

TOWN OF MAGRATH MUNICIPAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

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1. Introduction

This Municipal Sustainability Plan (MSP) has been prepared by the administration of the Town of Magrath under the direction of Town Council. It is the product of public input sessions, surveys, workshops, public meetings and strategic planning sessions. The purpose of this plan is to provide general overview and strategic guidance that can lead Magrath to a more prosperous and sustainable future. The plan addresses the Alberta Urban Municipality Association's (AUMA) five dimensions of sustainability, which are *cultural, economic, environmental, governance* and *social*. Addressing these responsibilities and opportunities has never been more important.

The Town of Magrath is increasingly applying long range strategic business and planning to the way it governs and administers the community. Magrath was founded on a sustainable agriculturally-based community model originally from its inception in 1899. These traditions of innovation and self-reliance remain important to the community's identity and future.

Good municipal corporations strive to provide both practical and farsighted leadership that reflects the needs, desires and best possible future for their communities. Sustainability in the modern world is largely about innovation and vision.

2. Municipal Sustainability Planning

Municipal sustainability planning is an opportunity for communities to think about their future in more comprehensive and farsighted terms. It enables them to progressively move towards a more reasoned, visionary and ideal future, rather than just reacting to issues and problems as they arise. In this sense, it assists in building community itself, not just its various capital and operational components.

A Municipal Sustainability Plan is a high level overarching document. Its purpose is to guide a community into the future. It provides a cohesive vision. It also identifies short, medium and long term actions for implementation; tracks and monitors progress; and should be revisited and revised, if necessary, on an annual basis.

A good MSP provides guidance in the development and alignment of all municipal plans and documents, including multi-year municipal development planning, recreation planning, municipal energy and infrastructure planning, family and community support services planning, capital planning, and so forth.

Popular definitions of sustainability include:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

-- The Brundtland Commission

A lifestyle designed for permanence.

--E.F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful*

A. Common Elements of Successful MSPs

Common elements of successful MSPs quoted from the AUMA's *Comprehensive Guide for Municipal Sustainability Planning: June 2006* include:

Political Will to Commit Resources: Having the political will to implement the plan accompanied by an adequate commitment of financial and personnel resources. Although the process is meant to engage the broader community, its success or failure will rest on the leadership and support of Council to the process. This leadership will be called upon throughout the process to provide guidance and steer the process in case problems arise.

Vision-Led Process: A desired vision of a successful outcome that generates energy and enthusiasm and gives purpose and meaning to inspire the contribution of time and effort.

Backcasting: Backcasting means starting first with the desired outcome in mind *and then* identifying present-day actions to move in the direction of that outcome. The outcome, or "vision", should also be consistent with sustainability principles to ensure that the basis for our economy and livelihood, i.e. natural systems and the materials and services they provide, are protected for future generations to access.

Picking the Low-Hanging Fruit: Low-hanging fruit are those actions that garner early agreement, are obtainable in the short-run, and can demonstrate success to generate momentum. In a community, that can be something as basic as getting a group together to clean up a visible vacant lot.

Democratic Process: At the heart of Municipal Sustainability Planning is a commitment to a bottom-up participatory change process that engages citizens in designing the specific steps to move toward the desired vision. Using a democratic, participatory process to involve the "implementers", i.e. partner organizations who will be responsible for implementing parts of the plan, is key to successful adoption and implementation of actions toward change.

Leading from the Side: Leadership from the side provides clear guidelines, then elicits ideas from participants for how to apply them.

Taking a Systems Approach: The approach to change is comprehensive and integrated, aimed at bringing about change throughout the range of planning areas. A conventional, less effective approach addresses issues on a one-by-one basis.

Broad Involvement: A wide representation of community participants takes part both in the creation of a positive vision and in the steps toward achieving that vision. Broad involvement of citizens and implementers helps assure that change will happen, since those responsible for making it happen are involved in shaping the proposals from their beginning, again the idea of "involving the implementers".

Keeping It Going: Planning in cycles, testing early action proposals, ongoing education and training programs, monitoring the effectiveness of actions with indicators, all guided by the vision and sustainability principles, help institutionalize change and keep adopted practices going over time.

The future is not something we enter. The future is something we create.

-- Leonard Sweet, Author and Futurist

B. Town Strategic Planning Process

As successive Mayors and Councils oversee the planning process in conjunction with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the following framework is recommended as part of the annual MSP internal review, implementation and governance process:

First Year of Council's Term

- ❖ Election, Orientation, Plan Review and Strategy Formulation
- ❖ Budget and Business Plan Development and Strategy Implementation
- ❖ Strategy Evaluation

Second Year of Council's Term

- ❖ Strategy Implementation
- ❖ Strategy Formulation and Budget Review
- ❖ Strategy Evaluation

Third Year of Council's Term

- ❖ Strategy Implementation
- ❖ Strategy Formulation and Budget Review
- ❖ Strategy Evaluation and Adjournment Session

October through September

Regular external review of the MSP is also recommended with the public generally as well as with relevant committees and interest groups to ensure community participation, support and the continuing relevance of the plan.

3. Municipal Corporation of the Town of Magrath

Magrath is one of the most sustainable and dynamic small communities in Canada. (In its last census in 2008, it had a population of 2,254.) The community is famous for the excellence of its schools and their academic, sport and band programs. It is also widely known as “The Garden City” for its vegetable gardens, tree-lined streets, and its park and trail system along the Pothole Creek natural corridor. Magrath is also home to a National Historic Site, the historic Galt Canal, a major adjacent wind farm, one of the finest 18 hole golf courses in Alberta, and one of Canada’s most prominent triathalons. The community is also known as the Irrigation Capital of Canada.

Magrath is located 30 miles north of the Canada-United States international boundary and 20 miles south of the City of Lethbridge. It also lies adjacent to the “Crown of the Continent” ecosystem comprising Waterton Lakes and Glacier National Parks. The community is exceptionally sustainable from economic and agricultural as well as from surface and ground water perspectives. Southern Alberta is also considered to have some of the best soils and the sunniest and most favourable climates in Canada.

Southern Alberta is an economically diverse region. Centered around the City of Lethbridge, it includes a major university and college as well as a diverse range of agricultural, light industrial and research industries. From an energy standpoint, the region is underlain by natural gas, coal and

other energy sources and also has major wind and other alternative energy industries. There is also a cultural focus on self-sufficiency and sustainability in Magrath and in Southern Alberta generally.

As a Municipal Corporation, Magrath functions under delegated powers from the Province of Alberta. On this basis the Town provides a range of services aimed at building an even more sustainable community in social, cultural, environmental, governmental and economic terms, as well as to fulfilling the community's purpose, vision and mission.

A. Purposes of a Municipality

The purpose of a municipality is to provide good government and leadership in order to build and maintain safe and viable communities. Vision and innovation are vital in this increasingly competitive environment. As the popular sustainability advocate, John Izzo, recently said:

If you are not doing something different, and doing it first, you are not leading.

-- Dr. John Izzo, SouthGrow Sustainability
Conference, Lethbridge, March 4, 2010

B. The Unique History of Magrath

Magrath has quite a unique history in visionary terms. Three prominent individuals, in particular, were involved in the envisioning and conceiving of the community: Levi Harker, Charles Magrath and David Elton.

