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Report to:

Mountain View County

Operational Process Review – Final Report

Presented to the County Council

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Confidentiality/Validity

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sierra Systems was asked to complete a comprehensive review of two parts of the Mountain View County Administration, the Operational Services and the Planning and Development Services Departments. The scope of the review included:

- Review of procedures and practices of the two Departments;
- Evaluation of the staffing structure of the two Departments;
- Assessment of the County’s current organizational structure to identify options to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the structure; and
- Benchmarking of the County’s organization against comparable organizations to identify “beneficial practices”.

Sierra collected information for the review through document reviews, interviews with Council and Senior Managers as well as site visits and discussions with staff, observation of Council and Municipal Planning Commission Meetings, and conversations with Chief Administrative Officers in four other Counties for comparative purposes.

Our findings, documented and explained in greater detail in the following pages can be summarized as follows:

- The County Administration is in a state of uncertainty and some anxiety. It is only now slowly beginning to recover from the significant changes initiated by the October 2010 election. Changes have included six new members on Council; termination of the previous Chief Administrative Officer (CAO); selection of an interim and then permanent CAO; creation of a number of vacancies through promotion, termination and/or resignation; and the initiation of the new Council’s strategic directions;
- The two Departments under review have the kind of procedures and practices that would be expected of similar Departments in other municipalities:
 - The Planning and Development Services Department has developed thoroughly documented and regularly practiced processes as a result of their implementation of software to support and document the County’s land use and development activities. Community and Council concerns about the Municipal Development Plan and the Land Use Bylaw are significant issues and create uncertainty for applicants and staff;
 - The Operational Services Department operates in a far more informal and undocumented manner. There is little documented in the way of service standards, policy and procedures to guide service delivery and a consistent understanding of what the work is and the way in which it should be done. This Department has not yet been able to implement information technology to help plan and manage their operations (due in part to the departure of the previous Director). There is an immediate opportunity to advance and document policy, procedure and practices.
- The staffing structure of the Departments seems to be well suited to the work carried out by each Department. No changes in structure are recommended. The general organizational structure of the two Departments is similar with a Director in charge of each Department and two Managers reporting to that Director. Other staff report directly to the Managers or to supervisory / foreman level positions which report to the Manager positions.

- This is a common organizational form that supports specialization of working groups, allows for succession and continuity of management, and provide for career progression for staff. The current CAO has recently made some minor organizational changes which seem appropriate to enhancing overall organizational efficiencies (shifting two functions to Planning and Development). Directors are currently being recruited for both Planning and Development and Operational Services and it is reasonable to expect that new incumbents may have some of their own ideas about the structure of their organization and the assignment of staff;
- Overall the County Administration’s organizational form is appropriate to the size and complexity of the County. The work of the organization is led by the CAO and divided amongst four Departments, each led by a senior manager (Director). Two Director positions are currently vacant (recruitment is underway), and a third was recently filled. The County Manager and the Directors (once all positions are filled) need to form a functional corporate senior management team that will manage cross-corporation issues in a collaborative manner;
 - A review of four comparator municipalities presented some new information on “beneficial practices” that might be applied in Mountain View County. Certain areas of “beneficial practice” are documented throughout the following pages, but there are no findings that suggest the need for fundamental change at Mountain View County:
 - Ponoka County has been suggested as a potential “model” for Mountain View County, however their situation differs in significant ways from that of Mountain View County. Ponoka is a smaller community with fewer municipal assets to manage and lesser growth pressures. They have an Administration which has experienced very little change for many years, where significant knowledge of the organization and its operations is resident in those employees, rather than being formally documented. They have for many years contracted out municipal work, resulting in a smaller employee population; and
 - Some examples from Ponoka’s Municipal Development Plan are included in an appendix to this report as ideas which may be useful. Overall Ponoka County is an organization that is quite different with some potentially “beneficial” land use planning practices, however other of their practices would not be “beneficial” to Mountain View County at this time.

Recommendations

Sierra Systems specific recommendations are limited and targeted to a few key changes that we believe are manageable and will yield significant improvements in efficiency and effectiveness for the two Departments and the County corporation as a whole.

Planning and Development Services Department

1. Continue to support the community and Council in achieving greater agreement and understanding around land use in the County (as expressed in the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw) and reducing current uncertainty. Examine the alternative approach used in Ponoka County (see page 17) to address concerns about retention of agricultural land and the subdivision process.

2. Improve on County communications about land use and development, particularly in regard to subdivision matters. Ensure that conditions imposed by provincial legislation or external regulation are identified. Simplify the language used.
3. Integrate the two functions recently transferred in to the Department and train the transferred staff in the use of the Department's processes and technology so that they become fully integrated parts of the whole.

Operational Services Department

4. Work with Corporate Services (information technology) and others as necessary to implement County information technology to support Department processes and provide required management information. Ensure that implementation of this technology considers the abilities, training and support requirements of current and future staff.
5. Develop a comprehensive asset management policy (for Council approval) and procedures (for CAO approval) to guide lifecycle management of core County capital assets and infrastructure (particularly roads, land and improvements, airports, buildings, vehicles and mobile equipment). The asset management policy should be comprehensive enough to apply to all County tangible capital assets as operated by any part of the County corporation or its contractors, authorities, boards or commissions.
6. Re-commit to, fully implement and communicate the "176 Guarantee" and undertake a reassessment of this program over two years of full implementation.

Other Elements Of The County Corporation

7. ***County Council.***
 - a. Continue to work with the community, the CAO and the Planning and Development Services Department to reduce contention and uncertainty in regard to land use planning and decisions.
 - b. Reaffirm County policy and support the use of the County's complaint policy and procedure so that resident concerns and complaints are properly documented, objectively investigated and appropriately responded to.
8. ***Corporate Services Department and Human Resources.*** Support the Operational Services Department in their full implementation and reassessment of the "176 Guarantee".
9. ***Corporate Services Department.*** Support the Operational Services Department in implementation of information technology to support processes and manage the work of the Department.
10. ***CAO and the four Department Heads.***
 - a. Commit to and develop the regular practice of working as the County's senior management team to review and decide on matters impacting the corporation.
 - b. Sponsor and champion key projects and initiatives to improve on the County's efficiency and service delivery.
 - c. Lead development of a corporate culture and reduce the "silo" culture by collectively examining practices, committing to and leading change.
 - d. Review, affirm and enhance the County's complaint policy and processes to ensure that residents and Council have an open, active, transparent, timely and informative method to address concerns and complaints about County services and practices.

The following pages contain information gained through this review and a number of ideas for Mountain View County to consider. In general we address the key themes of:

- Stabilize, “calm” and re-focus the County Administration including filling existing vacancies;
- Develop a strong corporate senior management team and culture, and reduce the “silo” departmental culture to conducting County business;
- Practicality – don’t take on too much change at once. Choose a few important things to work on. When one project/improvement is completed celebrate and move on to address another; and
- Undertake focused improvements in each of the two Departments (and other areas of the Administration), including additional clarification of policy, procedure, roles, responsibilities and processes.

2. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this operational process review project was to complete a comprehensive review of two of the Departments of the County Administration: the Operational Services Department and the Planning and Development Services Department. The scope of the review included:

- Review of procedures and practices of the two Departments;
- Evaluation of the staffing structure of the two Departments;
- Assessment of the County’s current organizational structure to identify options to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the structure; and
- Benchmarking of the County’s organization against comparable organizations to identify “beneficial practices”

Outcomes sought by the County from this review included the following;

- Recommendations of opportunities for overall organizational efficiency, streamlined operations between the two Departments and within the organization as a whole, and improved management practices (especially those that foster a culture of continuous improvement), and better customer and employee service in the two Departments;
- A list of recommendations which could form the basis for creating a productive workforce that include appropriate delegation of staff in order to maintain teamwork, service delivery quality, individual accountability and adaptability to future change;
- A plan of recommended action to ensure the two Departments’ administrative, operational and management processes are efficient, cost-effective and provide optimum service delivery with minimal bureaucracy;
- Identification of County organizational structure options and recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the whole structure;
- Recommendations as to whether the “beneficial practices” of comparable organizations should be integrated into the County’s organizational structure and processes;
- Determination of whether staff are utilized in the most efficient and equitable manner, and whether alternative departmental configurations might be appropriate; and
- Compliance with practical municipal management practices and applicable statutory acts and legislation.

The organizational units chosen for review have been the subject of ongoing concern and debate in the County, as is the case in other municipalities. The mandates and functions of the Operational Services department and the Planning and Development Services Department are significantly different as is their work and the ways in which it is conducted.

Planning and Development Services

- The legislative mandate and requirements for land use planning are established in the Municipal Government Act and associated regulations;
- Municipal land use planning and development permitting actions also provide the means by which other provincial (and federal) legislation is enabled at the local level (such as for water quality, environmental protection and building codes);
- The key organizational functions of the Planning and Development Services Department include long range planning, plan implementation, and approvals and permitting. The Department is structured around its two major functions: land use planning, and development permitting and inspection;
- The work of the department is directed and constrained by legislation and directed by the County's own bylaws (particularly statutory plans and the land use bylaw). Work is overseen by Managers or senior staff and is defined by well developed and documented procedures;
- Much of the work undertaken by the Department staff results in recommendations presented to a committee or Council for approval. Staff may also be required to represent the County in formal appeal or legal proceedings;
- Most staff roles require professional (university level) education as well as training in and extensive knowledge of local, provincial and federal legislation. Often membership in a professional planning organization is a requirement of employment which brings with it additional professional accountability. The work involves significant office time in the County office as well as some on site work across the County;
- The work in this Department entails significant ongoing involvement with land owners and land developers as well as with the formal committees/authorities which have decision-making or review powers on land use decisions; and
- Land use planning and development permitting work often requires significant levels of interpretation of complex and sometimes conflicting rules and regulations.

Operational Services Department

- The role of managing and maintaining municipal capital assets and infrastructure (such as land, buildings, roads, airports, vehicles, and equipment) has little or no direct municipal government legislative mandate. There is nothing specific in the Municipal Government Act and associated regulations but there are numerous other regulations that apply to most of these type of assets;
- Operations Services work in the development and maintenance and safe operation of the County's capital assets is governed by many other aspects of legislation, regulation and industry specific standards;

- The key organizational functions include planning, building, maintaining and renewing the County's major capital assets. The Department is structured around two major functions: planning and building/renewing assets (roads, airports, buildings) – with the work primarily done through contracted resources managed by County staff; and maintaining County assets (roads and right of ways, airports, vehicles and equipment) undertaken and managed by County staff. Building maintenance is part of the planning section of the Department;
- Working level and supervisory staff require technical / trades education and / or experience as well as training on specific tools or equipment up to and including specific certification and / or operator licensing;
- The work entails significant coordination and team work with other staff in the Operational Services Department, but involves limited communications with citizens on a daily basis. There is little or no reporting to external bodies for review or approval of their work except for ongoing County budgeting and reporting. Work is overseen by Managers and Foremen and guided by past practice with few documented standards or procedures;
- Road maintenance work is organized geographically into four quadrants reflectively different requirements across the County and positioning equipment and staff closer to their work so that travel time is minimized. The County has a contract with Alberta Highway Services for maintenance of specific provincial highways and receives payment for these services as well as additional equipment which is also be used for work on County roads. Road maintenance work varies with the seasons and is frequently impacted by extreme weather. The County has developed specific practices (particularly the "176 Guarantee") to retain experienced staff and provide flexibility in work scheduling;
- The work requires consistent interpretation and application of accepted practices and experience. The maintenance work is primarily on site at multiple locations across the County. Most staff and equipment are dispatched from one of the Department's multiple locations to work in teams in one of the Department's four established quadrants. Managers work from the County office while vehicle maintenance and sign shop staff work from the Didsbury yard; and
- For a number of years the County has contracted to provide winter maintenance on provincial highways in the County. The contract allows the County to hire operators and provides for additional equipment, so once the highways are plowed these operators and equipment can be used to clear County Roads. The contract gives the County additional resources to meet the County's winter snow clearing needs. However, the contract results in additional administrative burden, as well as, public relations issues when "County" plows are seen working on Provincial highways. County Administration believes the benefits of this arrangement outweigh the issues..

3. THE REVIEW PROCESS

Sierra Systems approach to undertaking this review included information collection, review and analysis through: interviews; the review of County documentation; and through spending time with staff members of the two Departments at their work sites and observing and discussing the work being undertaken. The work began in May 2011 and final on site information collection was undertaken in early July. The County Manager, the CAO's Executive Assistant, the various County Directors, Managers and other staff were very supportive in providing information, explaining their work, and answering our questions throughout.

Sierra's consultants interviewed: the seven current members of County Council; the County Manager; the Directors of Corporate Services, Legislative and Community Services and Planning and Development, the two Managers in the Operational Services Department (the Director's position was vacant) and the Human Resources Manager. We also held informal discussions with Foremen, vehicle services staff and other members of Operational Services as well as many of the staff in the Planning and Development Department. The site visits and discussion provided us with an understanding of the work being done, work settings, the tools being used (from computers, forms and filing systems, to graders and other heavy equipment) and employees' perceptions. As part of our work site observation our consultants attended a pre-application meeting with a County resident seeking information on rezoning and permitting issues for a multi-generational family farm and business situation; and meetings of the Municipal Planning Commission. We also visited with Foremen and staff at Operational Services work sites at multiple locations in different quadrants of the County. These interviews, discussions and site visits provided a wealth of information about the "people" and "process" aspects of the County's issues and ongoing operations.

Documents reviewed by our consultants included: the County website and contents; current County policies and procedures as provided by the CAO's office; the current Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw and Area Structure Plans; various forms, process descriptions, and public brochures and information for the County's subdivision and permitting functions; samples from land use planning and permitting files. We reviewed maps and documents describing the summer and winter operations of the Operational Services groups, and specific documentation and analyses related to the '176 Guarantee' program in place in Operational Services. We also reviewed organization charts and job summaries and job descriptions; County budget documents; and documents related to County plans.

We interviewed the County Managers of four selected comparator counties (Clearwater, Lacombe, Ponoka, and Wetaskiwin) and reviewed a range of documentation provided by those organizations.

