOSPITAL FOUNDATION KEY TO CARE CAMPAIGN

\$470,465 released as of 2023, to install television services.



\$300,000 TO THE HYTHE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

\$100,000 per year (2021-2023) for arena upgrades.



\$300,000 TO SUPPORT THE NEW SUNRISE HOUSE YOUTH EMERGENCY SHELTER

\$100,000 per year (2023-2025).



\$200,000 TO D-COY ARMOURIES

\$100,000 per year (2023-2024) for renovations.



\$192,000 TO NITEHAWK YEAR-ROUND ADVENTURE PARK

\$142,000 for equipment replacement. \$50,000 per year (2015-2023) for energy costs.



\$100,000 TO THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH #54

\$50,000 per year (2022-2023) for building repairs.



\$50,000 TO THE SPRING LAKE SKI HILL ASSOCIATION

to repair the ski lift.



\$40,000 TO THE HYTHE & DISTRICT RECREATION SOCIETY

to replace the Hythe Community Centre furnaces.



\$30,000 TO THE SASKATOON LAKE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

for roofing.



\$25,375 TO THE VIKING CULTURAL CENTRE

for a new playground at Silver Wing Hall.



\$24,930 BEAVERLODGE BOYS & GIRLS CAMP SOCIETY

for playground improvements.



\$22,515 TO THE BEZANSON AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

for a divider curtain and LED lighting project.



\$22,767 TO THE CLAIRMONT PARTICIPARENT SOCIETY

for upgrades to the Clairmont Community School playground.

2022-2026

STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

The County of Grande Prairie No. 1.
First in building sustainable, prosperous
and safe communities.

MISSION

The County of Grande Prairie builds on its natural
environment and the entrepreneurial spirit of its citizens to
provide an unmatched quality of life and opportunity for all.

OUR VALUES

The County of Grande Prairie Council commits
to the following values. We will maintain high
standards of ethical and professional
conduct by being:

- Trustworthy in our decision making and interpersonal relationships
- Transparent in our communications
- Respectful of others
- Collaborative in achieving our goal

OUR OPERATING PRINCIPLES

We will use these principles to guide the decision-making and service
delivery of our County. We will:

- Place the people we serve at the centre of our work.
- Be good stewards of our land, air and water.
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility and good financial management.
- Provide programs and services in an effective and efficient manner.
- Foster an entrepreneurial spirit and encourage sustainable agriculture, industry and tourism pursuits.
- Be a good neighbour to our surrounding municipalities.
- Practice good governance and respect each other's roles.
- Create a work environment that contributes to employee health and well-being.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Six strategic themes lay the foundation of the County's work and planning.

Read through the report for details of how the County has driven each priority forward in the past year.



**EFFECTIVE
TRANSPORTATION
NETWORKS**



**EFFECTIVE LAND-USE
MANAGEMENT**



**FISCAL
MANAGEMENT**



**COMMUNITY WELLNESS
AND SAFETY**



**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**



**GOVERNANCE AND
LEADERSHIP**

Learn more about County Council's Strategic Plan
at www.countygp.ab.ca/stratplan.





EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

Effective transportation networks are a priority for the County. Safe and well-maintained roads and bridges drive economic development, support communities, and align with the priorities of residents and industry.



**\$47.4
MILLION**

2023 INVESTMENT
INTO THE COUNTY'S
TRANSPORTATION
NETWORK

Roads and sidewalks upgraded	13 km
Dust control applied	140 km
Gravel applied	795 km
Ditches rehabilitated	28 km
Culverts installed	136
Repainted lines on paved roads	372 km

INVESTED
**\$28
MILLION**
IN CAPITAL ROAD AND
BRIDGE PROJECTS

INVESTED
**\$19.4
MILLION**
IN ROAD AND BRIDGE
MAINTENANCE

COMPLETED
313
MAINTENANCE
PROJECTS
INCLUDING CULVERT
REPLACEMENTS AND
ROAD REPAIRS



Approximately \$22.5 million – 59 per cent of the 2023 capital budget – is going towards capital road and bridge projects.



Busy roads reflect a recovering economy. We saw an increase in permits for service rigs, drilling rigs, and heavy hauls in 2023, and 2024 looks promising so far.



We're in the final phase of Highway 40 Twinning and Bridge Construction — a cost-shared project with the province and MD of Greenview. The County made its final contribution in 2023 for a total of \$10 million toward the project.

TOWNSHIP ROAD 720 GRADING PROJECT

In the summer of 2023, the County invested \$1 million to complete grading work to rebuild Township Road 720 from Range Road 92 to 94.





FISCAL MANAGEMENT

The County relies on a sustainable financial framework to continue to build safe and prosperous communities.

