

Magrath

The Garden City

Strategic Plan

2022-2025

Updated 2023

Magrath Town Council

Mayor Byrne Cook

Council Ken Baker Darryl Christensen
 Gerry Baril Cynthia Ralph
 Mark Bennett* Aaron Zaugg
 Josh Bourelle*

CAO James Suffredine

*Josh Bourelle was elected to Council on May 29th 2023, following Mark Bennett's resignation.

Town of Magrath Identity Statements

Mission Statement

“Uniting to build the world’s greatest community.”

Vision Statement

“To promote, protect, and beautify Magrath, making it the hometown of choice for families and businesses.”

Strategic Planning 2022-2025

Strategic planning helps to align the vision of both Council and staff ensuring that everyone understands how they are working together towards a set of common goals and objectives. This alignment helps to ensure that residents of the municipality areas receive the highest performance and output possible from its elected council and municipal staff.

Strategic planning is done as long-range planning that is designed to establish broad goals for the organization. Based on these goals, Council and administration staff are able to then create annual performance goals to be accomplished in annual action plans.

Strategic Planning Methodology

SWOT analyses on specific discussion topics were completed over 1 day of strategic discussions amongst the Mayor, Council, the CAO, and senior staff. Common discussion themes emerged between each analysis and that information was compiled to align the strategic goals of the municipality in seven discussion areas.



Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats

What is a SWOT Analysis?

A SWOT analysis is an evaluation method for a discussion that looks at the issue from four different aspects. Two of the aspects (strengths and weaknesses) are focused from an internal perspective of the organization while the other two (opportunities and threats) are focused from an external perspective to the organization.

Discussion 1 – Culture



- * Town Celebration
- * Athletics
- * Church activities
- * Cross-generational support
- * Town Day of Service
- * Family Connections
- * Community and School connection
- * “Garden City” Irrigation
- * A shared history for the Town
- * Small community “know your neighbour” lifestyle

- * Communication
- * Struggling service club membership and activity
- * Lots of time, money, and energy goes to Lethbridge Activities
- * Active groups are siloed and focused on their internal goals rather than networking for the larger picture and projects.

- * Engage more youth with local cultural opportunities
- * Increase coordinating opportunities for local groups and clubs.
- * Create projects with the goal of fostering volunteerism
- * Educate groups and the public about the importance of supporting local
- * Encourage broad-based foundational engagement
- * Build facilities and amenities that bring people together.

- * Perceived divide of LDS/ Non-LDS community
- * Global belonging vs local – online vs in-person service groups.
- * Losing local identity within generations – their culture not being based in our local community
- * Uncontrolled urban growth (sprawl) without good land use planning.
- * Residents involved in other areas of life, feeling overwhelmed.

The Town of Magrath has been able to maintain strong cultural ties to its historic roots through community-sponsored activities that create lasting bonds which draw many who leave to return later. However, there is increasing outside influence that takes our citizens to where there are more enticing activities and cultural belonging is transitioning to a more regional, even global, scale. Through the advances in technology and social media, a person can be involved in any community or culture of their preference. To strengthen the cultural ties to the community, the Town must find ways to include our youth in meaningful ways and be in tune with their vision of the community going forward.

Discussion 2 – Environment



- * Abundance of land
- * Access to water
- * Solar and wind power generation potential
- * Local trail system
- * Thoroughfare to Provincial and National Parks
- * Beautiful landscape, creek, parks
- * No rats

- * Mentality of oil and gas
- * Lack of desire for change
- * Need to embrace “green” world
- * Anti-green politics of Conservative Party
- * Climate – wind, cold

- * Untapped Solar/Wind energy
- * Jensen Dam/St. Mary’s River – Tourism, rafting, fishing
- * Electric vehicle charging stations
- * Green energy grant-friendly environment
- * Solar farm potential

- * Getting left behind
- * Wind/hail damage
- * Flood
- * The politics of “green” energy
- * Rising energy costs
- * Wildfire
- * Inactivity

The Town of Magrath is well-positioned geographically to innovate and capitalize in the wind and solar renewable energy sectors. Opportunity also exists to expand on tourism related to water activities, gateway to National and Provincial parks, camping, hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, and expanding the existing trail systems for environmental enthusiasts while capitalizing on promoting a healthy lifestyle community.