Levi Harker

Levi Harker settled in the Cardston area in the early 1890s. A few years later he headed up the settlement of what came to be known as the Town of Magrath. This story—taken from Magrath's Golden Jubilee publication in 1949—describes the unique origins of the Town from his perspective as recounted to a local historian at the time, Inez Rich Bennett:

More than fifty years ago a horseman, riding the prairie some ten miles south of what was to become the town of Magrath, viewed the treeless landscape, the mile upon mile of bluejoint grass undulating in waves with the steady west wind. No fences, no roads; just trails across the prairie; no sign to portend the future of the landscape that stretched unbroken to the horizon. That rider was the late Levi Harker. He told the writer that as he rode and looked north from his vantage point on the northern slope of the Milk River Ridge, which became McIntyre Ranch property, that suddenly he felt impelled to stop his horse and look north, when a "vision" opened to his view. At that time Magrath was unknown. He saw the country criss-crossed with wire fences, divided into fields, prosperous farms; well travelled roads ran between the section lines; a canal wound its way along the slope of Milk River Ridge and fields of golden grain were everywhere. Interspersed were green fields as of sugar beets or hay. Prosperous farmsteads dotted the fields. On the north bank of Pot Hole Creek he saw a prosperous town with beautiful trees and comfortable homes. He looked in wonder as he saw beneath the soil rich reservoirs of gas and oil, potential wealth of the future. A voice seemed to say, "You will see all this come to pass and more." The vision faded. The wind blew in his face, bent the prairie grass eastward as he turned his horse west toward Cardston and home.

Charles Magrath

Charles A. Magrath was widely recognized as a man of vision. He was a nation-builder, a surveyor, served in the Northwest territorial government, and was a Cabinet Minister from 1898 to 1901 before Alberta became a province. He also managed 700,000 acres of land in Southern Alberta owned by one of Canada's most famous founding families, the Galts. He was also a prominent government administrator during the First World War and widely-respected servant of his country. In the late 1890s, he gave a section of land to the people of Magrath for a townsite.

Charles Magrath was Sir Alexander Galt's son-in-law and together with his brother-in-law, Elliott Galt, was a leading supporter of large scale irrigation and immigration into the then largely unpopulated foothills and plains of Southern Alberta. Many of his ideas and practical sentiments live on in Magrath today. His vision and commonsense approach combined with that of Charles Ora Card, Levi Harker, Elliott Galt, David Elton and others, laid the foundations for our current community. His picture and the following caption were given to the Magrath School in 1907:

To my young friends attending the Magrath Public School: Learn to say 'NO' with firmness. It may at times keep you out of trouble. Cultivate that great human asset—integrity. Always be kind and considerate to others. These virtues are easy to acquire and open to all. Make your compact with me to possess them. They will add greatly to your usefulness in life and buy you much happiness, which is my earnest wish."

Charles Magrath's efforts helped build this community and led to it being called "The Irrigation Capital of Canada."

David Elton

In 1949 David H. Elton, K.C.—a prominent area newspaperman and Mayor of Lethbridge—was asked at the Town's 50th Anniversary how "The Garden City" was named:

"You ask me, in a very brief word, to say why I designated Magrath, "The Garden City", and, for the first time, I venture to reply.

The present century was just one year old when I saw Magrath. Save for a few houses, a few furrows, a general store, nature had not been greatly disturbed, but held its virgin sod and soil in primeval repose. The "Sea Gulls" had not even spied out the land.

Magrath was then part of the great North West Territories, and was not, so far as the eye could see, very far removed, either in cultivation or redemption, from the vast area of the original "Prince Rupert's Land". The nearest approach to anything like modern civilization was a "narrow-gauge" railway, terminating at Spring Coulee—the "jumping-off" place for Cardston and the Lee's Creek settlements.

The next four years saw a rapid and unprecedented growth in its agricultural and commercial development—especially the first year. "Archie" Mitchell, government agriculturalist (later the promoter of the nursery that skirts the western boundary of Coaldale), made several visits, delivering lectures, showing pictures, and urging the planting of trees—primarily for windbreaks.

The pioneers of Magrath were first and foremost in accepting his message and applying themselves whole-heartedly and unreservedly to his urge. May I be permitted to name him: "The Tree Prophet

and Planter of Southern Alberta”, for such he was. If:

“ONLY GOD CAN MAKE A TREE”

then “Archie” Mitchell was the forerunner of His craftsmanship, and the pioneer prophet of the gospel of tree planting—at least in this part of His vine-yard. All honor to his name!

As a direct result of “Archie” Mitchell’s missionary work, this erst-while “bald spot” was soon festooned beneath a bower of trees, and flowers, and lawns, and gardens, and comfortable homes, and a happy prosperous, progressive people. As I looked upon this marvellous transformation I said: “Surely this is the Garden City.”

In the Valley of the Euphrates was the garden of the world in its day, then Magrath has easily won for itself the coveted title of “The Garden City” of our day, and mine (with all due apologies) the Twentieth Century Herodotus to bear record of the same.

*And now, Magrath, in your Golden glow
Recalling fifty short years ago”
It pleases me greatly to know
You’re still “The Garden City”.*

A Model Community

Since its founding in 1899, Magrath has been based on two ideal or utopian community traditions: the Plat of Zion-based “City Beautiful” model of many of its pioneer founders and the British “Garden City” tradition of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (Both of these models were based on principles of sustainability and self-sufficiency.) The world’s first “Garden City” is widely considered to be the community of Letchworth in England. The book which sparked this reformist social and urban movement was entitled *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. It was written by a former Chicago newspaperman, Sir Ebenezer Howard, who was one of the fathers of modern planning. Excerpts from the following paper describes how this relates to Magrath. (See Appendix A).

Many people of diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds now call Magrath “home.” The name “Magrath” means “son of the clearing,” or a safe place measured and cleared from the forest. There is a peaceful feeling here...a bit of heaven, many would say, in the midst of an increasingly complex world.

C. Urban Design

The physical form of Magrath has evolved on the basis of this model community vision and the Town’s original layout to the community we see today. Increasingly, however, growth pressures within and around the community are requiring a broader and more comprehensive vision.

The original vision and design concept of the founders of Magrath was reinforced by their siting of the community adjacent to Pothole Creek and its surrounding natural corridor. This river valley setting has contributed to the Town’s beauty as well as to its oasis-like “Garden City” character. This geographic setting coupled with the alignment of Provincial Highway #5 to the north and west of the community has provided natural boundaries for the current and future growth of the community. The potential expansion of the community within these parameters will soon be framed in an Inter-Municipal Development Plan being formalized with Cardston County.

Plat of Zion and Garden City Characteristics

The chief characteristic of the Garden City model is a small to medium-sized self-contained community bounded by a peripheral greenbelt system. The chief characteristics of the *Plat of Zion* are a compact commercial and institutional core surrounded by residential development and farmland. These two models are not only uniquely compatible and sustainable; they are also very consistent and applicable to the current urban form of the Town of Magrath. For these reasons, it is strongly recommended that these two models continue to be applied in the best interest of future generations; also because of their consistency with the history of the community and the vision of its founders. Magrath has a model community tradition. From this, as well as branding and marketing perspectives, it makes sense to embrace and reinforce this tradition.