Our review was focused on the scope set out by the County – that is the current state of the organization, particularly the two identified Departments, and the potential for improving on the performance of these Departments. As such, our review did not include extensive review of historical experience, documentation of past issues, or engagement of previous employees or County residents/ratepayers.

Throughout the process Sierra kept the County Manager informed of project progress and provided information on our observations.

4. DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Organization-Wide

Mountain View County (MVC) has undergone many changes in the past several years. This section of the report will provide Sierra's findings on some overall themes regarding areas that could be improved upon within the County.

It should be noted that despite facing numerous obstacles and challenges, which are outlined below, MVC has a workforce that has been effectively maintaining the County's day-to-day operations. County staff has maintained a continuous focus on serving its customers and there is an awareness and consideration regarding the community and its ratepayers. The County's roads are being maintained effectively and the County is able to address any issues that may arise during the summer and winter months. Mountain View County has also been able to effectively address its subdivision applications, development permits, and other planning and development related issues and requests. In addition, despite being in the public eye and losing some staff, there remains a solid contingent of employees that have stayed the course through difficult times. However, some may argue that employees have been pushed too far and are nearing their breaking point. MVC is currently at a crossroads and has the opportunity to use its existing foundation to enable focused, purposeful and positive change.

The following section provides information on the overall themes from Sierra's organization-wide findings for Mountain View County.

4.1.1. The Current State

State of Continuing Change and Uncertainty

Mountain View County (MVC) and its employees have undergone a number of reviews over the past several years, including the George Cuff *Corporate Review* report in May of 2006, the Meyer Norris Penny Report on *Issues Raised by Petitioners* in July 2010, and the current *Operational Process Review* conducted by Sierra Systems in the summer of 2011. In addition to the reviews, the County has recently undergone leadership changes with its Council, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and most senior managers.

These reviews and leadership changes have taken a toll on County staff as the organization is continuously under public scrutiny and in a constant state of change. These changes have both responded to and resulted in public and political contention which has been significant enough to be deemed newsworthy. The local newspaper has published numerous stories on issues and challenges experienced by the County and the publicity has not helped the situation and has exacerbated the low trust between Administration and Council.

The recently appointed County Manager has taken significant actions by changing personnel and making organizational adjustments. These changes were seen as essential to address public and Council concerns and set the Administration up for success. Sierra believes that these changes have set the stage for further improvements in County operations as recommended in this report.

Lack of Clarity and Direction

The ongoing changes in leadership at Mountain View County have created an environment of uncertainty, which in turn has led to a lack of clarity impacting the County's long-term planning abilities. The numerous changes in leadership over the past several years combined with changing priorities has created a reactive situation where the County has tended to focus on immediate and urgent activities. This has prevented the County from functioning as a cohesive unit which has impacted its abilities to focus on long-term strategic initiatives and objectives.

The recent changes in Council membership placed a heavy emphasis on "rural" planning. This was a shift from the direction of the previous Council and created significant implications for the organization's long term plans and strategic direction. The future direction of the community as a whole is a major point of contention and there is currently no consensus on the appropriate balance of "rural" and "urban" aspects. As an example, the Council and Administration are currently challenged with managing a duality within the agricultural community, involving the desire to maintain prime agricultural land for agricultural purposes, while at the same time having the ability to sub-divide agricultural land for personal and / or economic purposes. The previous Council created the opportunity for the current Council to review the Municipal Development Plan and the Land Use Bylaw and when Council and the community are able to reach some consensus on fundamental issues in those key land use policies there will a new focus around which the municipal corporation (Council and Administration) and residents can rally to build Mountain View County's future.

The County also lacks clarity in terms of employee roles and responsibilities. One of the ways this is demonstrated is by the broad job descriptions and summaries used by the County. While the job descriptions and summaries provide a general overview of each position, they are not detailed enough to clearly outline the specific accountabilities of each position which have evolved with changes in the organization. This is not as much of a concern in the Planning and Development Department as it has established policy framework and processes that provide the further level of detail required. However, it is a concern in the Operational Services Department where there is no parallel of clearly documented standards, policy or processes and the individual accountability of each position is unclear.

Silo-Approach to Planning, Working, and Managing

The current reality at MVC is that the Administration operates as a collection of individual silos made up of each Department. These silos have resulted in individual unit planning, working, and management activities which, in a number of cases, has lead to poor collaboration, turf wars and accusation, and lowered innovation and efficiency. There has been an increased separation of staff since the opening of the new county office and little has been done to bridge that gap. This is partly a result of past leadership practices and recent organizational changes, but can also be attributed to the apparent top-down managerial style of the past. The silos have been perpetuated by a lack of central corporate direction and organization, which is demonstrated by the lack of a strong collegial senior management team.

All of the above issues have contributed to an organizational culture that: shies away from collaboration; lacks clear and committed direction; does not demonstrate a strong, shared corporate leadership; and an employee workforce who are review weary, have low morale, and are fearful of the future and their job security. Note: specific recommendations for the Planning and Development and Operational Services departments follow in subsequent sections of this report.

4.1.2. Recommendations

The following section provides organization-wide recommendations. These recommendations are intended to build on MVC's foundation to improve its effectiveness, innovation, and culture. The specific recommendations are as follows:

1. **Strategic and Collaborative Approach to Planning, Working, and Managing.**
2. **Clarity and Respect for Roles and Responsibilities.**
3. **Effective Communication.**

Strategic and Collaborative Approach to Planning, Working, and Managing

In order to be effective and gain efficiencies, it is important for all MVC departments and staff to work together and employ a collaborative approach to planning, working, and managing County services. This will enable MVC to strive for continuous improvement, find innovative solutions to problems and encourage a collegial work atmosphere. In addition, it will enable employees to understand the roles and responsibilities across all departments which will ultimately improve work flows and efficiencies in the county overall and better serve residents and ratepayers.

As with all change initiatives, strong leadership and support is needed to encourage and enable changes to the current climate. This can be accomplished by creating a strong senior management team that supports collaboration and demonstrates it to their staff through their own words and actions. The senior management team should set an example for the rest of the organization to follow by establishing open lines of communication, supporting each other's initiatives, and lending a hand wherever possible. The CAO has the skills and desire and, once current recruitment efforts are completed, will have a team of three new and one experienced Department Heads to work with. Having regular senior management meetings to address corporate issues and creating cross-functional committees and workgroups will also aid in breaking down the existing functional silos. Specific recommendations of initiatives that will begin the process of breaking down the existing MVC silos are as follows:

Senior Management Team

As a starting point, Sierra recommends that MVC's new senior management team (SMT) identify two (2) outstanding issues that departments view differently or do not agree on. Once the issues have been identified, the SMT should find a way to "turn the boat around" and seek to find a process to confront and resolve the issues. The senior management team should be the key players involved in resolving these issues and work together to build processes on how future issues should be resolved. The SMT needs to communicate what they learned by going through the process in addition to communicating what was decided. This will set an example for the rest of staff to follow, start to break down the silos, and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Suggested issues that could act as a starting point for this recommendation include the *176 Guarantee* and the *capital asset management plan*. These issues are at the forefront of existing misunderstandings and disagreements amongst departments and are excellent candidates for the senior management team to address.