Discussion 3 – Governance



- * Strong operations to support governance
- * New engaged council
- * Council transparency
- * Experienced Town management and staff
- * Willingness to try new things
- * Strong municipal voter turnout
- * Council works together for the good of the Town – not individual wants or direction

- * Turnover/loss of historical understanding for new council
- * Broad agenda
- * Historical lack of community engagement and decision-making.

- * Stronger connections with Community Futures of Lethbridge
- * Developing regional relationships with other communities
- * Council is willing to take risks to further local economic development
- * The possibility of a new direction and tone
- * Greater involvement with residents
- * Be a unifying voice in the community
- * Building strong relationships with other governing bodies

- * Developer driven often at a discount.
- * Inaccurate/unchecked social media
- * Doing nothing
- * Lack of vision – we need to unite under a vision and focus on moving the goalposts there.

With a new Council, the opportunity to modify direction and vision moving forward exists. This Council has a strong desire to see more engagement with the community and provide transparency and dissemination of information to the residents of Town. Strengthening relationships with neighboring communities and economic development entities is also a priority for this new Council.

Discussion 4 – Tourism



- * Golf Course & Disc Golf
- * Historic Trail/Bird Watching
- * Waterton/Mountains
- * Campground/Covered Wagon
- * Jensen Reservoir & Wally's Beach
- * New Pool & Multi-Court
- * Ag Society
- * Hometown Christmas
- * Entrance Pond and Fishpond
- * Lots of summer activities

- * Insufficient marketing
- * Low number of events that bring people to our community
- * People not willing to volunteer or get involved
- * No booking system for campground
- * Online availability of services
- * Winter Activities
- * Not selling out strong points
- * Locally don't value what we have

- * Expanding campground and RV park opportunities
- * Traveling outside Canada potentially reduced in the future
- * Improving the Town website to better market for tourism
- * Economic development
- * Establish new Kayak/dragon boat/marathon/tough mudder events
- * Promotion

- * Volunteers afraid to start something and then be tied to it forever
- * Outside perception of community
- * Lack of events to draw people here
- * Fear of change.
- * Not having community groups buy into changing Magrath (mind set)
- * Disposable income shrinking

Tourism presents opportunities and challenges for our community. One challenge has emerged in the number of volunteers willing to step up and assist over the years. Many local events are taken on by the same few people who burn out because of the overwhelming task to take on large events. Council's desire is to see a broader spread of activities among more people/groups to enhance the number and quality of our events. A second area of concern is the Town's limited presence digitally and missed economic development opportunities and tourism by not expanding advertising and marketing strategies to online.

Discussion 5 – Local Economy



- * Doctors
- * Highspeed internet services
- * Educated population
- * Family Ties
- * Lots of professionals
- * Industrial lots
- * Solar, wind energy
- * Highway 5 – location
- * Bedroom community with working professionals

- * Proximity to Lethbridge can strain local competitiveness
- * Lack of advertising, marketing and promotion
- * Critical mass required to sustain in-demand businesses currently too small.
- * Local job opportunities
- * Transportation routes for traditional highway traffic
- * Available Housing and Builders
- * West side infrastructure

- * Professionals
- * Work from home
- * Home builder – Spec homes
- * Medical clinic
- * Incinerator plant for waste
- * Self-Storage units
- * Geothermal
- * Highway commercial developments

- * Automated plants – no employees required

A significant challenge facing the Town of Magrath is our proximity to Lethbridge. Being a “bedroom community” strains the expansion of professional services, retail, restaurant and industrial growth. Most of the available workforce travels out of town for greater employment opportunities. In that context, the Town has not reached a sufficient population to support and expand viable small storefront businesses. Embracing our placement as a bedroom community while promoting opportunities for tourism and small home-based businesses to encourage growth will increase the available supporting population for new opportunities in more traditional businesses.

Discussion 6 – Community



- * Great neighbours
- * Safe, positive interactions
- * School system
- * Community churches
- * Stable cross-section of age groups
- * “Hallmark” community – be a part of the community
- * Positive attitude toward events and community

- * Rely on school and church only to provide for social needs
- * Lack of coffee time with each other
- * Winter – people locked up
- * Division (perceived or real) of LDS/non-LDS

- * Engage student and parent councils
- * Activities incorporating multiple community groups
- * Block parties & holiday socials
- * More recreational activities hosted
- * Tap into school events to advertise social – i.e. theatre productions
- * Not capital projects – need to be more program-oriented
- * We have many young families and lots of untapped potential

- * Exclusion or exclusivity
- * Poor coordination

Council’s aim is to find ways to encourage deeper community relationships. Through facilitating the inclusion of many groups and ages, new social activities and community involvement needs to be fostered. New residents need to feel welcomed and involved in order to develop a sense of belonging ensuring the strength of community carries on long into the future.

