

# County of Grande Prairie No. 1 Hamlet Resiliency Strategy

June 2024



County of  
Grande Prairie No. 1

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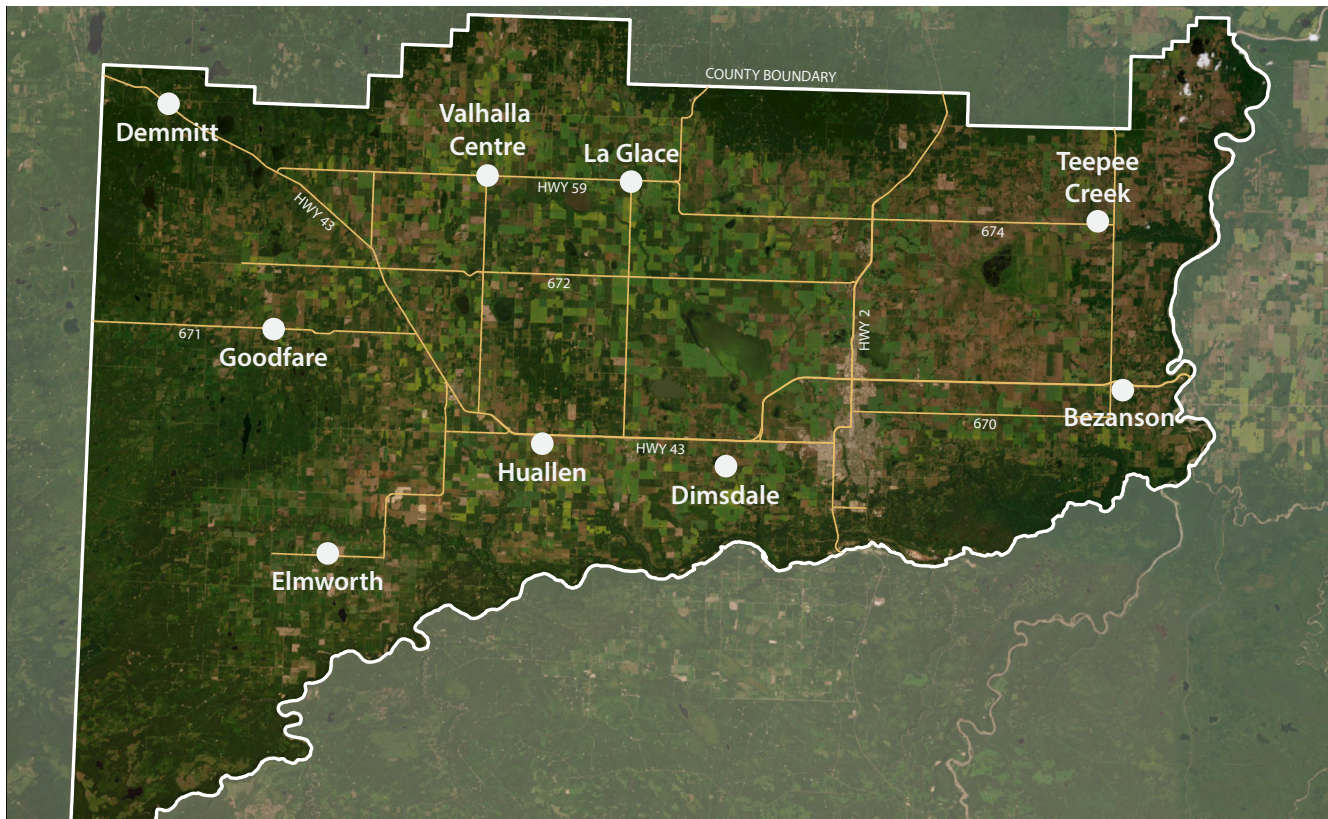
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# Executive Summary



The County of Grande Prairie's Growth and Economic Development Strategy recommended a program to promote resiliency within the County's hamlets. Hamlets play an important role in the development and community building of the County.

The purpose of the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy is to ensure rural hamlets are resilient and remain sustainable over the long-term. **Resiliency** is the ability for hamlets to adapt to changing external circumstances while maintaining their core functions and providing services to the surrounding area. This Strategy will also inform updates to the Municipal Development Plan review.

This Strategy details the process undertaken to evaluate the current state of the nine rural hamlets included in the strategy and identifies recommendations and actions to support their future sustainability.

The Hamlet Resiliency Strategy provides recommendations and actions that can be implemented by the County to encourage additional amenities and economic development as well as create communities that are more attractive to live in.

## The Hamlets

The following rural hamlets are included in this Strategy:

- Bezanson
- Demmitt
- Dimsdale
- Elmworth
- Goodfare
- Hualien
- La Glace
- Teepee Creek
- Valhalla Centre

## Key Findings

Each hamlet was scored against criteria such as land use mix, population, utility servicing, community amenities, and geographic size and location of the hamlet. The higher scoring hamlets are the most likely to experience growth pressure and be able to support additional growth. The result of the hamlet scoring is as follows:

Hamlet	Score
Bezanson	29
La Glace	23
Teepee Creek	23
Valhalla Centre	19
Dimsdale	16
Elmworth	14
Demmitt	9
Goodfare	8
Huallen	5

Bezanson and La Glace have the most potential for growth due to their existing size and concentration of services. Opportunities exist in Bezanson, Dimsdale, La Glace, Teepee Creek and Valhalla Centre to support stable populations and services due to their existing populations, amenities and locational advantages.

Only four of the nine hamlets meet the Municipal Government Act criteria for a hamlet. These are:

- Bezanson
- La Glace
- Teepee Creek
- Valhalla Centre

It would not be possible for any of the other hamlets to achieve the requirements through a boundary adjustment.

## Strategy

The strategy provides three goals and a series of actions that address hamlet resiliency. The actions are split into County-wide General Actions and Hamlet Specific Actions.

The goals of the strategy are:

- Infrastructure is upgraded to accommodate growth in the growth hamlets and maintained to support a stable population in the stable hamlets.*
- Placemaking is enabled to celebrate the rich history and future possibilities within each hamlet and to strengthen community identity.*
- Programs and land use planning create opportunities for economic prosperity within and surrounding hamlets.*

The actions in the strategy primarily focus on Bezanson, Dimsdale, Elmworth, La Glace, Teepee Creek and Valhalla Centre. The following actions should be taken to provide continued stability and encourage growth where most desirable. These actions address:

- Planning and Land Use
- Infrastructure
- Economic Incentives
- Community Building

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## **County-Wide General Actions**

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### ***3.2.1 Planning and Land Use***

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**3.2.1.1. Update Designations to Hamlet, Rural Settlement, or Historical Settlement**

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**3.2.1.2. Adjust Hamlet Boundaries**

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**3.2.1.3. Municipal Development Plan Updates**

**a. Re-designate the Hamlets and Their Boundaries**

**b. Allow for More Development Opportunities Around Hamlets**

**c. Enable Non-Residential Opportunities in Rural and Historical Settlements**

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**3.2.1.4. Develop, Incentivize, and Update Area Structure Plans**

**a. Develop Area Structure Plans for Growth Hamlets**

**b. Incentivize Developer-led Area Structure Plans for Areas In and Adjacent to Growth Hamlets**

**c. Update Existing Area Structure Plans**

**d. Enable Development Opportunities in Rural and Historical Settlements**

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### ***3.2.2 Infrastructure***

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**3.2.2.1. Determine Long-Term Level of Service in Hamlets**

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**3.2.2.2. Establish Timeline for Infrastructure Upgrades**

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**3.2.2.3. Establish a Permanent Program for Community Hall Internet Connectivity**

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### ***3.2.3 Economic Incentives***

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**3.2.3.1. Include hamlets in future Business Incentives Program**

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**3.2.3.2. Explore Development Incentive Options for Hamlets**

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### ***3.2.4 Community Building***

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**3.2.4.1. Create a Program to Acknowledge Historical Settlements**

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**3.2.4.2. Provide Community Beautification Program Grants**

**a. Continue to Support Community Beautification Initiatives Through Grants**

**b. Explore Supporting Community Beautification by Providing Services**

**c. Explore Providing Additional Resources for Enforcement of Community Standards Bylaw**

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**3.2.4.3. Explore Opportunities for Shared Recreation**

**a. Explore Opportunities for Shared Recreation Infrastructure**

**b. Explore Opportunities for Shared Recreation Programming**

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**3.2.4.4. Explore Opportunities for Transit to Urban Centres**

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**3.2.4.5. Explore the Development of a Biannual Volunteer Campaign**

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## Hamlet Specific Actions

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### 3.3.1 *Bezanson*

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3.3.1.1. Expand Hamlet Boundary to Include Future Industrial Area North of Highway 43 and Re-designate Land Use for Those Parcels

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3.3.1.2. Update the Bezanson Area Structure Plan to Identify Growth Areas

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3.3.1.3. Develop a Timeline to Expand Utility Capacity to Service New Growth

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3.3.1.4. Connect the School to the Recreation Centre Through a Crosswalk and Pathway

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### 3.3.2 *Demmitt*

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3.3.2.1. Recognize Demmitt as a Historical Settlement

a. Update the Municipal Development Plan to Recognize Demmitt as a Historical Settlement

b. Include Demmitt in a Program to Recognize Historical Settlements

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### 3.3.3 *Dimsdale*

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3.3.3.1. Expand Hamlet Boundary to Reflect Planned Future Development Area in Dimsdale

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3.3.3.2 Review and Update the Dimsdale Area Structure Plan

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3.3.3.3 Explore Long-Term Servicing Options for the Hamlet

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3.3.3.4. Explore Economic Development Opportunities to Market the Dimsdale Area as a Rural Industrial Hub

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### 3.3.4 *Elmworth*

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3.3.4.1. Explore Programming Opportunities that Could Draw More People to Use the Library and Curling Facility

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3.3.4.2. Include More Options for Development Around Elmworth in the Municipal Development Plan

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### 3.3.5 *Goodfare*

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3.3.5.1. Recognize Goodfare as a Rural Settlement

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### 3.3.6 *Huallen*

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3.3.6.1. Recognize Huallen as a Rural Settlement

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### 3.3.7 *La Glace*

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3.3.7.1. Complete an Area Structure Plan to Identify Future Growth Areas

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3.3.7.2. Complete Sanitary Servicing Upgrades to Improve Capacity for New Development as Needed

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3.3.7.3. Explore Opportunities to Locate a Cell Tower in La Glace

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3.3.7.4. Adjust Hamlet Boundaries

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### 3.3.8 *Teepee Creek*

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3.3.8.1. Determine the Long-Term Level of Service for Water and Wastewater

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3.3.8.2. Complete an Area Structure Plan to Identify Future Growth Areas

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3.3.8.3. Prioritize the Completion of the Fire Hall Infrastructure to Ensure Adequate Emergency Response Services for the Community

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3.3.8.4. Explore Options to Improve the Quality of Drinking Water Through Infrastructure Improvements

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### 3.3.9 *Valhalla Centre*

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3.3.9.1. Work with the Local School to Establish a Community Garden Space with Educational Programming in Valhalla Centre

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3.3.9.2. Adjust Hamlet Boundaries

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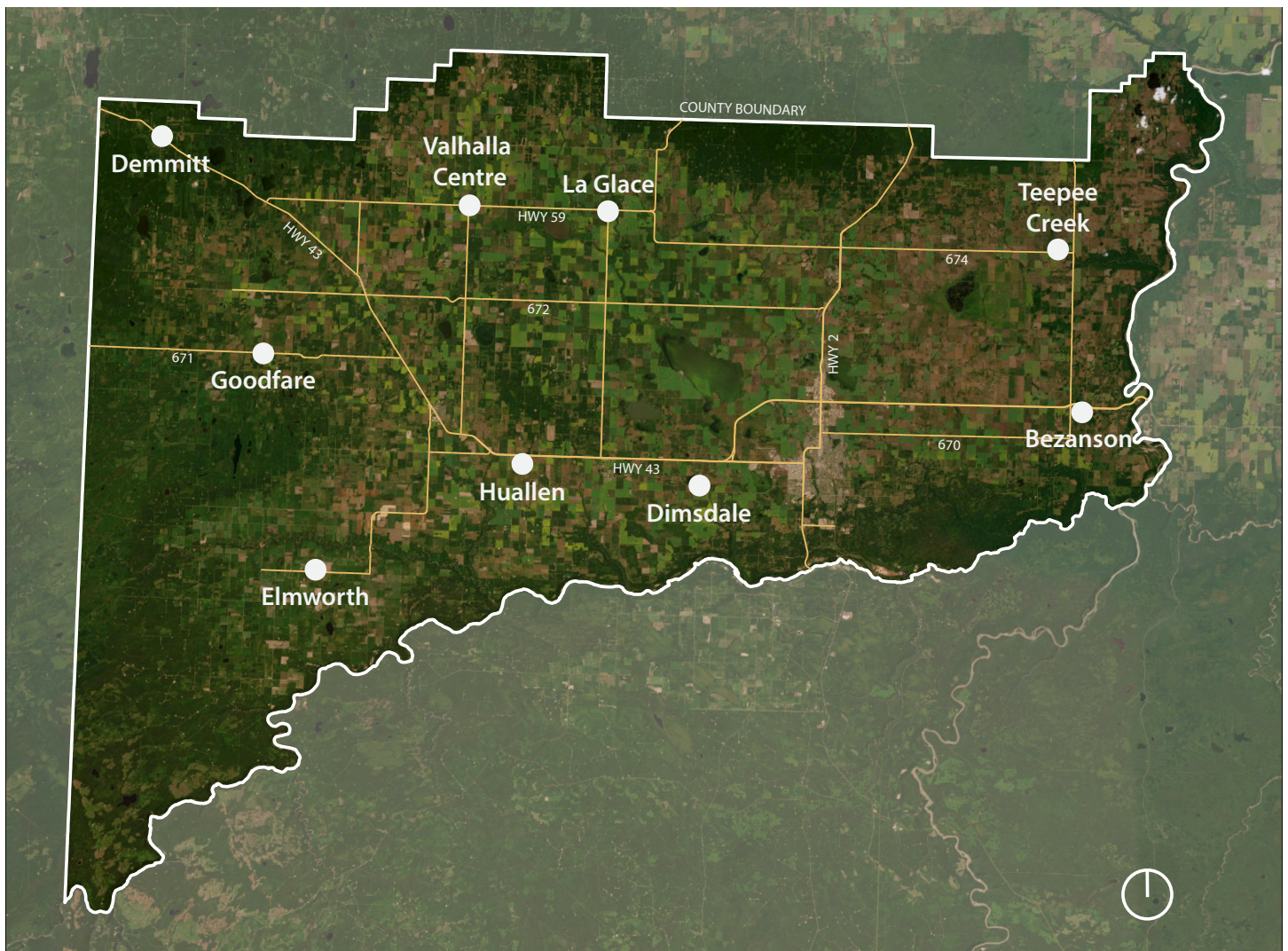
# Section 1: **Introduction**

# 1.1 Purpose

The County of Grande Prairie is a large region made up of many communities offering a diverse range of housing, employment and lifestyle options. These communities range from country residential subdivisions to growing urban centers and hamlets.

The County's twelve hamlets are historically and culturally rich communities that serve as important centers for commerce, recreation, tourism and

institutional services. The County's Regional Growth and Economic Development Strategy, which establishes a vision for sustainable and prosperous communities, highlights hamlets as vibrant places to live, work and play. The important and multifunctional roles of the County's hamlets can be strengthened through programs and policies that support their ongoing resilience and attractiveness. This is the goal of the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy.



# 1.2 Objectives

The Hamlet Resiliency Strategy is the first step in the Plan Your County process. As part of Plan Your County, The County is reviewing and updating its land use and development plans and bylaws, including the Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The recommendations from the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy will direct how other County plans and bylaws can support hamlet resiliency.

**Resiliency** is the ability for hamlets to adapt to changing external circumstances while maintaining their core functions and providing services to the surrounding area. The purpose of the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy is to ensure that key hamlets are resilient and sustainable over the long-term. This is achieved by understanding the forces that contribute to hamlet growth or decline, recognizing the role that stable hamlets play within the region, and developing programs and policies to support these communities.

The strategy focuses on the County's nine rural hamlets: Bezanson, Demmitt, Dimsdale, Elmworth, Goodfare, Huallen, La Glace, Teepee Creek and Valhalla Centre. The strategy does not include the County's three urban hamlets: Hythe, Clairmont and Wedgewood. These urban hamlets are or are part of larger urban centres and already have detailed planning policies established in the Municipal Development Plan and/or Area Structure Plans. Further, assessments of Hythe's community services, amenities and infrastructure were conducted in 2021 as part of the viability review and transition process. However, the implementation of any general recommendations from this strategy should also include consideration for the urban hamlets.