Cross-Functional Committees

There has been some discussion regarding the creation of a Culture Committee at MVC. Sierra supports this initiative and believes it is great way to create a cross-functional committee that can assist with identifying issues, breaking down the silos and fostering positive employee interaction and morale. Sierra supports the immediate creation of this committee and recommends that it be representative of the organizational as a whole. A diagonal slice of the organization would include, at a minimum, front-line employees from all departments with support from at least one Senior Management Team representative and would ensure that all County groups are represented.

Clarity and Respect for Roles and Responsibilities

Once the County has better defined the functions of its organizational units and the roles and responsibilities of its employees, it is important for all parties to understand and respect them. This respect must extend through all levels of the organizations from Council members, to senior management, to front-line employees. Strong leadership and support is required to encourage this respect and to immediately address any behavior that does not demonstrate the desired behavior. Knowing and understanding “who does what” is important for the community as well as for a high functioning organization.

Effective Communication

Effective corporate communication can provide a multitude of benefits for the County. It can enhance the corporation’s image both internally and externally, foster positive relations with employees and stakeholders, and strengthen the overall corporate culture. Mountain View County should continue to focus on effective communication both within and outside of the organization.

Effective external communication can enhance the County’s image. This would be especially beneficial to the County given the amount of public scrutiny it has been under and the negative impressions from the media that have been encouraged amongst the public and county staff. The County should focus on communicating the positive changes and outcomes it is achieving, rather than responding to questions regarding the County’s issues and challenges. As part of this, the County should make better and more effective use of its complaints process. This is the first step in improving the County’s image both internally and externally.

The County should also provide ongoing communications to its employees. This should be done both directly and indirectly with employees. Direct communications can take the form of notices, emails, memos, and newsletters to communicate new processes, initiatives, and updates. Indirect communications can take the form of informal conversations between managers and staff, or within the cross-functional committees. Whichever method is chosen, there must be careful thought about which means of communication is the most effective. Both forms of communication will provide information to employees and will reduce the amount of speculation and gossip which should in turn make employees more comfortable about the direction of the organization and their position within it.

One means of communication between residents and the County is the complaint process. Through the course of this review Sierra's consultants heard many examples of what were presented as poor or problematic County practices or employee actions. However, the established County complaint process appears to be used very infrequently. The informal communication of significant concerns in which residents, Council and staff have engaged is not a useful or well informed means to communicate and resolve important issues. If residents have concerns or complaints they should be documented, the complaint should be objectively evaluated and follow up actions (as deemed appropriate) should be taken in a timely fashion. County policy and procedure provides for such a process. It is Sierra's view that the continued informal approach to presenting concerns or complaints has resulted in one-sided assessments and poorly considered and often reactive attempts at resolution. The existing complaint process provides a defined and purposeful means to address issues and all parties should be encouraged to use it. The County's complaint process could be improved by the addition of formal complaint tracking and consolidated public reporting out of the use of the process. Confidence in the County and its practices, staff and Council can be improved if all parties understand that complaints will be handled in a fair and open fashion.

4.2. Planning and Development Services

The following comments on the Planning and Development Service Department are presented in three main parts, dealing with people, processes, and policies. The comments incorporate findings on the current state of the Department as well as a number of suggestions for improvements to the County's planning and permitting practices.

The Department is well organized and appropriately staffed for the functions they are expected to undertake. Recent CAO directed reassignments of roles transferred two positions from other parts of the Administration to the Department. These changes will bring both the technical resources to monitor and approve the variety of technical studies and other conditions that can be applied to approvals and the capacity for enforcement of relevant bylaws into the Department and more fully integrate that work with the other processes of the Planning Department thus reducing potential disconnects or inter-department differences. This change will require the Planning Department to review and document relevant processes, (potentially) update their software tools, and train and integrate the two "new" staff into the work of the Department.

People

Sierra consultants sat in on several meetings of Planning and Development staff with landowners. The County's employees did well in these meetings. They are competent and well trained, and have a good attitude. They are willing to sit down with applicants and help them define what they want, whether that can be achieved under the rules set by the province and by Council, and if necessary the staff explain to the landowner how to change an application so that it conforms with the rules and will likely be approved.

It is important to acknowledge that that one of the main purposes of land use planning legislation is to reduce uncertainty and increase predictability, so that landowners know what they and their neighbours can do with their land. County staff understands this fact.

Ideally, these initial meetings will give an applicant a good idea of whether or not an application will be approved and insights into some of the conditions which may apply to an approval. Unfortunately, staff were not always able to give a definite answer because of what they saw as inconsistent application of policy by Council or the Municipal Planning Commission. We will return to this later.

We heard some concerns that the County's staff was trained in "urban" planning and lack sensitivity to rural issues or a rural point of view. We did not find much evidence of this. What may appear to be an urban viewpoint is often the result of the planner looking ahead and trying to avoid future problems. For example, requiring a private sewage system to be upgraded can seem like an expensive imposition, but it reduces the risk to public health and the likelihood of disputes between neighbours. Much of what is seen as "too urban" is inevitable in a rapidly growing municipality. Rules and complexity increase with population density. When your neighbour's house is a mile away, you don't much care about his sewer system or his dogs. When his house is just across the road, you care about these things, and you ask the municipality to regulate them.

Nevertheless, rural experience is definitely an asset for a planner working in MVC. When hiring new staff, the County should make it clear that, other things being equal, they will prefer people who grew up on farms, or were 4H members, or who have an education related to agriculture, forestry, or rural life.

Procedures

Legal background: The planning process is controlled by the Municipal Government Act. The Act gives a fair amount of latitude in how to do long range planning (MDP, ASPs, etc), but the more detailed, day-to-day processes such as rezoning, subdivision processing, and the issuing of development permits must follow detailed procedures set out in legislation. We believe that the County's planning staff follows these procedures extremely well. The City View computer program used by the Department seems to be a great help. The program guides staff through the process and enables them (and when necessary prompts them) to do the right things at the right time. As a result, processing times meet provincial standards.

The planning process is complex, and unavoidably so. The County must follow detailed provincial rules. The MGA has 40 pages, containing 41 sections, describing the subdivision and development process, and some of those sections are divided into subsections and clauses and sub-clauses, all written in legal language. Regulations under the Act add another 22 sections on 11 pages. The County also has its own rules in the land use bylaw and other documents. County staff do their best to explain this to landowners, but a first time applicant is often overwhelmed. We therefore suggest some ways to reduce this sense of helplessness.

- a. **The subdivision process:** Like most municipalities, MVC has chosen to delegate subdivision authority. Simple cases are decided by administration. More complex cases are decided by the municipal planning commission (MPC), which includes Councillors. This system gives quick decisions for simple cases, while exposing the bigger applications to both political and technical review.

We question the need for political input at the MPC. Council has adopted planning documents which set out policies for administration to follow. Council has also, in most cases, made a zoning (designation) decision on the application. It does not seem necessary to have further political input into the subdivision decision. An MPC consisting of citizens could bring the "common man" viewpoint to supplement staff's technical expertise.

- b. **Guide to the process:** When a person is exposed to a complex situation for the first time, it is very useful for them to have a guide to the process. Some landowners, who may have heard horror stories about the planning process, have engaged consultants to help them. This should not be necessary for a simple application, and we suggest some ways it can be avoided.