County Council approved the final capital and operating budgets for 2023 with no increase to the municipal tax rate for the fourth year. The \$195.1 million budget includes an estimated \$106.7 million for general operations, \$6.7 million for debt payments and \$81.7 million for capital investments including \$39.6 million for projects continued from previous years.

Council approved using dividends from Aquatera to offset increases to utility rates for residents receiving wastewater service in the Hamlet of Clairmont. It came into effect on May 1st – a total commitment of \$2 million.



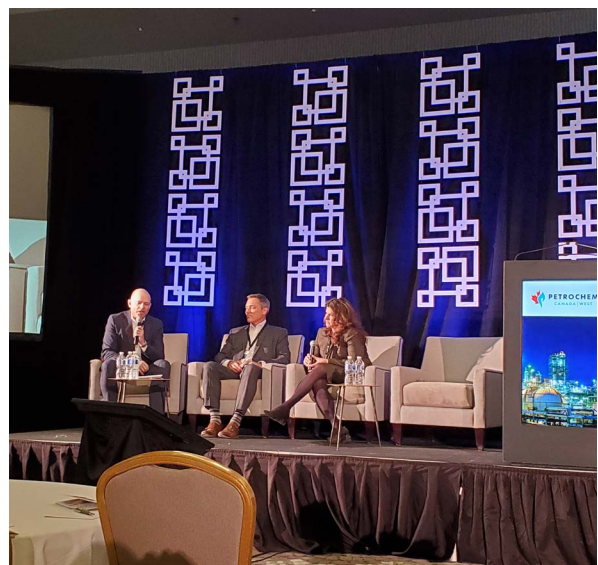
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The County helps drive vibrant, prosperous, and sustainable communities by facilitating connections with our partners and stakeholders to encourage economic and community development.

Economic Development team continues to implement an industrial investment attraction strategy, showcasing the County's key offerings and competitive positioning to support growth and economic development.

Activities are coordinated around four main pillars: investment readiness, investment attraction, business retention and expansion, and providing an economic development lens for the County's broader activities.

County Council supported the Regional Workforce Development Partnership with the City of Grande Prairie, Northwestern Polytechnic, MD of Greenview, and the Grande Prairie and District Chamber of Commerce. This partnership is working to support local businesses in recruiting and developing the workforce they need to support growth.





EFFECTIVE LAND-USE MANAGEMENT

The County wants development to happen in the best and most appropriate locations. Sound planning and community engagement are key to the process.

CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

	2022	2023
Inspections	2,105	1,765
Non-residential building permits	40	60
Residential building permits	309	252
Residential construction value	\$51,248,038	\$44,812,490
Non-residential construction value	\$24,307,757	\$19,131,743



PLANS UNDERWAY

Municipal Development Plan Update

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is the primary policy document that provides long-term guidelines and policy direction for growth and development within the County. The MDP guides the policy direction for other planning documents such as Area Structure Plans and the Land Use Bylaw. The County has initiated a review of the MDP to ensure that we are supporting effective planning and development which meets the needs of the community.

Hamlet Resiliency Strategy

The Hamlet Resiliency Strategy is a special study looking into the long-term needs of some of the County's rural hamlets. As these smaller communities are unique, this study will engage with residents and other groups to identify their requirements, and what other types of amenities these hamlets could benefit from such as trails, cultural spaces or economic development programs.

Windsor Area Structure Plan

An Area Structure Plan (ASP) is under development for the southwest part of the Hamlet of Clairmont, covering the area between Range Road 62 and 63, and south of Highway 43 to the City of Grande Prairie boundary. The plan will guide the development of the approximately 388 hectares, outlining future land use and development plans including parks, roads, water, sewer, storm water, and other infrastructure.

Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDP)

An IDP is a long-term and strategic plan between two or more municipalities. An IDP's purpose is to provide a coordinated and collaborative framework respecting land use, servicing and transportation on lands adjacent to the boundaries of the respective municipalities.

Beaverlodge IDP

This IDP between the County and the Town of Beaverlodge will address growth opportunities and other development-related matters of joint interest between the two municipalities. A draft was presented to the public in August 2023.

Wembley IDP

Work on this IDP plan being developed between the County and the Town of Wembley is currently on hold. Once complete, the plan will provide direction on what types of land uses are appropriate around the town if and when the landowner chooses to develop, considering factors such as surrounding land uses and infrastructure.

City of Grande Prairie IDP Update

In 2024, the County and City of Grande Prairie will complete the update of their IDP. This work will be a review of the existing plans in the current context of development in the area to ensure that it meets the needs of residents and both municipalities.



GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Effective leadership of a municipality starts with a shared understanding of challenges and priorities.



Our innovative approach to leadership includes a strong commitment to customer service to meet the needs of residents and businesses.

With an approved Indigenous Relationship Policy, the County's next step will involve engaging with other municipalities regarding a regional Indigenous Relations Plan. The County will also continue to build and maintain intermunicipal relationships and identify priorities and strategies for regional economic development initiatives, including a Workforce Development Strategy and a Regional Growth Study.