The advantages of combining these models include:

- ❖ Together they provide a unique convergence of sustainable historic frameworks and ideas;
- ❖ They provide unique tourism, economic development (commercial, residential and light industrial) and competitive advantages for the Town;
- ❖ They provide a clear definable edge for the community, setting Magrath apart from most other communities in North America;
- ❖ They are consistent with the natural geographic and land use setting of the community and its rural fringe;
- ❖ They are consistent with the nature, recreation and fitness orientation of the community; and
- ❖ A peripheral greenbelt system together with the wind turbines on the adjacent hills would help contribute to an iconic sense of place and association with a much more liveable and sustainable form of community, which will help make Magrath an even more distinctive and uniquely marketable and attractive place to live.

This MSP is geared toward building Magrath into what all communities should aspire to be—one of the most liveable and sustainable communities in the world. Speaking of the book *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* by planning pioneer, Ebenezer Howard, Stanley Buder states in his recent book *Visionaries & Planners: The Garden City Movement and the Modern Community*:

In 1898 an unknown Englishman published a little book advocating experimental communities as the way to draw populations out of huge, teeming cities. Small garden cities girdled by greenbelts were to meet fully and efficiently the needs of their residents and indeed, in time, to serve as the “master key” to a higher, more cooperative stage of civilization. Dismissed by reviewers as the utopian fantasy of a naïve enthusiast, Ebenezer Howard’s deceptively simple concept has provided a basis for modern city planning’s most elusive quest, the environmental design of the ideal community.

What is a model community? What is a good life about in essence? We hope to answer and market this in Magrath.

D. Mission and Vision

Magrath, like all communities, is a convergence of “people, place and vision.” Ordinary mission and vision—in spite of the quality of a people or a place—leads to ordinary communities. The mission statement developed by Mayor and Council for the Town of Magrath is:

Uniting to build the world’s greatest community. Welcome home.

The community's vision statement is:

To promote, protect and beautify Magrath, making it the home town of choice for families and businesses.

E. Goals and Core Values

Magrath has and will continue to be built based on the following progressive principles, goals and core values:

- ❖ **Model Community:** Applying best practices to build an ideal form of sustainable small community (to a maximum of 10,000 people) based on the “Plat of Zion” and the “Garden City” traditions and the shared vision of current residents and the community's founders.
- ❖ **Governance, Unity and Inclusivity:** Building bonds of unity, trust and cooperation between the elected representatives and administration of the Town and citizens of every age and background.
- ❖ **Leadership and Sustainability:** Striving to increase Magrath's sustainability by innovating in cultural, social, governance, administrative, economic and environmental terms.
- ❖ **Natural and Historic Preservation:** Magrath is one of the oldest communities in the Province of Alberta and played a leading role in the settlement of Southern Alberta. Preserving and interpreting this history is an increasing priority in the community. This includes developing the Pothole Creek natural corridor and the remnants of the historically significant Galt Canal and the Town's National Historic Site as well as the Magrath's Museum, historic mainstreet, Magrath Public Library, Alston Park and other sites of historic significance which are increasingly valued as amenities and tourist destinations in the community.
- ❖ **Pedestrian and Fitness Orientation:** Building our community in ways that promote walking, a healthy lifestyle and high degrees of social interaction, and that preserve and reinforce the unique historic, Pothole Creek corridor, greenbelt and other features of Magrath's current and future natural and cultural landscape.
- ❖ **Service and Volunteerism:** Encouraging young and old to get involved, take an interest in each other, and progressively improve—together—every aspect of our community.
- ❖ **Clear Urban-Rural Edge and Fringe Development:** Working with our neighbours in Cardston County to provide adequate servicing, avoid inappropriate land use, establish natural and historic corridors, build trail systems, and to preserve the distinctive oasis-like visual quality of Magrath in contrast with its well-planned rural hinterland.
- ❖ **Healing and Nurture:** Further developing Magrath as a healing and nurturing place in physical, social and environmental terms.
- ❖ **Fiscal Responsibility:** Managing the finances of the community in a careful, farsighted and fiscally responsible manner.

The Town of Magrath could be a leader in a number of strategic urban form, environmental, sustainability and community development categories.

F. Current Dimensions of Sustainable Community

Community is a crowning asset that helps define and give meaning to our lives. Every community is unique in this respect. Following are some of the features that contribute to the distinctive nature and sustainability of the Town of Magrath:

- ❖ Since its founding in 1899, Magrath has consistently been known as a progressive and welcoming place to live.
- ❖ Geographically Magrath is part of the rich grain belt and irrigated agricultural heartland of Western Canada and lies adjacent to the abundant recreational, water and tourism resources of “The Crown of the Continent Ecosystem” in Waterton and Glacier National Parks—also referred to as the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park.
- ❖ The Pothole Creek natural and historic corridor on the eastern and southern edges of Magrath sustains an exceptional range of plant and animal life. A successful leopard frog reinstatement program in this ecosystem has been widely acclaimed.
- ❖ Outstanding local energy sources including 325 days of annual sunshine, the 30 Megawatt ‘Magrath Wind Farm,’ and the exceptional hydroelectric, coal, natural gas, oil and alternative energy resources of the Province of Alberta.
- ❖ Exceptional surface and subsurface water sources and infrastructure, food soils, and a stable and diverse irrigated agricultural base.
- ❖ Alberta has one of the world’s strongest and most stable economies and lowest unemployment rates.
- ❖ The Magrath and Lethbridge area economy is driven by world class tourism facilities and national parks, outstanding research and post-secondary facilities, as well as diverse agriculture and light manufacturing.
- ❖ Magrath is a stable, cohesive and inclusive community with a rich local culture.
- ❖ According to the United Nations, Alberta’s primary, secondary and post-secondary educational programs are second to none.
- ❖ Magrath’s schools are famous for the quality of their sport, band and academic programs.
- ❖ The Town is serviced by committed local doctors and an exceptional emergency medical services team. It is also served by the Good Samaritans Society Magrath Community Health Centre as well as by a world class regional medical facility and service hub centred 15 minutes away in Lethbridge.
- ❖ Maintaining attractive streets and yards is a constant challenge and is an important part of Magrath’s past, present and future. It is important to reinforce the oasis-like quality of Magrath in ways that are cost effective and that reflect and enhance the Town’s historic layout, entrances, resources and street pattern. Every property and home owner has an important part to play in making Magrath a more attractive and distinctive place to live.
- ❖ The community is a great retirement destination with quality conventional seniors living as well as extended care facilities.
- ❖ Magrath’s emergency medical services and preparedness programs are respected throughout the region and its personnel are well-trained and prepared for any eventuality.

Whether measured in economic, social or environmental terms, it can easily be argued that Magrath is one of the more sustainable and liveable small communities in the world.

G. Critical Success Factors

Critical success factors and measures that would encourage increased sustainability in Magrath include:

- ❖ Unity and sustainability in the families, neighbourhoods and among the citizens of the Town.
- ❖ Unity and sustainability of the governance and administrative structures in the Town.
- ❖ Increasing volunteerism in the Town.