Discussion 7 – Recreation



- * Pool
- * Ice arena
- * Diverse facilities
- * Lots of involvement
- * Facilities are relatively new
- * Good Facilities for size of town
- * Hockey League
- * Updated facilities – new pool
- * Golf course
- * Pickleball/basketball/tennis court

- * Building accessibility
- * Arts/theater
- * Lifeguard - certification
- * Staffing availability/shortages
- * Marketing
- * Staffing costs are expensive
- * Arts and Cultural
- * Diversify – Not just organized sports

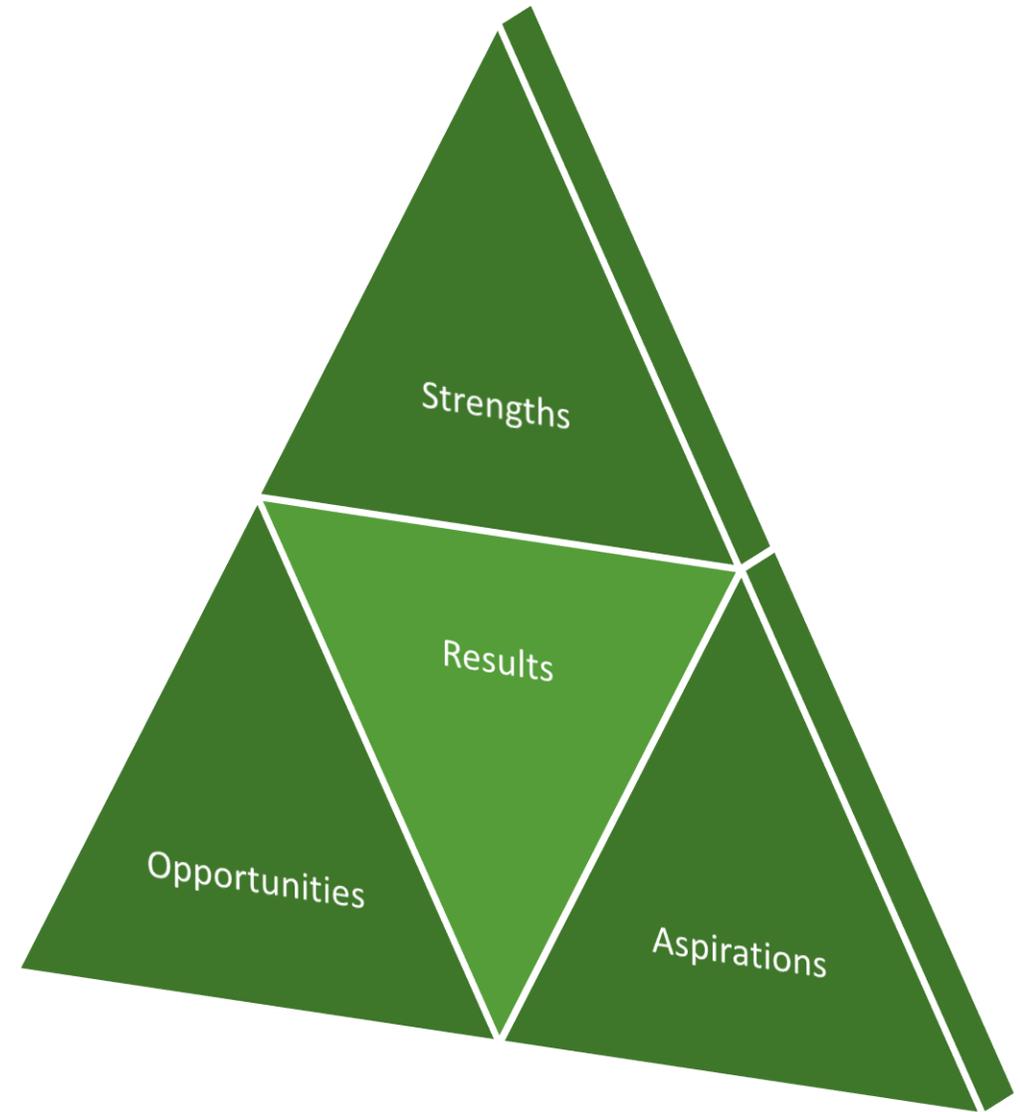
- * Broadening the definition of recreation – always defaults to organized sports – need to include theatre, Ag Society, camping, fishing, boating, hiking, bike/skate park, trail, Rod & Gun, gymnastics
- * Volunteers to set up leagues and invite other Towns/Leagues and host more tournaments
- * Arena is underutilized – create more rental opportunities
- * Expand and promote theatre use
- * More ball diamonds