FRIENDS OF EDUCATION AWARD

The County was awarded the Alberta School Boards Association Zone One Friends of Education Award after being nominated by the Peace Wapiti Public School Division Board. We appreciate the recognition of our commitment to students and families, and our community schools: sharing resources during municipal and school board elections, advocating for a replacement high school, and the outstanding leadership and support during area wildfires in May of 2023.

2021 CITIZEN SATISFACTION SURVEY

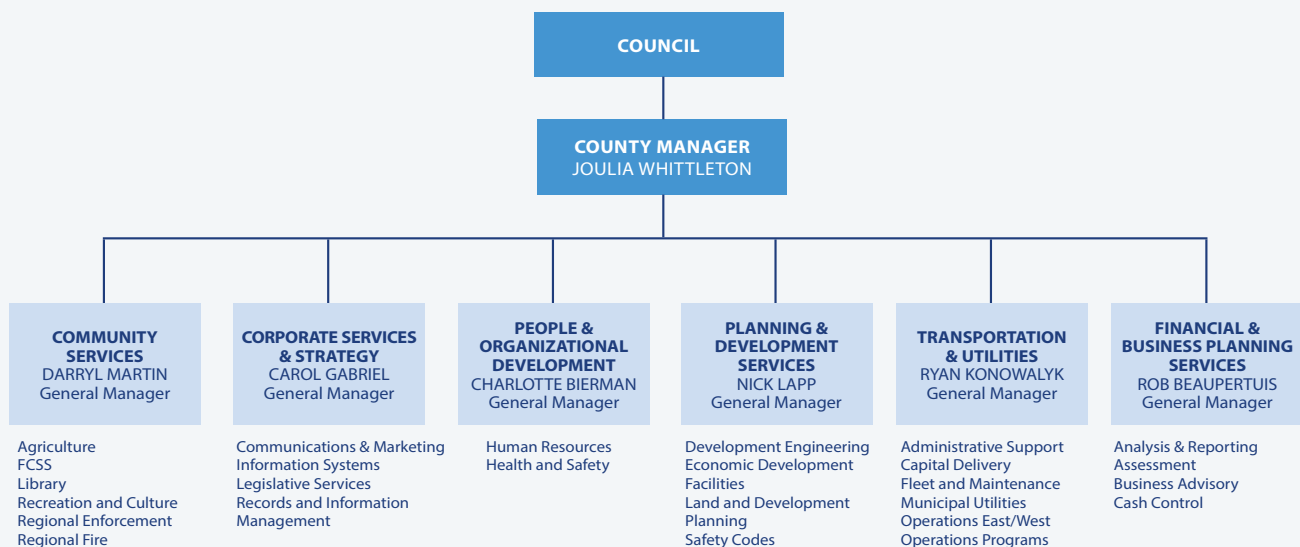
The 2021 Citizen Satisfaction Survey results showed the County's priorities are aligned with residents':

- 96 per cent rate our quality of life as very good or good.
- 95 per cent are proud to be a resident of the County.
- Our residents consistently rate roads as their top priority.

HOW THE COUNTY IS ORGANIZED

The County has been focusing on ways to improve our operations, enhance efficiency and maximize our ability to serve our community to meet the needs of growth and other changes. One of the ways we're adjusting is by restructuring and renaming County departments to better reflect the working divisions and the scope of services they deliver to the community.

This new organizational chart includes the people and divisions responsible for providing exceptional services to our communities.





COMMUNITY WELLNESS AND SAFETY

The County's commitment to collaboration and high standards has shaped the safe and friendly communities that residents and business enjoy today.

The County of Grande Prairie launched It Takes a Volunteer, a new program to recognize the outstanding contributions of volunteers and organizations who contribute to the well-being of their neighbours and communities. A total of 19 individuals and groups were recognized in 2023.

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) continues to work toward enhancing the well-being of residents, including responding to increasing demand for home support services; partnering with the City of Grande Prairie and Alberta Health Services on an opioid exhibit; working cooperatively with Peace Wapiti Public schools to support Community School Liaison Counsellors who provide mental health supports to students; and funding social agencies that provide preventative social programs.

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PROACTIVE PLANNING

	2022	2023
Regional Fire Service calls for service	2,018	2,790
Fire permits	2,069	1,768
Fire investigations	92	335
Regional Enforcement Services calls for service	1,540	1,469
Regional Enforcement Services charges laid	2,393	3,164
Regional Animal Pound intakes	1,102	1,192



In July, the City and County made a joint purchase of the building next door to the regional animal pound. The building is leased to **Bandaged Paws** to ensure continuity of animal rehoming and adoption services.

