

# Bentley Community Strategic Plan

---



**Adopted by Bentley Town Council**

**April, 2019**

---

# **Table of Contents**

Purpose of this Plan.....	2
Bentley’s Vision.....	3
High Priority Actions .....	4
Goal 1: Effective Communication and Engagement.....	4
Goal 2: Financial Sustainability .....	5
Goal 3: Economic Growth.....	6
Goal 4: Enriched and United Community .....	7
Goal 5: Organizational Success .....	8
Additional Action Items .....	9
Goal 1: Effective Communication and Engagement.....	9
Goal 2: Financial Sustainability .....	10
Goal 3: Economic Growth.....	11
Goal 4: Enriched and United Community .....	12
Goal 5: Organizational Success .....	14
Planning Background.....	15
Strategic Planning Process.....	18
Challenges and Opportunities.....	18
Opportunities .....	19
Challenges .....	21

## PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The Bentley Community Strategic Plan outlines the goals and actions that will support achieving the vision of the community over the next five years (2019-2024). This plan has been developed as a Strategic Plan for the community of Bentley as a whole; it is not intended to be a corporate strategic plan. The goals and actions contained in the Plan were developed by the Steering Committee with community input on the ideas and priorities.

As a community Strategic Plan, it is intended that any member of the community or community organization can take it upon themselves to accomplish any of these actions. If a member of the community feels they can champion or lead any of the identified initiatives, they are encouraged to do so. This Plan has purposely avoided attaching leaders to any of the actions to allow community members the opportunity to lead where they see fit. Some actions may require the lead of the Town of Bentley where the action identifies the Town; however the majority of the actions have been developed for the community at large.

Each section of actions includes “*Community members are encouraged to...*” at the beginning of each table. This preface is intended to be the lead in for each action item, to clearly identify each action item as belonging to the community. The hope of the Committee in identifying each action for community members is to empower the community to champion and lead the actions.

This Plan does not commit the Town of Bentley to any public expenditure. The Town’s budgeting process is separate from this Plan; the Town may consider any of these actions during budget deliberations but they are not bound to any items contained within this Plan.



# **BENTLEY'S VISION**

The vision for Bentley that this Strategic Plan will be supporting is the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) vision statement. The MDP was recently adopted in 2016, Council and Administration felt that this vision statement is the most reflective of the direction the community would like to work to in the coming years.

*"As we look to the future we see the Town of Bentley as a community that offers residents a high quality of life that grows in a sustainable manner that is safe, clean, attractive, friendly and family-oriented. The community benefits from its strategic location building on its strengths of being proactive in planning for economic growth in an environmentally responsible manner. Bentley celebrates community spirit where citizens are actively involved in shaping and guiding the future of the Community."*

In support of this vision five main goals have been developed through feedback from the steering committee and municipal staff. These five goals have a host of actions and desired results intended to be implemented to achieve the goals and ultimately the fulfilment of Bentley's vision.

## **Strategic Goals**

- 1. Effective Communication and Engagement**
- 2. Financial Sustainability**
- 3. Economic Growth**
- 4. Enriched and United Community**
- 5. Organizational Success**

Accompanied with each goal is a set of anticipated outcomes. These outcomes are intended to express the goals and to connect the action items through the goal to the vision statement. If the goals are achieved the anticipated outcomes are how the community will look and function.

The following pages contain the Action Items that are intended to achieve the goals. These Actions have been divided into two categories; High Priority actions and actions that are important, but are not considered High Priority for the immediate future.

# HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS

The tables below outline the High Priority actions identified for each of the five goals. The High Priority actions are considered the most important actions to accomplish over the next five years for the community of Bentley. As High Priority, it is intended that the actions will be at the top of the list for community organizations, the Town of Bentley and members of the public to achieve. These actions were selected as High Priority through public input and Strategic Planning Committee input.

