



County of Minburn No. 27

Minburn Regional Economic Development Strategy (EDS)

November 2022

Minburn Regional Economic Development Strategy (EDS)



Table of Contents

- Executive Summary
- Project Overview
 - Project Overview and Background
 - Regional Economic Development Strategy: Framework and Direction
- Minburn County Assets
- Economic Development Structure
- SWOT/Gap Analysis (Qualitative Insights from County Stakeholders)
- Strategy Framework
 - Strategy Elements
 - Key Goals - Rationale Statement
- Strategic Framework
 - Key Objectives
- Directional Framework
 - Initiatives and Actions
- Concluding Observations

Minburn Regional EDS: *Executive Summary*



Executive Summary

As communities across North America begin to recalibrate their economic development efforts, due to the pandemic, there is a need to ensure that key economic and community elements are taken into consideration in preparing a functional and impactful economic development strategy. The County of Minburn has recognized this need and has commissioned the preparation of a regional economic development strategy and directional framework that outlines the county's;

- Strategic Asset Base
- Key Industry Sectors
- Objectives, Priorities and Goals
- Process for implementation

The foundation of the strategy is based on a balance between quantitative information and qualitative insights provided by key county stakeholders. This strategy is not intended to replicate past research but rather to build upon those efforts and ensure that elements from previous efforts have been taken into consideration.

Minburn's Economic Development Strategy is a guiding document that provides a framework from which to capture the county's key asset base which can be leveraged to identify and advance actions that address opportunities while also helping to identify and address various barriers to growth. The directional elements of this document should be seen as a road map for developing annual action plans reflective of the strategic framework.

The fundamental issue that all communities and regions face is the ability to make well informed decisions that support the county's economic and social well-being. Minburn's Economic Development Strategy is intended to be a functional decision-making tool for the county.

Minburn Regional EDS: *Overview*



Minburn County Overview

The County of Minburn is a rural municipality located in east-central Alberta in the parkland area east of Edmonton with a population of just over 3,000 people. The County covers an area of approximately 88 km east to west and 48 km north to south, encompassing 41 townships. The County is made up of primarily agricultural land and includes the Hamlets of Lavoy, Ranfurly, and Minburn. Within the County's boundaries is the Town of Vegreville and the Villages of Innisfree and Mannville, with Vegreville being the largest community in the county with a population just over 5,500 people.

Minburn is part of the Alberta HUB which is a region made up of 9 counties with a total population of 135,000 within Northeastern Alberta. As part of the Alberta HUB, Minburn is part of a larger regional effort to;

- Raise the awareness of Northeastern Alberta's economy and competitive advantages
- Be part of a regional approach to attract investment, talent, industry
- Leverage support from the Province of Alberta to enhance regional infrastructure that support economic and community growth
- Create collaborative relationships with other counties and communities in the region
- Develop regional value propositions

Each of these elements create regional alignment and provide a foundation to formulate Minburn's economic development strategy and directional roadmap to target specific issues impacting Minburn while still aligning with the broader Alberta HUB initiatives.

The county is underpinned by industry sectors represented by Agriculture (value added and primary), Transportation, Oil and Gas (energy) with a variety of business support services primarily based in Vegreville, Innisfree, and Mannville. These county service centres in provide access to skilled labour, educational institutions as well as manufacturing support for the counties key industry sectors. The asset base reflected in these communities, impact future opportunities to retain, expand and attract new companies, investment and skilled labour all critical elements within Minburn's approach to guiding its economic development efforts.



Minburn Regional Economic Development Strategy (EDS)

Minburn Industry Sectors and Asset Base

Minburn Regional EDS: *Economic Makeup*



Minburn County Industry Sector and Asset Base

Minburn's industry sectors and asset base reflect the county's baseline economic make up and the elements that can contribute to business retention, expansion and attraction. Though there exist numerous data points on that profile the county there are several that offer a view into the county's stability, where strength exist to support economic growth and the barriers that can impede economic growth and subsequently need to be addressed.

