

Sturgeon County Agriculture Master Plan

Engagement and Communication Plan

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Engagement & Communications Plan Summary

Timeline

January 2024 - April 2024

Questions

For the Sturgeon County community

- What agricultural activities do you or your household CURRENTLY participate in? *(survey, check all that apply)*
 - a. I/we learn about agriculture in school
 - b. I/we raise livestock or grow grain, oilseed, fruit, vegetables, or fibre crops
 - c. I/we process grains, oilseeds, fruit, vegetables, or fibre crops/livestock/agricultural byproducts
 - d. I/we sell grains, oilseeds, fruit, vegetables, or fibre crops/livestock/agricultural byproducts
 - e. I/we volunteer for agriculture groups
 - f. I/we share information about agriculture with friends and family
 - g. I/we buy from local food producers directly
 - h. I/we buy from local food producers at our grocery store
 - i. I/we forage locally
 - j. Other (please specify)
- What agricultural activities would you or your household like to participate in, but can't? *(survey, check all that apply)*
 - a. Learn about agriculture in school
 - b. Grow fruits and vegetables/livestock/byproducts
 - c. Process fruits and vegetables/livestock/byproducts
 - d. Sell fruits and vegetables/livestock/byproducts
 - e. Volunteer for agriculture groups
 - f. Share information about agriculture with friends and family
 - g. Have our own bees, chickens, or livestock
 - h. Compost
 - i. Buy from local food producers directly
 - j. Buy from local food producers at our grocery store

- k. Forage locally
 - l. Other (please specify)
- What are the most important things happening in agriculture for Sturgeon County today? *(survey & workshop, open-ended)*
- The engagement in 2018 also identified barriers or risks to Sturgeon County's agricultural sector including transportation and drainage system issues, rural-urban conflicts, and regulatory complexity. What specific barriers or risks do you see for the agricultural sector in Sturgeon County today? *(workshop, interviews)*
- What are your big ideas for the future of agriculture in Sturgeon County? *(survey & workshop, open-ended)*
- What is your level of support for these forms of agriculture in Sturgeon County? *(survey, likert)*
 - a. Agritourism (farm-based tourism activities, events, or accommodations)
 - b. Protection of farmable agricultural land
 - c. Educational programming about growing food
 - d. An incubator for agricultural innovation
 - e. Community gardens
 - f. Farm to table sales
 - g. Greenhouse, vertical, and aquaponic indoor farms
 - h. Increased agri-food processing facilities
 - i. Large Scale Crop and Livestock Operations
- Thinking 20 years into the future, how would you describe the ideal state of agriculture in Sturgeon County? *(survey, workshop)*
- Agricultural community engagement in 2018 highlighted opportunities enabled by Sturgeon County's high-quality agricultural land, well situated transportation network, and other strengths. What opportunities do you see for the future of the agricultural sector in Sturgeon County? *(workshop, interviews)*
- Where are the barriers to new agricultural initiatives in Sturgeon County? *(workshop, interviews)*
- What has been your experience in implementing new agricultural and food related activities in Sturgeon County? *(interviews)*
 - a. What opportunities did you find?
 - b. Where did you have challenges?
 - c. What are some of the risks and costs for implementing changes in the County's agricultural landscape?
 - d. How can the County support producers in scaling up their agricultural activities in the future?
- Please select all that apply: *(survey)*
 - a. I am a full-time resident of Sturgeon County
 - b. I am a part-time resident of Sturgeon County
 - c. I am a landowner in Sturgeon County
 - d. I work in Sturgeon County
 - e. I am a visitor to Sturgeon County