## *Goal 1: Effective Communication and Engagement*

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

- A well connected, knowledgeable and engaged citizenry.
- Bentley is a well-known regional centre and destination that people seek out.
- All citizens, regardless of age and ability, are engaged in a wide variety of year round events and activities.

Goal 1: Effective Communication and Engagement	
High Priority Action	Desired Result
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
1.1 - Recognize community members who volunteer within the community.	Actively engaged community members are recognized and appreciated for their involvement.
1.2 - Develop a Marketing Plan for Bentley to advertise the community as a place to call home and a business opportunity.	Increased interest in the community, families relocate to Bentley and businesses establish in Bentley.
1.3 - Continue the organization of community events, such as Good Neighbour Day, the Fair and Rodeo, Canada Day and Santa Celebration, while exploring new event opportunities such as Arbour Day or a Community Garage Sale.	Increased community spirit, engagement.

## ***Goal 2: Financial Sustainability***

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

- A wide variety of partnerships have been created across Bentley to deliver a host of programs and services.
- The tax base is broadened and well diversified to support new development and endeavors.

Goal 2: Financial Sustainability	
High Priority Action	Desired Result
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
2.1 - Continue partnerships with Lacombe County for investment in the Bentley community.	Lacombe County residents access businesses and community services in Bentley.
2.2 - Support the Town in investigating the acquisition of land for industrial uses and developing the residential lands in the north.	New active businesses in the community to increase the tax base, offer employment opportunities and more housing options.



## Goal 3: Economic Growth

### Anticipated Outcomes

- Bentley has a wide variety of seasonal and permanent businesses.
- Year round tourism supports Bentley businesses and provides a range of employment opportunities.
- Regional collaboration supports the success of Bentley businesses and growth.

Goal 3: Economic Growth	
High Priority Action	Desired Result
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
3.1 - Approach businesses in other communities to set up satellite shops in Bentley, either permanently or seasonally (e.g. UFA Card lock).	A greater variety of businesses are present in Bentley, employment opportunities.
3.2 – Collaborate with regional neighbours to actively promote Bentley and the seasonal tourism opportunities at tradeshow, home shows, through website and social media/media advertising to increase tourism to Bentley and the region.	More businesses and tourists to support the businesses, increased population.
3.3 - Explore developing a hotel, motel, rental apartment units or seasonal accommodation.	People accessing recreational facilities and tourists can stay in Town.

## ***Goal 4: Enriched and United Community***

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

- A safe, sustainable and holistic community where people can live, work and recreate.
- All housing needs are met to support people of every age, ability and family size.
- An active, engaged and sustainable community.

Goal 4: Enriched and United Community	
High Priority Action	Desired Result
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
4.1 - Investigate offering rotating services for health and social needs in a shared space throughout the week in Bentley.	Increased services to support all segments of the community.
4.2 - Continue communication with RCMP and County Bylaw Enforcement to address policing needs, vandalism and enforcement in Bentley.	Community dialogue and safer community.
4.3 - Investigate reducing waste by exploring different options for handling and disposing of waste.	Reduce landfill waste.



## Goal 5: Organizational Success

### Anticipated Outcomes

- An efficient, knowledgeable, healthy and caring community.
- A transparent and accessible municipal Council and Administration.
- Organized and engaged network of community partnerships and organizations.

Goal 5: Organizational Success	
High Priority Action	Desired Result
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
5.1 - Explore creating a Recreation Society to bring together all programmers and organizations in the community providing recreation opportunities.	Improved communication and organization among recreation groups.
5.2 - Lead and champion initiatives and programs.	Alleviates pressure on municipal financial and human resources.
5.3 - Enhance open lines of communication between Councillors, the public and community organizations by utilizing community surveys to determine consensus on initiatives and priorities.	Increased municipal transparency, public confidence and greater public participation.