The key data points include

Demographics

- Population
- Age
- Gender

Labour

- Size
- Participation Rate
- Employment Rate
- Unemployment Rate

Education

- Education Attainment
- Apprenticeships
- Post Secondary

Economic Activity

- Building Activity
- Building Permits
- New Business Starts



Minburn Regional EDS: *Industry Sectors*

Key Industry Sectors	Sector Make-up and Capacities
Agriculture This sector is reflective of both primary agriculture including grain production and livestock as well as value add in the area of industrial processing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viterra Inc. hosted a grand opening event today at its new high throughput grain facility at Vegreville, AB (2019) • County offers excellent conditions for growing Industrial Hemp • Industrial Hemp Vegreville is the epicentre for Industrial Hemp processing and manufacturing • Grains Connect Canada GrainsConnect Canada is pleased to announce their first Alberta high-speed train loading terminal Vegreville, • A highly productive livestock area with grazing reserve of over 20 sections of land. Beef producers are mainly cow-calf operators.
Energy Oil and gas underpin the energy sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil and gas lease sites and pipeline development has increased significantly over the past few years and that trend is expected to continue. With lower land costs, excellent infrastructure and an educated labour force • Large heavy oil field with over 400 wells is located in the southeast • Grizzly Bear Creek Wind Power development - 34 wind turbines - 152 MW project
Transportation The transportation sector provides access to industrial inputs and the ability to distribute products and resources from the agriculture and energy sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway 16 is a major east-west corridor, linking the County to the Port of Prince Rupert. Highway 36 is a High Load Corridor with access to vast oil sands development areas. • Vegreville Regional Airport compliments the excellent highway transportation system. • CANAMEX transportation corridor • The County of Minburn is conveniently located approximately 130 kilometres northeast of Edmonton International Airport. • The Vegreville Regional Airport, located just northeast of Vegreville • The CNR line runs east-west through the middle of the county. The line runs north of and parallel to Highway 16 and offers advantages to prospective developers. There is 25 meters separation distance between Highway 16 and the CNR line. Sidings, spur trackage and point loading areas are available. • Vegreville Regional Airport has general aviation access and is UAV friendly



Minburn Regional EDS: *Asset Base*

Minburn Economic Development Asset Base	Key Characteristics
Population of 3,084 (2021)	Declined -1.09% year-over-year, decreased -5.25% in the last five years.
Land Transfers totaled \$38.1 million in value (2021)	Increased 29.6% year-over-year, increased 3.27% in the last five years
Major projects \$298.2 million in value (2021)	Declined -27.4% year-over-year, increased 165.1% in the last five years.
100.0% of businesses in Minburn were small businesses (2021)	1 and 49 employees
58 businesses in 2021 (2021)	Decline of -18.3% from 71 in 2020
Transportation and warehousing segment had the largest increase	Increasing 300.0% to 4, from last year
Labour Force (2021 data impending)	
Education (2021 data impending)	



Minburn Regional Economic Development Strategy (EDS)

Vision Statement & Implementation Plan



Minburn Regional EDS: *Principles*

Minburn's Economic Development Strategy

The purpose of formulating and economic development strategy is to apply strategic thinking around setting priorities, goals, and actions to improve your community in some manner. This can come in a variety of different forms such as supporting efforts to stimulate job growth, improving income levels, attracting, and retaining people and talent, enhancing access to infrastructure, environmental resiliency or improving the over social well being of a community or region.

For Minburn this strategy is foundational to making key decisions intended to capitalize on the county's competitive advantages while identifying key barriers that need to be addressed in order to secure future growth and priority for the county and region. This is a strategy not an action plan which is a result of the strategy "Strategies are made as a blueprint and action plan is the step-by-step process of how to go about that blueprint. Strategy is the mental part of reaching a goal, action plan is the physical part of reaching a goal".