- How long have you lived,worked, or owned land in Sturgeon County? *(survey)*
 - a. 0-2 years
 - b. 3-5 years
 - c. 6-8 years
 - d. 9+ years
- What is your age? *(survey)*
 - a. 18-25
 - b. 26-33
 - c. 34-41
 - d. 42-49
 - e. 50-57
 - f. 58-64
 - g. 65+
- Are you actively involved in work within the agricultural sector? *(survey)*
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- If Yes, specify the category of agriculture you are involved in (list producer categories) *(survey)*
 - a. Primary production organic
 - b. Primary production sod
 - c. Primary production bee
 - d. Primary production poultry & egg
 - e. Primary production poultry broilers
 - f. Primary production turkey
 - g. Primary production elk
 - h. Primary production yak
 - i. Primary production bison
 - j. Primary production goats
 - k. Primary production trees
 - l. Primary production cow/calf
 - m. Primary production cattle backgrounding/finishing
 - n. Primary production dairy
 - o. Primary production greenhouse
 - p. Primary production fruit & berry
 - q. Primary production market/garden vegetable
 - r. Primary production seed potato
 - s. Primary production specialty crops
 - t. Primary production oilseed/grain/pulse
 - u. Primary production hay/forage
 - v. Primary production other (please specify)
 - w. Support Services crop inputs
 - x. Support Services agronomic Services
 - y. Support Services feed supplier

- z. Support Services terminals
- aa. Support Services fuel/lubricants
- bb. Support Services veterinarian
- cc. Support Services other (please specify)
- dd. Processing/Value Added grain processing/milling
- ee. Processing/Value Added oilseed processing
- ff. Processing/Value Added pulse processing/ protein fractionation
- gg. Processing/Value Added abattoir and/or packing
- hh. Processing/Value Added other secondary processing (please specify)
- ii. Processing/Agritourism (please specify)
- jj. Other – (please specify)

Tactics

The different tactics that will be used throughout this planned approach to engaging the Sturgeon County community are explained in more detail in Section 3.6 of this Engagement and Communications plan. The approach will use five main tactics for engaging the community: an online questionnaire, up to 12 experience interviews, administration interviews, 3 Data Walks Workshops and an information session.

1.0 Project Background

1.1 Project History

Sturgeon County is situated in the heart of a rich agricultural landscape. The County's strong agricultural outputs are deeply rooted in a longstanding tradition of farming that spans over a century, with agriculture being the predominant land use in the region.

Notably, the County has been honouring its agricultural heritage since 1992 by presenting the prestigious 100-Year Farm Family awards to local farming families that have dedicated themselves to active and continuous production for a century or more. The exceptional soil quality, flat terrain, and access to quality water contribute to creating exemplary growing conditions in Sturgeon County, setting the stage for agricultural excellence.

Sturgeon County has witnessed significant strides in agricultural processing capacity, particularly in the alfalfa, oats and cereals, and grain handling market segments. Major expansions of existing facilities and proposed developments by new investors underscore the County's commitment to fostering growth and innovation in its agricultural and agribusiness sectors.

In a key decision in November 2022, the County Council approved a diversified agriculture bylaw, providing clear regulations for agribusiness and agritourism development. The bylaw, aligned with public input, task force recommendations and regulatory best practices to support diversified agriculture on agricultural land. It also introduced the Agriculture 2 land use district for more intensive agricultural uses. This strategic move opens avenues for operators to expand and diversify revenue sources.

This diversified agriculture bylaw aligns closely with the Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP) developed by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB). Although the diversified agriculture bylaw and RAMP were developed separately, they share the same goal of supporting the diversification of agriculture. RAMP is a visionary strategy that supports a myriad of opportunities to diversify agriculture, strategically positioning Sturgeon County for the future of farming and agribusiness in the broader Edmonton region.

Sturgeon County's commitment to excellence in agriculture has led them to initiate the development of the Sturgeon County Agriculture Master Plan. This strategic endeavor reflects a dedicated effort to foster sustainable growth, innovation, and resilience within the agricultural sector. By undertaking this initiative, Sturgeon County demonstrates its

dedication to supporting local farmers, enhancing agricultural practices, and ensuring the long-term prosperity of the community.

1.2 Project Scope

Deliver engagement for the Agriculture Master Plan to support the development of a roadmap for Sturgeon County with measurable goals for 2024-2034 (10 years). The AMP will guide action for agriculture-related initiatives by Sturgeon County Council and administration, supporting the needs of residents, landowners, farmers, and community partners.

Engagement will be conducted in two phases, in Phase 1 the project team will work to understand the experiences of producers, processors, landowners, distributors and consumers today in Sturgeon County, as well as their ideas and vision for the future of agriculture in the County (see section 3.2). Phase 2 will be centred on information sharing and gauging public acceptance of the direction taken for the Agriculture Master Plan. Inputs that will be used to capture experiences, ideas and vision for the future include engagement, a situational analysis and case studies.