The objectives of the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy project were:

1. Recognize and understand the core functions of each of the rural hamlets within the County of Grande Prairie.
2. Develop an overarching and actionable resiliency strategy that safeguards and revitalizes the critical role that hamlets play within the County.
3. Capitalize on the hamlets' rich histories as well as their social, economic, and environmental assets to create a framework for the enhancement of public spaces that strengthens community identity.
4. Develop recommendations that highlight the unique features of each community to ensure an attractive and functional hamlet, independent of future growth.
5. Consider infrastructure and service requirements to ensure the needs of residents are adequately met.
6. Maximize local capacity for action and provide an opportunity for stakeholders to shape the future of their hamlet through a placemaking approach.

# 1.3 Background

## 1.3.1 Hamlets

A hamlet is an unincorporated community within the County. The designation is generally applied to settlements that are too small to incorporate as a town but have an established population centre and amenities.

In Alberta, the ability to designate hamlets is established in the Municipal Government Act and serves two main practical functions: the ability to apply taxation policies that are specific to hamlets, and eligibility for provincial grants.

In 1986, the Municipal Government Act was updated to replace the more generalized definition of a hamlet with specific criteria. These criteria are:

- a. Consists of 5 or more buildings used as dwellings, a majority of which are on parcels of land smaller than 1850 square metres,
- b. Has a generally accepted boundary and name, and
- c. Contains parcels of land that are used for non-residential purposes.

Four of the nine hamlets meet these criteria: Bezanson, La Glace, Teepee Creek, and Valhalla Centre.

Historically, the County has designated hamlets for the following purposes:

- To utilize provincial grants,
- To implement tax regulations,
- To acknowledge historical settlements, and
- To implement programs to encourage growth.



*Old La Glace Cafe*

The Strategy includes an evaluation of each of the nine hamlets to determine their function and potential for growth. For some of the hamlets, the designation of rural or historical settlement may be more appropriate. A rural settlement is a settlement with a local name, but which is not large enough to be a hamlet and is not expected to grow. Historical settlements are generally areas that historically served a larger regional function such as having a post office, train station, grain elevator and/or school. This includes places such as Buffalo Lakes, Bad Heart, Halcourt, and Lymburn.

The Hamlet Resiliency Strategy project was initiated based on recommendations within the County's Regional Growth and Economic Development Strategy 2016-2066 (RGEDS). The RGEDS categorizes hamlets as growth hamlets and stable hamlets. Growth hamlets are ones where significant growth is expected. Stable hamlets are those that are not expected to experience significant growth over the next 50 years.

The RGEDS identified Clairmont, Bezanson and La Glace as growth hamlets. Dimsdale, Elmworth, Goodfare, Huallen, Teepee Creek and Valhalla Centre were considered stable.

The RGEDS included the following recommendations related to the rural hamlets:

- Initiate or complete Area Structure Plans and Master Servicing Plans for the growth hamlets of La Glace and Bezanson.
- Institute a hamlet revitalization program for the stable hamlets of Teepee Creek, Valhalla Centre, Goodfare, Elmworth, Huallen and Dimsdale.
- Initiate planning for water/wastewater upgrades to service growth plans with their hamlets and rural subdivisions.
  - Design and construct upgrades to the Bezanson lagoon.
  - Investigate municipal water systems for La Glace.
  - Investigate implementation of a municipal water system in Dimsdale after regional line to Wembley is constructed.

Since the RGEDS was completed, The County has initiated the following actions:

- Drafted a new Bezanson Area Structure Plan in 2016. The project is on hold while awaiting the final design concepts for the highway intersections.

- Explored lagoon upgrade options for Bezanson.
- Completed construction of a municipal water system in La Glace.
- Investigated the opportunity to connect Dimsdale to the regional waterline. However, Dimsdale did not qualify for the Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership funding because Dimsdale does not meet the provincial requirements for a hamlet.
- Planned work on an Area Structure Plan for La Glace to be initiated in 2024.

The County has also undertaken a range of other initiatives and revitalization in the hamlets that are not directly tied to the RGEDS. This Hamlet Resiliency Strategy builds upon on the RGEDS and the County's current initiatives to create a comprehensive plan for the nine rural hamlets.

# 1.4 Process

## 1.4.1 Hamlet Evaluation

The first phase of the project was an evaluation and assessment of the current state of the nine hamlets to understand their key functions and determine their likelihood of future growth. Each of the nine hamlets were scored against criteria that indicate the ability to allow growth, the likelihood that there may be growth demand, and the status of amenities that could support growth. The scoring does not indicate the importance of each hamlet or which hamlet should be considered the highest priority.

The scoring criteria used to evaluate the hamlets include:

- Hamlet facts
- Development activity
- Land use mix
- Local retail and dining
- Community events
- Community amenities and institutions
- Recent capital investment
- Services
- Major employers
- Relevant local plans

The evaluation included reviewing available documents and data, in addition to engagement with residents and community organizations. The full method and details on hamlet evaluation can be found in the Phase 1 Background Report.



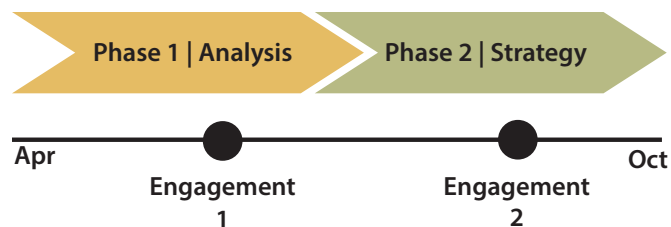
Teepee Creek Communities in Bloom Signage

# 1.5 Engagement

Engagement was conducted in two phases for this strategy. The first phase of the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy engagement was conducted in April and May of 2023 and included in-person and online feedback opportunities. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the assets and challenges in each of the nine rural hamlets to help set the context from which the resiliency strategy could build upon.

The second phase of engagement was conducted in September and October of 2023 and also included in-person and online feedback opportunities. In the second phase participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft recommendations for each hamlet.

In total across both engagement phases, 146 people participated in the eight in-person events. The project team collected 218 surveys over the two phases of engagement where respondents could provide feedback on any of the nine different hamlets. A full summary of the phase 2 engagement feedback is attached as an appendix to this Strategy. The phase 1 engagement feedback summary is included in the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy Background Report.



**146**  
ATTENDEES

**8**  
OPEN HOUSES

**218**  
SURVEYS

# Section 2: **Key Findings**

# 2.1 Hamlet Evaluation

As noted in Section 1, each of the nine hamlets' growth potential and capacity were evaluated and scored. The scores help to identify the different roles of each hamlet and the types of initiatives and servicing that may be required to support those roles.

Table 1 outlines the aggregate scoring for each hamlet and Table 2 indicates the scoring for each hamlet by criteria. Bezanson scored the highest at 29, followed by La Glace and Teepee Creek each with a score of 23. Valhalla Centre, Dimsdale and Elmworth follow with scores of 19, 16, and 14 respectively. The lowest three scoring hamlets are Demmitt, Goodfare and Huallen with scores of 9, 8, and 5 respectively. This generally aligns with the Regional Growth and Economic Development Strategy (RGEDS), which identified Bezanson and La Glace as growth hamlets and Dimsdale, Elmworth, Goodfare, Huallen, Teepee Creek and Valhalla Centre as stable hamlets.

Bezanson, as the highest scoring hamlet, is the most likely to attract new growth due to its existing services and amenities, location along Highway 43, and surrounding growth. La Glace, Teepee Creek and Valhalla Centre also present opportunities to maintain stable or moderate population growth due to their location, educational and servicing infrastructure and hamlet social network.

The RGEDS recommended directing future residential and industrial growth to Bezanson and La Glace. The presence of municipal services in both these hamlets supports their ability to accommodate additional development.

Table 1 - Hamlet Aggregate Evaluation Scoring

Hamlet	Score
Bezanson	29
La Glace	23
Teepee Creek	23
Valhalla Centre	19
Dimsdale	16
Elmworth	14
Demmitt	9
Goodfare	8
Huallen	5



Demmitt Hall

**Table 2 - Hamlet Criteria Scoring**

Scoring Criteria	Bezanson	La Glace	Teepee Creek	Valhalla Centre	Dimsdale	Elmworth	Demmitt	Goodfare	Hualten
Size	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0
Distance to Grande Prairie	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	1
Location	2	1	2	1	0	0	2	0	0
Rail	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Population	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	1	1
Development Activity	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0
Land Use Mix	2	2	2	2	1	2	0	1	0
Local Retail and Dining	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
Community Event	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	0
Youth Programs	2	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	0
Community Amenities and Institutions	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	0
School	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Seniors Facility or Programming	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Recent Capital Investment	1	2	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
Services	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	0
Major Employers	2	0	2	0	2	2	0	1	2
Plan	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0

## 2.1.1 Growth Hamlets

**Bezanson** is expected to grow by 454 to 560 people within the next 50 years (RGEDS). The hamlet is serviced by a sewage lagoon and a wastewater collection system, however, the lagoon has reached its full capacity of approximately 164 people based on 275L/capita/day sewage generation (45m<sup>3</sup>/day). The County is investigating expanding the lagoon to accommodate future population growth in the area. The hamlet of Bezanson also has an existing water treatment plant which is supplied via groundwater wells. Even though Bezanson has seen a 22% decline in its population from 2001 to 2016, the northern area of the hamlet has the opportunity to support future industrial and commercial development, as identified in the RGEDS.

**La Glace** is expected to grow by 284 to 495 people by within the next 50 years (RGEDS). A small number of homes within the Hamlet of La Glace are serviced by centralized wells and distribution system managed by the County. Currently, other homes and businesses within the hamlet are serviced through private wells and water hauling. The RGEDS identified the following infrastructure needs to service the hamlet's growing population:

- New groundwater wells and pumps
- Water treatment plant, reservoir and pumping system – completed in March 2023
- Municipal distribution system

Similar to the hamlet of Bezanson, La Glace is serviced by a sewage lagoon and wastewater collection system. The lagoon will require expansion of approximately 54,000m<sup>3</sup>/day to accommodate the projected future population in the area.

## 2.1.2 Stable Hamlets

The stable hamlets of **Teepee Creek** and **Valhalla Centre**, both have a small but long existing population and history of 20 and 50 people respectively (RGEDS). Continuing to support additional local employment opportunities will be a key driver of any future population growth.

While **Teepee Creek** is not expected to experience significant growth within the next 50 years. A new water treatment plant was constructed in 2016 to accommodate future residential growth within the hamlet. Other existing water treatment measures include the existing piped distribution system and private wells and water hauling. The hamlet also includes a wastewater collection system along with a wastewater lagoon with a service capacity of approximately 57 people.

**Valhalla Centre** is not expected to experience significant growth within the next 50 years. The hamlet does not currently have County provided water service. The hamlet includes a wastewater collection system and a wastewater lagoon with a service capacity of approximately 200 people. The current level of service should be able to accommodate future residential growth.

**Dimsdale** as the only mainly industrial hamlet and proximity to Grande Prairie, presents a unique advantage to attract additional non-residential development and become a more employment focused hamlet in the County. The RGEDS identified the northern parts of Dimsdale as opportunity areas for residential growth and development. Dimsdale does not have County water servicing and is currently supplied by hauling or private wells. Some of the infrastructure requirements for this hamlet, as identified in its ASP (approved in 2015), include a future reservoir and pumphouse, as well as a distribution system.

The four lowest scoring hamlets of **Elmworth**, **Demmitt**, **Goodfare** and **Huallen** are likely to remain as community gathering places or very small rural residential areas. These hamlets can continue to serve their existing function with little to no growth anticipated. These hamlets can continue to serve as gathering spaces through the existing community halls and help maintain the historic character of the local area. The RGEDS recommended maintaining the current service level for Huallen, which does not have County servicing. Elmworth, Demmitt, and Goodfare were not included in the RGEDS, but levels of service are similarly recommended to remain the same.

Overall, each hamlet will have a unique role to play in the County in the future.



*Bezanson Seniors Residences*



*Elmworth School and Library*

## 2.2 Challenges

### Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a major challenge in most of the hamlets, as only Bezanson, La Glace and Teepee Creek have both municipal water and sewer. Valhalla Centre has sewer but no water and Dimsdale has potential water through Aquatera but no sewer. All other hamlets rely on private wells and septic systems. Further development within the hamlets is limited due to existing servicing constraints. Only large lots would be permitted in areas with no municipal servicing.

### Housing & Mix of Land Uses

Limited utility infrastructure limits housing and other land uses in the hamlets. This is a challenge to hamlet resiliency as it reduces the ability to attract a mix of land uses and opportunities to work, live and play within the hamlets. Homogeneous land use communities are less resilient than communities with a mix of land uses due to the inability to absorb external environmental shocks such as market, technological, and social changes. Greater land use diversity attracts more people to the hamlets throughout the day and can improve the safety and liveliness of communities.

### Location

Each hamlet's location adds another challenge to hamlet resiliency. Hamlets that are in close proximity to other larger hamlets or urban centres will have a greater challenge competing for residents and businesses. Hamlets further away from Highway 43 will be challenged to attract economic opportunities due to less passerby traffic. Mobility in the hamlets and to and from the hamlets can also be challenging for some people due to the hamlet's distance from other amenities and employment, particularly for youth and seniors.

### Market Forces

Growth is ultimately dependent on market conditions. There will only be so much demand and development to go around. The rural hamlets that are likely to see some growth will be competing against each other as well as with other urban centres like the City of Grande Prairie, Hythe, Beaverlodge and Clairmont. The County can try to encourage growth to locate in hamlets through incentives.

## 2.3 Hamlet Designation

Currently, only four of the nine hamlets meet the Municipal Government Act criteria for a hamlet:

- Bezanson,
- La Glace,
- Teepee Creek, and
- Valhalla Centre.

It would not be possible for any of the other hamlets to achieve the requirements through a boundary adjustment. Generally, municipal or communal water and wastewater servicing would be required to achieve the residential densities needed for a hamlet designation.

Because they do not meet provincial criteria, Demmitt, Dimsdale, Elmworth, Goodfare, and Huallen will likely not be eligible for provincial initiatives and funding. However, maintaining the hamlets' designation may be useful in supporting the County's goals to encourage development in strategic areas including:

- Areas where population growth may support the sustainability of community amenities such as schools; and
- Areas where future industrial activities may generate a need for housing

Additional detail on hamlet designations is provided in the recommendations section.



La Glace Gas Bar



Bezanson General Store

# Section 3: **Strategy**

# 3.1 Goals

The purpose of the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy is to ensure that key hamlets are resilient and sustainable over the long-term. Resiliency is the ability of hamlets to adapt to changing external circumstances while maintaining their core functions and providing services to the surrounding area. This is achieved by understanding the forces that contribute to hamlet growth or decline, recognizing the role that stable hamlets play within the region and developing programs and policies to support these communities.

The goals of the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy identify specific elements that are designed to achieve resiliency and stability in the hamlets and are to be achieved through the implementation of the actions identified in this strategy.

Goals:

- a. *Infrastructure is upgraded to accommodate growth in the growth hamlets and maintained to support a stable population in the stable hamlets.*
- b. *Placemaking is enabled to celebrate the rich history and future possibilities within each hamlet and to strengthen community identity.*
- c. *Programs and land use planning create opportunities for economic prosperity within and surrounding hamlets.*

## 3.2 County-Wide General Actions

The following actions apply to all nine rural hamlets included in the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy.

### 3.2.1 Planning and Land Use

#### 3.2.1.1. Update Designations to Hamlet, Rural Settlement, or Historical Settlement

The County's hamlets have been designated in three ways: by Ministerial Order, through a hamlet specific County bylaw, and through the Municipal Development Plan bylaw. These designations have occurred at different times and to serve different purposes, as noted in Section 2.

The background review for this strategy found that:

- Five of the nine hamlets do not meet eligibility requirements to be considered a hamlet under the provincial programs
- The relevant tax regulations were removed from the Municipal Government Act in 1985
- The hamlet designation is not the most appropriate way to acknowledge rural and historical settlements
- The County's development incentive is only relevant to Dimsdale. The incentive is a waiver of transportation levies and only Dimsdale falls within the levy zones.

Based on these findings, the Strategy recommends that the hamlet designation only be applied to places that meet the requirements for what constitutes a hamlet, that are expected to grow, or where the County intends to encourage development. Suggested re-classification is provided in Table 3.

Additional detail on the recommended designations is provided in the recommendations for individual hamlets.

#### 3.2.1.2. Adjust Hamlet Boundaries

Hamlet boundaries should be adjusted to align with property boundaries, existing development and areas intended for growth. For some of the hamlets, the boundaries do not align with property boundaries, which make it difficult to apply various policies. The hamlet boundaries should also include any existing development and areas where the County intends to support more development. Additional detail on the recommended boundary changes is provided in the recommendations for individual hamlets.

#### 3.2.1.3. Municipal Development Plan Updates

As part of the Municipal Development Plan update, policies and mapping should be updated to align with the recommendations of this report. Currently, the MDP identifies all nine rural hamlets as hamlets on Map 6 Future Land Use Areas and within the policies in section 9.0 Hamlets / Rural Residential.

##### ***a. Re-designate the Hamlets and Their Boundaries***

Reclassify Goodfare and Huallen as rural settlements and Demmitt as a historical settlement on the Future Land Use Areas Map and within the hamlet policies.