## **ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS**

The action items contained in each of the following sections are considered important to achieving each of the respective goals, but are not High Priority focus items. That is not to say that these action items cannot be worked on at the same time as the High Priority actions. If any member of the public, community organization or group identifies an action item they feel they can champion and accomplish, they are encouraged to do so at their convenience.

### ***Goal 1: Effective Communication and Engagement***

#### **Anticipated Outcomes**

- A well connected, knowledgeable and engaged citizenry.
- Bentley is a well-known regional centre and destination that people seek out.
- All citizens, regardless of age and ability, are engaged in a wide variety of year round events and activities.

Key Actions - Communication	Desired Results
<b><i>Community members are encouraged to...</i></b>	
1.1 - Continue implementing current methods of community outreach and communication, while exploring new and different methods to reach more people in the community, such as the Lacombe County News.	Find more local community members to volunteer with events and community projects.
1.2 - Increase community knowledge of existing groups and organizations, and access to volunteer opportunities.	More community members participating in events and volunteer opportunities.
1.3 - Attract more service clubs and organizations to the community (i.e. Lions, Elks, Legion, Scouts) by advertising the spaces and facilities that are available in the community.	More variety and opportunities for community members to become involved.

## Goal 2: Financial Sustainability

### Anticipated Outcomes

- A wide variety of partnerships have been created across Bentley to deliver a host of programs and services.
- The tax base is broadened and well diversified to support new development and endeavors.

Key Actions	Desired Results
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
2.1 - Investigate additional community grant funding opportunities, corporate sponsorships and casinos, for programming and facilities such as the Oxford School.	Build community capacity and additional funding leveraged separate from the tax base.
2.2 - Ensure the continued provision of funds for community projects and events.	Leveraged financial resources for items such as sponsoring benches and trees.

## Goal 3: Economic Growth

### Anticipated Outcomes

- Bentley has a wide variety of seasonal and permanent businesses.
- Year round tourism supports Bentley businesses and provides a range of employment opportunities.
- Regional collaboration supports the success of Bentley businesses and growth.

Key Actions	Desired Results
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
3.1 - Investigate “shop local” incentives to encourage patronage in Bentley businesses, such as late night shopping and theme shopping for Christmas.	More activity and sales for local businesses.
3.2 - Investigate the development of a business incubator facility.	More businesses establishing in Bentley and larger variety of rental spaces available.
3.3 - Investigate offering incentives for new businesses that build or buy in Town.	Incentive for businesses to establish in Bentley.
3.4 - Continued business collaboration to undertake efforts to promote better business and advertising.	Businesses actively working together in the community.
3.5 - Pursue more opportunities to transport community members and shuttle tourists to and from Gull Lake communities.	Transport more people to Bentley to use services and support businesses.

## Goal 4: Enriched and United Community

### Anticipated Outcomes

- A safe, sustainable and holistic community where people can live, work and recreate.
- All housing needs are met to support people of every age, ability and family size.
- An active, engaged and sustainable community.

Key Actions – Community Services	Desired Results
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
4.1 - Undertake a space inventory of existing assets and facilities to identify community needs, such as increased space for library, FCSS programs and service providers.	More usable space for programming.
4.2 - Explore the opportunity of an off-leash dog park in Bentley.	Amenity space for dog owners in Bentley.
4.3 - Build a spray park.	Amenity space for families and children.
4.4 - Continue to host sporting tournaments to bring more people to the community and utilize the facilities.	Attracting customers to businesses and community promotion.
4.5 - Install a gazebo with lights in the Main Street Memorial Park to be used as staging area for community events and activities.	Increased community spirit and pride.
4.6 - Extend the existing bike path network for community recreational opportunities and to host events such as bike races.	Attract more tourists to the area.
4.7 - Create incentives for newcomers to Bentley, such as Welcome Wagon, Good Neighbour Day, Welcome Dinner.	New community members feel welcome in Bentley.