Key deliverables for this project include:

- Online questionnaire
- Experience Interviews (up to 12)
- Administration Interviews (as needed)
- Data Walks Workshops (3)
- What We Heard Report
- Information session
- Involvement in final AMP presentations to Council
- Involvement in a final AMP presentation to Council Boards, Administration & Committees

In summary, the scope of the work for this project involves evaluating the existing agriculture-related initiatives, and potential of future initiatives in Sturgeon County by engaging with the community and interest holders to guide efforts in developing an Agriculture Master Plan.

1.3 Project Integration

- Sturgeon County 2022-2025 Strategic Plan
- 2018 Agricultural Engagement Strategy
- Regional Agriculture Master Plan

- Tri-County Agricultural Communication Plan Report
- Tri-County Agricultural Business Study Report
- Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Task Force Report
- Sturgeon County Municipal Development Plan
- Sturgeon County Public Engagement Policy
- Sturgeon County Brand Guide
- Sturgeon County Land Use Bylaw
- Agriculture Services programs and policies, including the ALUS Program
- Regional Agriculture Master Plan
- Tri County Communications Plan
- Tri County Agri-Business Study

1.4 Defining Success

- Effective engagement of diverse agricultural interest holders (i.e. producers, distributors, processors, consumers, etc.)
 - Participant feedback forms at in person events
 - Demographic and related diversity questions for survey and interview respondents
- Providing Council with clear insights into the community feedback that will help to inform their decision making process.
 - Sharing the What We Heard Report highlights of common themes, top concerns and ideas generated through engagement
- Improve awareness of agritourism and other related initiatives in Sturgeon County
 - Tracking social media reach and reactions; emails received regarding current and future initiatives; workshop ideas captured; project website visits and newsletter clicks
- Alignment of actions and strategies with Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Development of the AMP will be informed by Council's Strategic Plan and the Plan's stated priorities

2.0 Engagement & Communications Overview

2.1 Engagement & Communications History

In March 2018, Sturgeon County commissioned Serecon to undertake the coordination of an Agricultural Engagement Strategy focusing on obtaining input from Sturgeon County residents and agricultural producers. Engagement aimed to understand the community's

needs, aspirations, vision, and position in the context of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board's Regional Agricultural Master Plan. The approach involved a comprehensive review of local agricultural trends, coupled with extensive input from residents, farmers, businesses, and various stakeholders.

The stakeholder engagement process was designed to be inclusive, incorporating input from counties, towns, cities, agricultural producers, developers, and policy specialists. The majority of participants were agricultural producers, highlighting the direct involvement of those engaged in farming activities.

Key findings from the 2018 Engagement Strategy offer distinct guidelines for shaping the future of agriculture in Sturgeon County. Leveraging its rich history and distinctiveness, the County can secure opportunities for a thriving agricultural future. It has been emphasized that the county should establish agriculture as a top priority, with all planning and policies taking into account their implications on the county's future in food and agriculture. Key action areas include:

- Education and awareness to address the rural-urban conflict
- Regulatory Review to make it easier to do business in a variety of ways
- Nuanced Land Use Strategies to ensure availability of agricultural land
- Value-Added Clustering to foster the development of new businesses

The findings from the 2018 Engagement Strategy were used to contribute insights to RAMP, which has policy directions addressing many of the areas identified. While the general sentiment of the strategy was favorable, engaging with the County's agricultural community is a continuous effort. It requires providing ongoing opportunities for input, with the aim of collaboratively shaping a shared vision for agriculture in the County.

2.2 Implementation

Engagement and communications strategies are closely related, and frequently overlap in terms of both tactics and human resources. Instead of developing two separate and isolated plans for these functions, Intelligent Futures combines engagement and communication planning in one document. This approach helps increase efficiency and ensure consistency while providing a clear and consolidated focus as the project evolves.