Guiding Principles for the County of Minburn Economic Development Strategy

Weigh economic and demographic data from research, analysis and forecasting

Rely on the natural assets of your community in order to develop realistic goals for economic development

Make sure you know your community as a product – its past, present and forecasted future

Recognize your strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and potential threats

Gain an understanding of future market trends and industry advances – Business Retention, Expansion

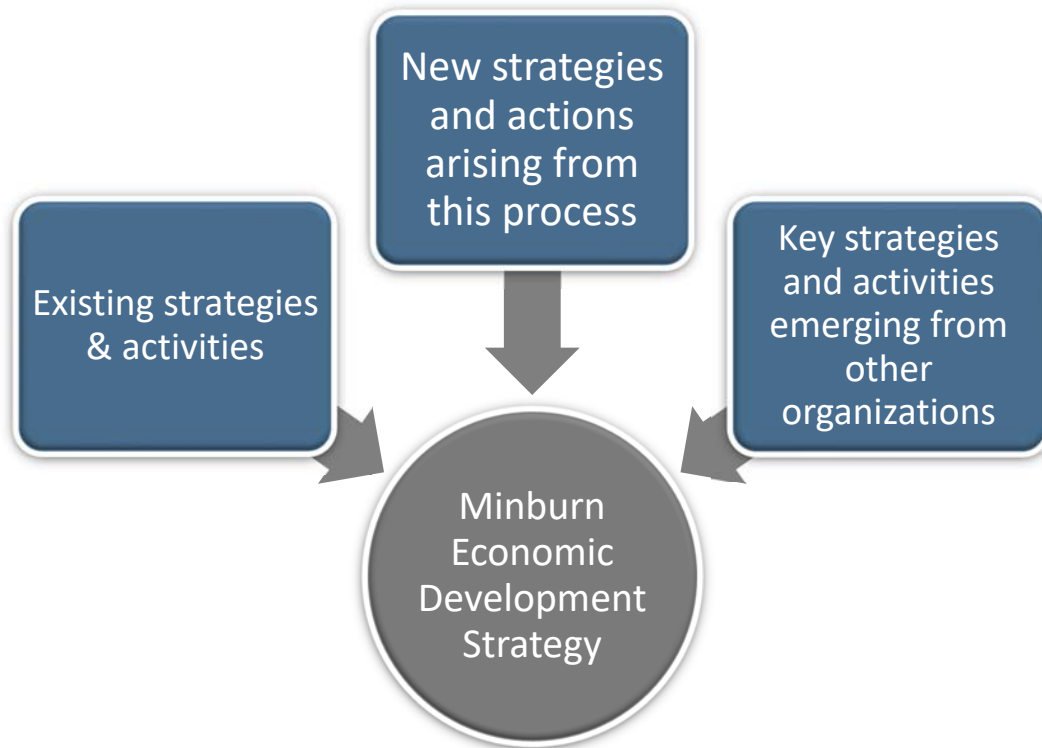
Combine research and analysis with public input and dialogue



Minburn Regional EDS: *Considerations*

Minburn's Economic Development Strategy needs to take into consideration:

- What presently exists in terms of other county or community strategies and how those fit into the new strategy
- How will new strategies and actions align with existing efforts
- How will the new strategy provide a pathway to work with other organizations that have initiated Strategies and Activities





Minburn Regional EDS: *Underpinning Info*

County of Minburn Stakeholder Interviews

The interviews were structured to draw out comments regarding the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats within Minburn. The following are statements made by stakeholders that reflect the impressions and insights of local government, business development and community organizations and agencies.

Strength (Economic Assets)

- We're on a main highway for transporting goods to a major market
- We are located smack dab on both a major railroad and a major highway
- A strength we don't capitalize on enough is our access to major transportation corridors
- Opportunity to provide value-added services along a major transportation route between markets
- The leadership of the Council has been good
- Allowing businesses, a better opportunity to grow and for new businesses to come online
- The Council has to be mindful of how they spend money
- I think leadership is looking at things more through a business lens than in the past
- The leadership seems to be more responsive
- It is like the businesses and the community want to work to make the County stronger
- There is a strong thirst to grow the business community
- The farming community is strong, knowledgeable and responsive to change
- The biggest strength is the farming community
- The strong farming base allows the region to be more stable
- We can become a growth area for secondary agriculture opportunities and businesses
- We are lucky to have both energy and agriculture to rely upon

Weakness (Gaps)