Illustrate the boundaries of Bezanson, La Glace, Valhalla Centre, Teepee Creek, Dimsdale, and Elmworth hamlets on the map.

Table 3 - Recommended Hamlet Designations

	Hamlet	Rural Settlement	Historic Settlement
<b>Description</b>	<p>A hamlet is defined as a settlement meeting the following criteria:</p> <p>Consists of 5 or more buildings used as dwellings, with a majority of these buildings situated on parcels of land smaller than 1850m<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>Has a generally accepted boundary and a distinct name.</p> <p>Contains parcels of land utilized for non-residential purposes.</p> <p>Designated hamlets are eligible for provincial grants, tax regulations, and growth-related programs. They are acknowledged for their historical significance and potential for future development.</p>	<p>A rural settlement is characterized as a localized area with a local name that does not meet the criteria to be classified as a hamlet. Typically, rural settlements historically served a broader regional function, often hosting amenities such as post offices, train stations, grain elevators, or schools. However, they are not anticipated to experience significant growth.</p> <p>Rural settlements are not eligible for provincial grants or programs but may retain importance within their historical context.</p>	<p>A historical settlement is identified as a designated area primarily acknowledged for its historical character. These settlements may have had significance in the past but do not meet the criteria to be classified as hamlets.</p> <p>Historical settlements are not eligible for provincial grants or programs but are valued for their historical preservation and cultural heritage.</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Bezanson</p> <p>Dimsdale</p> <p>Elmworth</p> <p>La Glace</p> <p>Teepee Creek</p> <p>Valhalla Centre</p>	<p>Goodfare</p> <p>Huallen</p>	<p>Demmitt</p>

***b. Allow for More Development Opportunities Around Hamlets***

Update the hamlets / rural residential policies to allow for a mix of development opportunities as a transition area around hamlets to increase economic activity and services accessible to hamlet areas.

***c. Enable Non-Residential Opportunities in Rural and Historical Settlements***

Provide additional policies in the hamlet / rural residential section to enable some non-residential opportunities in rural and historical settlements such as camping, bed and breakfast, recreation, and commercial uses.

**3.2.1.4. Develop, Incentivize, and Update Area Structure Plans**

Area Structure Plans should be updated or created for identified growth hamlets and adjacent areas to establish planned growth in alignment with the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy goals.

***a. Develop Area Structure Plans for Growth Hamlets***

Develop Area Structure Plans for Bezanson, La Glace and Teepee Creek.

***b. Incentivize Developer-led Area Structure Plans for Areas In and Adjacent to Growth Hamlets***

Incentivize the creation of privately-led Area Structure Plans for areas in and adjacent to growth hamlets to ensure uses are supportive of growth in hamlets.

***c. Update Existing Area Structure Plans***

Update existing Area Structure Plans for the growth hamlets to reflect boundary adjustments and enable different types of development. More detail is provided on ASP updates in the individual hamlet recommendations.

***d. Enable Development Opportunities in Rural and Historical Settlements***

Add policy to enable development opportunities in rural and historical settlements.

## **3.2.2 Infrastructure**

**3.2.2.1. Determine Long-Term Level of Service in Hamlets**

Determine the long-term level of service the County is willing to provide for each hamlet and develop the criteria that will create the stage gates to get to a full level of service. Detailed servicing recommendations are provided in each hamlet section.

**3.2.2.2. Establish Timeline for Infrastructure Upgrades**

Once a long-term level of service is determined, develop an infrastructure investment plan along with corresponding funding sources and outline the projected timing for infrastructure upgrades.

**3.2.2.3. Establish a Permanent Program for Community Hall Internet Connectivity**

Work with internet providers to provide additional internet service options in the County. Establish a permanent program to cover a portion of community hall internet costs with the goal to attract more use of the halls and centres.

## 3.2.3 Economic Incentives

### 3.2.3.1. Include Hamlets in Future Business Incentives Program

The County's Economic Development team has been working on multiple local business supports and incentives. Future incentives should include opportunities for businesses in the rural hamlets. An example would be setting up a grant program that could be used to help start up new businesses or to help with the expansion of existing businesses.

### 3.2.3.2. Explore Development Incentive Options for Hamlet

The County is undertaking a study to explore opportunities for development incentives. This study will include exploring opportunities to support development within the hamlets. Future incentives should attract new development or redevelopment resulting in an expanded tax base.

## 3.2.4 Community Building

### 3.2.4.1. Create a Program to Acknowledge Historical Settlements

Similar to the County's work on providing hamlet entrance signs for hamlets such as Bezanson, Dimsdale and others, create a program that acknowledges historical settlements within the County through the use of signage and commemorative plaques. This initiative could include other settlements such as Bad Heart and Buffalo Lakes.

### 3.2.4.2. Provide Community Beautification Program Grants

Take a placemaking approach and work with community groups to develop programs that encourage highlighting local identity and attracting visitors. Creating a draw for visitors can lead to additional economic opportunities in the hamlet.

#### ***a. Continue to Support Community Beautification Initiatives Through Grants***

The County currently provides a Community Beautification Incentives Grant program. This has previously been used to support 'Communities in Bloom' projects. Communities can receive up to \$1000 for eligible projects in hamlets or rural subdivisions that improve the physical appearance of a community and enhance civic pride. This program could be expanded and further advertised in communities to encourage further volunteer-led beautification initiatives.

#### ***b. Explore Supporting Community Beautification by Providing Services***

The County has supported community projects by providing services that utilize County staff and equipment. The County should explore these types of opportunities on a case-by-case basis to bolster the resources provided by volunteers when there is staff capacity.

#### ***c. Explore Providing Additional Resources for Enforcement of Community Standards Bylaw***

The County's Enforcement Services team proactively enforces the Community Standards Bylaw when there is staff capacity. The department prioritizes enforcement on active incidents and complaints. Additional staffing resources would be required to increase capacity for proactive enforcement.

### **3.2.4.3. Explore Opportunities for Shared Recreation**

The low population of the hamlets make it challenging to cost-effectively provide a lot of different types of recreation infrastructure and programming. Further, within each hamlet there may be a range of different recreation needs that make it challenging to determine what investments will best meet the needs of the residents. Developing infrastructure and programming that can be shared among the hamlets may help to create more recreation opportunities while minimizing costs and improving utilization.

#### ***a. Explore Opportunities for Shared Recreation Infrastructure***

The County should explore purchasing recreation infrastructure that can be moved between the hamlets. For example, the City of Grande Prairie has a mobile skate park that can be used indoors or outdoors and is moved throughout the year to different neighbourhoods.

#### ***b. Explore Opportunities for Shared Recreation Programming***

The County should explore coordinated and shared recreation programming between multiple hamlets. As an example, there may not be enough interest in a single hamlet to operate a particular recreation program but there may be enough interest across multiple hamlets. By rotating recreational programming, the County may generate and sustain greater interest in the program offering overall.

### **3.2.4.4. Explore Opportunities for Transit to Urban Centres**

There are many people who cannot drive in hamlets, notably youth and seniors. As a result, they may have a challenge accessing the amenities and employment opportunities that are available in an

urban centre. For seniors, this may create a need to relocate rather than remain in their communities. Providing transportation to larger urban centres, such as Clairmont or the City of Grande Prairie may help to address these challenges.

The County is currently exploring opportunities for regional transit in collaboration with the City of Grande Prairie and the Towns of Wembley, Beaverlodge, and Sexsmith. This project could help with creating more transit access to hamlets.

There may also be other opportunities to partner with other municipalities or organizations to improve transportation options. Such as partnering with City of Grande Prairie transit, or exploring whether County hamlets can be added to the MD of Greenview seniors busing program.

### **3.2.4.5. Explore the Development of a Biannual Volunteer Campaign**

The County should continue its 'It Takes a Volunteer' campaign to attract volunteers to participate in community initiatives and reduce volunteer burnout. Volunteers are a necessary element of rural community building.

## 3.3 Hamlet Roles and Actions

The following roles and actions are specific to individual hamlets.

### 3.3.1 Bezanson

Bezanson, a 2.56km<sup>2</sup> hamlet established around the 1920s, is situated 33 kilometers from Grande Prairie with a population of around 140. While it already boasts public facilities and residential enhancements, further housing development is needed to accommodate future growth. The community features amenities like a community hall, recreation center, skating rink, two churches, school, and seniors' facility. Recent investments include a water well (\$82,500) and pump house (\$300,000). Despite adequate fire, and water facilities, future growth necessitates stormwater and waste solutions. Given its pivotal role in the County of Grande Prairie and regional opportunities, prioritizing infrastructure upgrades is crucial for its development. Today, Bezanson is the main community hub for the southeast portion of the County and contains the Bezanson public school, Bezanson Community Event Centre and local fire hall to serve the community.

#### 3.3.1.1. Expand Hamlet Boundary to Include Future Industrial Area North of Highway 43 and Re-designate Land Use for Those Parcels

A mixture of medium and highway industrial development is designated north of Highway 43 to minimize the potential for land use conflicts with residential properties.



### **3.3.1.2. Update the Bezanson Area Structure Plan to Identify Growth Areas**

The Bezanson Area Structure Plan should be updated to identify future growth areas and general servicing requirements to service the growth areas. Growth areas should consider a variety of built forms and land use mixes.

### **3.3.1.3. Develop a Timeline to Expand Utility Capacity to Service New Growth**

The utility servicing capacity of Bezanson is a limiting factor in making Bezanson a resilient hamlet. The current capacity limits the potential growth that could be accommodated. Upgrades to the water servicing and sewer capacity will be required.

A bioelectrochemical anaerobic sewage treatment (BEAST) trial is underway and if it is successful the lagoon's available capacity will be doubled. Through the review of the ASP, the timing criteria should be determined when the sewer expansion may be required.

### **3.3.1.4. Connect the School to the Recreation Centre Through a Crosswalk and Pathway**

Healthy and safe communities are an important consideration in maintaining resilience. The lack of pedestrian connectivity between the school and community centre was identified as a potential safety concern. Improved connectivity can lead to additional traffic calming and safety near the school.

## 3.3.2 Demmitt

Demmitt, a small hamlet located immediately off Highway 43, covers approximately 0.03 km<sup>2</sup> and lies around 77 kilometers northwest of Grande Prairie. Primarily agricultural, it lacks local retail establishments or publicly accessible businesses. The community's amenities, located south of the existing hamlet boundary, consist of a community hall and a playground. Recent capital investment of \$1.3 million was directed towards the Demmitt Community Hall. With no servicing infrastructure, low growth, an aging population, and a scarcity of housing or real estate, Demmitt faces significant challenges in terms of development and sustainability. However, it functions as a vibrant community node in the region that supports various community events and activities.

### 3.3.2.1. Recognize Demmitt as a Historical Settlement

Demmitt was designated as a hamlet in a 1998 update to the County's Municipal Development Plan that was intended to acknowledge historical settlements. Demmitt does not meet the Provincial definition of a hamlet and is not eligible for Provincial hamlet grants. The current boundary contains two vacant parcels and does not reflect the boundaries of the historical settlement. Further, Demmitt is not anticipated to grow but continues to have historical and cultural significance.

#### *a. Update the Municipal Development Plan to Recognize Demmitt as a Historical Settlement*

Demmitt is a historically significant settlement in the County and should be recognized as such. The designation in the Municipal Development Plan should be updated to recognize Demmitt as a historical settlement, rather than a hamlet.

#### *b. Include Demmitt in a Program to Recognize Historical Settlements*

The County should explore the creation of a program to acknowledge historical settlements, such as with interpretive signage. This program should include Demmitt.



### 3.3.3 Dimsdale

Dimsdale, a rural employment hub spanning 0.84 km<sup>2</sup>, is located 17.8 kilometers from Grande Prairie, with an estimated population of 30. The Canadian National Railway passes through the hamlet. Recent development activities have seen growth in commercial occupancies and housing improvements. Land use primarily comprises industrial zones, including country industrial, rural industrial, and business parks. The community hall serves as a venue for local events and gatherings. While services are lacking, a waterline with a booster station offers potential for future servicing. Despite its strength in proximity to the highway, Dimsdale lacks amenities.

Notably, Dimsdale and its environs hold promise for harnessing geothermal energy, showcasing alternative renewable energy sources. The hamlet falls within a designated 'Important Bird Area' as per the County of Grande Prairie's RGEDS, featuring environmental assets like lakes, wetlands, rivers, and creeks. Dimsdale Lake and its surroundings are renowned for hosting Trumpeter Swan habitats, contributing to the area's ecological significance.

#### 3.3.3.1. Expand Hamlet Boundary to Reflect Planned Future Development Area in Dimsdale

Dimsdale's ASP (2015) suggests an expansion surrounding the existing hamlet, taking into account economics, existing road networks and the orderly expansion of roadways and municipal servicing. It provides guidance on infrastructure and development expansion, anticipating growth in country residential development in the following locations (SE-22-71-7-W6M, NW-15-71-7-W6M & SE-15-71-7-W6M). Upgrades to Township Road 712 and 713A are expected to facilitate this development, with collector roads and local roads to follow suit as development progresses.



Future plans include upgrades to Township 713A once Alberta Transportation constructs the proposed interchange along Highway 43. These upgrades will extend into the proposed expansion area and connect to Highway 43X Resource Road. Township 712 and 713A upgrades will serve as primary access routes east to west into the expansion of Dimsdale, linking to Highway 43X West, Grande Prairie, and Highway 2 North.

### **3.3.3.2. Review and Update the Dimsdale Area Structure Plan**

The Dimsdale Area Structure Plan should be updated to reflect current development conditions, identify future growth areas and utility servicing and general infrastructure requirements and opportunities.

### **3.3.3.3. Explore Long-Term Servicing Options for the Hamlet**

Dimsdale currently has no municipal servicing in place to support greater intensification. Aquaterra operates a water license in the area that services a bulk water station and provides water to the Town of Wembley. In conjunction with an Area Structure Plan update to reflect current conditions and new opportunities such as the highway ring road, the County should determine the long-term servicing vision for the Dimsdale area to encourage more development in the area.

### **3.3.3.4. Explore Economic Development Opportunities to Market the Dimsdale Area as a Rural Industrial Hub**

Dimsdale's proximity to the City of Grande Prairie and its existing industrial character creates an opportunity to build upon its industrial base and create some additional non-residential tax base for the County. The County's economic development officer should work with land owners to promote additional development in the hamlet.

### 3.3.4 Elmworth

Elmworth serves as a rural recreation and educational hub, covering 0.63 km<sup>2</sup> and situated 67.5 km from Grande Prairie. Its land use is primarily residential (country residential) and institutional (limited institutional and recreation). Community amenities include a community hall, library, curling rink, skating rink, and a school. However, Elmworth lacks adequate water and wastewater services, relying on private wells, with a waste transfer station also present. Its key asset is large natural gas reserves in the area. The area faces a challenge of landowners purchasing land with houses but letting these lots sit empty. Elmworth is still the location of the Elmworth public school and community library plus the community hall and curling rink. Gas reserves in the area have led to industrial development in the area in the form of a gas plant.

#### 3.3.4.1. Explore Programming Opportunities that Could Draw More People to Use the Library and Curling Facility

Additional programming can draw more people to the facilities and increase the efficiency of the buildings. More programming may also attract other pop up uses to the area during bigger events and spur economic activity.

#### 3.3.4.2. Include More Options for Development Around Elmworth in the Municipal Development Plan

Elmworth offers a range of community amenities such as the school and library. To promote the long-term viability of these facilities, the County should explore encouraging some population growth in the area. This may be achieved by encouraging Country Residential Development in the area. Supporting Country Residential development in the area may allow for population growth without the need for municipal utilities.



## 3.3.5 Goodfare

Goodfare, a residential community spanning 0.05 km<sup>2</sup>, is located 63.9 km from Grande Prairie with an estimated population of 15 people. However, it lacks adequate utility infrastructure, with wastewater and water services managed through private septic wells and wells. The community hall serves as a focal point for local gatherings and various social activities year-round.

### 3.3.5.1. Recognize Goodfare as a Rural Settlement

Goodfare was established as a post office during the homesteading boom that followed World War 1. The current amenities consist of a hall and outdoor rink. While Goodfare is not expected to grow, it does provide amenities to the regional population. As such, it should be recognized as a rural settlement rather than a hamlet.

Prior to 1998, the County identified Goodfare as a rural settlement in the Municipal Development Plan and the Land Use Bylaw. In 1998, the Municipal Development Plan was updated and referred to Goodfare as a hamlet; though the Land Use Bylaw continued to treat it as a rural settlement.

The Municipal Development Plan should be updated to recognize Goodfare as a rural settlement, rather than a hamlet, in order to apply development policies intended for stable settlements.