- * Provincial Covid Requirements
- * Competing with other communities/facilities for recreation options and staffing availability

The Town has made large improvements in its recreation facilities and infrastructure in recent years and now needs to find ways to enhance their use. Expanding leagues, and hosting tournaments not only increase the social and recreational aspects of town promoting healthy living but also brings tourism and business patrons to the community.

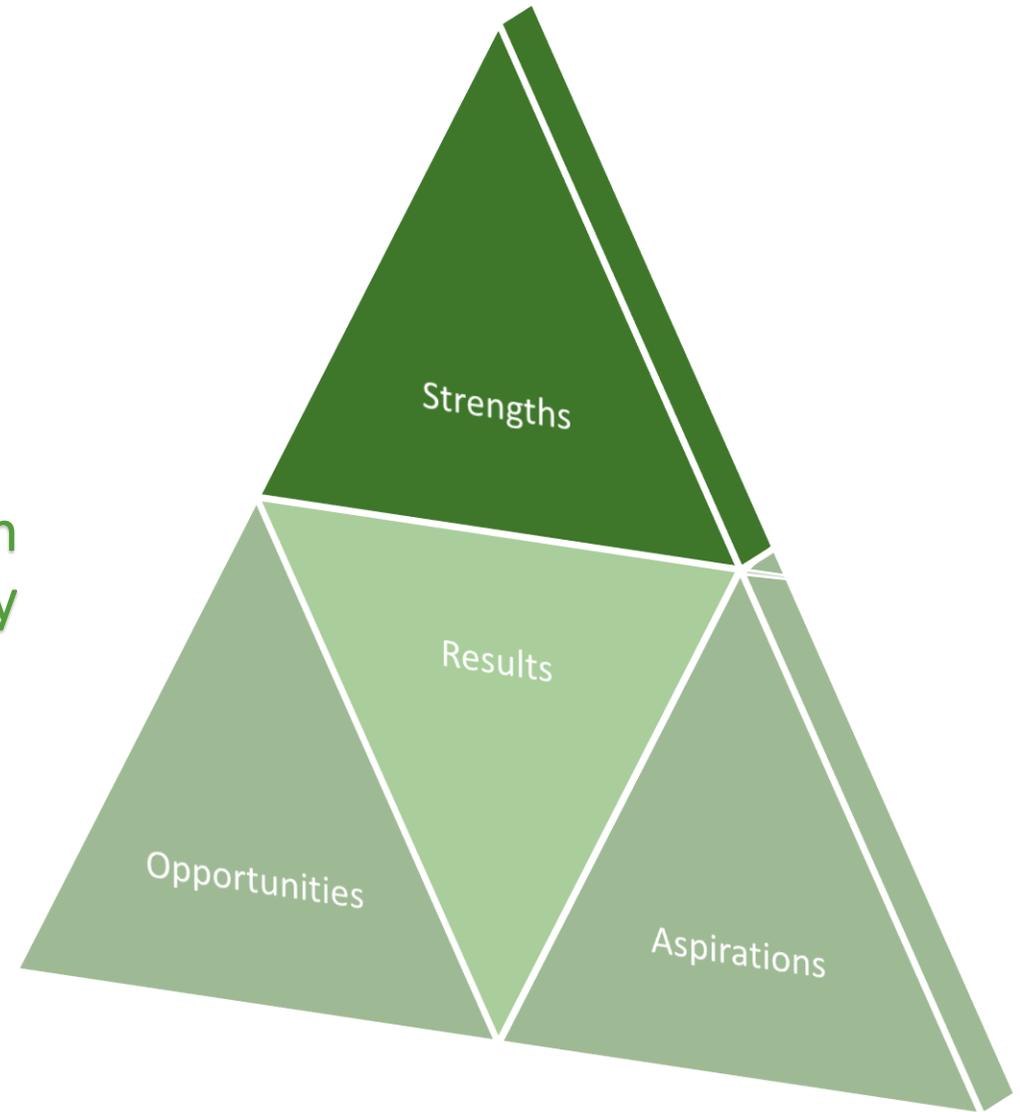
What is a SOAR Analysis?