- ❖ The quality of the Town’s biosphere and environment, including its natural corridors, trail systems and parks.
- ❖ The quality and number of students in our schools.
- ❖ The quality of our Family and Community Support Services programs.
- ❖ The quality of our fitness and recreation programs.
- ❖ The vitality of our downtown core and special events.
- ❖ A competitive local property tax rate.
- ❖ The quality and sustainability of the Town’s tangible capital assets, including its recreational and other buildings, and its water, sewer, roads and other infrastructure.

Qualities of Organizational Sustainability and Resilience

Charmaine Hammond, in a presentation at the Local Government Administrator’s Association annual conference in Red Deer on March 17, 2010 titled *Building Resilience and Inspired Teams*, gave the following recommendations on improving resilience and sustainability in communities:

- ❖ Focus on Value Centred Work
- ❖ Encourage Strong Trust in Leadership
- ❖ Focus on Culture and Compelling Purpose
- ❖ Focus on People and Open Communication
- ❖ Providing Systems and Adequate Tools and Resources to Do Best Work

Sustainable teams are resilient. According to Hammond:

Teams that strengthen their resilience factor connect people with ideas, revisit processes and planning, and incorporate fun at work.

Such teams “will not only survive,” she states, “but thrive and prosper in today’s ever-changing world of work.”

These and other factors will help to measure and determine the effectiveness of this municipal sustainability framework and the plans and priorities—as well as the governance and administrative initiatives—described here.

H. Significant Opportunities and Challenges

Every community is challenged by change. Following are some of the most important opportunities and challenges facing the Town of Magrath:

- ❖ **Model Community Framework:** There is an opportunity to build a truly sustainable and distinctive community in Magrath based on some of the latest sustainable community practices and the Town’s uniquely sustainable model community and cooperative communal past. Reinforcing these principles through appropriate Municipal and Inter-

Municipal planning presents an opportunity to lead, as well as a major competitive advantage and economic opportunity for the Town.

- ❖ **Municipal and Inter-Municipal Planning:** Fringe area servicing and development issues are being addressed and will soon be represented in an Inter-Municipal Development Plan (IMDP) and associated Inter-Municipal Development Agreement (IMDA) being developed between the Town and Cardston County. By 2011, the Town of Magrath should have completed an updated Municipal Development Plan consistent with this IMDP to reflect the land use, multi-year infrastructural, and community development vision expressed in this document. (These documents are intended to be reviewed and updated every 5 years.)
- ❖ **Tax Base:** In order to lower Magrath's largely residential tax base, an opportunity exists to increase the size of the Town by attracting quality residential, commercial and light industrial development building on its current and expanding integrated potable water, irrigation water, storm water and sewer infrastructure base.
- ❖ **Municipal Infrastructure:** Magrath is modernizing and progressively extending its potable and irrigation water, storm and sanitary sewer, and road infrastructure to accommodate development and progressively service all residents of the Town based on its long range capital and infrastructure master plan.
- ❖ **Potable Water System:** To increase the community's sustainability, a major upgrade of the Town's water treatment system is being undertaken in cooperation with Cardston County and should be completed by 2012.
- ❖ **Irrigation Water System:** Magrath is one of the few communities in North America that has a separate untreated irrigation water infrastructure.
- ❖ **Historic Sites, Natural Area and Trail System:** Magrath is one of the oldest communities in Alberta and has a national historic site and historic trail system and corridor commemorating the founding of Canada's first major irrigation project. Strategic investment these existing sites and assets is an important economic development, recreation and tourism opportunity for the Town of Magrath.
- ❖ **Integrated Natural Corridor, Surrounding Greenbelt and Trail System:** The Garden City community model is characterized by a peripheral greenbelt system. There is an opportunity to reinforce and affordably extend this model to permanently surround and set apart the Town of Magrath—reinforcing its oasis-like visual quality and natural boundaries—through innovative urban and trail system planning, landscape architecture, land use planning and urban design.
- ❖ **Community Beautification:** Magrath has an opportunity to beautify the entire Town through a low cost coordinated street tree planting program commencing in all new subdivisions and the community core.
- ❖ **Local Food System:** Magrath has an opportunity to play a leadership role in encouraging local food production and innovative land use consistent with its traditions of self-reliance and sustainability.
- ❖ **Waste Management and Recycling:** Magrath has an opportunity to expand its recycling programs and improve the way waste is managed both regionally and in the community.
- ❖ **Bylaw Enforcement:** Magrath has an opportunity to better enforce unsightly premises, animal and other bylaws in the best interests of the community.
- ❖ **Downtown Revitalization:** Like many small communities, Magrath encourages support for its local merchants and service sector. The Town is encouraging higher density seniors and other forms of development in the centre of the community to support its historic downtown core.
- ❖ **Industrial Development:** Magrath has an opportunity to promote light clean industrial development in its new industrial park to local groups as well as to outside businesses attracted by the Town's sustainable development model.

- ❖ **Economic Development:** If the above opportunities are progressively pursued, Magrath will be able to position itself as a uniquely attractive, sustainable, growing and affordable community setting for both families and businesses.

I. Citizen Engagement Strategies for 2010 through 2012

The Mayor and Council and Town administration will continue to conduct regular surveys, public meetings and information sessions to involve area residents and gauge public opinion. Mayor and Council will also review this MSP on an annual basis to reflect local priorities and changing conditions impacting the Town.

4. Priorities and Framework for a Sustainable Magrath

“Cities are all about choices.”

-- Mike Harcourt, Lethbridge Sustainability
Conference, March 4, 2010

If communities are about *choices* as well as about *people, place and vision*, what do we conceive as the best possible future and vision for the Town of Magrath? What can Magrath do to create a competitive advantage and draw good families and businesses into the community?

Going back to that statement by John Izzo, what can Magrath do to build a better and more sustainable community and provide leadership in meaningful and strategically important ways?

Following are the five categories of sustainability mentioned in the AUMA’s *Resource Binder for Municipal Sustainability Planning*:

A. Cultural Model

Magrath was founded by immigrants from the United States and overseas who were seeking a better way of life. Because of the beauty and productivity of this land, most stayed or still have roots here. Today Magrath offers an outstanding community environment for old and new residents alike. The community is famous for its fitness as well as its cultural-orientation and is widely considered an inviting and friendly place to live. The Town triples in size each July as friends and residents return to experience the way community life was meant to be. For generations young and old, it feels like coming home.

Priority #1: Engage the Community: connecting employees, council and the community to Magrath’s mission, vision, core values and associated initiatives through the Town’s website and other activities.

Priority #2: Encourage and invest in historic preservation and interpretation as they express the sustainable models and unique history which underpin this community.

Priority #3: Emphasize participation and lifelong fitness in diverse ways throughout the community and link it to the Town’s parks and trail systems.

Priority #4: Emphasize gardening, food production and beautification throughout the community

consistent with the Town's "Garden City" theme.

Description of Success

Unity is a primary focus in Magrath and is a potent expression of sustainability. Ultimately, all of these programs will be measured by an increasing sense of unity within our schools, within our urban and surrounding rural community at large, and within Council and the Town administration.

Current Reality

Every community can improve from this perspective and considerable progress has been achieved on Council and in the administration over the past few years. More can always be done in this area, and the Town is committed to working with institutions, organizations and individuals throughout the community to build a more united Magrath.