## 3.3.6 Huallen

Huallen, a hamlet with an estimated population of 15, spans 0.03 km<sup>2</sup> and is situated 31.9 kilometers from Grande Prairie, with Canadian National Railway passing through the area and Highway 43 just 700 meters away. Primarily agricultural, Huallen borders the designated RGEDS' 'Important Bird Area' and features environmental assets like wetlands, creeks, and tributaries. Despite its residential focus, the hamlet lacks community activities or institutions. Additionally, it is not adequately serviced, relying on private septic for wastewater and private wells for water. The hamlet itself does not serve much of a function anymore, however the area of Huallen provides some rural industrial/agricultural employment for the County. The two primary employers being the Richardson Pioneer grain terminal and the Liberty Energy rail site.

### 3.3.6.1. Recognize Huallen as a Rural Settlement

Huallen developed in the 1920's with a train station, grain elevator, post office and general store. There is no longer any of these facilities and Huallen consists of a few residences. It is not expected to grow for residential development, though the area has potential for rural industrial development. As such, Huallen should be recognized as a rural settlement rather than a hamlet.

Prior to 1998, the County identified Huallen as a rural settlement in the Municipal Development Plan and the Land Use Bylaw. In 1998, the Municipal Development Plan was updated and referred to Huallen as a hamlet; though the Land Use Bylaw continued to treat it as a rural settlement.

The Municipal Development Plan should be updated to recognize Huallen as a rural settlement, rather than a hamlet, in order to apply development policies intended for stable settlements.



## 3.3.7 La Glace

La Glace, a vibrant mixed-use community, is home to an estimated 225 residents and covers 0.68 km<sup>2</sup>, located 49.4 km from Grande Prairie along Highway 59. Its amenities include a community hall, recreation center, curling rink, three churches, and a school, with ongoing efforts to enhance the recreation center. The hamlet boasts a diverse land use mix, incorporating institutional, industrial, commercial, and predominantly residential areas. Services such as a fire station, wastewater management, centralized wells, and county water distribution are in place, although stormwater and waste transfer stations are lacking. Recent capital investments include \$1 million for water upgrades, \$500,000 for provincial arena funding, and \$2 million for a new fire hall.

Considering the hamlet's ecological habitat, La Glace's Trumpeter Swan habitat requires protection measures, potentially through environmental reserves or conservation easements.

### 3.3.7.1. Complete an Area Structure Plan to Identify Future Growth Areas

There is no Area Structure Plan for La Glace and therefore no direction on the future land use vision of the hamlet. The first step to opening up additional development opportunities is to develop an Area Structure Plan to ensure development is planned in an orderly manner and maximizes the use of infrastructure.



### **3.3.7.2. Complete Sanitary Servicing Upgrades to Improve Capacity for New Development as Needed**

The recent water servicing upgrades can allow additional growth in the hamlet however, the lagoon in La Glace is undersized and is a major limiting factor to attracting new growth in the area. Improved capacity will be required to make La Glace more resilient in maintaining the service quality for existing development as well as for additional growth.

### **3.3.7.3. Explore Opportunities to Locate a Cell Tower in La Glace**

As part of community engagement, it was communicated that cell and internet service can be unreliable. The County should work with providers to encourage a solution that may improve the existing service in the area.

### **3.3.7.4. Adjust Hamlet Boundaries**

Adjust hamlet boundaries to align with property lines and future growth areas. Currently, the boundaries cut through parcels of land, creating challenges for applying hamlet-specific policies.

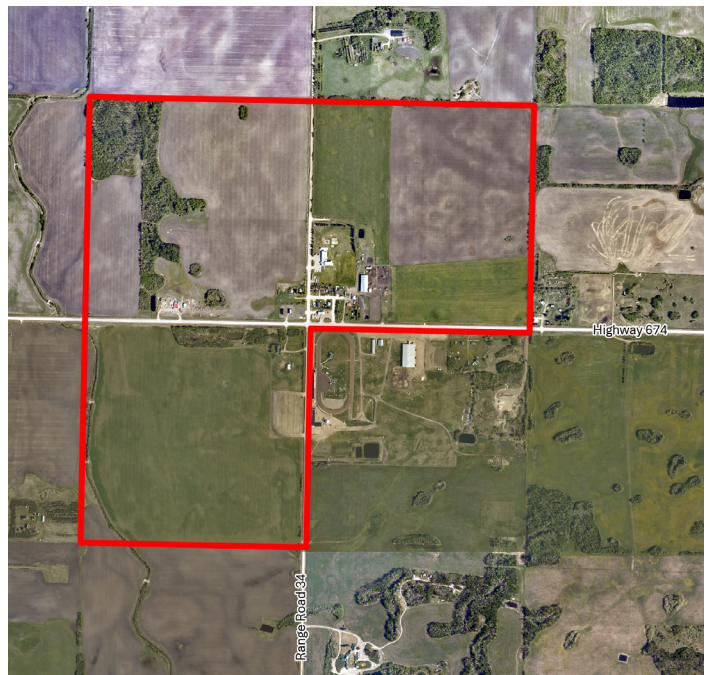
## 3.3.8 Teepee Creek

Teepee Creek, a bustling community and event destination, spans 2 km<sup>2</sup> and is located 49.7 kilometers from Grande Prairie along Highway 674, with an estimated population of 20 people. Its land use mix is predominantly institutional (intensive recreation, limited institutional, and recreation), with nearly equal proportions dedicated to residential, commercial, and agricultural purposes. Teepee Creek hosts a variety of events, including sports, parties, concerts, and cultural activities, notably the Teepee Creek Stampede, complemented by amenities like a community hall, church, school, and expansive stampede grounds. Recent capital investments include \$1.8 million for the fire hall and \$22,500 for a chlorine system. While serviced adequately with a fire station, wastewater management, and water service from a county well and treatment plant, the hamlet lacks stormwater and waste transfer stations.

Primarily an agricultural area, Teepee Creek is suggested to be a good location for a food hub or equestrian centre capitalizing on its ranching heritage. Its ranching history dates back to around 1918, with a century-long rodeo culture. Environmental features include surface water elements like lakes, wetlands, creeks, and tributaries, contributing to a significant wildlife and biodiversity zone to the east.

### 3.3.8.1. Determine the Long-Term Level of Service for Water and Wastewater

The background report indicates that Teepee Creek has the potential for growth. There has also been recent interest in development. Water and wastewater servicing are a significant limiting factor. The County should determine the intended long-term level of service for water and sanitary in Teepee Creek. The County should determine whether it will maintain the current level of servicing for existing residents or expand capacity to support growth. If



the capacity is not going to be expanded, the County should consider servicing alternatives to allow for development within the hamlet.

### **3.3.8.2. Complete an Area Structure Plan to Identify Future Growth Areas**

The first step to attracting additional growth is to complete an Area Structure Plan for Teepee Creek to determine how future growth can be accommodated.

### **3.3.8.3. Prioritize the Completion of the Fire Hall Infrastructure to Ensure Adequate Emergency Response Services for the Community**

Funding for the new fire hall was included in the 2023 capital budget. The new fire hall will support greater resiliency within the County and surrounding areas improving its emergency response abilities.

### **3.3.8.4. Explore Options to Improve the Quality of Drinking Water Through Infrastructure Improvements**

The water in Teepee Creek is deemed unpalatable to some residents due to odour and taste. The water is safe to drink, however understanding how the water quality could be improved will allow the County to further determine what infrastructure upgrades may be needed to support additional growth.

### 3.3.9 Valhalla Centre

Valhalla Centre, known as a cultural spot, spans 0.81 km<sup>2</sup> and is situated 62.7 kilometers from Grande Prairie along Highway 59, with an estimated population of around 50 people. Its land use primarily comprises residential areas, followed by institutional and a small commercial sector. Community amenities include a library, church, and playground. Although lacking in various services, Valhalla Centre recently invested \$375,000 in wastewater infrastructure, including a lift station and lagoon.

The hamlet falls within a designated 'Important Bird Area' as per the County of Grande Prairie's RGEDS, it features environmental assets like lakes, wetlands, rivers, creeks, and tributaries, notably Bear Creek. Recognized for its Trumpeter Swan habitat, preservation efforts are crucial, potentially through environmental reserves or conservation easements.

There is an opportunity for placemaking initiatives around the local history and Norwegian heritage, building on the Mercantile Cafe and Heritage Room.

#### 3.3.9.1. Work with the Local School to Establish a Community Garden Space with Educational Programming in Valhalla Centre

Any additional programming that can be done at the school has the opportunity to increase community building on the Mercantile Cafe and Heritage Room.

#### 3.3.9.2. Adjust Hamlet Boundaries

Adjust hamlet boundaries to align with property lines and future growth areas. Currently, the boundaries cut through parcels of land, creating challenges for applying hamlet-specific policies.



# Section 4: **Cost and Funding Options**

# 4.1 Estimated Cost

The implementation of strategies and actions in this report will require additional staff resourcing that is not currently available within Administration. The strategies and actions also require new funding in addition to more staff resources. Municipal funding should be considered as one potential funding source while other funding sources may be available to fund particular actions.

A total of 4.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff are anticipated to be needed to complete the actions in this strategy and include:

- 1 FTE Planning and Development Services
- 1 FTE Recreation and Culture
- 1 FTE Regional Enforcement Services
- 0.5 FTE Economic Development
- 1 FTE Utilities

In addition to new staff, an estimated \$410,000 will be required to complete updated planning documents and servicing studies. These costs may be reduced if some of the plans and studies are completed by Administration, where capacity exists.

Other operating funding will be required to complete the actions either in the form of permanent funding such as the \$10,000 identified for permanent community hall internet assistance or funding still to be determined for actions such as a biannual volunteer campaign.

Capital funding will also be required for infrastructure upgrades. An estimated \$550,000 has been specifically identified in the Implementation section. The outcome of the long term servicing and Area Structure Plan reviews will determine ultimate servicing upgrades necessary for each hamlet.

# 4.2 Potential Funding Sources

Implementing the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy will require leadership, co-operation with neighbouring municipalities, collaboration between public and private sectors, and the adoption of new economic strategies. The following table outlines actions that can accomplish these and some potential funding sources.

Table 4 - Summary of Potential Funding Sources

## 1 Municipal

- **County Operating Budget:** The County operating budget is an annual financial plan that covers the day-to-day expenses and operations of the municipality. It includes funding for services such as public safety, road maintenance, parks and recreation, and administrative costs.
- **County Capital Budget:** The County capital budget allocates funds for long-term investments and infrastructure projects. This includes the construction and capital maintenance of public buildings, roads, bridges, and other significant municipal assets.
- **Off-Site Levies:** Off-site levies are charges imposed on developers to fund infrastructure improvements needed due to new development. This can include the construction or expansion of roads, water and sewer systems, and other municipal services required to support growth while ensuring that infrastructure required to service a proposed development is constructed to the County's standards.
- **Utility Charges:** Utility charges are fees collected from residents and businesses for the provision of essential services such as water, wastewater, and waste management. These charges are used to maintain and upgrade utility infrastructure and ensure the continued delivery of these services

## 2 Provincial

**The Alberta Provincial Grant** is a financial assistance program aimed at supporting initiatives and projects across the province, covering areas such as community development, infrastructure upgrades, and economic growth. Some program specific examples include:

- **Northern and Regional Economic Development Program:** The NRED Program funds initiatives led by Alberta municipalities that promote regional economic development and diversification.
- **Community and Regional Economic Support (CARES) program:** The CARES program funds initiatives led by Alberta municipalities, communities and regions that enhance local economic conditions and leverage regional resources to build capacity for sustainable economic development.
- **The Small Community Opportunity Program:** This funding provides grants to tackle challenges and tap into opportunities in rural areas. Indigenous and small communities, as well as non-profit groups they work with, may receive between \$20,000 and \$100,000 for local projects. By building capacity in the agriculture industry and small business, these rural communities will grow their economic footprint.
- **Alberta Community Resilience Program:** The ACRP is a multi-year grant program supporting the development of long-term resilience to flood and drought events, while supporting integrated planning and healthy, functioning watersheds. The ACRP provides grants for the design and construction of projects that protect critical infrastructure from flooding and drought and help to ensure public safety is protected.
- **Alberta Broadband Fund:** This fund is part of Alberta's overall \$390-million commitment to improve access to high-speed internet. It will be used to implement solutions to connect rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.
- **Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership:** The Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership (AMWWP), which launched in 1991, provides cost-shared funding to eligible municipalities to help build municipal facilities for water supply and treatment, and wastewater treatment and disposal.

## 3 National

- **Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund:** The Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF) is a federal program that provides funding for large-scale infrastructure projects. These projects are intended to support economic growth, improve quality of life, and enhance the sustainability of communities. Eligible projects often include transportation, water and wastewater systems, energy, and broadband infrastructure.
- **Federal Grants:** Infrastructure Canada offers various grants and funding opportunities for municipal, provincial, and territorial governments, as well as private sector partners. These grants support a wide range of infrastructure projects, including public transit, green infrastructure, and community, culture, and recreation infrastructure.
- **FCM Green Municipal Fund:** The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Green Municipal Fund (GMF) provides funding for municipal environmental projects. The GMF supports initiatives that improve air, water, and land quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes funding for sustainable transportation, energy efficiency, waste management, and water conservation projects. The GMF offers grants and low-interest loans to municipalities across Canada.

# Section 5: Implementation

The implementation of this strategy will require the cooperation and input of many groups within the County and communities. Some of the recommendations will require further community engagement and others will require further engineering study and design, as well as budget approval from Council.

In the following table, actions have been indicated as short-term (to be completed within 5 years) and medium-term (to be completed within 5-10 years). Additional longer term items are expected to follow these actions after being determined through additional study and will require more capital funding.

The following table also identifies which Administration group is responsible for each action, potential funding sources to be used, and an approximate cost. The FTE's indicated in the table for each department are not cumulative, instead they indicate the resource required in addition to current staffing levels to complete the action.

Table 5 - Implementation Actions

County-wide General Actions				
Actions	Responsibilities	Potential Funding Sources	Cost	Timeline
<b>3.2.1 Planning and Land Use</b>				
<b>3.2.1.1. Update Designations to Hamlet, Rural Settlement, or Historical Settlement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include in MDP project</li> </ul>	Short-term
<b>3.2.1.2. Adjust Hamlet Boundaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include in MDP project</li> </ul>	Short-term
<b>3.2.1.3. Municipal Development Plan Updates</b>  <b>a. Re-designate the Hamlets and Their Boundaries</b>  <b>b. Allow for More Development Opportunities Around Hamlets</b>  <b>c. Enable Non-Residential Opportunities in Rural and Historical Settlements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include in MDP project</li> </ul>	Short-term
<b>3.2.1.4. Develop, Incentivize, and Update Area Structure Plans</b>  <b>a. Develop Area Structure Plans for Growth Hamlets</b>  <b>b. Incentivize Developer-led Area Structure Plans for Areas Adjacent to Growth Hamlets</b>  <b>c. Update Existing Area Structure Plans</b>  <b>d. Enable Development Opportunities in Rural and Historical Settlements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> <li>Provincial Funding</li> </ul>	1 FTE – Planning and Development Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$200,000</li> <li>Incentives</li> </ul>	Short-term

<b>3.2.2 Infrastructure</b>				
<b>3.2.2.1. Determine Long-Term Level of Service in Hamlets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Utilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$50,000</li> <li>1 FTE - Municipal Utilities</li> </ul>	Short-term
<b>3.2.2.2. Establish Timeline for Infrastructure Upgrades</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Utilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provincial Funding</li> <li>Utility Charges</li> <li>Offsite Levies</li> <li>County Capital Budget</li> <li>Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund</li> <li>Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership</li> </ul>	1 FTE - Municipal Utilities	Short-term
<b>3.2.2.3. Establish a Permanent Program for Community Hall Internet Connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$10,000</li> </ul>	Short-term
<b>3.2.3 Economic Incentives</b>				
<b>3.2.3.1. Include Hamlets in Future Business Incentives Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	0.5 FTE - Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incentives</li> </ul>	Short-term
<b>3.2.3.2. Explore Development Incentive Options for Hamlets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	0.5 FTE - Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incentives</li> </ul>	Short-term

<b>3.2.4 Community Building</b>				
<b>3.2.4.1. Create a Program to Acknowledge Historical Settlements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation and Culture</li> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> <li>• Provincial Funding</li> </ul>	1 FTE – Recreation and Culture	Medium-term
<b>3.2.4.2. Provide Community Beautification Program Grants</b>  <b>a. Continue to Support Community Beautification Initiatives Through Grants</b>  <b>b. Explore Supporting Community Beautification by Providing Services</b>  <b>c. Explore Providing Additional Resources for Enforcement of Community Standards Bylaw</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation and Culture</li> <li>• Regional Enforcement Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> <li>• Provincial Funding</li> </ul>	1 FTE – Recreation and Culture  1 FTE – Regional Enforcement Services	Short-term
<b>3.2.4.3. Explore Opportunities for Shared Recreation</b>  <b>a. Explore Opportunities for Shared Recreation Infrastructure</b>  <b>b. Explore Opportunities for Shared Recreation Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation and Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> <li>• Provincial Funding</li> </ul>	1 FTE – Recreation and Culture	Short-term
<b>3.2.4.4. Explore Opportunities for Transit to Urban Centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and Community Support Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> <li>• Provincial Funding</li> </ul>	\$50,000	Medium-term
<b>3.2.4.5. Explore the Development of a Biannual Volunteer Campaign</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation and Culture</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> <li>• Provincial Funding</li> </ul>	1 FTE – Recreation and Culture	Short-term