A SOAR analysis is an evaluation method used in strategic planning that looks at an organization from 3 vantage points. What are the organization's strengths, what are its opportunities, and what are its aspirations? Using that information, it's different from a SWOT analysis because asks participants what are the results sought.



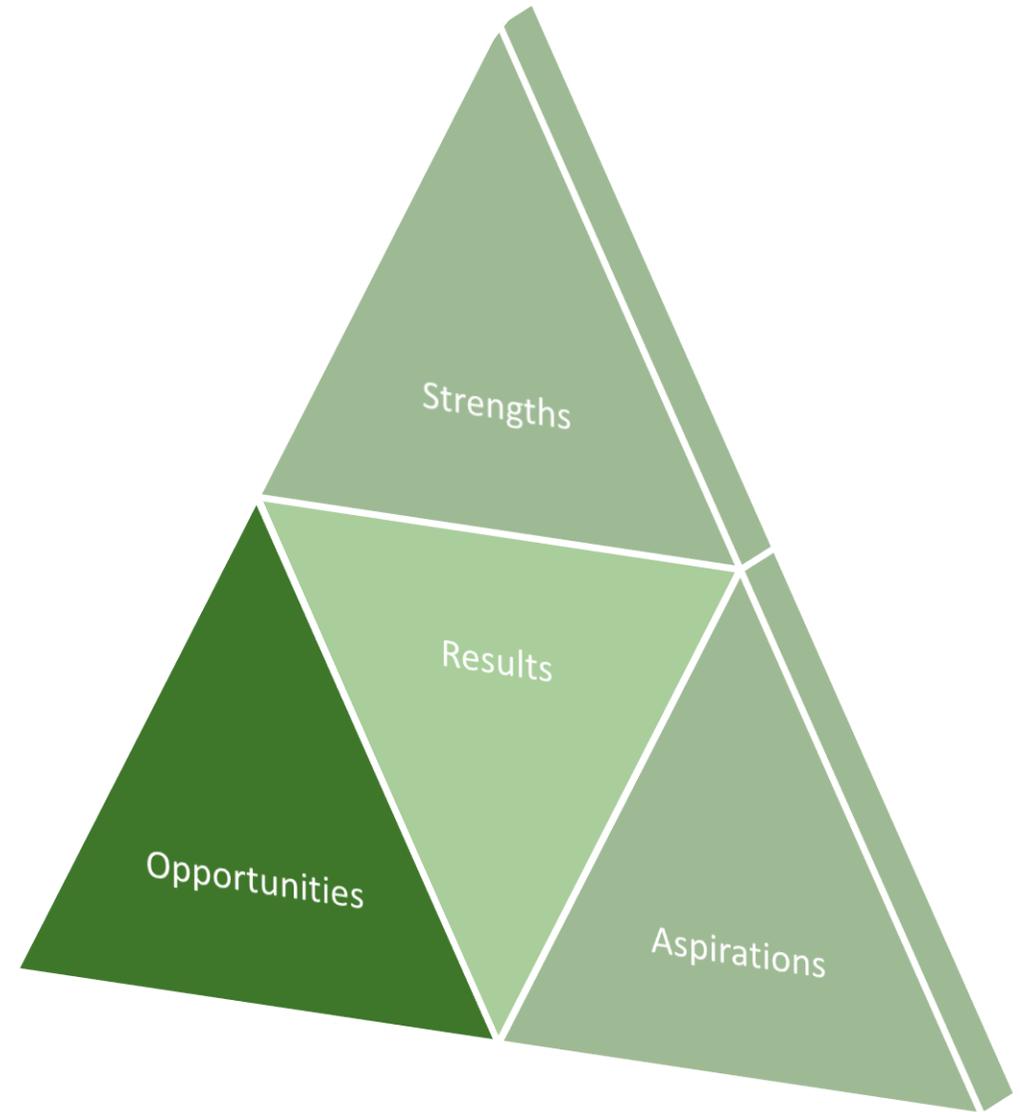
Magrath's Strengths

Magrath is a friendly, safe, tolerant, and close-knit community that prides itself on its local heritage, green spaces, and recreational opportunities. The community is blessed with excellent schools, sports, culture, and social programs, high quality drinking water and municipal services, world class golfing, recreational trails, and land for growth.