Priority Short and Long Range Deliverables

- ❖ The Town is reconfiguring its website currently to express these principles and priorities in a more engaging and user friendly format. The Town will also reinforce and pursue these priorities this year, and subsequently, through its various council and administrative activities as well as through its Family and Community Support Services program.
- ❖ The Town will coordinate with Boards, Committees and special interest groups throughout the community to advance these priorities in the short and long term.
- ❖ The Town administration will assist with grant applications and the preparation of land use planning, recreational, landscape architectural and other documents as needed to advance these priority items.

Responsibility Assignment

- ❖ The Mayor and Council and administration will take the lead with Priority #1.
- ❖ The administration will coordinate with the Museum Board and relevant granting agencies on Priority #2.
- ❖ The administration will coordinate with the schools, its FCSS program, the Town's Triathlon Committee, Zenith Alumni, trail boosters, and other local interest groups to advance Priority #3.
- ❖ The Town's beautification committee and local gardening groups will take the lead with Priority #4.

Plans and High Leverage Actions

- ❖ Complete the Town website in early 2010.
- ❖ Work with the Museum Board to follow up its Community Facility Enhancement Program grant proposal and implementation in 2010/11.
- ❖ Work with Cardston County during the first half of 2010 to establish a planning and land use framework that will facilitate a community encompassing trail and greenbelt loop.
- ❖ Work with local gardening groups and the beautification committee to promote beautification and gardening initiatives in the Town.

B. Governance Model

The service motto for the administration in Magrath was borrowed from a popular local school administrator, Jim Anderson. It is called the three Fs: “*fair, firm and friendly.*” This is how the administration strives to serve everyone in the community.

The administration also strives to support the Mayor and Council in building, uniting and lifting the community toward an ideal model of interpersonal and community life. One way we do this is by applying the best available visioning, planning, human resource and municipal management practices, and by treating all Town residents with courtesy and respect.

Priority #1: Establish a Model Code of Conduct, Accountability and Best Practices Framework and Strategies for Ensuring Magrath’s Operational and Governance Excellence. We will strive to be a “model community” in everything we do.

Priority #2: Encourage performance and continuity through a successive three year planning, strategy and implementation framework—as expressed in Section 2B—geared toward achieving Mayor and Council goals and succession in line with this evolving MSP and related planning and budget documents.

Priority #3: Review and upgrade of all Town bylaws.

Description of Success

The acceptance and pursuit of the above three priorities in 2010, and carrying them forward—Priorities #1 and #2 particularly—subsequently.

Current Reality

Council and the Town administration have been pursuing Priority #1 informally over the past few years, but need to formalize this model approach—as time and resources allow—in the months and years ahead. The administration also recommends that Priority #2 be embraced by future councils as a means of pursuing council goals and priorities on a continuing bases.

Concerning Priority #3, it is widely recognized that most municipalities need to review, streamline and modernize their bylaws in order to increase their relevance, enforceability and risk implications. This has never been done in Magrath and needs to be progressively pursued over the next few years.

Priority Short and Long Range Deliverables

- ❖ There are organizational and governance code of practice and enhancement toolkits available to municipalities. These need to be researched with a view to tailoring a package to the needs of the Town. Ideally, this can be concluded with the current and embraced by succeeding councils.
- ❖ The process outlined in Section 2B should be raised with the succeeding Mayor and Council at their first planning session following the election in October 2010.
- ❖ Council and the administration should conduct a review of existing bylaws in 2010 to develop recommendations for council toward a comprehensive bylaw review. This should be followed up subsequently by this and succeeding councils and the administration.

Responsibility Assignment

Town Council and the administration will work together to advance these three priority items.

Plans and High Leverage Actions

- ❖ The administration should research and report back to council on model governance and operational frameworks consistent with this MSP.
- ❖ The succeeding council should review the process proposed in Section 2B and support or amend this framework.
- ❖ The council and administration should strike a committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the Town's bylaws.

C. Economic Model

The economic sustainability of Magrath will ultimately require growth to ensure the vitality of the downtown commercial core and to support the schools, local businesses and institutions as well as attract new residents and businesses to the community.

Priority #1: Promote Magrath's unique leading edge "Model Community" past and future to residential, commercial and light industrial parties on an international basis to attract quality sustainable development to the community.

Priority #2: Invest strategically in traditional as well as green infrastructure that will expand Magrath's tax base and attract measured quality development to the community and extend potable and irrigation water to all Town residents.

Priority #3: Promote revitalization through a range of affordable seniors housing and other initiatives in the Town's commercial and institutional core.

Priority #4: Promote the viability and sustainable expansion, where feasible, of major employers in the community and leverage the Town's human and wider resource base whenever possible.

Priority #5: Encourage the establishment of emergency and other medical services in the community as it grows with a view toward re-establishing a Magrath hospital.

Priority #6: Enable Town staff to dedicate more time to undertake grant and economic development opportunities on a more proactive and entrepreneurial basis.

Description of Success

Further quality investment and development in the downtown core, in Town subdivisions, in the light industrial park, and in businesses and institutions within the community, and an increasing community and external awareness of the sustainable model community dimensions of the Town.

Current Reality

Magrath is experiencing growth, but needs to attract more jobs to the community to be more sustainable and to diversify the current "bedroom community" orientation of the Town. In order to do this, Council and the administration need to take better advantage of the SouthGrow economic

development initiative and dedicate more time to the marketing and economic development of the community.

Priority Short and Long Range Deliverables

- ❖ Complete the website, including links to available Alberta government and SouthGrow sites capable of profiling and advancing the unique attributes and advantages of the community.
- ❖ Provide the requisite infrastructure in the Town's light industrial park to accommodate local and potential outside businesses.
- ❖ Encourage affordable seniors housing near the downtown core.
- ❖ Support local businesses and institutional employers in the community to stabilize and expand their facilities, as feasible, through advertizing, strategic and land use planning, investment, and other initiatives as appropriate.
- ❖ Take advantage of the skill sets of the Town administration and local volunteers in support of economic development generally and sustainability initiatives.

Responsibility Assignment

Plans and High Leverage Actions

- ❖ Like many small communities near larger centres, Magrath's main shopping district has been affected changing shopping patterns and the growth of the major box stores. Recent street tree planting, lighting and downtown investments, however, have led to significant commercial improvements in the core. The Town will continue to encourage public and private investment to build on the well-preserved historic streetscape at the centre of our community.
- ❖ Magrath is well-known for the quality of care and range of its seniors residential facilities. These include the Garden Villa complex, Diamond Willow Terrace, and the Good Samaritan Society Extended Care Facility. Magrath is a pedestrian-oriented community and is very seniors friendly. Most of our community buildings are handicapped accessible and there is a lot of seniors-oriented residential development near the community core. The Town has a wide range of centrally located and other affordable housing options for seniors on fixed incomes. The Garden City Seniors Centre on 1st Street West, Magrath's main commercial street, is a major hub for seniors-related activities in the community.
- ❖ Strategic storm water and other infrastructural expansion in the northeast to build on the areas existing infrastructure base.
- ❖ Encourage the establishment of private dental and medical facilities in the downtown core and expansion of emergency and other medical services in the former Magrath hospital until such time as the community can justify an expanded private or publically funded medical services facility in the Town.
- ❖ Hire junior staff, as needed, to enable the CAO or others to dedicate more time to economic development activities in the short term as the budget allows; and in the long term, as the community grows in future years, the Town should consider hiring a full time Economic Development Officer.