Aspirations (broad primary outcomes)

Big picture aspirations for our engagement work:

- Raise awareness of and public support for Sturgeon County's AMP initiatives
- Develop a vision for agriculture in Sturgeon County
- Improved public satisfaction regarding opportunities for engagement

Project-specific aspirations for our engagement work:

- Gather input that directly informs the Agriculture Master Plan
- Improve relationships between community partners including, but not limited to the Youth Advisory Board, Economic Development Board and Agricultural Services Board
- Diverse engagement participation based on interest holder involvement in agriculture and demographics
- Increase interest for participation in AMP initiatives
- Identify opportunities and barriers for agriculture in Sturgeon County
- Identify how agriculture will be supported in the municipality
- Determine forms of agriculture that are suitable to the unique circumstances of Sturgeon County, including their relative priority

Strategies (the approach we'll take)

Engagement:

Multiple entry points into the conversation will be available to all targeted interest holders and audiences. Engagement opportunities will include the following:

- Online questionnaire (1)
- Data walks workshops (3)
- Experience interviews (up to 12)
- Administration interviews
- Information session (1)

Communications:

Communications tactics will be executed in partnership with Sturgeon County Administration. Communications mentioned below will be primarily used to promote the engagement activities.

Communications will use a consistent set of messages customized for specific audiences and delivered across multiple platforms to ensure repeated exposure to messaging using the following channels:

- Sturgeon County website
- Social media
- Roadside signage
- Email distribution
- Local newsletter distribution
- Agricultural network outreach

Objectives (measurable steps we'll take)

- Ensure high level of awareness of engagement opportunities
- Accurately capture agricultural priorities
- Broad awareness of project purpose

- See Section 4.2 for details on how we will measure these objectives

2.3 What is On and Off the Table?

ON the Table: Areas where the community can have input into the decision-making	OFF the Table: Areas where the community won't have an influence on decision-making
<p>Current State</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current trends, strengths and weaknesses of Sturgeon County's agriculture sector • Local food security connections <p>Future State</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agri-food system, social, and related economic infrastructure within Sturgeon County's jurisdiction • Agriculture and future land development relationships, transition, and maintenance • Ideas for supporting or encouraging evolving agriculture or agribusiness opportunities in Sturgeon County • Support and encouragement for Diversified forms of agri-business (storefronts, agritourism, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing existing regional policy direction (EMRB RAMP) • The need for an AMP • Land Use Bylaw issues that are not related to agriculture

3.0 Engagement & Communications Approach

3.1 Engagement & Communications Design

A series of engagement sessions with residents, farmers, and community partners are planned to bring the Sturgeon County community along the journey to improve the current state of agricultural support and initiatives in Sturgeon County. Using a wide range of collaborative tools and activities, engagement will encourage participants to openly share their ideas and concerns, allowing the project team to understand a variety of perspectives as the Agriculture Master Plan is developed. This approach is designed to understand the community's priorities, brainstorm ideas, discover gaps in the implementation of initiatives, encourage feedback on ideas and share details about the project as it progresses. This will be achieved through a combination of methods including an online questionnaire, up to 12 experience interviews, administration interviews, 3 Data Walks Workshops and an information session between January and April, 2024.

3.2 Overall Project Key Messages

Project Key Messages

- At Sturgeon County, we're committed to adapting to the community's agricultural needs! We invite you to share what you currently see as opportunities and barriers for the future of our agriculture sector by completing an online survey between January 30- March 15, 2024.
- Sturgeon County is interested in answering the following question: How can Sturgeon County become a regional leader in agriculture? Please share your ideas at our Data Walks Workshops on February 27 & 28, 2024
- By focusing on diversifying the agriculture sector, Sturgeon County can maximize financial resources, support efforts to bolster innovation and prepare the next generation of farmers for the evolving landscape of agriculture.
- By taking part in engagement, residents will have the opportunity to inform Agriculture Master Plan considerations, and help to identify areas most in need of support for agriculture in Sturgeon County.

Using the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation framework below, engagement for this project lands in the “involve” category. The engagement process will provide many opportunities for public input, highlighting the community's concerns and needs related to agriculture incorporating the feedback into the development of the AMP.