Key Actions - Planning and Development	Desired Results
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
4.8 - Explore opportunities and incentives to attract developers to Bentley for industrial and residential development.	More housing opportunities are available in the community. More industrial development opportunities are available in the community.
4.9 - Explore affordable housing grants or partnerships with developers to develop affordable housing options in the community.	Affordable housing availability.
4.10 - Market Bentley as a destination and highlight the successes and opportunities.	Residential lots fully developed with an increased population and tax base.
4.11 - Develop Way Finding Signage for the community of Bentley.	Travellers on the highway stop in Bentley and can find amenities in the community.
4.12 - Continue with Main Street beautification.	An attractive community.
Key Actions - Environmental Integrity	Desired Results
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
4.13 - Actively promote water conservation in Bentley. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low flow toilets and water faucets,</li> <li>• lawn watering restrictions and education.</li> </ul>	Promote responsible consumption and water conservation.
4.14 - Invest in community open spaces to be attractive and functional.	Greenspaces for the community to use.

## Goal 5: Organizational Success

### Anticipated Outcomes

- An efficient, knowledgeable, healthy and caring community.
- A transparent and accessible municipal Council and Administration.
- Organized and engaged network of community partnerships and organizations.

Key Actions	Desired Results
<i>Community members are encouraged to...</i>	
5.1 - Utilize social media platforms to advertise opportunities and host community information.	Spread information throughout the community more readily, and provide community specific information.
5.2 - Engage youth through a Youth Council partnered with the existing school youth programs.	Youth engagement and input.
5.3 - Foster a positive attitude environment by embracing change, being proactive and accepting accountability.	Positive influence on public perception and increased integrity.



# **PLANNING BACKGROUND**

Bentley has a solid foundation of previous planning work that can be used both in the implementation of this plan and in understanding the current setting. Below is a summary of the relevant background information, including planning documents, studies and financial resources. Each of these should be considered tools that can be accessed for implementing any number of action items identified within this Strategic Plan.

## **Bentley – Lacombe County Intermunicipal Development Plan**

An Intermunicipal Development Plan, (IDP), is a plan adopted by two or more councils. An IDP acknowledges that land use decisions can often have significant impacts outside of one municipality's legal boundary. An IDP is a tool which will help identify the positives of joint planning and address the potential challenges associated with growth and development. The Town of Bentley and Lacombe County IDP was initially adopted in 2009, and has been reviewed regularly by both municipalities.

## **Municipal Development Plan**

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) was adopted in 2016 and is a blueprint to guide future growth and development of the community. The MDP contains objectives and policies for sustainable and efficient growth and development, achieving a safe and desirable community, increasing public participation and collaboration, economic development and provision of community services and facilities. The MDP is the framework that decision makers use for creating the physical setting of the community and communicates the long term desired land use for the community.

## **Land Use Bylaw**

The Land Use Bylaw (LUB) is the primary tool that is used to make “every day” decisions regarding applications such as redistricting and development permits. The LUB divides the community into land use districts, and determines the uses allowed in each district and their development standards. A change in land use or redistricting a piece of property should conform to the vision contained in the MDP, or other higher level documents, if the long term vision is to be achieved. The Town's current LUB was adopted in 2016.

## **Area Structure Plans**

Area Structure Plans are considered intermediate or secondary plans which will identify in detail: land use, servicing requirements and infrastructure needs within a portion of the community. Plans of this level also need to provide information regarding the proposed sequence and density of development within a given area.

### *Bentley Industrial Area Structure Plan*

This ASP covers the lands in the southwest corner of the Town east of the wastewater treatment facility and south of Highway 12, in the NE 22-40-2-W5M and NW 23-40-1-W5M. The plan was adopted in January 2010, and guides the future development of these lands for Industrial uses.

### *Summersault Area Structure Plan*

The Summersault ASP covers the lands in the north part of the Town, north of 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue and east of 49<sup>th</sup> Street, being part of the SW 26-40-1-W5M. This plan was adopted in 2014, and guides the future development of the subject lands for residential and open spaces uses.