D. Environmental Model

Magrath's dry, semi-arid climate allows year round access to a range of outdoor recreational activities. Annual precipitation in Magrath is about 38 centimetres or 15 inches on average. Though the mountains nearby are ideal for skiing and other winter sports, Magrath itself sits in the rain shadow of the Rocky Mountains and typically experiences little winter snow. As a result, road

conditions are generally good through the winter months in Southern Alberta. Roads are also wide and well-maintained throughout the Province. Cyclists find Southern Alberta a natural haven because of the wide paved shoulders on most secondary roads.

Magrath also has an exceptionally rich natural corridor on the southern and eastern sides of the community which includes the Pothole Creek and the historic Galt Canal. An existing historic and recreational trail system extends through a portion of this corridor.

Priority #1: Invest in and expand the Town's Pothole Creek and Galt Canal Corridor, linking it to an eventual peripheral trail system loop in conjunction with Cardston County. Promote and entrench this leading edge urban design strategy.

Priority #2: Develop a progressive street tree planting and maintenance program to reinforce the "Garden City" roots of the community.

Priority #3: Develop a program to control the deer population in the Town.

Priority #4: Establish a "Sustainability Charter" through a collaborative community wide process.

Description of Success

Magrath has always been an active and nature-oriented community. Expansion of the Town's protected river valley and associated trails, parks, recreation, gardening and fitness activities for all age groups is a good measure of the uniqueness as well as the vitality and success of the community.

Current Reality

The Town has an exceptional natural corridor on the southern and eastern edges of the community, but needs to plan, invest in and expand this corridor in cooperation with Cardston County over time.

Though the natural setting, well-treed north and south entrances, and streetscape of Magrath are more attractive than most prairie communities, there is still much room for improvement. Some streets have attractive trees and private landscapes, but as a general rule streetscapes lack the kinds of uniform treatments that can dramatically and affordably improve the visual quality and value of both communities and neighbourhoods.

The Town has a serious deer overpopulation problem which affects the ability of residents to maintain gardens and most new shrubs and trees in the community.

Like most communities the people of Magrath are aware of the principle of sustainability, but are not clear on what this means and where the community stands in this respect. Building consensus, focus and vision in this area would be useful

Priority Short and Long Range Deliverables

- ❖ Establish a plan and land use framework together with Cardston County that will accommodate the Town's peripheral greenbelt urban design strategy, and pursue it persistently until a sustainable system is in place.

- ❖ The Town’s Beautification Committee should develop a street tree master plan, in conjunction with the administration, and develop community support in order to progressively beautify the community in a manner consistent with its “Garden City” theme.
- ❖ Striking of a special committee to address the overpopulation of deer in the community.
- ❖ Council and the administration should form a special committee charged with developing a practical but leading edge “Sustainability Charter” for the Town.

Responsibility Assignment

- ❖ The Town administration together with Council will take the lead with Priority #1.
- ❖ The Town councillor represented on the Beautification Committee will take the lead in developing a street tree master plan in close cooperation with the administration.
- ❖ It is recommended that a Town Councillor approach individuals willing to sit on this deer overpopulation committee.
- ❖ It is recommended that a Town Councillor approach parties willing to sit on this “Sustainability Charter” committee.

Plans and High Leverage Actions

- ❖ Establish the recommended peripheral greenbelt system framework with Cardston County by June 2010.
- ❖ Develop a comprehensive street tree master plan to be progressively implemented in coming years.
- ❖ Strike a deer management committee involving a committed group of local volunteers, then develop a plan, together with the Town administration, to mitigate the local deer problem.
- ❖ Involve Calgary-based author Chris Tucker, author of *The Geography of Hope*, potentially, in the “Sustainability Charter” process. [Reference Vancouver, B.C.’s local food and other “Greenest City Action Team Goals.”]

Being a “green” as well as a sustainable and fitness-oriented community can generate cost and other competitive advantages. This applies to the Town’s natural areas, trail systems and landfill as well as other aspects of the community.

E. Social Model

This section describes one of the most important segments in any MSP. Social vision and programming addresses in very practical and participatory terms the culture and core values of communities. In Magrath this will increasingly be centred around the community’s new Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Centre and its volunteer and full time staff.

Priority #1: Launch, register and engage participants of all ages in a comprehensive “Garden City Volunteers” initiative on a sustainable model basis throughout the community.

Priority #2: Launch new Music and Arts and Crafts programs in the FCSS facility in addition to existing programs, and encourage the presentation of the fruits of these programs at special events, celebrations, public venues, and so on.

Priority #3: Encourage heightened participation in FCSS, recreational, fitness and special events activities throughout the community.

Description of Success

Getting people of all ages out of their homes and more engaged with each other and in community activities will be the primary measures of success.

Others include encouraging local musical and arts and crafts talents in ways that benefit lives and enhance the community both economically and culturally, and providing programs and promoting regular physical activity for all residents in the community.

Current Reality

Like many communities, our increasingly media-driven culture has impacted social interaction, fitness levels and volunteerism in Magrath. The community has a range of programs in the schools and seniors facilities, and available indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities for both youth and adults, but only a small percentage of the community take advantage of them.

Priority Short and Long Range Deliverables

- ❖ Establish a “Garden City Volunteer” committee and business plan under the auspices of the FCSS Board with support from the administration.
- ❖ Complete the renovations to the FCSS Centre by May 2010 and launch its music and arts and crafts programs by July 2010.
- ❖ Extend the reach of the FCSS program by preparing a short and long range plan which includes the promotion and programming of community recreational, fitness and special event activities to augment existing programs and operations already existing in the Town.
- ❖ Long term, the Town and its FCSS coordinator will research the cooperative movement being encouraged by the Alberta government to see if it might be relevant to the Town’s FCSS and other programs and opportunities in the community.

Responsibility Assignment

- ❖ Priority #1 will be the responsibility of the FCSS program coordinator and the FCSS Board together with the Town administration.
- ❖ Priority #2 and #3 will be the responsibility of the FCSS program coordinator with support from the Town administration.

Plans and High Leverage Actions

- ❖ Develop a “Garden City Volunteers” Business Plan, then approach the schools and all local churches and volunteer organizations about what they can do on an ongoing basis to get involved.
- ❖ Contract out and complete the required facility upgrades by May 2010.
- ❖ Prepare a preliminary plan for council review and continue to refine it based on its strengths and weaknesses in coming years.

There is a significant economic and sustainability dimension to all of this. Strong families and active youth and seniors contribute to the tangible and intangible quality and cost of community life. Arts, crafts, sculpture and other FCSS-driven programs will not only encourage interaction, but can also produce saleable items which can contribute to family incomes and the local economy. Magrath’s FCSS building is an incubator in this sense.

These and other aspects of the Town’s social and FCSS model can contribute significantly to the unity and sustainability of the Town, and need to be encouraged and reinforced.

5. Strategic Priorities and the Town's Multi-Year Capital Infrastructure and Broader Planning

The priorities and vision mentioned in this MSP must always be viewed within the context of the Town's financial limitations, Council priorities and Town staffing capabilities.