## Hamlet Specific Actions

Actions	Responsibilities	Potential Funding Options	Cost	Timeline
<b>3.3.1 Bezanson</b>				
<b>3.3.1.1. Expand Hamlet Boundary to Include Future Industrial Area North of Highway 43 and Re-designate Land Use for Those Parcels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	Include in MDP project	Short-term
<b>3.3.1.2. Update the Bezanson Area Structure Plan to Identify Growth Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	\$80,000	Medium-term
<b>3.3.1.3. Develop a Timeline to Expand Utility Capacity to Service New Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Utilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	1 FTE - Municipal Utilities	Short-term
<b>3.3.1.4. Connect the School to the Recreation Centre Through a Crosswalk and Pathway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> <li>• Capital Delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund</li> <li>• County Capital Budget</li> </ul>	\$150,000	Medium-term
<b>3.3.2 Demmitt</b>				
<b>3.3.2.1. Re-designate Demmitt to Recognize it as a Historical Settlement</b>  <b>a. Update the Municipal Development Plan to Recognize Demmitt as a Historical Settlement</b>  <b>b. Include Demmitt in a Program to Recognize Historical Settlements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in MDP project</li> </ul>	Short-term

<b>3.3.3 Dimsdale</b>				
<b>3.3.3.1. Expand Hamlet Boundary to Reflect Planned Future Development Area in Dimsdale</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in MDP project</li> </ul>	Short-term
<b>3.3.3.2. Review and Update the Dimsdale Area Structure Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	1 FTE - Planning and Development Services	Medium-term
<b>3.3.3.3. Explore Long-Term Servicing Options for the Hamlet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> <li>• Municipal Utilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	No Cost	Short-term
<b>3.3.3.4. Explore Economic Development Opportunities to Market the Dimsdale Area as a Rural Industrial Hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Funding</li> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	0.5 FTE - Economic Development	Short-term
<b>3.3.4 Elmworth</b>				
<b>3.3.4.1. Explore Programming Opportunities that Could Draw More People to Use the Library and Curling Facility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> <li>• Recreation and Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in MDP project</li> </ul>	Short-term
<b>3.3.4.2. Include More Options for Development Around Elmworth in the Municipal Development Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in MDP project</li> </ul>	Short-term
<b>3.3.5 Goodfare</b>				
<b>3.3.5.1. Recognize Goodfare as a Rural Settlement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in MDP project</li> </ul>	Short-term
<b>3.3.6 Huallen</b>				
<b>3.3.6.1. Recognize Huallen as a Rural Settlement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in MDP project</li> </ul>	Short-term

<b>3.3.7 La Glace</b>				
<b>3.3.7.1. Complete an Area Structure Plan to Identify Future Growth Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	1 FTE – Planning and Development Services	Short-term
<b>3.3.7.2. Complete Sanitary Servicing Upgrades to Improve Capacity for New Development as Needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> <li>• Municipal Utilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Funding</li> <li>• Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund</li> <li>• Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership</li> <li>• County Capital Budget</li> </ul>	\$400,000	\$400,000
<b>3.3.7.3. Explore Opportunities to Locate a Cell Tower in La Glace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	1 FTE – Planning and Development Services	Medium-term
<b>3.3.7.4 Adjust Hamlet Boundaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	Include in MDP project	Short-term
<b>3.3.8 Teepee Creek</b>				
<b>3.3.8.1. Determine the Long-Term Level of Service for Water and Wastewater</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> <li>• Municipal Utilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	Include in MDP project	Short-term
<b>3.3.8.2. Complete an Area Structure Plan to Identify Future Growth Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	1 FTE – Planning and Development Services	Medium-term

<b>3.3.8.3. Prioritize the Completion of the Fire Hall Infrastructure to Ensure Adequate Emergency Response Services for the Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Fire Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Capital Budget</li> </ul>	\$1.8M - Already funded	Short-term
<b>3.3.8.4. Explore Options to Improve the Quality of Drinking Water Through Infrastructure Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and Development Services</li> <li>Municipal Utilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	\$15,000	Short-term
<b>3.3.9 Valhalla Centre</b>				
<b>3.3.9.1. Work with the Local School to Establish a Community Garden Space with Educational Programming in Valhalla Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation and Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	1 FTE – Recreation and Culture	Short-term
<b>3.3.9.2 Adjust Hamlet Boundaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Operating Budget</li> </ul>	Include in MDP project	Short-term

# Section 6: **Conclusion**

Hamlet sustainability at a minimum will be dependent on maintaining stable populations that can sustain existing community amenities. To achieve hamlet resiliency, a concerted effort will be required by the County. Additional staff resources, infrastructure investment and other funding will be required to implement the actions identified in this strategy. Attracting new residents to reside in the hamlets will be needed to create resiliency.

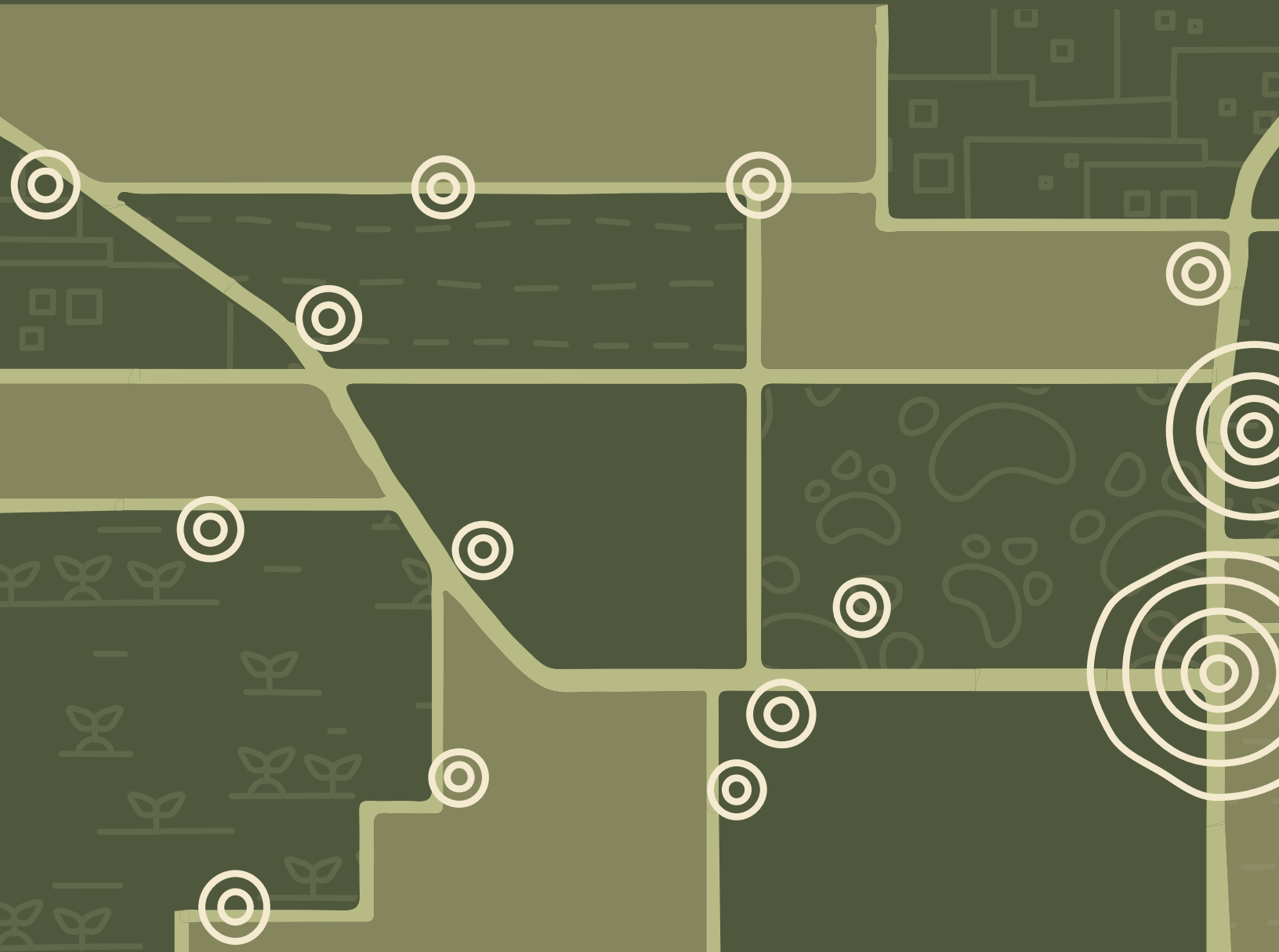
# **Appendix - Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary**

**County of Grande Prairie  
Hamlet Resiliency Strategy**



# Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary

October 2023



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# Executive Summary

Phase 2 Hamlet Resiliency Strategy engagement was conducted from September 13 to October 9, 2023. The purpose of phase 2 engagement was to gather feedback on the draft recommendations and actions. The two primary methods used to receive feedback included an online and paper survey and five in person open houses held in Bezanson, Albright, La Glace, Dimsdale and Teepee Creek. A variety of tactics were used to notify residents of the methods of engagement such as social media posts, radio ads, post cards, posters and the project webpage. In total, 152 surveys were completed and 77 people attended the open houses.

Several key themes emerged from the engagement feedback that were common across multiple of the nine rural hamlets. These themes are summarized below:

- **Mixed opinions on servicing upgrades:** The rising cost of living and services in hamlets is a concern. Residents of rural hamlets want to see the value they are getting for the services that they pay for, especially for water servicing. In some hamlets, residents do not want to pay higher costs for communal servicing. In other hamlets, there is a desire to see increased servicing capacity to support growth.
- **Extending hamlet capacity to deliver maintenance/programs:** Some hamlets are struggling to retain volunteers to support programming, beautification, or maintenance around hamlets (such as mowing, snow removal, etc). Some participants want to see the County provide additional support to community groups to construct, maintain, and operate community facilities and infrastructure or potentially take on some of these functions.
- **Improving connectivity and safety:** Participants want to see better and safer internal connections within hamlets, such as trails, crosswalks, and sidewalks. Creating safer connections between schools and other community facilities was a priority.
- **Incentivizing residential / commercial hamlet growth:** Participants were generally supportive of initiatives to help promote residential growth, economic development, and tourism within hamlets. There was generally more support for growth that would provide additional services (gas stations, stores, restaurants) in hamlets, but less support for industrial or campground uses that were recommended for particular hamlets. Recommendations regarding changing hamlet boundaries or changing ASPs also tended to be supported less than other community-related initiatives.

The feedback received on draft recommendations and actions will be used to inform the final actions included in the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy.

# Engagement Approach

## Project Overview

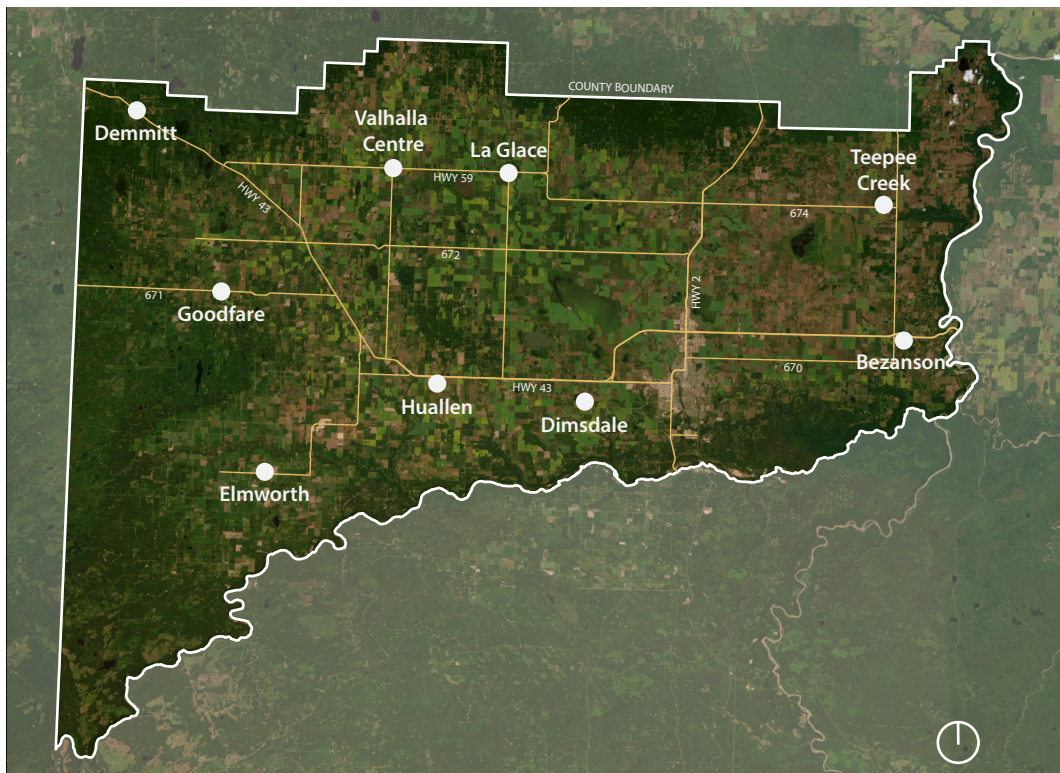
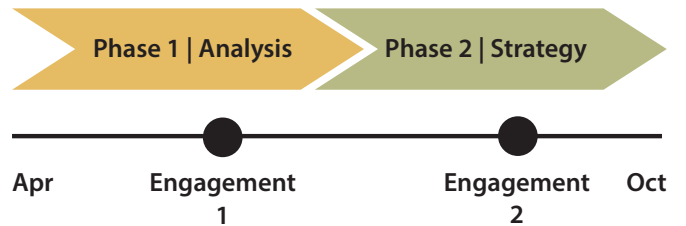
The County of Grande Prairie is developing a Hamlet Resiliency Strategy for its nine rural hamlets, including:

- Bezanson
- Demmitt
- Dimsdale
- Elmworth
- Goodfare
- Huallen
- La Glace
- Teepee Creek
- Valhalla Centre

This strategy will identify what makes each hamlet unique and provide recommendations to guide their future development and levels of service. Recommendations from the strategy will be applied to the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) review to ensure that the role and needs of the hamlets are reflected in the broader vision for the County.

## Timeline

Engagement for the project was conducted in two phases from spring to fall 2023. The first phase of engagement was focused on identifying the strengths and challenges of each hamlet. This phase of engagement provided an opportunity to receive feedback on the draft hamlet recommendations.



## Who We Engaged

The audiences for Phase 2 engagement included members of the public / residents and Council.

## How We Engaged

Phase 2 engagement involved both in-person and online feedback opportunities. An online and paper survey were available from September 13 to October 9, 2023. The project team received 143 survey responses and 9 hardcopy surveys.

The project team hosted a drop-in open house session in each of the following five locations:

- Bezanson
- Albright
- La Glace
- Dimsdale
- Teepee Creek

Details on the dates and locations for these sessions can be found on the following page. A total of 77 people attended the sessions.

## What We Asked

In Phase 2, participants were asked to react to and provide an indication of their level of support for the draft recommendations of the Hamlet Resiliency Strategy.

**Survey:** For the general recommendations and recommendations for each of the nine rural hamlets, participants were asked:

- What is your level of support for the following recommendations?
- Are there additional recommendations that you would like to see included?

At the end of the survey, participants were asked the following demographics questions to understand who was reached by the survey:

- What is your relationship to the following hamlets?
- What area do you live in?
- How old are you?

**Open House:** At the open house, tables were setup with boards containing the same questions from the online survey (except demographics) as dotmocracy activities with additional recommendations or comments captured on sticky notes.

**143**  
ONLINE  
SURVEYS

**9**  
HARDCOPY  
SURVEYS

**5**  
OPEN  
HOUSES

**77**  
OPEN HOUSE  
ATTENDEES

# Communications

The project team used a variety of methods to invite participation in the engagement process, including mailouts, email notifications, social media, local radio ads, and in-place posters. These methods are summarized below.