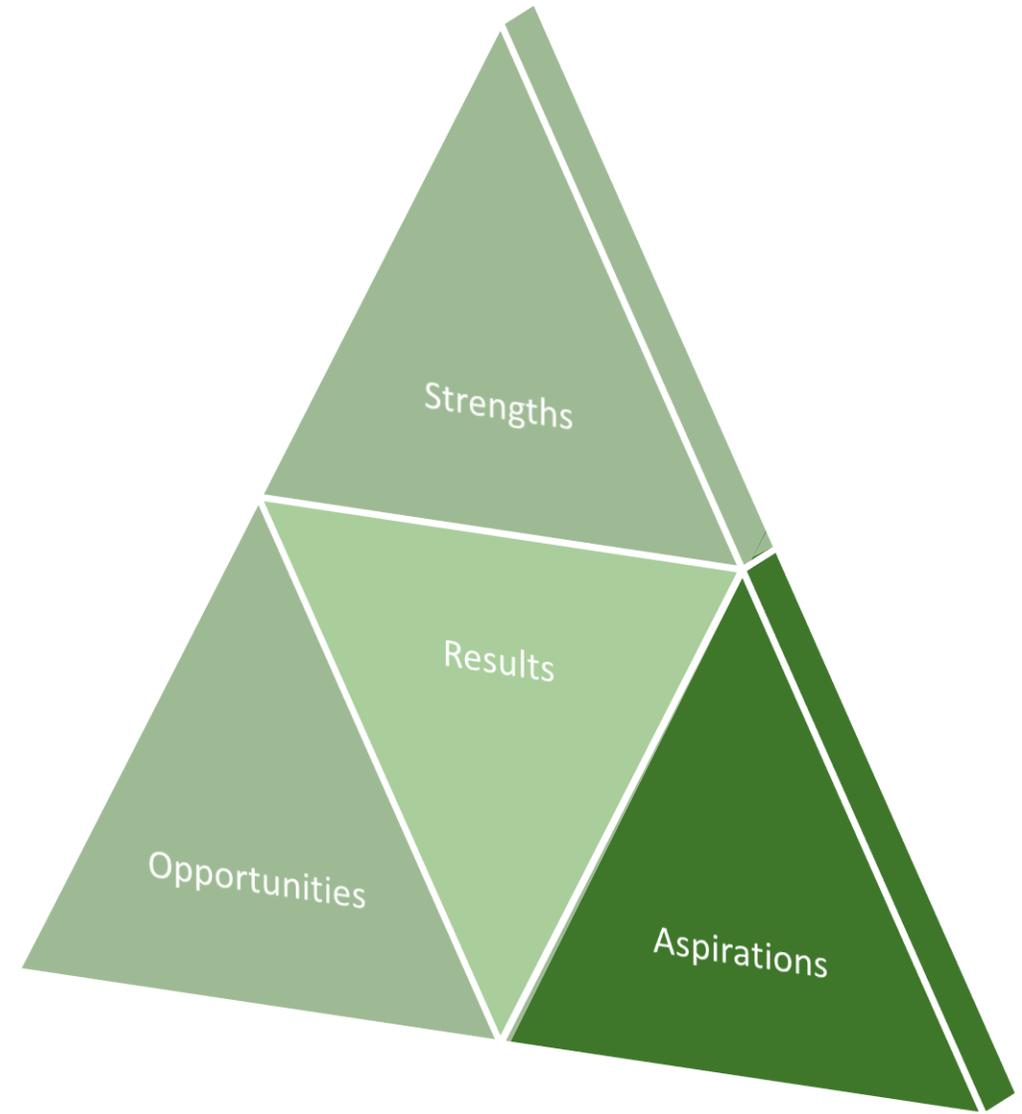
Magrath's Opportunities

The Town of Magrath has many opportunities for growth. There is tremendous potential for residential lot developments and development in the shovel-ready industrial lots. The Town also has the potential to increase its collaboration and civic engagement between the administration and community stakeholders.