We recommend that every person coming through the door be assigned to a planner even before a file is opened so the application is thoroughly discussed, and amended if necessary to increase its chances of success. This is normal practice now, but it should be mandated by a policy directive from Council.

The initial meeting between the applicant and the planner is important, but it is not enough for a person who is exposed to the system for the first time. Details of a spoken conversation may be forgotten or overlooked. There needs to be, in addition, a written guide to the process. Again, reduce uncertainty.

County staff has produced a series of brochures which describe the planning process, and they make these available to applicants. The intent is good, but we believe the content could be improved. For example, the brochure on subdivision is good as it deals with process, but it does not tell the applicant what he will have to do after he has an approval, or what it will cost him. We have attached a two-page handout used by the County of Wetaskiwin (Appendix C) some years ago which proved very useful and which might be adapted to MVC. Other brochures could also be improved, and this should be done with input from users as well as the Planning Department. The actual writing might be done by a university-level summer student who has an excellent command of language.

We would like to note in passing that every section of the land use bylaw has a preamble which summarizes the section in plain language. This is very useful to readers.

- c. **Subdivision approval letters:** Most subdivisions and development are approved subject to various conditions. Some of these conditions are necessary to meet provincial requirements. Others are imposed by the County to protect its interests or the interests of neighbours.

Landowners whose subdivision is approved often blame the municipality for conditions and expenses which are actually mandated by the provincial government. There is no reason for the County to take the blame for this. In the approval letter, a provincial condition might then read "In order to comply with the provincial ____ Act, the developer must..."

The standard conditions of approval, set out in County Policy 6004-01, are similar to those in other rural municipalities. For the sake of comparison, we have attached a table which compares the standard conditions of approval in MVC and Ponoka County (Appendix C). While the content is much the same, Ponoka's language is less formal and more approachable. Simple things like starting each condition with a verb, and using the active instead of the passive voice, make an approval much easier to understand.

MVC's approval conditions for more complex subdivisions are similar to those in other rural municipalities. As they are usually issued to more sophisticated developers, simplicity of language is not as important, although it is always preferable.

- d. **Subdivision follow-up:** We were told that applicants are confused when the Planning Department adds conditions to already-issued approvals. Such a practice is illegal. Once issued, an approval cannot be changed except on appeal. The County's planning staff knows that, and they assured us that they do not change approvals or add conditions later. However, if an approval calls for a development agreement, or negotiations with a third party (such as utility installation), something required under that development agreement, or by the utility company, might be misinterpreted as a new condition. The experience of other counties is that if there is to be a development agreement or third party condition, the subdivision approval letter should spell out the items that it will contain. Here is an example from Wetaskiwin:

"The developer is to construct all roads, water and sewer lines, drainage systems, street lights and signs, and other municipal infrastructure needed to serve the area, and is to enter into an agreement with the municipality under section 655 of the Municipal Government Act which sets out the standards for this work."

- e. **Development permits:** We were told that development permits often contain over-kill, such as when a storm drainage report is required for a small outbuilding. We were not able to track down this case, but it may have been due to a planner's being unable to waive a requirement of the land use bylaw. Our terms of reference for this review do not call for a detailed review of the land use bylaw. However, we believe that it could usefully contain provisions like this one from Drayton Valley, which gives more discretion to the development officer than does the current MVC bylaw:

32.4 *On-site parking requirements for non-residential uses, and for residential uses in commercial and industrial areas, may be relaxed where in the opinion of the Development Authority*

- (a) *sufficient on-street parking is available without causing congestion, or*
- (b) *sufficient parking is available in public parking lots, or*

(c) *private parking can be shared because peak use times are different.*

A section like this allows the development officer to look at the requirements of the bylaw, but to relax them where a lower standard will not create a hazard or impose any hardship on neighbours. This is entirely consistent with section 617 of the MGA:

“The purpose of this part and the regulations and bylaws under this Part is to ... achieve the orderly, economical, and beneficial development, use of land, and patterns of human settlement ... without infringing on the rights of individuals for any public interest except to the extent that is necessary for the overall public interest.”

In other words, the burden of proof falls on the municipality to show why a landowner should not do what he wants with his land. In case of doubt, the landowner's rights prevail. This should be a guiding principle in the land use bylaw.

We note that the land use bylaw has a list of items (Table 4.2.1) not needing a development permit, and it is very similar to what is found in other municipalities.

County Land Use Policies

The procedures discussed in the previous section flow from two sources: provincial legislation and municipal policies. Provincial legislation is a given, so we will concentrate on municipal policies.

Is Ponoka a realistic model for MVC? It has been suggested that MVC, as a rural, agricultural community, could model its planning rules and practices on Ponoka County, whose processes are extremely simple and transparent. However, Ponoka does not have anything like the development pressures that MVC is experiencing. Ponoka's population declined by 1.7% between 2001 and 2006, while MVC's population grew by 2.2%. And look at the number of subdivision applications in the past five years:

Year	Ponoka County	Mountain View County
2006	89	78
2007	106	80
2008	78	182
2009	45	92
2010	61	126

In both Counties, the strongest pressure for development is along the Highway 2 corridor. MVC has 30 miles of Highway 2, but Ponoka has only 18 miles. MVC has three rapidly growing towns in the Highway 2 corridor; Ponoka has one slow growing town. [Population change 2001 to 2006: Olds +9.7%; Didsbury +8.7%; Carstairs +17.8%; Ponoka +3.5%]

We should also note that, despite lower development pressures, Ponoka County's planning system and its rules are moving close to those of MVC. Developers pay \$5,000 per lot for the improvement of off-site roads. Farm yard subdivisions must give up road widening, and must upgrade their sewer systems. Processes are also similar. Ponoka's planning process is very similar to that in MVC for more complex subdivisions. Simple subdivisions are approved by staff, but more complex ones are dealt with by a municipal planning commission of three councillors. Outline plans are required before land is rezoned for multi-lot subdivision.

Then why is it that Ponoka seems to run a simpler planning system? The answer is that Ponoka limits multi-lot subdivision to a few, well defined areas of the County, and reserves the rest of the municipality for agriculture. The following extract from Ponoka's Municipal Development Plan sets the context.

MDP 4.1 *In order to reduce conflicts with agriculture, and to minimize the cost of maintaining roads and other municipal services, Council believes it is better to concentrate most multi-lot subdivisions in a few well-defined areas, leaving the rest of the county primarily agricultural.*

Because multi-lot development is concentrated in these few, well-defined areas, the remainder of the county is reserved for agriculture and for those sorts of subdivision which are compatible with agriculture. The Agricultural districts in Camrose, Leduc, Ponoka, and Wetaskiwin counties allow a single lot subdivision out of any quarter. In these settings there is no need to go through a re-designation (rezoning) process, and there is no requirement for a concept plan. Consequently, a single lot subdivision can be approved in four or five weeks.

That does not mean all subdivision applications are approved. They may be refused if they interfere with existing farming operations, or if the site conditions are unsafe. That determination is made by the subdivision authority. The list of disqualifying factors is set out in the land use bylaw, so it is known in advance. Remember: one of the purposes of the land use bylaw is to reduce uncertainty. Disqualification of such an application does not require a decision of Council. And by eliminating the need for a zoning decision by Council, these Counties eliminate the risk that Council may be inconsistent in its decisions.