RESOURCES	DESCRIPTION	STATS	AUDIENCE
<b>Engagement Opportunities</b>			
 <b>Public Survey</b>	<p>The online survey was a primary means used to collect input from residents. The survey ran from September 13 to October 9, 2023. Paper copies of the survey were also available at Teepee Creek Country Store, Elmworth Library, La Glace Library, Bezanson General Store, and the County of Grande Prairie Administration Building.</p>	<p><b>143 online surveys completed</b></p> <p><b>9 hardcopy surveys completed</b></p>	Public
 <b>Drop-in Public Session</b>	<p>Five drop-in open houses were hosted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October 2, 6-8 PM: Bezanson at the Knelsen Centre</li> <li>October 2, 6-8 PM: Albright at the Albright Community Hall</li> <li>October 3, 6-8 PM: La Glace at the Twilight Centre</li> <li>October 3, 6-8 PM: Dimsdale at the Dimsdale Hall</li> <li>October 4, 6-8 PM: Teepee Creek at the Teepee Creek Hall</li> </ul> <p>Participants could stop by at anytime during the session to learn about the project and participate in the activity stations.</p>	<p><b>77 attendees</b></p>	Public
<b>Communications Tactics</b>			
 <b>Project Webpage</b>	<p>All project information was available on the project website at <a href="https://countygp.ab.ca/planyourcounty">countygp.ab.ca/planyourcounty</a></p>	<p><b>1300+ unique webpage visits</b></p>	Public
 <b>Social Media</b>	<p>Posts on Facebook and Twitter throughout September and October 2023 directed people to the public events and online survey.</p>	<p><b>14 posts</b></p> <p><b>13 likes</b></p> <p><b>15 shares</b></p> <p><b>1 comment</b></p>	Public
 <b>Radio Ads</b>	<p>Radio ads were run on two local stations from September 23 to October 4, 2023.</p>	<p><b>2 radio station ads</b></p>	Public
 <b>Emails</b>	<p>One email post with the link to the website/survey was sent to those subscribed to County engagement updates.</p>	<p><b>71 subscribers</b></p>	Public
 <b>Postcards</b>	<p>Postcards were mailed to residents in and around the hamlets on September 22, 2023.</p>	<p><b>729 postcards</b></p>	Public
 <b>Public Calendar</b>	<p>All scheduled public engagement events were posted on the County's event calendar.</p>	<p><b>5 calendar events</b></p>	Public
 <b>Posters</b>	<p>Bezanson Tempo General Store, Bezanson School, Bezanson Community Centre, TP Country Store TP School, La Glace School, Hythe Post Office, Mercantile Restaurant, Valhalla Viking Centre &amp; Community Library, Demmit Cultural Centre, Hythe Community Library, Hythe Community Centre, Hythe Regional School, Elmworth Library, Webster Community Hall, La Glace Library, Dimsdale Community Centre, and La Glace Fas Gas</p>	<p><b>18 posters</b></p>	Public

# Overall Themes

Several key themes emerged from the engagement feedback that were common across multiple of the nine rural hamlets. These themes are summarized below:

- **Mixed opinions on servicing upgrades:** The rising cost of living and services in hamlets is a concern. Residents of rural hamlets want to see the value they are getting for the services that they pay for, especially for water servicing. In some hamlets, residents do not want to pay higher costs for communal servicing. In other hamlets, there is a desire to see increased servicing capacity to support growth.
- **Extending hamlet capacity to deliver maintenance/programs:** Some hamlets are struggling to retain volunteers to support programming, beautification, or maintenance around hamlets (such as mowing, snow removal, etc). Some participants want to see the County provide additional support to community groups to construct, maintain, and operate community facilities and infrastructure or potentially take on some of these functions.
- **Improving connectivity and safety:** Participants want to see better and safer internal connections within hamlets, such as trails, crosswalks, and sidewalks. Creating safer connections between schools and other community facilities was a priority.
- **Incentivizing residential / commercial hamlet growth:** Participants were generally supportive of initiatives to help promote residential growth, economic development, and tourism within hamlets. There was generally more support for growth that would provide additional services (gas stations, stores, restaurants) in hamlets, but less support for industrial or campground uses that were recommended for particular hamlets. Recommendations regarding changing hamlet boundaries or changing ASPs also tended to be supported less than other community-related initiatives.

# Engagement Results

The hamlet-specific in-person and online engagement results are reported on together in the following summaries.

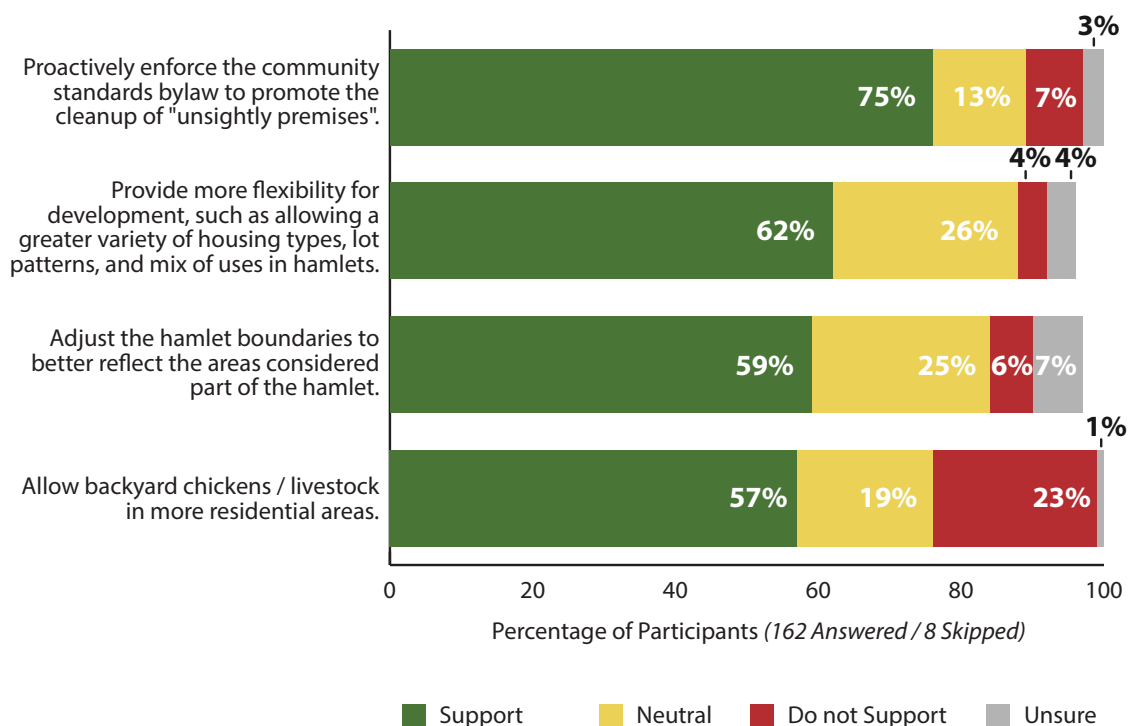
## General Recommendations

The general recommendations were grouped into three categories: Land use / bylaw, incentives, and support & enforcement.

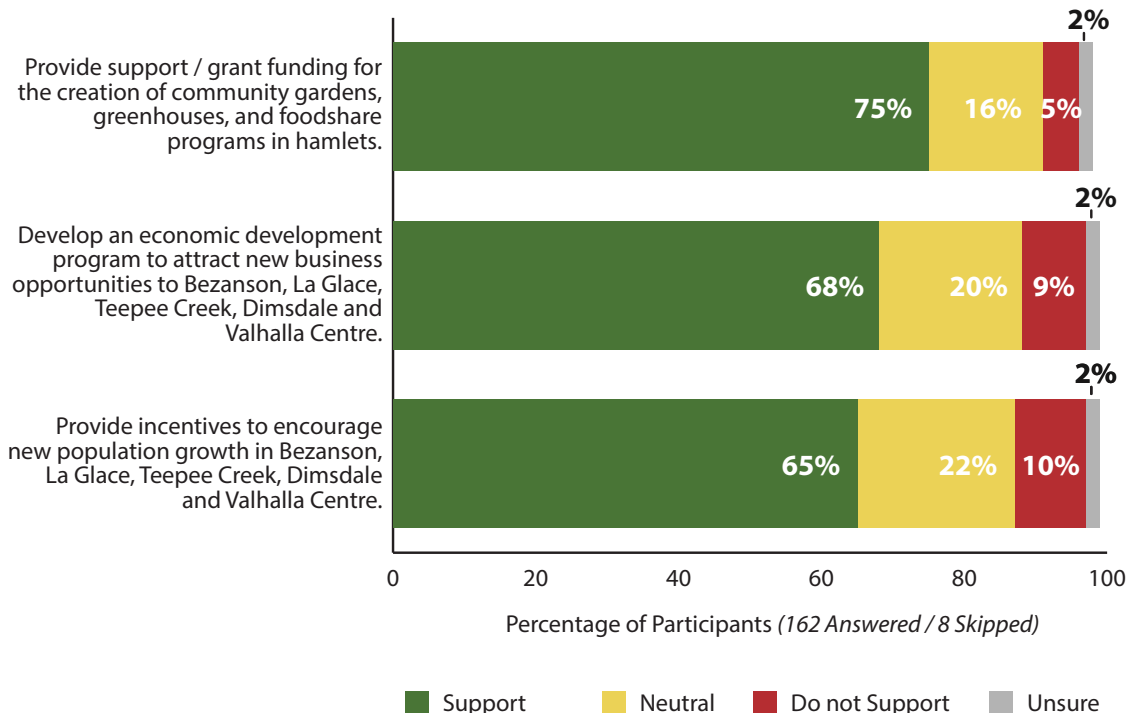
Feedback from both the in-person and survey engagement was generally supportive of all the general recommendations. The most supported recommendations were promoting hamlet activities, developing a campaign to promote volunteering, providing support / grant funding for the creation of community gardens/greenhouses/foodshare, and enforcing the cleanup of unsightly premises. Though more than half of participants supported allowing backyard chickens / livestock in more residential area, it received the lowest level of support.

At the public events, several participants added comments to the general recommendations, including some concerns that the recommendations were too vague or needed to be better defined. Backyard chickens versus livestock were also felt to be separate issues, but were contained in the same recommendation. 'Unsightly premises' and 'incentives' were additional terms that participants asked to be defined.

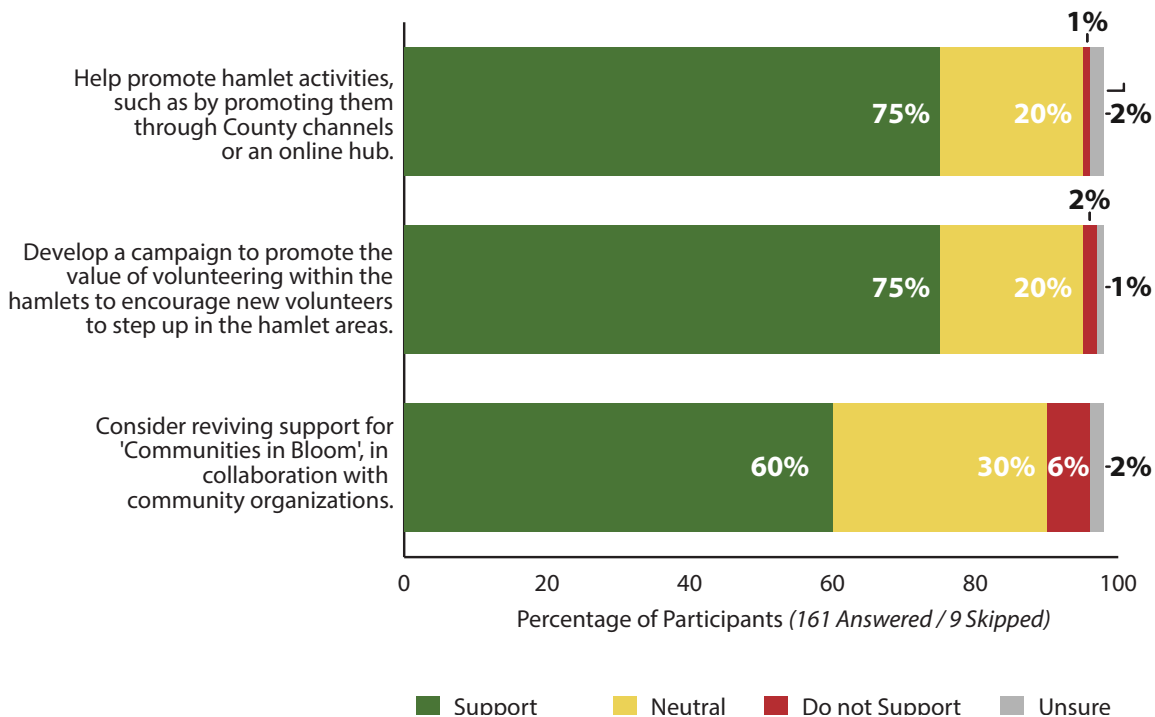
### What is your level of support for the following land use/bylaw recommendations for the nine rural hamlets?



**What is your level of support for the following incentives recommendations for the nine rural hamlets?**



**What is your level of support for the following community support & enforcement recommendations for the nine rural hamlets?**



## Hamlet Feedback

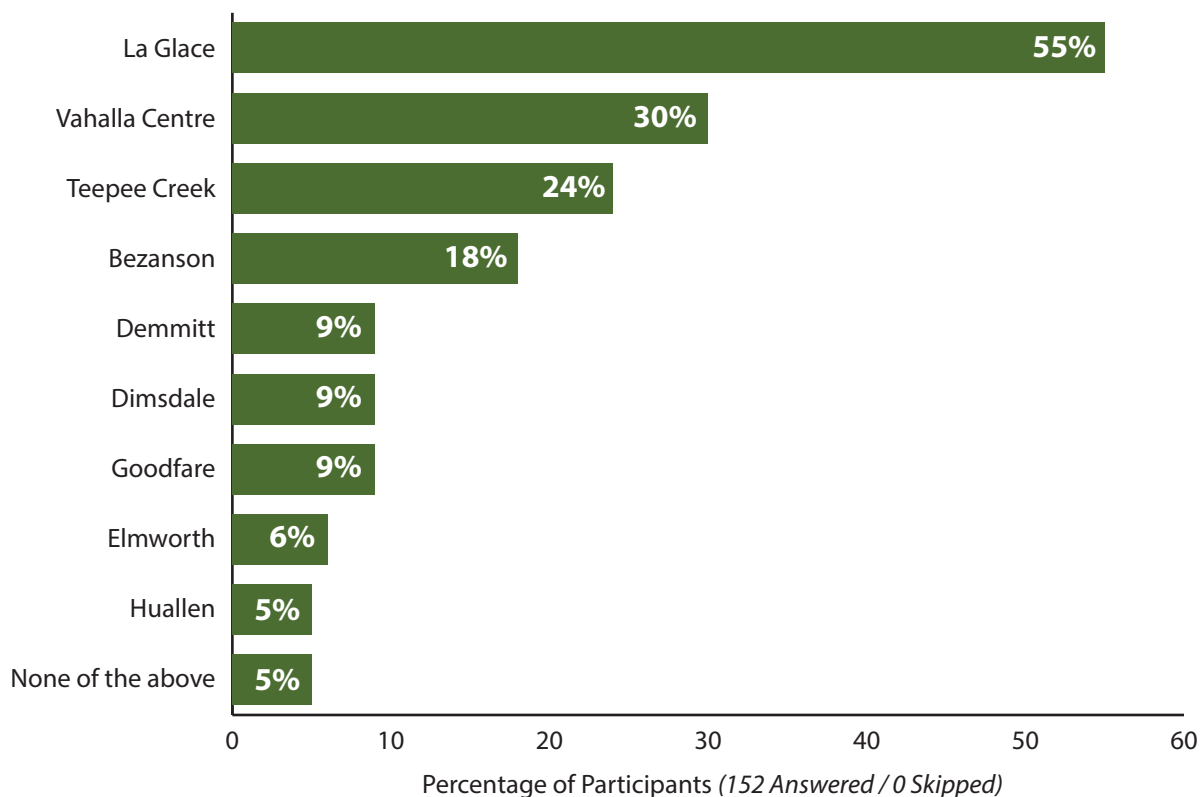
All hamlets received some level of feedback. In the survey La Glace (55%) received the most responses, followed by Valhalla Centre (30%), Teepee Creek (24%), and Bezanson (18%). Huallen received the least responses (5%).

Similarly, La Glace (43 comments) received the most comments. No written comments were received for Huallen or Goodfare, but feedback was provided on the multiple choice questions for those hamlets.

Feedback for each of the nine individual hamlets is summarized on the following pages.

### HAMLET RESPONSES

Please select all of the hamlets that you would like to provide feedback for (select all that apply).



## Bezanson

Bezanson received the fourth highest number of comments and survey responses after La Glace.

The most supported recommendation was addressing water servicing quality in the hamlet (86% support). This priority was also reiterated in the comments.

Following this, streetscape upgrades (sidewalks) and promoting tourism were the second highest supported recommendation (69% support). However, implementing some actions from the previous streetscape design concepts was the least supported recommendation (42% support). 25% of participants were neutral on this recommendation. This may also be due to participants not being aware of the former concept.

Participants suggested some additional recommendations related to servicing / infrastructure, and community facilities. These are summarized below.

### OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Servicing / Infrastructure

- Addressing the high cost of water servicing
- Creating of a central garbage pickup location
- Using native / drought tolerant species in any landscaping.