The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Process Key Messages

- Sturgeon County's residents, staff and community partners can share their perspectives and priorities for the new Agriculture Master Plan from January 30 - March 15, 2024
- There will be a number of opportunities to take part, including through data walks workshops, interviews and an online survey. For more information follow us on Instagram @SturgeonCounty

3.3 Interest Holders / Audiences

Serecon Team

- Darren Haarsma
- Bob Burden

Intelligent Futures

- Cassandra Caiger
- Shayna Wedderburn
- Helen Loghrin
- John Lewis

Primary Interest Holders / Audiences

Primary interest holders are the people or groups that stand to be directly affected, either positively or negatively, by an effort or the actions of an agency, institution, or organization.

Interest Holders / Audience	Notes	Requires customized messaging? (Y/N)
Advisory Boards & Committees - Youth Advisory Board, Economic Development Board, Agricultural Services Board, Transportation Advisory Committee & others		N
Agricultural Producers, Operators and Land Owners	Will require more direct reach outs, and likely snowball circulation of a print and online survey through agricultural coops, agricultural service boards, farmers' market organizers, and Alberta Federation of Agriculture.	Y
Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)		N
Primary Production - Organic, sod, bee, poultry & egg, poultry broilers, turkey, elk, yak, bison, goats, trees, cow/calf, dairy, greenhouse, fruit & berry, market/garden vegetable, seed potato, specialty crops, oilseed/grain/pulse	Will require more direct reach outs, and likely snowball circulation of a print and online survey through agricultural coops, agricultural service boards, farmers' market organizers, and Alberta Federation of Agriculture.	Y
Agricultural Inputs & Value Add - Crop Inputs / Agronomic Services, Grain Milling/Processing, Terminals		N
Other - Community partners, local Indigenous communities, general public, agricultural societies, 4-H		N

3.4 Risks/Sensitivities & Mitigation

Risk / Sensitivity	Mitigation
Engagement participant conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our team will use County input prior to engagement to identify any expected points of conflict. In the event of a conflict, we will use engagement protocols to reduce all risks of escalation.
Numerous ongoing engagement and planning processes increase the risk of citizen engagement fatigue.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Creative, diverse and “fresh” opportunities for engagement. 2) Clear framing on how concurrent planning processes are integrated and why they matter.
Varied levels of interest and knowledge about agriculture and existing initiatives among stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Include educational / learning pieces in the online questionnaire to bring everyone participating to a level playing field when answering questions. 2) Meet differing levels of enthusiasm for and knowledge through multiple engagement tactics and different levels of conversation depth through the different tactics.
Community dissatisfaction with direction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Transparently report on why particular options and strategies were chosen, in the context of input received and the broader system in which the deliverable exists
Engagement participation and accessibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide an online and paper option for survey feedback 2) Use of in-person and virtual options for interviews. 3) Host workshops in low-barrier facilities.

	4) Providing multiple dates and times for engagement activities.
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3.5 Engagement Process Phases

Phase 1: Explore (current and future state of Ag in the County)	
Purpose:	To understand the priorities, concerns and ideas for agriculture in the county, as identified by the community and key interest holders.
Dates:	January 30 - April 1, 2024
Key audience(s):	All primary and secondary interest holders
Key question(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What agricultural activities do you or your household CURRENTLY participate in? <i>(survey, check all that apply)</i> • What agricultural activities would you or your household like to participate in, but can't? <i>(survey, check all that apply)</i> • What are the most important things happening in agriculture for Sturgeon County today? <i>(survey & workshop, open-ended)</i> • The feedback from the 2018 Agriculture Engagement Strategy also identified barriers or risks to Sturgeon County's agricultural sector including transportation and drainage system issues, rural-urban conflicts, and regulatory complexity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What specific barriers or risks do you see for the agricultural sector in Sturgeon County today? <i>(workshop, interviews)</i> • What are your big ideas for the future of agriculture in Sturgeon County? <i>(survey & workshop, open-ended)</i> • What is your level of support for these forms of agriculture in Sturgeon County? <i>(survey, likert)</i> • Thinking 20 years into the future, how would you describe the ideal state of agriculture in Sturgeon County? <i>(survey, workshop)</i> • Agricultural community engagement from the 2018 Agriculture Engagement Strategy highlighted