To aid in this process, the Town of Magrath will continue to refine and maintain a Multi-Year (10 Year) Capital Infrastructure Plan in addition to furthering its comprehensive engineering planning, facility planning, recreation planning, parks and greenbelt planning, trails planning, and other sustainable documents. This will assist the Town to upgrade and further refine this document, as well as guide the community's continuing cultural, governance, economic, environmental and social development activities.

6. Summary

This process has enabled the Magrath Town Council and administration as well as community residents to develop a refineable general plan to enhance the sustainability of the Town of Magrath, and that also reflects the Town's multi-year capital infrastructure planning. To be effective, this document should be reviewed and updated annually to ensure its continuing relevance to the community as well as to successive Councils and administrations.

Though an MSP's particulars may change, core community values and goals seem to endure. For this reason, it is expected that this document in its current and amended future forms will continue to provide a roadmap for an increasingly sustainable and liveable Magrath.

In conclusion, the people of Magrath have the opportunity to be and to build something out of the ordinary. What can be termed a unique sustainable convergence of people, place and vision. The planning and conceptual dimensions of this are the easy part. Shared vision and consistent effort at a Council, administration and community level will ultimately tell how this turns out.

Two final statements are perhaps worth mentioning. This from Barack Obama:

Making your mark on the world is hard. If it were easy, everybody would do it. But it's not. It takes patience, it takes commitment, and it comes with plenty of failure along the way. The real test is not whether you avoid this failure, because you won't. It's whether you let it harden or shame you into inaction, or whether you learn from it; whether you choose to persevere.

And along similar lines, this from Frank Lloyd Wright:

I know the price of success: dedication, hard work and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen.

APPENDIX A: MAGRATH'S GARDEN CITY TRADITION

"Francis Bacon once said that a garden is "the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man, without which buildings and palaces are but gross handiworks." [Bacon, Francis, Essays.] The following material provides an overview on a unique Canadian community, Magrath, Alberta, widely known as "The Garden City."

Magrath is known for its natural beauty, its oasis-like appearance, and its outstanding quality of life. For example, the community has large protected natural areas and historic parks, renowned concert and field bands, one of the highest North American primary and secondary education standards, prominent sport and recreation programs, its well known gardens, and one of the best 18 hole golf courses in Western Canada. It is less well known as a living example of utopian city planning and as the center of one of the richest tourism, recreation, ranching, irrigated agriculture, and scenic regions in the world.

Magrath lies in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in what Mikhail Gorbachev once called "the most beautiful agricultural valley [he had] ever seen." The early settlers who came to this area were attracted by its rich farm and ranch land and its abundance of water flowing from the nearby Rocky Mountains. Magrath's founders tapped this water through what at that time was the largest irrigation project undertaken on the North American continent.

Today Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada and its sister wilderness and recreation area, Glacier National Park in the United States, encompass these headwaters. Some of the most outstanding mountain, hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, natural history and car touring areas in the world can be found within an hours drive from Magrath.

The Magrath area is one of the most diverse scenic, outdoor adventure, bicycle and automobile touring, quality living and tourism opportunity regions in the world.

Origins of Magrath as "The Garden City"

Since the early 1900s, Magrath has been known as "The Garden City." The origins present, past and future of this title have been influenced by three important historical factors. First, Magrath's natural setting is strikingly oasis-like and scenic comprising an area rich in human history as well as natural landscape. Second, Magrath's origins were uniquely utopian, comprising in both physical and social form what John W. Reps in his book "The Making of Urban America" (Princeton, 1965.) terms "A City of Zion." And third, Magrath's "garden city" epithet was pronounced in the years just following the publication of the utopian "Garden Cities of Tomorrow" new town conceptions of one of the fathers of modern city planning, Sir Ebenezer Howard, in England.

Unquestionably, the founders of Magrath set out to establish an ideal or utopian new community. The end and beginnings of new centuries have tended to be times of idealist thinking generally and late 19th century North America was no exception. In the new world, the most prolific and adventurous of utopian thinkers and community builders of the day were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, better known as "the Mormons." For 60 years they had been establishing new communities based on a characteristic physical

layout and settlement philosophy developed in the 1830s and 1840s in Missouri and Illinois, and later in the Western Territories of the United States. The early new communities established in the Eastern United States met with considerable resistance. In search of greater religious freedom and opportunities for unrestricted settlement, the majority of Church members traveled by handcart and covered wagon in the late 1840s and early 1850s, many departing from England, Scotland and Wales to what was then the largely uncharted wilderness of the West. Many new communities were established throughout this region including a major center at Salt Lake City. It was from this utopian base that Magrath's early history began. In 1886 one Charles Ora Card was instructed on behalf of then leader of the Church, John Taylor, an Englishman who had originally settled in Eastern Canada, to seek suitable lands for settlement in the British controlled territories to the North. In this year Card selected the current site of Cardston as the first Mormon community to be established in Canada. Some years later, Canadian government and other leaders

seeking greater settlement of the Southern Alberta region requested that the Mormons apply their well-known irrigation and new town settlement expertise in the establishment of new communities and in the construction of what at that time, as mentioned previously, was the largest irrigation project undertaken in North America. This construction included the establishment of a new community as a base for the construction of the first stage of canal excavation work. The establishment of this community was foreseen by two prominent men of the region: John W. Taylor, son of John Taylor and a member of the leading body of the Church, and Levi Harker, son of another expatriate Englishman who would figure prominently in the planning and establishment of the community. This new town was Magrath.

Also figuring prominently in the establishment of Magrath were Mr. C.A. Magrath, a prominent surveyor, politician and businessman, and Mr. Elliott T. Galt, son of Sir Alexander Galt, prominent Englishman and Father of Canadian Confederation, one of the great promoters of Southern Alberta development. These men and Charles Ora Card were friends as well as strong proponents of both irrigation and of new community development in what later became Southern Alberta.

Through the 1890s Elliott Galt made many trips to England to rally investor support for his irrigation and settlement proposals for the region south of the largely Galt-built City of Lethbridge. In 1891 C.A. Magrath, encouraged by brother-in-law Galt, travelled to Salt Lake City with John W. Taylor to enquire concerning Church interest in participating in this linked new community development and irrigation enterprise. The leaders of the Church were interested. By this time, however, political support in Eastern Canada had waned for the project. Not until 1897 when Magrath met in Ottawa with Mr. Clifford Sifton, newly appointed Minister of the Interior, did the Canadian government offer its support.

Galt, returning from England in 1898 following discussions with British supporters and shareholders in this venture, chose the siting of the new community of Magrath, signing a contract with the Church to proceed with the establishment of the new town and the commencement of the irrigation work in September of that same year.

Concerning the establishment of Magrath and the letting of contracts to the Mormons Mr. Jeremiah J. Head of Old Jewry, London, England—sent by the English shareholders to report on the matter—advised that the Mormons were the ideal new town developers and irrigation builders given their knowledge of the region. Their conclusion was based on the following facts: their far-sighted leaders, their 50 years of western North American new town settlement, their irrigation experience, the fact that the Church was sending capable families experienced in colonization. They considered that these new town builders would most likely make the country blossom economically to the benefit of the shareholders, and also that the Canadian Government regarded

them favorably. [See "Irrigation Builders," Magrath and District History Association, 1974 and Magrath's "Golden Jubilee", 1'4'.] This same Englishman was the new town's first overseer following the community's incorporation as a village in 1901.