The current review of the Mountain View County MDP is a good time to consider whether MVC should follow the practice of other municipalities and allow single parcel subdivision out of farm land without the need for rezoning. That will require defining, in the MDP, those areas where agriculture has priority and multi-lot subdivision will not be permitted. Those areas can be defined by a combination of Canada Land Inventory (CLI) ratings, farmland assessment data, and input from Councillors and local residents.

A simplified model of land allocation would divide the County into three areas:

- In the first area, subdivision and development are tightly restricted, either to protect the natural environment, or to protect the ability of the towns to grow;
- In the second area, multiple lot subdivision may be allowed providing the proposal goes through the full range of studies, as now in MVC. A municipal cost-benefit study should also be required; and

- In the third area (making up most of the County), multi lot residential subdivision will not be allowed, but agriculture-compatible subdivision and development such as natural splits and a single parcel per quarter can be approved through a streamlined process with no rezoning, which will speed up the process and eliminate a large volume of work for both staff and Council. The land use bylaw would include a check list (site suitability, water supply, road access, compatibility with neighbouring farm operations, etc), and if the proposal met all conditions, it is allowed without rezoning and with minimal conditions.

A brief review of other Counties' MDPs shows that they commonly open up ten to twenty per cent of the total area to non-farm development, depending on soil capability and on historic patterns of development. The other ten to twenty per cent of the land base is essentially reserved for agriculture.

4.3. Operational Services

On the whole, the Operational Services Department is doing the right things in order to maintain the County's infrastructure to an acceptable level. The County has moved to primarily using contractors to build new infrastructure, while using County staff to maintain County infrastructure, which presents differences in the way the two major functions (building/renewing infrastructure and ongoing infrastructure maintenance) of the Department are run. However, there are improvements that can be made for both functions to create a more efficient Department.

There is also a need to recognize the important function this Department plays in the creation, maintenance, and renewal of County assets. This Department is the de facto "asset manager" for the majority of the County's highest value assets. The County's 2009 Audited Financial Statements identify the total cost of these assets in 2009 at almost \$386 M. These same statements identify that operating costs for Operational Services in 2009 for road maintenance, facilities and airports was in excess of \$22M, or about 2/3 of the County's total expenses in that year.

The capital assets of the County are made up of: land and land improvements (including airports); buildings; engineered structures (bridges, gravel roads, chip seal roads, dirt roads, and asphalt roads); machinery and equipment; and vehicles. While the County has initiated ongoing financial reporting of the value of the County's tangible capital assets, the County lacks an overall policy framework and strategy to guide the management and maintenance of these various types of assets. Such a policy and strategy framework would also clarify the organizational accountability for these assets and the required standards, processes and practices for their maintenance and ongoing management. That said, the staff of the Operational Services Department demonstrated their knowledge of sound asset management practices, gained from practical experience, and in some cases learned from other jurisdictions, in carrying out their ongoing work. However, the lack of formal service standards and documented asset management policy and practice for the various types of assets has also been a point of contention when individuals differ about the appropriate way to maintain particular assets (such as vehicles or equipment).

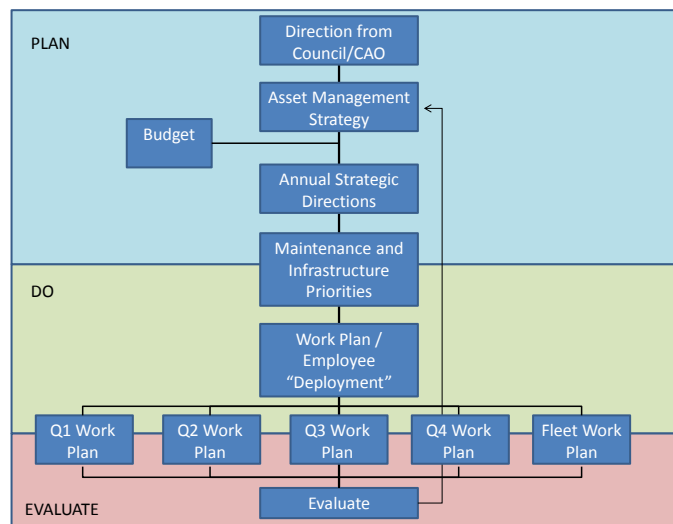
Asset Management

Although Operational Services Department appears to be doing the right things to maintain County infrastructure, they are without any comprehensive asset management plan. The infrastructure maintenance function of the Department has a general approach to this type of planning based on the previous experience of its Manager. The infrastructure projects function also undertakes some future planning, primarily to identify capital budget requirements and projects but there is no significant overarching and integrated corporate plan for the immediate and longer term management of all of the assets the County owns and maintains.

Sierra recommends a strategic asset management approach be adopted for the County with the Operational Services Department as the lead. At its most basic level, this asset management strategy would determine the strategic needs of the County over the long-term (20 or more years), and then create plans to build and maintain the necessary infrastructure. Council would be challenged by the broad question of “How will Mountain View County build/buy, maintain and renew our required infrastructure?” From there, Administration would be tasked with creating specific strategies, supported by policy, procedures and annual plans in order to carry out Council’s direction. Most importantly, this approach would require constant evaluation of the ability of the County to achieve desired standards and possible adjustment of annual priorities based on this evaluation.

The County is already applying this approach at a very basic level by assessing the quality of roads regularly to determine which ones to grade every year with a certain allotment of gravel; by applying basic lifecycle management to the vehicles the County owns; and by monitoring the conditions and identifying required maintenance or repair of County land and buildings . However, as currently practiced these are small independent pieces of a larger picture. By applying an asset management strategy, everything done in the Department would be linked to one larger goal, and can all be measured against a common guideline.

The following graphic demonstrates how asset/ infrastructure planning should flow within the County:



As you can see, the graphic is split up into three main sections: plan, do, and evaluate. These are the three basic activities that should purposely occur with any asset management planning process in order for the process to be successful. As previously stated, Council should provide the necessary broad strategic direction for asset planning and then expect the CAO to work with County Administration on achieving that desired direction. Once a long-term asset management strategy is developed, budget discussions should centre around this strategy and how best to deliver on it with the funds available.

Annual maintenance and asset management priorities should be developed based on the strategic directions from the asset management strategy. These priorities should then flow down into detailed work plans to meet these priorities. As an example: in the case of roads these plans should become the responsibility of to each quadrant Foreman; and in the case of the County's vehicles and mobile equipment would become the responsibility of the fleet maintenance foreman. By providing these positions with approved plans that are integrated with long term County strategy the incumbents and their staff can be better empowered to maintain those County assets for which they are responsible and will provide them a frame of reference by which they can monitor and evaluate their work.

Although the "Evaluate" part of the process comes at the end after the quadrant work plans as a separate step, there should be some aspect of evaluation at every level of the process providing feedback to redefine the asset management strategy. It is important that the strategy be understood as a "living" process that guides directs County work but which is responsive to experience gained.