Magrath's Aspirations

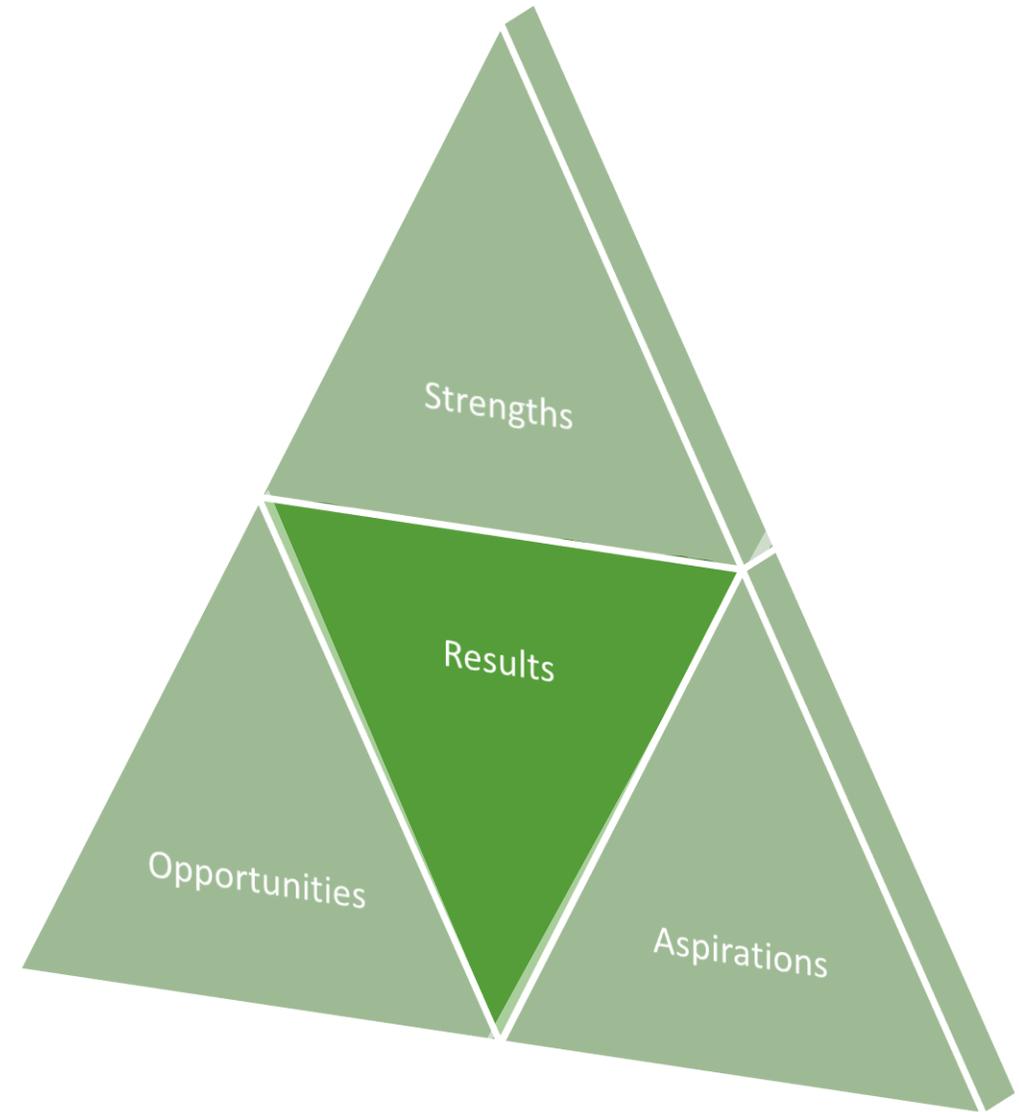
The Town wants to be a first-choice destination for everyone wanting to live in the region and raise a family.