- There are too many regulations, rules and too much taxation levied upon businesses
- There has been a lot of red tape and policies restrictive to business growth
- There was a little bit of a disconnect between the Council and the previous administrator
- We need to make the paths for businesses easier
- The County needs to be more responsive to business opportunities
- The process to grow business needs to have less red tape
- The County needs to do a better job of advertising itself
- We haven't invested a lot of time into economic development so how can we expect to grow economically
- We need an individual dedicated to promoting and growing the County
- There is no involvement with the ratepayers
- Here, you can't even get a Councillor to answer their phone
- Not sure we have the ability to react quickly enough to economic opportunities
- We need to stop being reactive
- We need to seek out business instead of waiting for them to come to us
- There is no plan for new business expansion
- No one is in charge of that right now no existing EDO
- Why aren't we driving business to come here instead of waiting and hoping
- There needs to be more dedication to developing business opportunities and awareness in the County



Minburn Regional EDS: *Underpinning Info*

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Opportunities (Potential New Business)

- Anything to do with the hemp industry should be a good fit.
- We need more agriculture-related growth
- The County should look at developing land along railways
- We need more value-added agriculture.
- We need strategic planning for the community as a whole
- We need to tie in economic development with land-use planning and bylaws
- Our location is key
- We are only an hour and away from a major city
- Our major thoroughfares are our biggest opportunity
- The northern economies will continue to grow, and we can play a part in servicing that growth
- Promote the benefits of small town and rural lifestyles
- The people are very welcoming and would support any new enterprises
- Spin-off businesses and value-added businesses should be a priority
- We need to diversify and take the opportunity to look at food sustainability
- Being right between Lloydminster and Edmonton, getting businesses to build outside those major centers should be investigated
- With Highways 16 and 36 running right through the center of the County, we have a real advantage
- Promoting the lifestyle here in the county is important

Threats (Economic Challenge)

- Being so close to the Capital Region, a lot of businesses prefer to develop in or closer to Edmonton.
- The biggest threat is not being able to attract different partners to open businesses
- We need to find better ways for Vegreville to take better advantage of the proximity to Edmonton.
- Minburn (County) needs a development plan like other communities
- We need to have a plan in place and move fast when companies come calling.
- If businesses come looking and there is nothing available, there is literally no choice but to develop in a different municipality
- We need to show we are more prepared than other regions so they will see us as a legitimate choice
- Concern for the environment and the political push away from oil is not going away
- We need to expand our advantage by capitalizing on agricultural spin-offs like processing
- There need to be jobs and opportunities created to replace the gap caused by the lack of traditional energy opportunities the province has relied upon in the past
- We can develop more opportunities in other industries tied to agriculture to grow and diversify the economy
- We need to keep working on things not related to oil



Minburn EDS: *Structure – Vision Statement & Implementation Plan*





Minburn Regional EDS: *Vision Statement*

County of Minburn Commitment.

An important organizational element for the County of Minburn is to articulate its future aspirations as a county, how will they commit to achieving this future and the guiding principles that the county and its staff will follow. These 3 elements are captured through a Vision, Mission and Core Values.

VISION

The County of Minburn No. 27 will be a leader in creating a socially and economically sustainable region for its citizens and companies to grow and prosper into the future.