The townsite for Magrath was chosen in 1898 along the west and northern edges of a protected stretch of Pothole Creek and was named in honor of Charles Alexander Magrath, then a member of the Northwest Council of the Canadian government. The new community was surveyed and laid out early in 1899 by Charles Ora Card and Thomas Duce with the support and blessing of C. A. Magrath and Elliott Galt. This commenced a major period of settlement and rapid economic expansion throughout the region.

Quoting from Mr. Magrath (*Irrigation Builders*, p. 61.): "In my opinion, the movement of the Mormon people into the south of Alberta was of inestimable value in opening up that section of our west. They understood irrigation, and Lethbridge being their market town, we were continually told of the wealth that could be created by diverting onto the land the waters running to waste down the rivers. It was fortunate that the Galts, who understood the fundamentals of colonization—the care of the newcomers--and the Mormons, who understood irrigation by actual experience, met at this time. It was only a question of bringing about co-operation of the two interests."

The first home built in Magrath was that of Charles Heber Dudley, previously of Willard, Utah, commencing April 20th, 1899. This home consisted of three earth walls dug into the bank of the Pothole Creek which skirts the southern edge of the current town. These walls were covered with a rough but serviceable "dugout" structure which provided a home for the Dudley family in these early years. Many of the early homes in Magrath were of this type. (The site and remains of this home are located within parkland acquired by the Town of Magrath as a memorial to the irrigation builders and settlers who founded the community. It is part of an historic corridor, recreation area, and wildlife preserve which defines the southern and eastern edges of the town.)

In its early days Magrath was very much a communally-oriented settlement. A bishop's storehouse headed by the Town's first Bishop and Mayor, Levi Harker, provided for the needy in the area. Provisions held in this storehouse consisted of one tenth of all of the increase of these pioneer Mormon families. Though the Bishop's storehouse no longer remains, many families in Magrath still donate one tenth of their yearly incomes to the local Churches.

Magrath was given the name "The Garden City" by David H. Elton, K.C. (King's Council), in the year 1905, the same year that Alberta became a Province in the Dominion of Canada. In 1906 Mr. Elton, later mayor of the City of Lethbridge, established a newspaper in Magrath: "The Magrath Pioneer." Mr. Elton also published the Cardston paper at this same time and later a paper in the neighboring Town of Raymond.

The development of Southern Alberta was closely tied and greatly influenced by both Englishmen and English investment in the region. When the well-read newspaperman D.H. Elton gave Magrath her name, it could easily have been influenced not only by the community's well-treed oasis-like appearance, but also by Magrath's religious Eden-like rural utopian as well as its contemporary English "Garden City" origins.

In 1898, during these same years, Sir Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928) published a book in England entitled "Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform" [Revised and reissued in 1902 as "Garden Cities of Tomorrow."] To fulfill his dream of a more utopian form of low density satellite community, Howard in 1899 started a "Garden City Association" which later became Britain's Garden Cities and Town Planning Association. Howard's basic concept was that self-sufficient "garden" communities of moderate size provided a more ideal form of community life and that these should take the place of over-large and often squalid cities. [See Whittick, ed. "Encyclopedia of Urban Planning," McGraw-Hill, 1974, pp. 437-439, 497-498, 1069-1070 and 1091.]

Concerning similar concerns in North America, Whittick states on page 1091: "There were elements of fervent dissatisfaction with the dominant crassness. This produced many new "intentional" or utopian communities, or what [again] John W. Reps calls "Cities of Zion." A dissident leaven with generally religious and egalitarian ideals and impulses expressed itself in both physical plans and social arrangements of these communities; often they were designed to accommodate special forms and ethics of industrial production."

Howard was intensely interested in these same principles, and was particularly preoccupied during his early years with what was a major concern of his period, viz., in intellectually harmonizing the breach between science, human progress and religion. Howard, who had emigrated to Nebraska in the American mid-west in 1871, later working as a reporter in Chicago before returning to England in 1876, was heralded internationally as the prophet of a new wave in progressive community development, giving rise to a series of new town developments in England and much later in other parts of the world.

Whether or not the Town's original layout or Elton's naming of Magrath was directly or indirectly influenced through Galt, Magrath or Head by the internationally publicized activities of Howard's garden city movement would require some additional research. The fact remains that Magrath was established on a remarkably similar utopian social reformist, ethical, industrially self-sufficient, treed parkland, peripheral greenbelt, and physical planning basis. This is evident in the marked similarity between the plan of Letchworth, England, Howard's first attempt at an ideal Garden City founded in 1903, and the conceptual plan of Magrath here illustrated. It could be equally argued and researched that Howard's thought was perhaps quite significantly influenced by the utopian religious new town development and settlement phenomena of western North America. Key elements in Howard's far-sighted planning that are mirrored in Magrath's past, present and future include the notion of a community surrounded by agricultural land whose limits are defined by park or greenbelt,

of organized migratory movements of population with a balance of agricultural and industrial employment, of systems of land ownership capturing increments of value for public purposes, of linkages and major thoroughfares set aside for commercial and institutional development, and of a strong orientation toward self-sufficiency. In addition, the origins of Letchworth and later of Welwyn Garden City, Howard's second attempt, was highly paternalistic, involving prominent community founders and promoters. It also required great effort in finding the necessary financial and political backing, a situation also very similar to the origins of Magrath.

Concerning the significance of the "Garden City" model, quoting again from Whittick on page 1070:

"From the paternalistic settlements and garden cities, there emerged many of the working tools of urban design; e.g., the master plan, reservation of sites for community buildings, a pattern of open spaces, and 'the definition of the edge of a town by a green belt.

The implementation of Howard's ideas [in England] by Parker and Unwin had a side effect in the garden suburbs which began to appear in existing towns and which set the pattern for suburban living to the present day. The New Town planned and built as a whole [at that time in England] was still generally beyond the reformers' reach."

This same Garden City approach to regional and suburban development has been broadly applied world-wide, particularly throughout the latter half of the 20th Century, though rarely with the utopian fervor, speed, and the social and economic scope of Magrath. The most distinctive examples of this approach are found in the satellite new towns of Britain and the British Crown Colonies—the new towns and cities of China and India, particularly—and the satellite community and suburban development of Europe and the United States.

There is no other North American community which epitomizes these utopian "garden city" characteristics so completely; certainly none whose origins so contemporaneously match the rise of this important utopian model. Magrath stands unique in this respect: as a forerunner and quite possibly the earliest manifestation of this still farsighted urban and social development concept; a conception of ideal community life in harmony with humanity and nature. This is a conception rarely seen, representative of a better way of urban living in a physical environmental sense, but also in a social, psychological and even spiritual sense. An ideal or utopian form of community representing, in a way, a smaller and more intimate scale of community life in harmony with nature and with neighbours in contrast with many of the pathologies of the modern suburb and city.

The "Garden City" concept was and remains a formula for a higher quality of collective human life. The utopian-based communities surrounding Magrath of the Hutterite and also of the Mennonite peoples further reinforce the unique utopian social, economic and physical community origins of this uniquely colonized area in Southern Alberta.

Magrath remains, as its title and theme suggest, in every sense, a thriving and progressive "Garden City," truly a Garden City of Tomorrow unique in North America. An evolving experiment in harmonious community living to those fortunate enough to call it home."