In 2009 the County reported asset costs for vehicles at almost \$4M and machinery and equipment costs at over \$14M (some of this cost may include office equipment). Managing vehicle and mobile equipment assets is important. The Operational Services Department is responsible for most, but not all, vehicles and mobile equipment at the county. Responsibility for management of all similar assets should be the responsibility of a single "process owner" who can assure that all similar assets are managed consistently according to approved County policy and procedure. A key part of an effective asset management strategy is how the County acquires and maintains its vehicles and mobile equipment. Currently, most vehicles (including heavy equipment) are purchased new and then used for an average of 7 years before being sold at auction and replaced. During their use, most of this mobile equipment is maintained by a team of mechanics at the yard in Didsbury at a cost to the County in labour, parts, facility and equipment. During our comparison of similar municipalities we found that other Counties follow differing practices, such as selling vehicles right before their warranties expire, thus reducing their need to hire mechanics for anything but minor repairs and maintenance. Without a strategy and policy in place it is difficult to determine which approach might provide greatest efficiency and value for MVC. There can be other less obvious benefits to different practices, such as the ability to get better deals and agreements with vehicle/equipment suppliers. By creating a purposeful purchasing relationship, the County might develop more leverage to negotiate purchase prices and warranty agreements with suppliers and manufacturers.

As part of a Mountain View County should consider reducing the life-spans of County vehicles as it reviews its asset management strategy.

Written Procedures and Standards

A foundation for asset management is a clear set of standards and guidelines to evaluate actions and results against. When building new infrastructure, whether it is roads or buildings, the standards are mostly set out in provincial regulation. However, when maintaining the infrastructure, standards are currently being set based on the personal experiences of the Manager of Infrastructure Maintenance. In order to effectively evaluate the quality of maintenance throughout the County, it is essential to create written guidelines that all work can be measured against. Not only will this help to ensure quality work is getting done, but it will also give all staff a common understanding of what the County expects from them.

As part of the asset management strategy, administration in Operational Services should study the policies and standards of other similar jurisdictions to find a starting point for their own standards, and then adapt it to meet the specific needs and expected service levels of Mountain View County. Policies on minimum standards should be set by Council, with County administration creating procedures to meet those standards. These procedures should be administrative procedures easily changed if the need arises.

Providing the Proper Tools

In order for any of the asset management work to be executed effectively, those responsible must be given the tools they need to be successful. Currently, the Planning department uses City View software to manage the functions of the department and centralize all the tasks taking place at any given time. However, in the Operational Services Department there are many different tools being used to track many different tasks. We are aware that the County has purchased a program called City Works to perform this functionality, but the person who was tasked with learning the software and putting it to use is no longer working at the County. The County should investigate whether this software can integrate with City View in the planning department in order to integrate common processes between the two departments, and if this is not possible, over the long-term the County should look at using one piece of software and integrating it between all departments.

With the new requirements around Tangible Capital Asset reporting for municipalities, the Corporate Services department took the key initial step of identifying all of the County's assets – including roads, vehicles, and buildings. Now that the County has this information, the Operations department can use this information to direct its maintenance activities into the future. With these new reporting requirements, however, comes an increased responsibility to keep the information updated and accurate so as not to require the County to engage in such a large-scale identification process in the future.

The information related to the County's tangible capital assets is only one reporting tool that can be used to guide the management of the Operational Services Department. There are many other reporting tools that management needs to be able to have access to, on-demand or within a reasonable amount of time, in order to measure how they are doing in relation to County goals and directions. In order for these tools to be meaningful, they should be developed in discussion between the Corporate Services Department and the Operational Services Department. The current lack of useful information is due to non-communication between these two departments. Operations needs to specify what it wants to see, and Corporate Services needs to work with them to determine the best way to present them with that information.

The Right People Doing the Right Things

In the current structure of Operational Services maintenance group each quadrant has a foreman who is meant to be “empowered” to run the day-to-day activities in that quadrant. However, these foremen are not provided with the skills or the information needed to effectively run the operations in their quadrant. For instance, it is up to the foremen to decide whether there is enough work to keep all their scheduled crew on, or who they should send home with no information about how close the employees on the “176-hour guarantee” are coming to their 176 hours. Foremen need access to some sort of staff utilization report on a regular basis in order to make effective decisions. This report can be a weekly printed report, or even some way to access numbers electronically from out in the field.

Apart from pure numbers, foremen and staff need to be kept informed about what is going on in the County as a whole and how they fit into the larger corporate picture. Right now, the employees in the field feel separated from the rest of the organization who works in the County Office. They mainly interact with the other employees in their quadrant and rarely, if at all, make it up to the County Office. There are also two different pools of money for staff social events: one for those working in the County Office, and one for those working in the field. This creates a culture of two different organizations, where the County should be encouraging its staff to see itself as one unit that shares the common goal of providing services to the citizens of Mountain View County. In order to get County information out to the employees in the field and make them more a part of the organization, the foremen should take two minutes as everyone comes in to start their shift everyday to let their group of employees know what’s going on with the County, what the assignments are for the day, and if there is any feedback the employees have from the previous day. In order to do that, though, the foremen should be meeting with the Manager of Infrastructure Maintenance at least once per week as a group to get the information they need. It would also be useful to get the group together to talk about what’s working in each quadrant and share how each foreman has solved problems that most likely affect the other foremen as well.

There is also a need for roles and responsibilities to be clarified with all the employees of the Operational Services Department. When the Maintenance Planner position gets filled, there will be some ambiguity of the roles and responsibilities between that person and the quadrant foremen. Who is in charge of planning for the quadrants? Who is in charge of quality control? These are questions that will arise when the position is filled, that should be answered in advance. Job descriptions for each employee should be reviewed and clarified in respect to their roles and accountabilities, as well as to whom they report (both directly and indirectly). If you are going to empower employees, it is important that you set out the parameters of their responsibilities including evaluation measures.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

While there are many observations and suggestions on which the County may wish to act, there are a few key recommendations which Sierra Systems believes will be important to future success. Sierra’s recommendations and proposed timeframe are summarized in the table below. Our specific recommendations are listed below the table.

Recommendation	Who is Responsible?
Immediately (within 3-6 months)	
Form a Senior Management Team and schedule regular meetings. (see #10 a, b, c below)	CAO
Develop <u>policy</u> to support a new comprehensive County asset management strategy. (see #5 below)	Director, Operational Services With support and / or approval from CAO, Council
Update and streamline written communications to the public in regards to Planning and Development. (see # 2 below)	Director, Planning and Development Services
Develop wider acceptance for County approach to land use planning and development. (see #7a and #1 below)	Council With support from Director, Planning and Development Services
Re-commit to, fully implement and communicate the “176 Guarantee” and initiate a reassessment of this program. (see #6 and #8 below)	Director, Operational Services With support from Corporate Services and Human Resources
Reaffirm County policy and support the use of the County’s complaint policy and procedure so that resident concerns and complaints are properly documented, objectively investigated and appropriately responded to. (see #7b and #10b below)	Council With support from the CAO and Department Heads
Short-Term (within 6-12 months)	
Develop <u>procedures</u> to support the new comprehensive County asset management policy (see #5 below)	Director, Operational Services With support from senior management team and approval of CAO
Improve on County communications about land use and development, particularly in regard to subdivision matters. (see page 15 and Appendix C)	Director, Planning and Development Services
Integrate the functions recently transferred in to the Planning and Development and train the staff in the use of the Department’s processes and technology. (see #3 below)	Director, Planning and Development Services
Implement County information technology to support Operational Services Department processes and provide required management information. (See #4 and #9 below)	Director, Operational Services With support from Corporate Services
Long-Term (within 24 months)	
Complete a reassessment of the “176 Guarantee” program and provide findings and recommendations to the CAO. (see #6 and #8 below)	Director, Operational Services With support from Corporate Services and Human Resources

Sierra Systems specific recommendations are limited and targeted to a few key changes that we believe are manageable and will yield significant improvements in efficiency and effectiveness for the two Departments and the County corporation as a whole.

