

Town of Morinville

Policy

TITLE: Sustainable Growth

ADOPTED BY: Council

NUMBER: 250/2002

PREPARED BY:

Cathy Clarke and Louise Champis

DATE: September 24, 2002

SUPERSEDES:

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY:

Item: Sustainable Growth Policy.

Existing Relevant Policies

- Council has adopted the Municipal Development Plan which states “The purpose of land use planning is to shape the physical environment of a community in order to maximize the quality of life of its citizens”.
- Council adopted the following values:
 - Partnership – We will meet the community’s goals through close working relationships with and between our community member groups.
 - Teamwork – We will listen and constructively respond to others, give others the benefit of the doubt; provide support to those who need it and recognize the interest and achievements of others.
 - Responsive – We will actively encourage and respect community participation.
 - Accountable – We are answerable and answer to our community and constituents for the results we achieve and the resources expended.

What:

Sustainable Growth is defined as:

- Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- To provide a secure and satisfying material future for everyone, in a society that is equitable, caring and attentive to basic human needs.
- We will have a growing economy that provides equitable opportunities for satisfying livelihoods and a safe, healthy, high quality of life for current and future generations.
- Will protect the environment, its natural resource base and the function and viability of natural systems on which all life depends.

Why:

- The way we plan the physical layout, or land use, of our communities is fundamental to sustainability.
- Urban sprawl causes increased traffic congestion, air pollution, inefficient energy consumption, loss of open space and habitat, inequitable distribution of economic resources and the loss of a sense of community.
- Scattered development does not generate enough taxes to educate the children who live there or to maintain the roads leading to and through their subdivisions.
- Scattered development not only wipes out industrial land but makes it more difficult for established industrial businesses to continue to operate.
- Urban sprawl is a problem primarily due to hidden costs associated with it, namely greater car dependence, higher infrastructure costs, loss of open space and industrial land, more energy-intensive development, urban core disinvestment and traffic congestion.

- With urban sprawl infrastructure costs, the cost of new facilities and the cost of public services are often higher and a major problem as the homebuyers or developers do not pay all of these costs.
- Empty urban lots are a target for arson, graffiti and other types of crime. Surrounding businesses and properties often lose value due to the crime and stigma associated with vacant lots.
- With urban sprawl causing cultural amenities, that help fuel downtown revitalization, to be built away for the main core of the municipality could cause sections of town to become islands of urban decay.
- The further away developments are from the service centers that serve them, the more costly it usually to provide those services.
- Street connectivity and route distance can be more influential than physical proximity. The maze-like effect of cul-de-sac development, for example, makes it more time consuming and expensive for police to watch neighbourhoods.

How:

- Community sustainability requires a transition from poorly-managed sprawl to land use planning practices that create and maintain efficient infrastructure, ensure close-knit neighbourhoods and sense of community and preserve natural systems.
- Strategies for growth control have included growth boundaries, restrictions on building permits, service area fees, regional planning and impact fees. Impact fees are monetary charges imposed on new development to recoup or offset a proportionate share of public capital costs required to accommodate such development with necessary public facilities.
- Sustainable growth requires the development community, environmental organizations, transportation, community groups, public officials and citizens working together to make better decisions about how town will grow.

Where:

- Foster local business retention and attract diverse, long term economic growth, including tourism.
- Ensure a timely supply of serviced residential, commercial and industrial land to support the economic and community development of Morinville.
- Promote our amenities, including recreation facilities, parks, human services, heritage, culture and other attractions that Morinville offers.
- Encourage activities, including trade shows, conventions, cultural, sporting and other events that promote tourism.

When:

- Sustainable growth is a new way of thinking about growth that asks us to look at the big picture by looking ahead 15 to 20 years. It asks us to co-ordinate our decisions today on public investment, infrastructure, transportation and planning to secure a healthy future.
- The Town of Morinville will look at a collection of fiscal and regulator growth management strategies to tackle issues of sprawl, economic development equity and environmental protection.
- Combined with regulatory strategies and impact analysis/indicator projects, communities will be able to internalize some of the social costs of development and guide development in a more sustainable direction.

Council Action:

- To ensure that land use policies, development guidelines and procedures support sustainability the Town of Morinville can:
- Conduct land use planning that considers fiscal, environmental and social sustainability.
 - Plan, in consultation with citizens, to effectively manage the issues that are associated with growth, such as infrastructure, urban sprawl and increased traffic.

- Plan for appropriate mix of parks, natural areas, residential, commercial, industrial and institutional land uses.
- Develop and monitor policies and guidelines to support revitalization of existing areas.
- Support the development of the downtown as a vibrant and attractive focal point of the community.
- Plan for community and economic growth, while providing a balance in preserving and maintaining historic resources and other significant features.

**Community
Action:**

- Most successful sustainable growth strategies incorporate a fully engaged comprehensive group of stakeholders committed to the principles of sustainability and collaborative planning.
- Set a clear plan, inclusive of community input, of design principles that embody a community's values and vision of what greater resource efficiency and sustainability mean to the future.
- Set a measurement of quantitative documentation of energy, economic, and environmental impacts to support informed planning choices and monitor plans as they are implemented.

**Administrative
Action:**

- In order to counter development subsidies and encourage more desirable forms of land use, the Town of Morinville administration must develop mechanisms for dynamically quantifying and tracking impacts. Once the impacts are known, our community can devise systems for getting the appropriate entities to pay a more equitable share.
- Further policy augmentation as per – Council Action to develop and monitor policies and guidelines to support revitalization of existing areas.