9  
SURVEY  
COMMENTS

7  
IN-PERSON  
COMMENTS

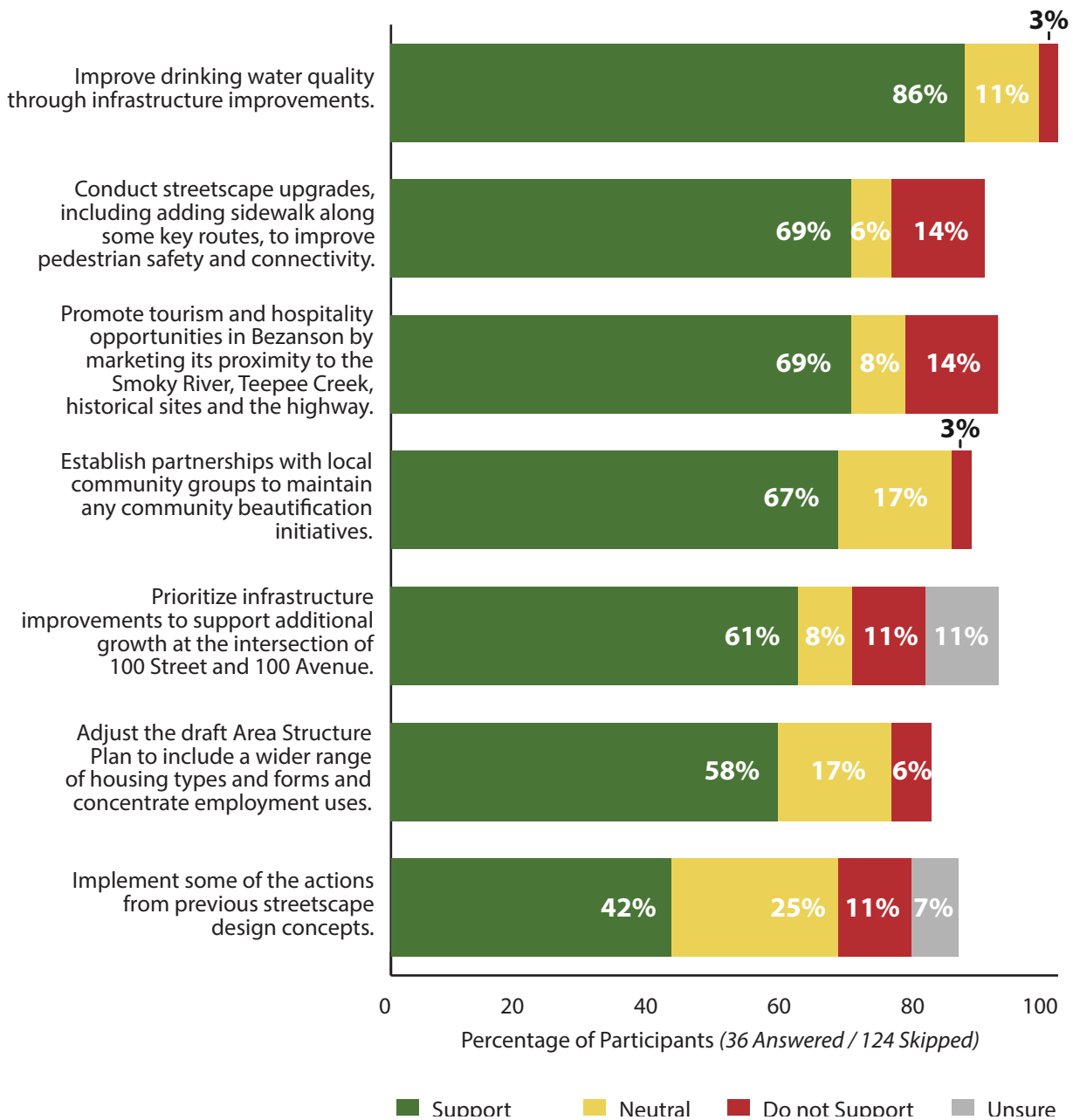
#### Community Facilities

- Providing infrastructure upgrades / funding for community facilities
- Establishing partnerships with community organizations for community initiatives
- Establishing a crosswalk / paths from school to the community hall
- More trails & pathways
- More trees along streets
- Acquiring land to support a larger school
- Ensuring greenspace is included in any new development.
- Enabling more childcare opportunities
- Provision of an outdoor athletic track / sports field
- More funding for Agricultural Society

#### Other

- Hamlet boundaries seem large
- More mixed use development

**WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS?**



# Demmitt

There was only one recommendation provided for Demmitt in the survey and event. Overall this recommendation was supported by over 67% of participants. 22% did not support the recommendation.

2  
SURVEY  
COMMENTS

5  
IN-PERSON  
COMMENTS

A few participants wanted to see Demmitt listed in the general recommendation for incentives to encourage new population growth in the area. Some felt however that gas activity in the area limits the attractiveness of the community for growth.

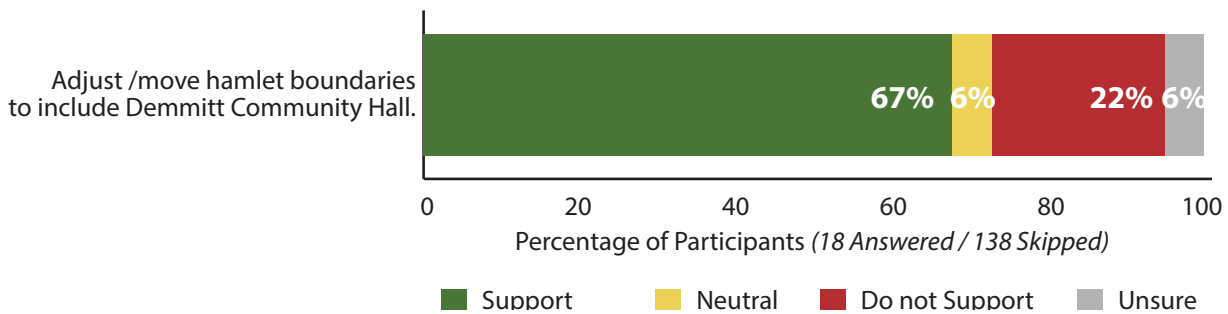
A few additional recommendations were suggested in the comments below.

### OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support renewables and sustainable housing construction using local materials
- Relax bylaw rules / allow a greater diversity of buildings
- Address crime in the area
- Allow more hospitality services such as bed and breakfasts and serviced camping
- Add a left turn lane going west on 43 at intersection

### WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS?

(Total question responses: 18)



# Dimsdale

Of all the hamlets, the recommendations for Dimsdale received the lowest levels of direct support. The only recommendation that received over 50% support was enabling more supporting commercial uses (gas stations, convenience, etc). Most recommendations had a high level of neutral responses.

The most contentious recommendations were exploring opportunities to connect to water servicing (39% support and 33% do not support) and allowing dwelling units in the industrial area (28% support, 28% do not support).

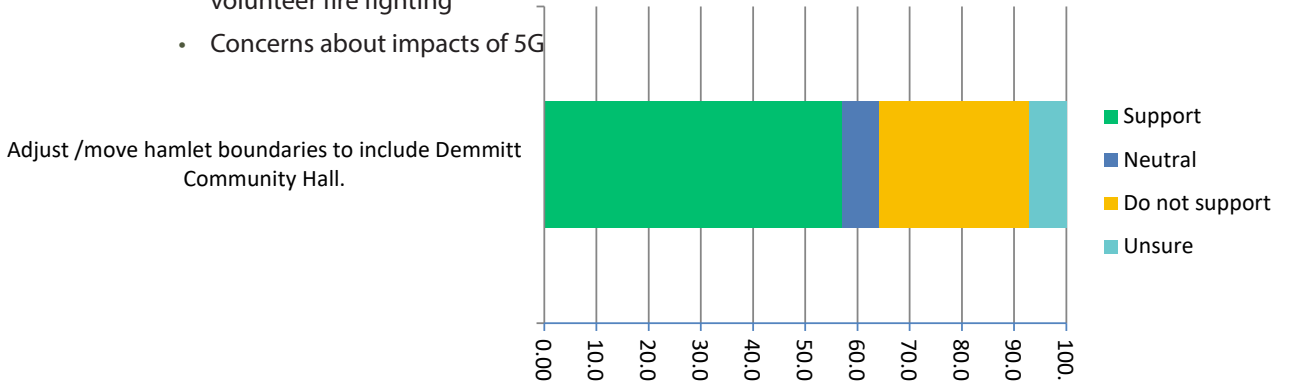
**1**  
**SURVEY**  
**COMMENT**

**5**  
**IN-PERSON**  
**COMMENTS**

### OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

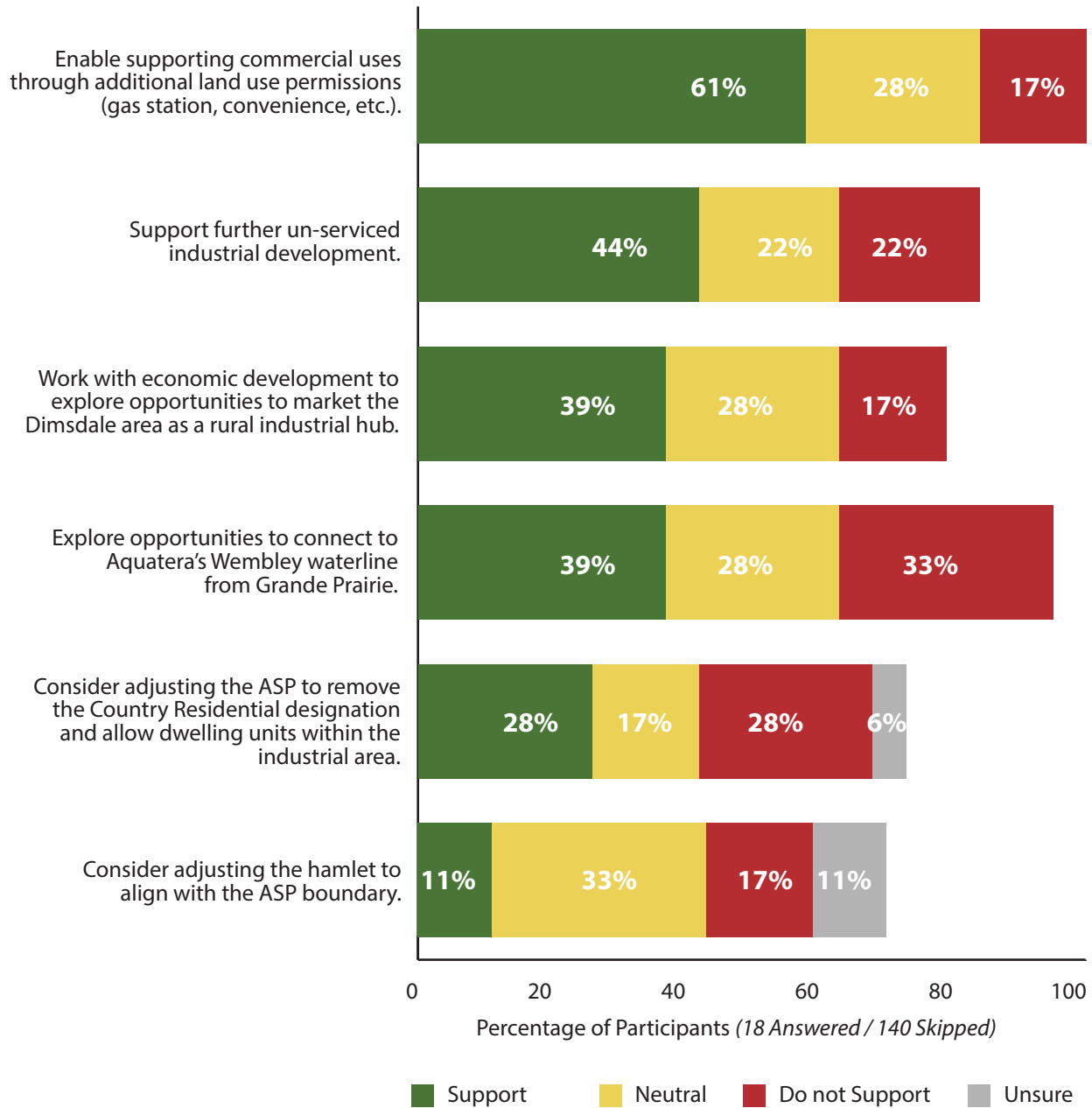
- Concerns that lots are converting to industrial and deterring small business owners / residents
- Incentives for restaurants, gas stations, services
- Provide high speed internet
- Need more community organization such as volunteer fire fighting
- Concerns about impacts of 5G

What is your level of support for the following Demmitt recommendations?



**WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS?**

(Total question responses: 18)



# Elmworth

Feedback on Elmworth was only received through the survey. Overall, participants were mostly supportive of additional programming at the library and slightly more neutral about promoting the hamlet as a rural and recreational hub.

**1**  
**SURVEY**  
**COMMENT**

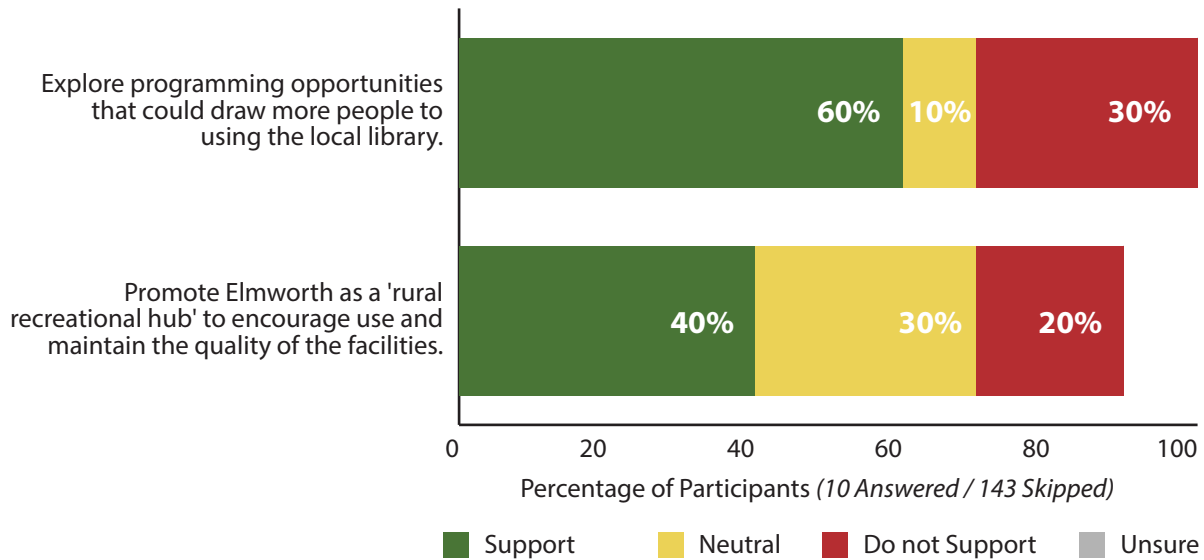
**0**  
**IN-PERSON**  
**COMMENTS**

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The one comment indicated a desire to see a bigger library with more programs as well as a new park at red willow with shade / water park.

## WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS?

(Total question responses: 10)



## Goodfare

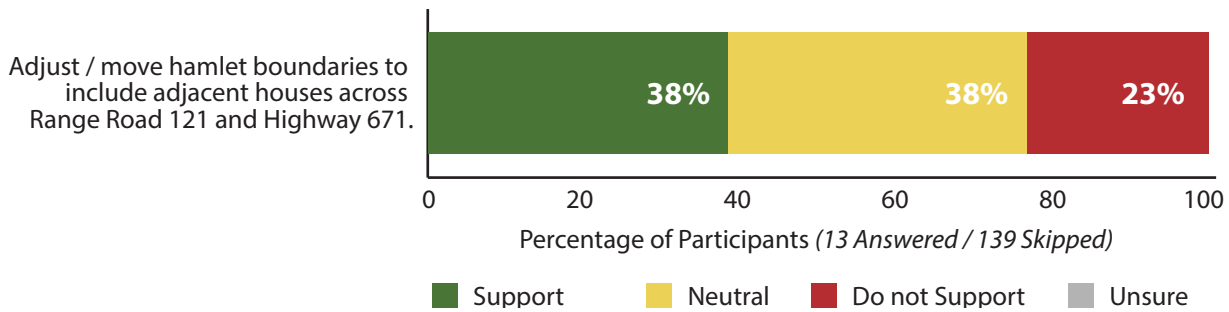
Feedback on Goodfare was only received through the survey and there were zero written comments.

Participants were split between supportive and neutral, with both at 38%. An additional 23% did not support the recommendation. No additional recommendations were proposed.