The County's 2023 Budget includes \$7 million for land purchase and preparation, architectural work, and hiring a builder to construct a **Regional Enforcement Services and RCMP Detachment Building** in the Hamlet of Clairmont. In addition, a full-time Parkland Patrol Officer position was funded to increase patrols during the Dunes West Wildfire and throughout the year.

The new **Community Safety and Wellness Grant** supports groups taking steps to protect their communities from harm. The first \$2,500 grant was awarded to the Grande Prairie & District Rural Crime Watch Association.

The County approved \$1.8 million for the **new Teepee Creek Fire Hall**, with planning for the Beaverlodge Fire Hall grand opening now underway.

New in 2023 was the Hickok Award, named to honour the memory and dedication of past Fire Services member Greg Hickok who served from 2011; he and his wife Cindy passed away in 2020. The **Hickok Award** exemplifies

the values and attributes Greg exhibited every day: dedication, hard work, and the willingness to do whatever it takes to get the job done (including "inventive reasoning"). Award winners are nominated by fellow Fire Service members. Tracay Depew was the 2023 Hickok Award recipient.



AGRICULTURE



Ken and Sherry Drysdale's family were the County of Grande Prairie's 2023 Farm Family — the 55th time it has been awarded. The award recognizes a local farm family that has made significant contributions to agriculture and their community.

	2022	2023
Weed inspections	26,052	42,181
Pest and disease	296	344
Ditches mowed	7,445 km	8,616 km
Ditches spot sprayed	5,809 km	3,685 km

RECREATION AND CULTURE

The County maintains outdoor recreation and greenspaces, as well as some community cemeteries.

13,759
CAMPERS
AT COUNTY CAMPGROUNDS

11
**NEWLY
POWERED SITES**
AT BEAR LAKE CAMPGROUND



WATER AND WASTEWATER

Council approved using dividends from Aquatera to offset increases to utility rates for residents receiving wastewater service in the Hamlet of Clairmont. It came into effect on May 1st – a total commitment of \$2 million.

RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

	2022	2023
Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management	5,375 tonnes diverted 51,143 tonnes accepted	7,112 tonnes diverted 37,720 tonnes accepted
West Grande Prairie Regional Landfill	732 tonnes diverted 6,925 tonnes accepted	763 tonnes diverted 6,715 tonnes accepted

LIBRARIES

Physical and Digital Library Items Circulated	2022	2023
Elmworth Community Library	3,610	4,108
Hythe Community Library	6,949	7,290
La Glace Community Library	9,863	9,820
Valhalla Community Library	7,451	8,388

The County of Grande Prairie Library Board operates four libraries in our communities.

2023 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

How was the municipal portion of
your 2023 tax dollars invested?



KEY SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

COUNTY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE



ROAD MAINTENANCE
EXCLUDING HIGHWAYS



REGIONAL FIRE SERVICE



**REGIONAL ENFORCEMENT
SERVICES**



DISASTER SERVICES



**WASTE & RECYCLING
MANAGEMENT FACILITIES
& SERVICES**



PROPERTY TAXES
MUNICIPAL PORTION



**COUNTY CAMPGROUNDS,
PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS & TRAILS**



**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
SUPPORT SERVICES**



UTILITIES
WATER, WASTEWATER



LIBRARIES



ANIMAL SERVICES



**AGRICULTURE SERVICES &
PROGRAMS**
ROADSIDE MOWING,
WEED CONTROL



**LAND USE PLANNING,
ZONING & DEVELOPMENT**



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

ALBERTA



HIGHWAYS



SCHOOLS
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION
CHILDREN'S SERVICES



HOSPITALS



SOCIAL SERVICES
CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SENIORS, COMMUNITY AND
SOCIAL SERVICES



**SUPPORTS FOR EMPLOYEES
& EMPLOYERS**



PUBLIC HEALTH
ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES



JUSTICE



PROPERTY TAXES
PROVINCIAL PORTION FOR
EDUCATION, SENIOR'S
FOUNDATION, AND DESIGNATED
INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES
REGISTRIES AND LAND TITLES



**PROVINCIAL PARKS &
CAMPGROUNDS**



ENVIRONMENT
FISH AND WILDLIFE
SPECIES AT RISK



**EMERGENCIES AND
DISASTER RELIEF**

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

CANADA



INCOME TAX



EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE



**NATIONAL DEFENSE
RCMP**



RAIL



AIRLINES & AIRPORTS
INTERNATIONAL TRADE
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL
BORDERS



POSTAL SERVICE



BANKING
MORTGAGES



NATIONAL PARKS



STUDENT LOANS



**CHILD BENEFIT
SOCIAL SERVICES**



OCEANS AND FISHERIES



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Administration Building

P 780-532-9722

F 780-539-9880

Community Services Building

P 780-532-9727

F 780-567-5576

countygp.ab.ca

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