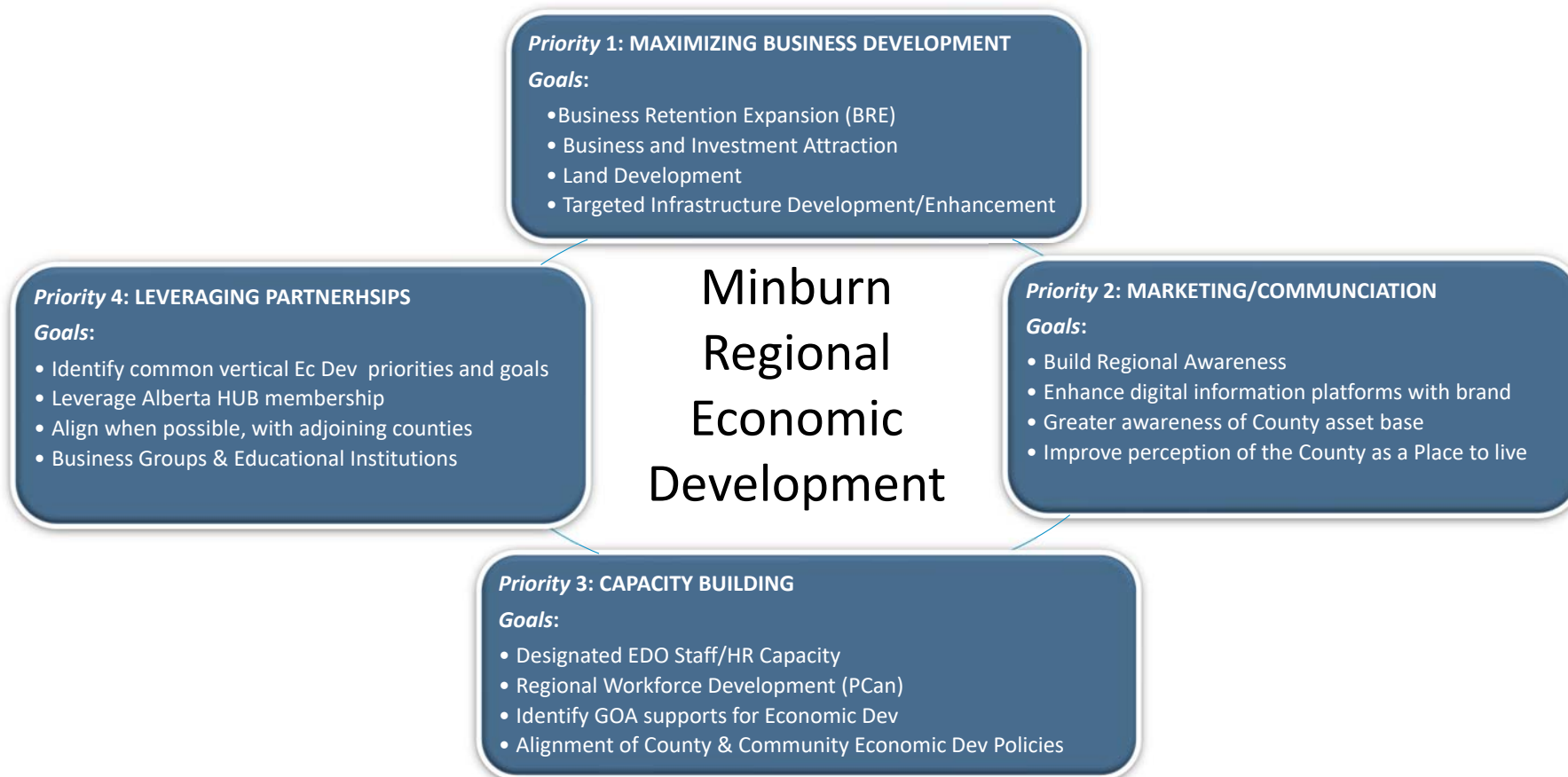
MISSION

The County of Minburn No. 27 through sound financial and economic growth strategies will bring the County stability and success into the year 2030 while promoting a continuation of our proud rural traditions and lifestyle.