	<p>opportunities enabled by Sturgeon County's high-quality agricultural land, well situated transportation network, and other strengths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What opportunities do you see for the future of the agricultural sector in Sturgeon County? (workshop, interviews) • Where are the barriers to new agricultural initiatives in Sturgeon County? (workshop, interviews) • What has been your experience in implementing new agricultural and food related activities in Sturgeon County? (interviews) • Please select all that apply: (survey) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I am a full-time resident of Sturgeon County b. I am a part-time resident of Sturgeon County c. I am a landowner in Sturgeon County d. I work in Sturgeon County e. I am a visitor to Sturgeon County • How long have you lived, worked, or owned land in Sturgeon County? (survey) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 0-2 years b. 3-5 years c. 6-8 years d. 9+ years • What is your age? (survey) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 18-25 b. 26-33 c. 34-41 d. 42-49 e. 50-57 f. 58-64 g. 65+ • Are you actively involved in work within the agricultural sector? (survey) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No • If Yes, specify the category of agriculture you are involved in (list producer categories) (survey) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Primary production organic b. Primary production sod c. Primary production bee d. Primary production poultry & egg e. Primary production poultry broilers
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Primary production turkey g. Primary production elk h. Primary production yak i. Primary production bison j. Primary production goats k. Primary production trees l. Primary production cow/calf m. Primary production cattle backgrounding/finishing n. Primary production dairy o. Primary production greenhouse p. Primary production fruit & berry q. Primary production market/garden vegetable r. Primary production seed potato s. Primary production specialty crops t. Primary production oilseed/grain/pulse u. Primary production hay/forage v. Primary production other (please specify) w. Support Services crop inputs x. Support Services agronomic Services y. Support Services feed supplier z. Support Services terminals aa. Support Services fuel/lubricants bb. Support Services veterinarian cc. Support Services other (please specify) dd. Processing/Value Added grain processing/milling ee. Processing/Value Added oilseed processing ff. Processing/Value Added pulse processing/protein fractionation gg. Processing/Value Added abattoir and/or packing hh. Processing/Value Added other secondary processing (please specify) ii. Processing/Agritourism (please specify) jj. Other – (please specify)
Key message(s):	We want to ensure that Sturgeon County staff and community partners have an opportunity to participate meaningfully in the engagement process.
Key objective(s):	Identify gaps and highlights for agriculture in Sturgeon County, identifying initiatives that can be used as examples during plan development.

Phase 2: Synthesize & Confirm	
Purpose:	To make sense of what was heard in the first phase of engagement and temperature check with the community whether the draft AMP fits with the future they describe for the County. This will be a closed-ended check-in on the emerging direction for the AMP. It's also an opportunity to explain why certain input might not have been used and why key, and possibly contentious, decisions were made.
Dates:	March - April 2024
Key audience(s):	All
Key question(s):	TBD March 2024
Key message(s):	TBD March 2024
Key objective(s):	Confirm interest holder support and build momentum and accountability for the implementation of the Agriculture Master Plan.

3.6 Communications & Engagement Tactics

Approach to Tactics and Tools

When designing an engagement process we consider how engagement could be most accessible to the range of identified interest holders. Selecting tactics for implementation is part of the strategic approach to delivering a successful engagement program. These tactics each have parameters that distinguish them from one another. They also determine the type of tools that could be used to best suit the needs of a process.

Engagement Tactics

Tactic:	<i>Data Walks Workshops (3)</i>
Description:	In-person multi-stakeholder events to review key data about Sturgeon County's agricultural current state and dive into the nuance and background of why certain stats and trends are occurring.
Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the varied experiences interacting with agriculture from stakeholders and community members living and/or working in Sturgeon County

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agriculture-related education and research findings ● Topic-based discussions/education
Dates:	February 27 & 28
Target audience / interest holders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendees representing various agriculture and related individuals and organizations ● County staff ● The general public
Materials and responsibilities:	<p>Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agenda and collateral <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentations of key findings ○ Datawalk Activity ○ Future Focused Activity ● Facilitate Workshops <p>Sturgeon County responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schedule/share key messages to interest holders ● Manage invitations
Evaluation:	Feedback form responses from participants