Magrath's Strategic Results

Over Council's term it wants to see objectives that will:

- Increase recreational opportunities and options through, new or enhanced facilities.
- Increase community engagement with local government and community group activities.
- Improve local deep utility service infrastructure.
- Enhance economic development and tourism.
- Sustainably increase the Town's population
- Champion the Town's geographical placement for renewable energy sources



2023-24 Action plan

Council Specific Objectives

SERVICES	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PROGRESS MEASURE	OUTCOME
Seniors Housing	To ensure sustainable amounts of intermediate seniors housing are locally available.	<p>Encourage and cultivate private development.</p> <p>Participate in funding a housing needs assessment for the region.</p> <p>Advocate for local control of existing community infrastructure.</p>	<p>Contact Aspen Point Group or others regarding possible developments in Magrath that could be geared toward seniors.</p> <p>Funding the Chinook Foundation as proposed for the assessment.</p> <p>Look at existing infrastructure for efficiencies to ensure housing locally is maximized</p>	
Community Health Services	To increase health services in Magrath	<p>Advocate for greater usage of the old hospital</p> <p>Increase emergency supports</p>	<p>Promote the return of a clinic or other specialized medical service into the building.</p> <p>Funding for a medical first responder program for local volunteer firefighters to support our community through AHS's turmoil.</p>	
Community Safety	A safe community	Engage with the community to develop a common understanding of the community's safety concerns.	Use MagrathMatters.com to survey residents about safety concerns.	
Provincial Education	To meet legislative compliance requirements	Create a Joint Use and Planning Agreement with Westwind School Division	Meet and agree to a Joint Use and Planning Agreement with Westwind School Division	
Provincial Municipal Funding	To advocate for municipal infrastructure needs	Raise concern with provincial officials about the need for greater funding for municipal infrastructure	Raise the issue as a concern with candidates running for Local MLA in the 2023 Provincial Election and follow up with the MLA after the election	

2023-24 Action plan

Administration Specific Objectives

SERVICES	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PROGRESS MEASURE	OUTCOME
Administration and Planning	Clean Financial Audit	Maintain a high fiduciary responsibility, with regular filing and proper records management.	Unqualified 2023 Auditors report.	
	Trust between the Town Administration and residents	Increase administrative transparency and provide the public with easier access to information	<p>Post Newsletters to the website and Social Media not just water bills.</p> <p>Develop the website calendar to contain Community Events as well.</p> <p>Develop a centralized location for that has the business hours and contact information for all local resources that might be considered public, even if not directly the municipality.</p>	
	Continuously Improve the Town's Administration	Make sensible changes that improve the efficiency of the town's services.	Develop succession planning for all departments	

2023-24 Action plan

SERVICES	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PROGRESS MEASURE	OUTCOME
Economic Development	Support community growth	Promote Local groups and business	<p>Develop methods to highlight local businesses throughout the year.</p> <p>Grow the Local Society Coordinating Committee to promote local Service clubs and events in the community.</p>	
Infrastructure and Public Works	Maintain safe transportation roadways	Maintain and expand road roadways throughout the in the Town. Patch, grade, pave and oil roadways as possible	<p>Improve curb on 1st Ave N across from the Multi court for drainage and road width.</p> <p>Replace asphalt section of 2nd Ave North in front of Garden Pl. cul-de-sac</p> <p>Pave 3rd St E as part of Block 91 subdivision and Local Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Perform road maintenance as required for pothole patching, and sidewalk tripping hazards.</p>	

2023-24 Action plan

SERVICES	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PROGRESS MEASURE	OUTCOME
Water Distribution System	Maintain safe and efficient water systems	Plan out, monitor and replace distribution lines to meet the needs of the community.	Perform water line checks and maintenance to target water system leaks.	
Tourism	Create a desirable Town atmosphere	Ensure visitors can find local places of interest	Participate in regional tourism and advertising initiatives	
	Support tourism locally and regionally	Support development in this sector to the benefit of the town.	Support better wayfinding for visitors to the town	
		Build awareness of Magrath and its amenities	Create online advertising campaigns that highlight Magrath amenities	
Parks and Recreation	Enhance Recreation in the Town	Better utilization of the campground.	Remove aging campground infrastructure and replace as possible with new developments	
	Maintain fleet equipment	Replace aging equipment.	Review and purchase assets as identified in fleet planning	

2023-24 Action plan

SERVICES	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PROGRESS MEASURE	OUTCOME
Fire and Emergency Preparedness	Fire Risk Management	Reduce fire risks through planning.	Fund and contribute to Fire Department equipment as identified through planning.	
	Emergency Risk Management	Review and maintain the emergency plan procedures to respond to a major event	Participate as a regional partner of the Cardston County Regional Emergency Management Agency	