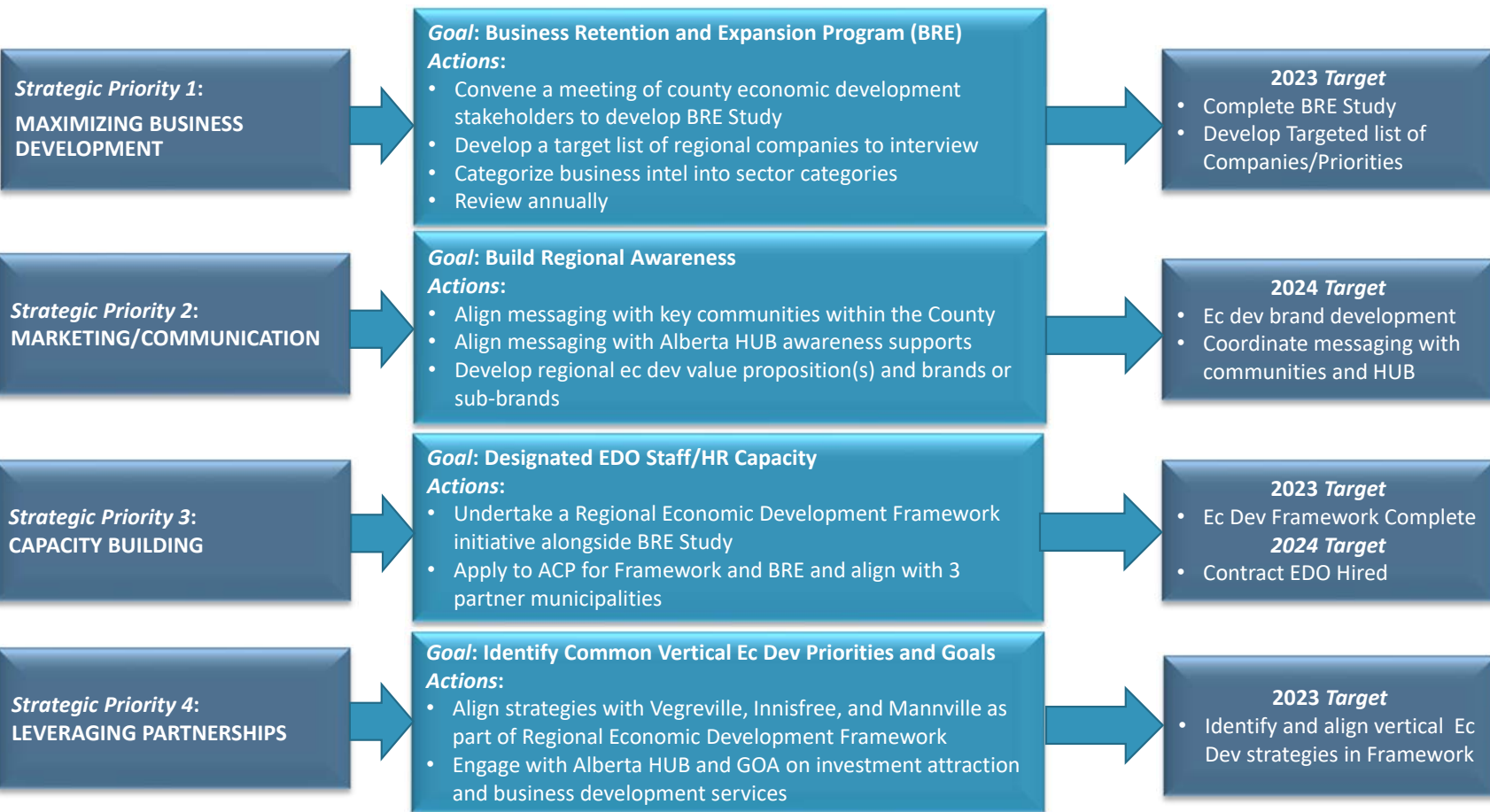
CORE VALUES

Citizen Focus – Ensure dedication, care and concern for our citizens
Communication – Be accessible to the public and communicate in a timely and effective manner
Transparency and Openness – Being accessible and providing clear and timely information
Accountability/Integrity - Remain accountable for decisions made and following through on our commitments
Respect - We value the input and opinions of all our stakeholders to meet our mutual regional aspirations
Teamwork - Think and act in a regional manner and maintain strong relations with neighbors and partners
Innovative - Be adaptive to change and seek innovative ways to improve our products services