0  
SURVEY  
COMMENTS

0  
IN-PERSON  
COMMENTS

### WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATION?



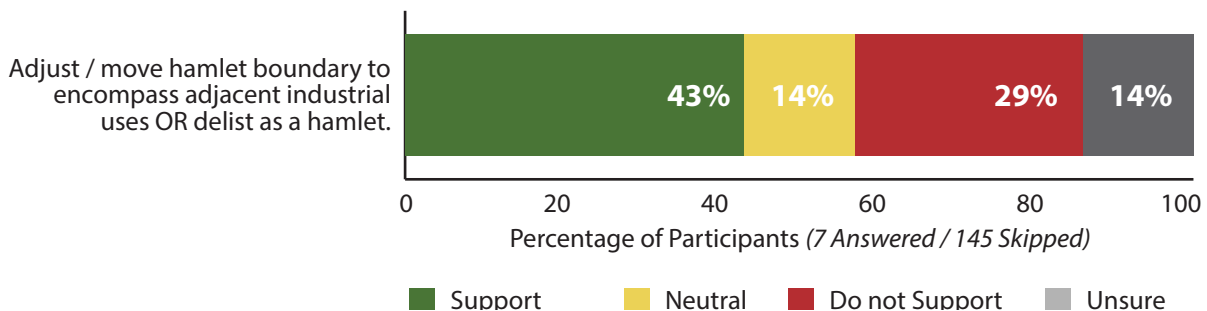
## Huallen

Huallen was not significantly represented in the survey and no comments were submitted for the hamlet. Of the seven responses to the survey, 43% were supportive and 29% did not support. No additional recommendations were proposed.

0  
SURVEY  
COMMENTS

0  
IN-PERSON  
COMMENTS

### WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS?



## La Glace

La Glace received the most responses in both the survey and at the public events.

There were very high levels of support for helping with the completion of the arena and promoting sport tourism in La Glace. Though it was included as a draft recommendation in the previous question, many comments reiterated the desire to see the County help finish the arena in La Glace in the comments as well.

The least supported recommendation was completing water servicing upgrades to improve capacity for new development (48% support, 25% neutral, 19% do not support).

Another theme from the feedback was concern about the rising cost of living for residents and rising costs for community-led initiatives and services. Participants were concerned about the cost and rules with connecting to the upgraded water service as well as the cost of garbage pickup. Some participants did not feel like they were getting enough value from the services they are paying for.

Several other suggestions were provided regarding servicing, promotion of tourism / economic development, community facilities, and County process, which are summarized below.

### OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Servicing / Infrastructure

- Concerns about cost and quality of water servicing and new rules about having to connect. Would like new development to be able to drill own wells instead of connecting to water servicing.
- Would like to see sidewalks cleared of snow in winter
- Concerns about the rising costs of living (garbage pickup, water servicing, sewer etc)
- Want to see more upkeep of weeds, mowing, pathways, and sidewalks around the community (used to be done by volunteers)
- Get Alberta Transportation to fix highway 724

**25**  
**SURVEY**  
**COMMENTS**

**18**  
**IN-PERSON**  
**COMMENTS**

- Protect land, water and resources from oil development. Make oil companies pay to fund community infrastructure
- Concerns about fire response time

#### Marketing / Promotion

- Work with Saddle Hills County to promote tourism and recreation in Bear Hills, Saddle Hills, and Spring Lake areas
- Agriculture should be promoted in the area
- Provide incentives for economic development, tourism, and residential growth

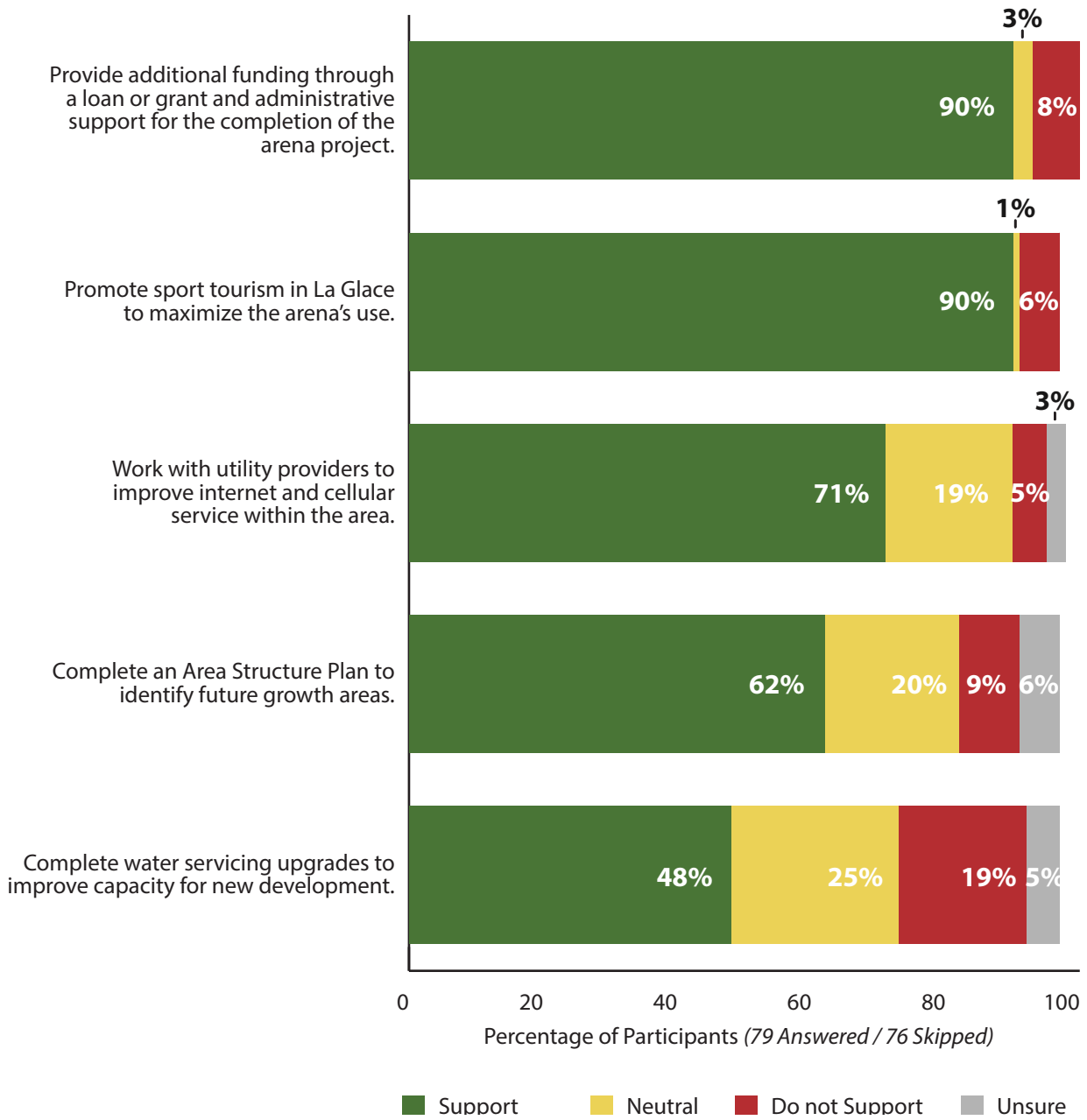
#### Community Facilities

- Library looking for grant funding to connect into new water servicing
- Provide a local riding arena for kids/horses
- Concerns about high cost of insurance for Twilight Centre
- Want County to build new neighbourhoods

#### Process & Enforcement

- Ensure community consultation to identify specific services, supports, and investment the community wants to see. And notification when work is being completed.
- Deal with abandoned properties

**WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS?**



# Teepee Creek

Teepee Creek received feedback from both the in person events and survey. Helping provide more year-round community programming at the rodeo grounds was the more supported recommendation of the two presented (81% support). About 50% percent of participants supported the addition of a campground, while 24% did not support.

Other recommendations are noted below.

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

### Servicing / Infrastructure

- Move the firehall to the store location and create space for police
- Improve water quality and distribution
- Address flooding / drainage
- Upgrade water system for fire hall

### Community Facilities

- Provide additional pathways between the school, store, arena, and skating rink
- Create a playground with walking trails, skate arena, skate park

**17**  
SURVEY  
COMMENTS

**14**  
IN-PERSON  
COMMENTS

- Have more dances
- Help with volunteer burnout

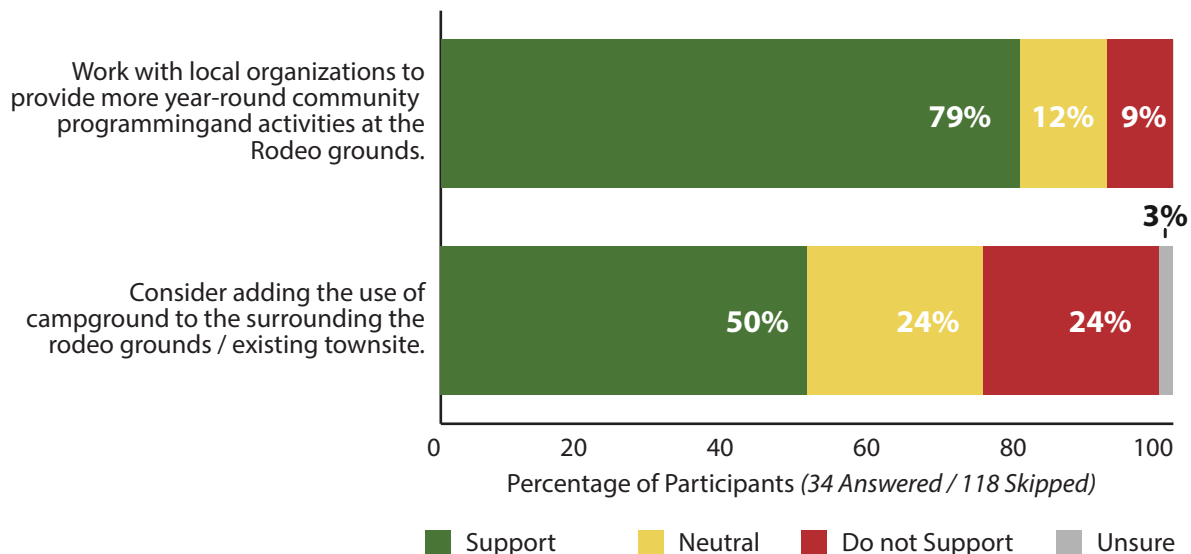
### Enforcement

- Provide more law enforcement (speed limits) and rural crime watch
- Ensure yard maintenance

### Development

- Encourage more development
- Provide more businesses & services (gas station)
- Enable more affordable living standards (internet, power, grocery)
- Complete an Area Structure Plan (ASP)
- Include stampede grounds in the hamlet boundary
- Increase curb appeal

## WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS?



# Valhalla Centre

Valhalla Centre received the second highest level of responses in the survey, but no in person comments.

**10**  
SURVEY  
COMMENTS

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IN-PERSON  
COMMENTS

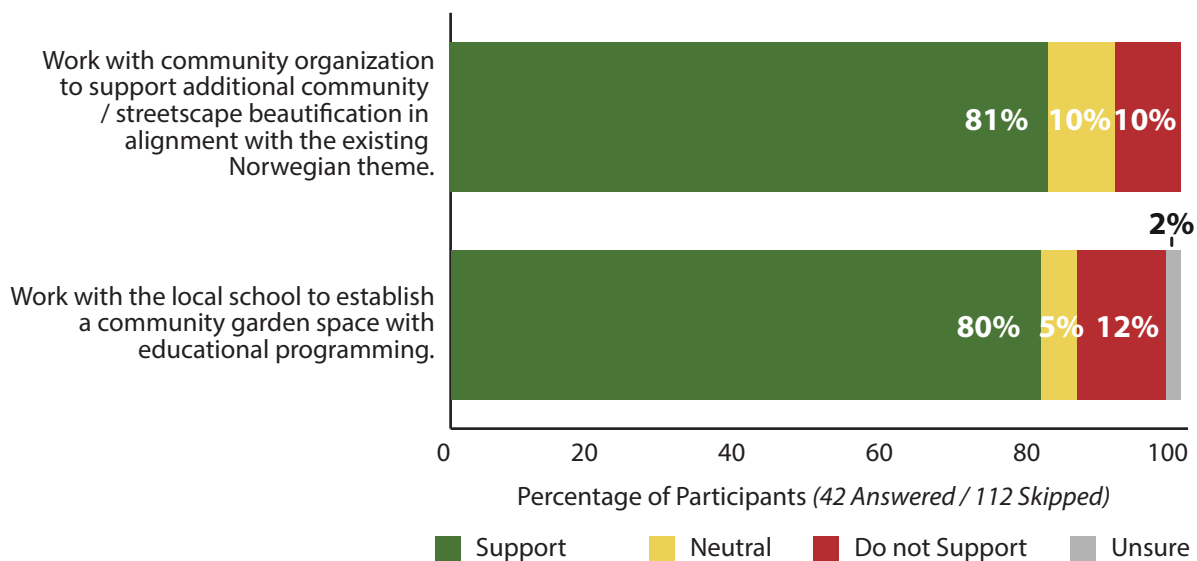
Both recommendations were supported overall and a few additional recommendations were suggested.

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

### Servicing / Infrastructure

- Would like to see unsightly premises cleaned up to help encourage new growth
- Promotion of the mercantile and the museum to engage people to come in and support local.
- Concerned about the charter school and impacts on other schools.
- Provide more senior supports and low income/ single parent housing.
- Consider an outdoor skating rink to increase winter community activities.
- Work to develop recreational tourism in the area.

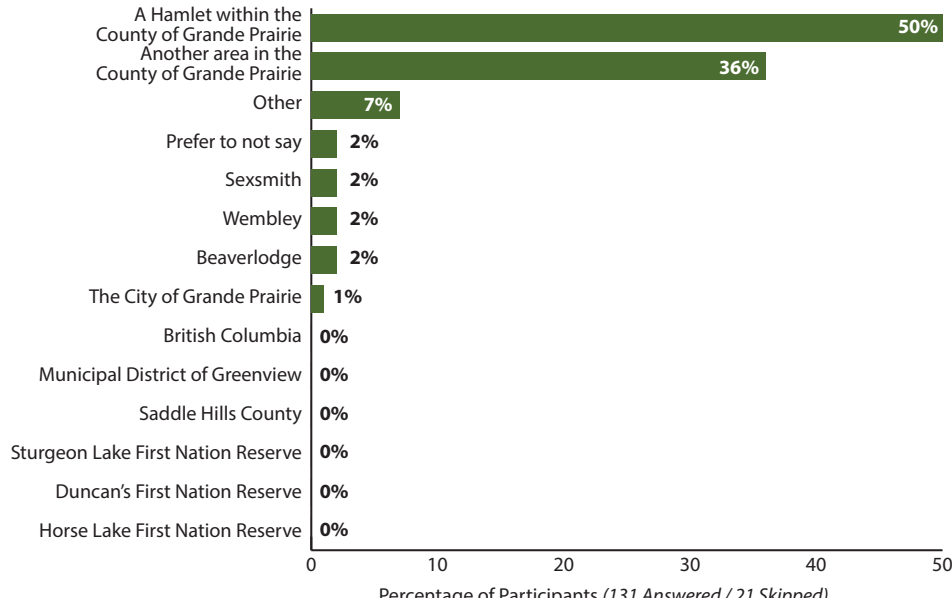
## WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS?



# Demographics

Two demographics questions were asked in the survey to help the project team understand who was responding and who may not be represented in the feedback received: where participants live and how old they are. These questions were only asked in the survey, not the public events or interviews.

## AREA RESPONDENTS LIVE IN

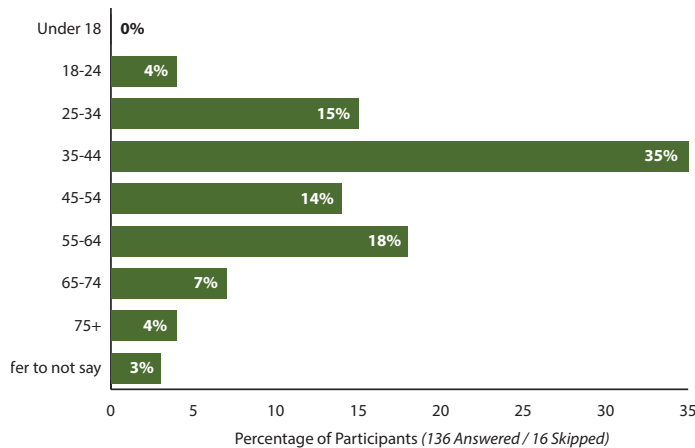


Half of survey participants were from a hamlet within the County. Another 36% were from other areas of the County. About 7% were from another municipality.

### OTHER

- Hythe
- Rural Sexsmith/Teepee Creek border
- Wedgewood

## AGE OF RESPONDENTS



The largest age group that completed the survey was 35-44 years old, which was 35% of participants. This was followed by 55-64 and 25-34 years old age categories at 18% and 15% respectively.

None of the survey participants were under 18 years old.

# Next Steps

## **Thank you to everyone who participated in Phase 2!**

The feedback from this phase will be used to inform the project team's final report and Hamlet Resiliency Strategy for the nine rural hamlets. This will be presented to Council. To stay up to date on the project, please visit [countygp.ab.ca/planyourcounty](https://countygp.ab.ca/planyourcounty).