## **Parks and Open Space Plan**

The Parks and Open Space Plan was approved by Council in 2008. The purpose of this plan is to inventory the existing park spaces in the Town, and to plan for the future parks and open spaces needs of the community. The plan also includes design guidelines and standards for parks and trails in the community.

## **5 Year Capital Plan**

The Town of Bentley's current 5 Year Capital Plan forecasts capital spending from January 2018 to the end of year 2022. This capital plan will be used to direct future spending on infrastructure, such as sidewalks, gutters, roadways and parks improvements. This plan will be updated each year to maintain a 5 year forecast.

## **Town of Bentley Land Supply and Future Growth Potential (February 2013)**

This report is intended to provide an overview of growth in the Town and the anticipated land supply needed to meet the future population. The projections will enable the Town to prepare for the amount of commercial, residential and industrial lands that will be required for long-term growth over a 30 year period. At the time the report was completed in 2013, it indicated that the Town had an

adequate supply of residential lands and industrial for the next 25 to 30 years; more commercial lands will be needed beyond what has already been identified.

### **Town of Bentley Streetscape Design**

A streetscape design project was undertaken in 2012 and 2013 to identify restoration and upgrade opportunities on 50<sup>th</sup> Street. A 3 phase approach was proposed, the first being restoration of the street, the second being minor upgrades for safety and aesthetics, and the third “wow factor” upgrades for a creative and inviting streetscape.

# **STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

The Bentley Strategic Plan was largely developed by a Strategic Planning Committee. This Committee was composed of 16 people, including all of Town Council, 2 from Town administration and 9 members of the community. A series of workshops were held with the Committee from September to December 2018. Workshop topics included:

- Discussing Bentley's current situation, being opportunities, challenges and desires of the community;
- Developing a list of Action Items that could be used to take advantage of opportunities and mitigate challenges;
- Refining the Committee formed Actions so community members at large could prioritize the Actions; and
- Reviewing the community input and refining the final draft Strategic Plan prior to Council presentation.

A workshop was held with all of Town Administration and staff to get their input on Bentley's current situation. The group was asked to identify what they believe are the opportunities and challenges facing Bentley, as well as actions that can be taken. They were asked to assess the current situation for the Town as a whole, as well as at an organizational level. The input received from the session was blended with the input from the Committee sessions.

Community input was also sought during this process, in the form of a Community Open House and an online survey. The Open House was hosted November 20, 2018 at the Bentley Community Hall, with 33 people attending. A "Dotmocracy" was used to allow attendees to vote on their 15 top priorities from the list of draft Action Items. The online survey was posted to the Town's website from October 26 to November 28, 2018. The survey allowed respondents to also vote on their Top 15 priorities from the list of draft Action Items. In total, 13 people responded to the survey by voting and leaving comments and suggestions. A summary of all of the community input received was given to the Committee to review, and use to refine and prioritize the Action Items.



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As part of the process to develop this plan, the Strategic Planning Committee engaged in a workshop to assess Bentley's current situation. The intent of the workshop was to have the Committee members identify what they see as opportunities and challenges facing Bentley, and their desires for Bentley in the future. A session was also conducted with Town staff to gain input on what they feel are the challenges and opportunities for Bentley. The tables below are a summary of the input received at both sessions; these are the ideas as they were presented by the participants. The ideas below are not intended to form part of the Bentley Community Strategic Plan; they are being presented as background information that was used as the basis for developing the actions contained within the plan.