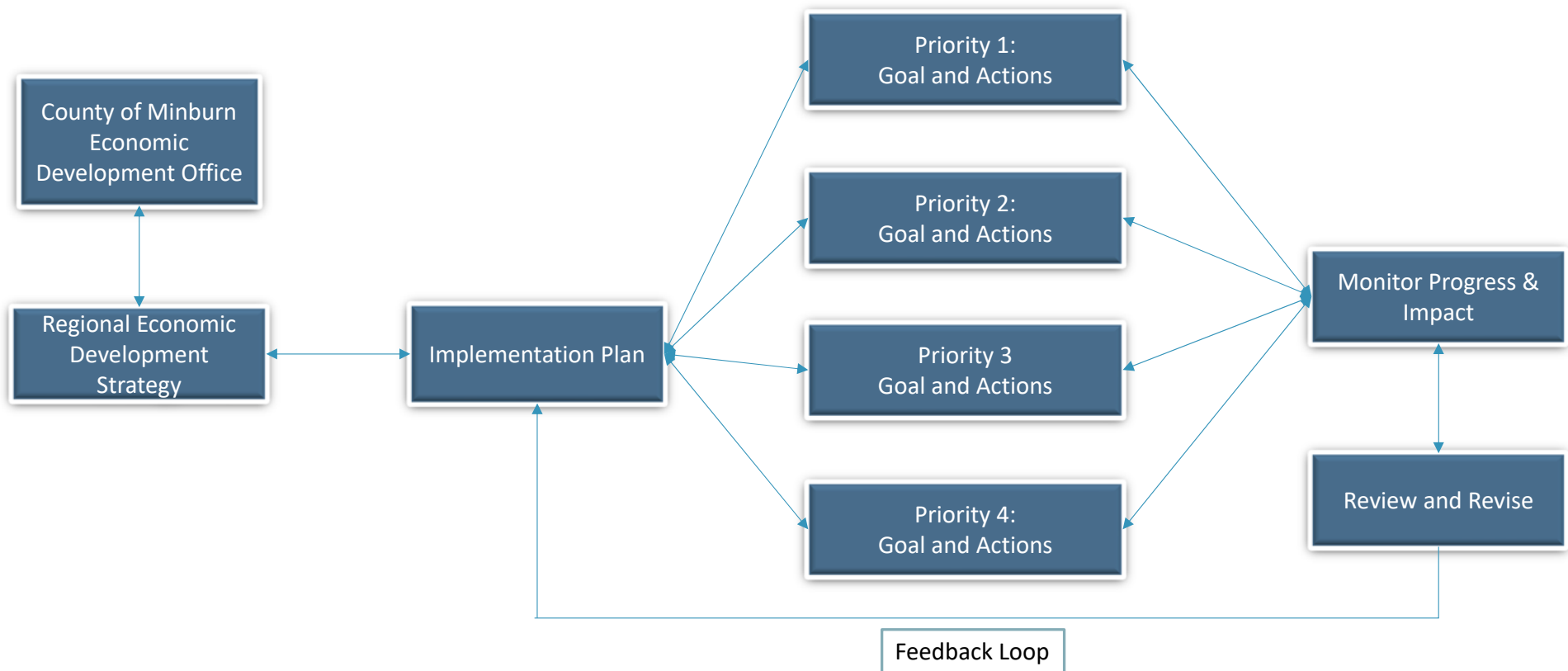
Minburn Regional EDS: *Implementation Plan – Strategic Priorities & Goals*