Tactic:	<i>Experience Interviews</i>
Description:	Up to 12 interviews with key leaders in Sturgeon County. Holding these individual conversations will allow interest holders to share their views early in the process, which provides the project team with a sense of both the current state and level of ambition for agricultural initiatives and programs in Sturgeon County
Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide the project team with a sense of the current state of agriculture from a strategic perspective ● To uncover information to understand the appropriate degree of ambition for AMP recommended actions, by temperature testing the primary concerns of key agriculture industry leaders
Dates:	January 30 - March 15 2024
Target audience / interest holders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth Advisory Board ○ Economic Development Board ○ Agricultural Services Boards ● 2-3 recommendations from each of the boards

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended contacts from Sturgeon County Council and administration
Materials and responsibilities:	<p>Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview questions Interview tracking sheet Interview scheduling <p>Sturgeon County responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant email list, coordination support
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of interviews conducted

Tactic:	<i>Administration Interviews</i>
Description:	Interview key staff and business units within Sturgeon County to review the emerging direction and recommendations within the AMP. These 1-on-1 and small group conversations will allow staff to share their views and articulate potential conflicts or challenges between the level of ambition for agricultural initiatives and programs and the reality of current knowledge, skills and capacity within business units.
Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide the project team with a sense of how the AMP might land with internal departments To surface challenges and identify where additional resourcing might be required to match the ambition of the AMP
Dates:	March-April 2024
Target audience / interest holders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sturgeon administration/staff
Materials and responsibilities:	<p>Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview questions Interview tracking sheet Interview scheduling <p>Sturgeon County responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant email list, coordination support
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of interviews conducted

Tactic:	<i>Online Questionnaire</i>
Description:	Develop and share an online questionnaire to be shared county-wide and amongst community partners. Use the feedback to refine the Sturgeon County AMP.
Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To obtain insights from the broader community • To identify participants who are interested in learning more about the project or assisting with implementation in the future
Dates:	January 30 - March 15, 2024
Target audience / interest holders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All primary and secondary interest holders
Materials and responsibilities:	<p>Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey design • Survey development, including provision of link <p>Sturgeon County responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling & sharing communications about the survey through Sturgeon County channels
Evaluation:	Number of questionnaires completed

Tactic:	<i>Information Session</i>
Description:	A public information session presenting the results of engagement and the subsequent actions developed for the Agriculture Master Plan, to confirm plan direction with the public and receive additional commentary.
Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To share the final outputs of the AMP creation process with the public and ensure that the proposed direction is aligned with the community's aspirations.
Dates:	March-April 2024
Target audience / interest holders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The general public
Materials and responsibilities:	<p>Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public presentation and collateral

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key messages <p>Sturgeon County responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing communications about the information session through Sturgeon County channels
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of attendees

Communications Tactics

Tactic:	<i>Project Sturgeon County Website</i>
Description:	Messaging through the Sturgeon County website describing the project, the process, and how to get involved.
Purpose:	To be the primary repository of public project information, survey and event signup links. To raise awareness of the project and encourage participation / information sharing within the community and community interest holders.
Phase(s):	Phase 1 & Phase 2
Dates:	January - March 2024, and beyond
Target audience / interest holders:	Primary and secondary interest holders
Materials and responsibilities:	<p>Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key messages Event details and online questionnaire link <p>Sturgeon County responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website development, implementation and monitoring
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website visits

Tactic:	<i>Sturgeon County Agriculture Email Address</i>
Description:	A generic email address to be used for Sturgeon County sendouts, to post on the project website, and to use for all ongoing communications.

Purpose:	<i>To ensure residents, landowners, producers, and all involved in the agricultural realm are able to communicate with County administration for project inquiries.</i>
Phase(s):	Phase 1 & Phase 2
Dates:	2024 - project end
Target audience / interest holders:	Primary and secondary interest holders
Materials and responsibilities:	<p>Surgeon County responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sturgeon County email setup ● Monitoring and circulating public inquiries to AMP team
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of email responses/inquiries

Tactic:	<i>Social Media</i>
Description:	Messaging through existing social media channels in Sturgeon County. - Facebook, Instagram & Twitter
Purpose:	To raise awareness of the project and encourage participation / information sharing within the community and community interest holders. To share important project links (including project survey, and event information).
Phase(s):	Phase 1
Dates:	January - March 2024
Target audience / interest holders:	Primary and secondary interest holders
Materials and responsibilities:	<p>Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key messages <p>Sturgeon County responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scheduling & sharing communications about engagement through Sturgeon County channels

Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reach and Reactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shares ○ Mentions ○ Clicks
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Tactic:	<i>Roadside Signage</i>
Description:	Roadside displays/billboards used to share details about how to participate in engagement for the AMP.
Purpose:	To raise awareness of the project and encourage participation / information sharing within the community and community interest holders.
Phase(s):	Phase 1
Dates:	January - March 2024
Target audience / interest holders:	Primary and secondary interest holders
Materials and responsibilities:	Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key messages Sturgeon County responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design and scheduling with road sign distributor
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Views/ traffic captured (look to sign company for data)

Tactic:	<i>Email Distribution</i>
Description:	Email content that Sturgeon County can circulate to various distribution lists
Purpose:	To share updates on the project, and engagement opportunities
Phase(s):	All phases

Dates:	Starting in January 2024
Target audience / interest holders:	Primary and secondary interest holders
Materials and responsibilities:	<p>Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email copy <p>Sturgeon County responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing communications about the information session through Sturgeon County channels
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach Number of replies

Tactic:	<i>Local Newsletter Distribution</i>
Description:	Content that Sturgeon County can circulate through the local newsletter mailing list
Purpose:	To share updates on the project, and engagement opportunities
Phase(s):	All phases
Dates:	Starting in January 2024
Target audience / interest holders:	Primary and secondary interest holders
Materials and responsibilities:	<p>Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletter copy <p>Sturgeon County responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share content via local newsletter distributor
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach Number of replies

Tactic:	<i>Agricultural Network Outreach</i>
Description:	Content that Sturgeon County can circulate through existing agricultural networks, both through email and word of mouth,for

	producers, processors and distributors through existing agricultural bodies and hubs.
Purpose:	To share updates on the project, and engagement opportunities
Phase(s):	All phases
Dates:	Starting in January 2024
Target audience / interest holders:	Agricultural coops Agricultural service boards Farmers' market organizers Alberta Federation of Agriculture and more
Materials and responsibilities:	Intelligent Futures/Serecon responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key messages Sturgeon County responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Email to those on the target audience list
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reach ● Number of replies

4.0 Reporting & Evaluation

4.1 What We Heard Report

Developing a What We Heard Report is a key step in distilling the insights from the engagement analysis. Following the initial engagement, the report encapsulates the diverse perspectives, concerns, and ideas shared by participants. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the community and community partner's sentiments, serving as a foundation for informed decision-making. The What We Heard Report will capture the evolving landscape of opinions, and strategic direction, incorporating the nuances discovered through the engagement process. This document offers a valuable narrative of the community's pulse, empowering Sturgeon County and the Consulting Team with a clear understanding of the sentiments that will enable strategic adjustments in line with the project's objectives.

4.2 Evaluation

The engagement for this project will be assessed through a comprehensive evaluation framework that encompasses various metrics. Social media engagement will be an important factor, gauging the project's impact through metrics such as sharing and likes. Survey engagement will also be pivotal, with the number of responses to the questionnaire serving as a valuable indicator. The scale of participation at the workshops, and interviews will provide insights into community involvement. Additionally, email inquiries should be tracked to measure interest and outreach effectiveness. Furthermore, the quantity of generated ideas will provide a holistic picture of the project's reach and resonance within the Sturgeon County community and beyond.

The following metrics will be tracked throughout the project:

- Social media engagement levels
- Number of responses to online questionnaire
- Number of participants at the Data Walks Workshops
- Number of interviews conducted
- Diversity of participants
- Engagement feedback form responses
- Number of ideas generated
- Number of engagement related email/phone inquiries

The following is how we define various engagement terms. This guides our measurement of engagement:

- *Participant*: a person who has actively sought out information regarding the project OR engaged in two-way conversations, by providing a response on the project
- *Response*: A comment received by one individual for one particular request for feedback (e.g. survey, evaluation ballot, post it)
- *Idea*: The different thoughts/themes that surface within a response. E.g. "I think transit is important because it is more environmentally friendly than the car and gets me to work fast." Two ideas are identified: environmentally friendly and timely commuting.