## *Opportunities*

Presented Ideas
Capitalize on seasonal tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lots of tourism now, need to take advantage</li><li>• Cross marketing - Sylvan, Lacombe</li></ul>
Increased Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a business brochure (or a placemat), or some type of map to put in campgrounds</li></ul>
Utilize Survey Monkey <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Survey citizens, anybody can use it and get feedback from citizens</li></ul>
Affordable real estate <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expensive to buy real estate in Blackfalds, Sylvan, Lacombe in other bedroom communities</li></ul>
Bentley School <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bentley school has a good reputation for accepting special needs students</li><li>• Families are moving to town because of the school</li><li>• There are hockey + golf academies linked to school</li><li>• Smaller class size</li></ul>
Bentley has room to grow

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bentley can expand in every direction, including residential, commercial, and industrial uses with few restrictions</li></ul>
Rebranding the Town <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage current residents to think positively about the Town, feel proud and be welcoming</li></ul>
Festivals and celebrations <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They generate economic activity in Town in all seasons for the businesses</li><li>• There are Intergenerational activities “Scare crow” festival</li></ul>
On-going Beautification of Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arbor Day as a community event that also works towards community beautification</li><li>• Opportunity to be hands on with community</li></ul>
Good Water Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal water source is good quality and quantity</li></ul>
Highway 12 Bypass <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Takes heavy truck traffic out of town, and towards highway commercial opportunities</li></ul>
Bentley Farmers Market <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is a certified farmers market, and brings people from the region for shopping</li></ul>
Unique Businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Several unique established businesses in Town draw people for shopping</li></ul>
Recreation Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are clubs and organizations established for soccer, hockey, baseball for kids</li></ul>
Friendly people
New Community Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased diversity of people to get involved in community organizations and events</li></ul>
Destination Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bentley has unique stores, with advertising they can draw people to come to Bentley</li></ul>
Renew Enthusiasm <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Service clubs can get more people involved and more volunteers as new community members come to Bentley</li></ul>

Mondays most businesses are closed

- Advertise best days to come to Bentley for services

## Challenges

In addition to identifying potential opportunities for Bentley, the Committee was also tasked with identifying potential challenges for Bentley in the future. The table below summarizes the challenges the Committee identified.

Presented Ideas
Odour from the wastewater treatment facility and pig farm <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has been a long term challenge</li><li>• Landowners may not want to build near the lagoon</li></ul>
Financial Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not as many grants as there used to be in the past, or for the same amount of money</li></ul>
Volunteer Burnout <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficult to find new people to volunteer</li><li>• Existing volunteer pool is small</li></ul>
Community Apathy <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General sentiment is no one wants to step forward for community initiatives or participate</li></ul>
Small Town Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Means limited resource for initiatives and projects</li></ul>
Seniors and rental housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Currently not affordable, and not enough mix of units</li></ul>
Viable land developer <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Means no land is currently available to develop on and nothing is build ready</li></ul>
Available farm land privately owned <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agricultural landowners are not currently interested in selling land or developing land</li><li>• Land supply shortage and monopoly</li></ul>
Need a hotel or motel <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of accommodation in Bentley means most people coming for recreational events stay in other towns</li></ul>



Taxes

- Considered too high by community members, spread across commercial/industrial uses

Utilities lower than most municipalities

Arena is aging

- May lose people with no facility available, which could mean loss of economic activity
- Currently 50-60 years old with a mid-80's refit
- Yearly upgrades do take place
- Lacombe County helps to pay for facility also

Population

- No significant population growth, means no new people to support businesses and pay taxes

Do more with less

- Town has to undertake more with fewer resources
- New regulations can also increase work load and infrastructure demands

Centralization of services

- Social services are shifting towards centralizing, people need to access services outside of community which can be a challenge for people who do not drive or have a vehicle

Challenge to attract businesses

- Lack of advertising of community and what is here
- Transition from home occupations to commercial spaces not happening
- Businesses not always accessing social media, internet advertising

Lack of youth activities outside of sports (school or recreation leagues)

- Library is engaging –but need to survey teens about what they want
- Board games and meals at the library is popular
- Need after school programs to reduce transportation costs for parents for out of town kids

Free shuttle to Aspen Beach to bring people into Bentley

- Could be weekends only, but may not be used
- There is currently a community van with 5 volunteer drivers, requires organizing