Minburn Regional EDS: *Implementation Plan - Goals, Actions, Targets*



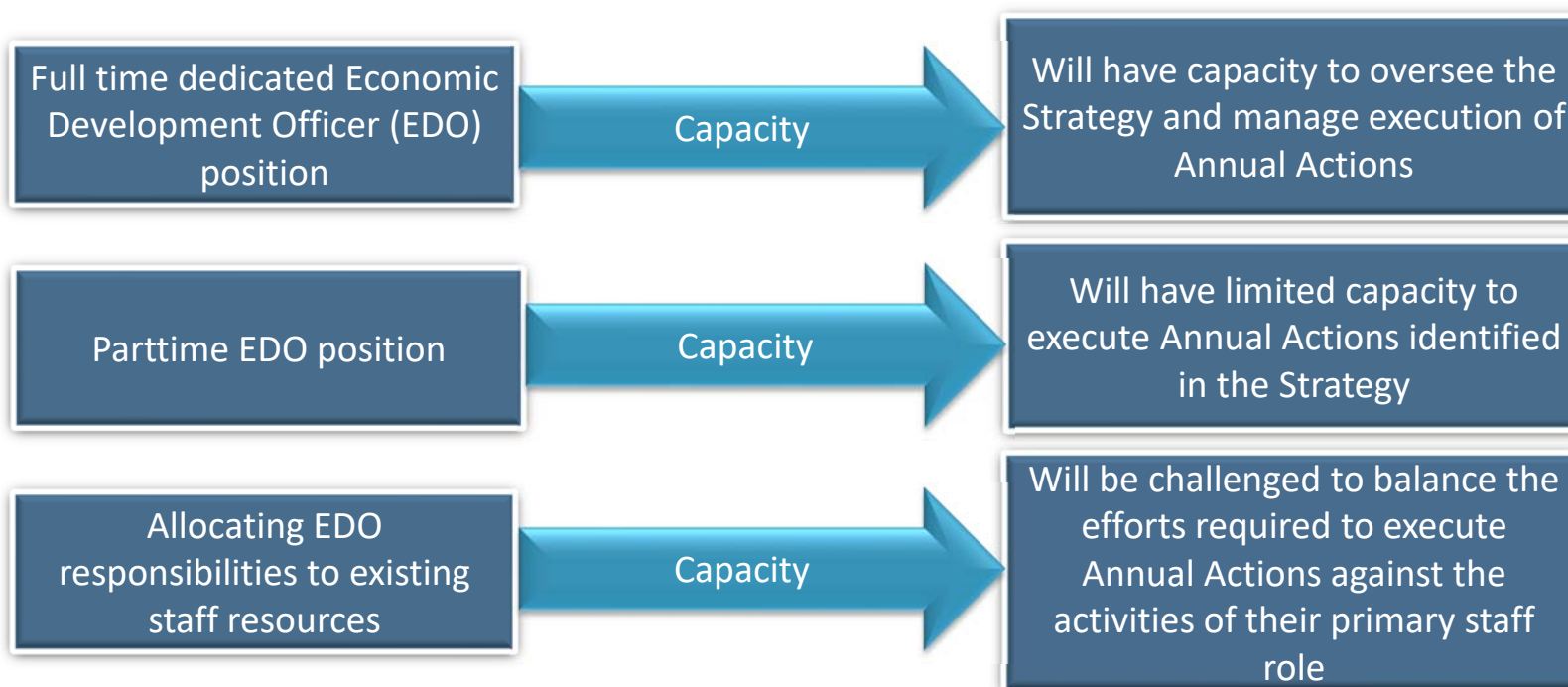
Minburn Regional EDS: *Schematic*





Minburn Regional EDS: *County EDO Capacity Options*

The Minburn Economic Development Strategy provides the foundation by which the county can identify key priorities, goals, and outline a series of annual implementable actions. It will be the actions which will move the county, over the short, medium and long terms, towards a sustainable pattern of growth reflected in the Strategy's priorities and goals. However, the actions require "boots on the ground" efforts through a dedicated staff person that is adequately resourced in order initiate and advance the actions. Subsequently, varying degrees of staff and resource allocation will impact the county's ability to execute the actions that reflect the Economic Development Strategy's priorities.





Minburn Regional EDS: *Regional EDO Capacity Options*

Another capacity option is hiring a Full time dedicated **Regional** Economic Development Officer (EDO) position. This shared position would be managed by a partnership of up to 4 regional municipalities: County of Minburn, Town of Vegreville, Village of Innisfree, and Village of Mannville. This Action would take place under Strategic Priority 3: CAPACITY BUILDING and be guided by a new Regional Economic Development Framework. Benefits include:

- A Right-Sized EDO presence as many communities are not large enough to justify a full time EDO but still have robust economic development needs
- Cost sharing between the municipalities
- A focus of sharing the benefits of economic development on a regional basis
- Greater likelihood of government grant support and investor interest for a region rather than one community
- A possibility that the Regional Economic Development Framework and even some of the EDO contact may be funded by GOA through programs like ACP
- This regional economic development initiative could be run as a pilot project with no legacy costs if it is deemed unsuccessful by the Partnership