Planning and Development Services Department

1. Continue to support the community and Council in achieving greater agreement and understanding around land use in the County (as expressed in the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw) and reducing current uncertainty. Examine the alternative approach used in Ponoka County (see page 17) to address concerns about retention of agricultural land and the subdivision process.
2. Improve on County communications about land use and development, particularly in regard to subdivision matters. Ensure that conditions imposed by provincial legislation or external regulation are identified. Simplify the language used.
3. Integrate the two functions recently transferred in to the Department and train the transferred staff in the use of the Department's processes and technology so that they become fully integrated parts of the whole.

Operational Services Department

4. Work with Corporate Services (information technology) and others as necessary to implement County information technology to support Department processes and provide required management information. Ensure that implementation of this technology considers the abilities, training and support requirements of current and future staff.
5. Develop a comprehensive asset management policy (for Council approval) and procedures (for CAO approval) to guide lifecycle management of core County capital assets and infrastructure (particularly roads, land and improvements, airports, buildings, vehicles and mobile equipment). The asset management policy should be comprehensive enough to apply to all County tangible capital assets as operated by any part of the County corporation or its contractors, authorities, boards or commissions.
6. Re-commit to, fully implement and communicate the "176 Guarantee" and undertake a reassessment of this program over two years of full implementation.

Other elements of the County Corporation

7. ***County Council.***
 - a. Continue to work with the community, the CAO and the Planning and Development Services Department to reduce contention and uncertainty in regard to land use planning and decisions.
 - b. Reaffirm County policy and support the use of the County's complaint policy and procedure so that resident concerns and complaints are properly documented, objectively investigated and appropriately responded to.
 - c. Set policy; let staff administer that policy.
8. ***Corporate Services Department and Human Resources.*** Support the Operational Services Department in their full implementation and reassessment of the "176 Guarantee".

9. **Corporate Services Department.** Support the Operational Services Department in implementation of information technology to support processes and manage the work of the Department.

10. **CAO and the four Department Directors.**
 - a. Commit to and develop the regular practice of working as the County’s senior management team to review and decide on matters impacting the corporation.
 - b. Sponsor and champion key projects and initiatives to improve on the County’s efficiency and service delivery.
 - c. Lead development of a corporate culture and reduce the “silo” culture by collectively examining practices, committing to and leading change.
 - d. Review, affirm and enhance the County’s complaint policy and processes to ensure that residents and Council have an open, active, transparent, timely and informative method to address concerns and complaints about County services and practices.

6. THE NECESSITY OF MANAGING CHANGE

Mountain View County has gone through many changes, and there are more changes to come for the organization. Although many of the recent changes made have been positive changes that have moved the County forward, Sierra's perception is that the change has not been managed well. In order for a change to be most effective, and create the most positive outcomes, it has to be planned, discussed, and communicated widely throughout the organization. In past years, Mountain View County seems to have implemented changes that, although made for the right reasons, may not have been well (or completely) planned, and were not discussed and communicated throughout the organization. It is important that the County start a process of purposeful change management to deal with results of change that has already happened, but also any future change that will take place as a result of this review.

Sierra Systems has designed a multi-stakeholder change methodology meant to address system challenges found in the organizations whose mandate is the creation of public value – such as municipalities. This methodology points out the three key activities to focus on when considering and implementing change in an organization:

- *Making Sense* – understanding the legacies, realities, expectations and dynamics that describe the world; forming collective meaning and identity;
- *Making Choices* – building the common understandings and agreements that generate alignment around desired outcomes; and
- *Making Progress* – designing and implementing the strategies, plans and relationships that generate new behaviors and get results in the face of uncertainty.

If change at Mountain View County continues to happen without deliberate processes to manage it, the culture in the organization will continue to be one of uncertainty and fear about what's going to happen next and how it will affect individuals. In order to effectively move to making progress, the County needs to work on communicating the change process and creating an understanding of why the change is occurring. By doing this, the County will create informed participants and observers of the change, and advocates out of employees who can then champion the change and ensure it keeps driving forward. Deliberate planning of the change will ensure it is being done for the right reasons and in such a way that it will still fit within the organization. Finally, taking time to understand the change and its impacts on those who are both directly and indirectly impacted will help to ensure a smooth transition to the change – ending in the best results for the organization.

Change management can mean the difference between constantly having to “fight fires”, or continually overhaul the organization - and creating a stable environment and efficient organization to serve the citizens of Mountain View County.

APPENDIX A: COMPARISON OF MOUNTAIN VIEW COUNTY TO OTHER ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES

As part of the Operational and Process Review of the Operational Services and Planning and Development Departments for Mountain View County (MVC), Sierra Systems gathered a set of related comparative information from several Albertan communities. The communities were chosen in consultation with MVC's CAO and are Counties which are at least "one removed" from major urban centres along Highway 2, and in experience comparable geography and climate. The communities were Clearwater County, Lacombe County, Ponoka County and Wetaskiwin County. The following table provides a summary of the results obtained from phone conversations with the CAO of each county.

It is worth noting that the information was obtained through one-hour phone interviews with the County Managers (with some follow-up information in some instances) and is not an exhaustive study of each County. Also of interest is the fact that these County Managers have been in their positions for more than 15 years with very little turnover in that time. Because of this, any information extrapolated from the data should be taken with caution and a thought to Mountain View County's specific circumstances.

Comments in the MVC column are Sierra's summary comments based on information gathered in the course of this review.

Topic	Mountain View County	Clearwater County	Lacombe County	Ponoka County	Wetaskiwin County
County Information					
Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or equivalent	Tony Martens, CAO	Ron Leaf, Municipal Manager	Terry Hager, County Commissioner	Charlie Cutforth, CAO	Frank Coutney, County Administrator
Population Change 2001-06	12,570 +2.2%	11,286 +2.8%	10,507 -1.1%	8,640 -1.7%	10,535 -1.5%
Full-time Municipal Positions	95	70	85	31	85
Area of Municipality	381,279	1,832,053	292,322	281,262	377,912
Length of all Open Roads Maintained (Kms)	2,905	2,587	2,169	1,932	2,022
Number of Dwelling Units	6,108	5,857	4,791	4,315	5,657

Topic	Mountain View County	Clearwater County	Lacombe County	Ponoka County	Wetaskiwin County
<p>General Questions</p> <p>1. Have you recently reconsidered the organization of the County Administration?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Clearwater County is in the process of reorganizing right now but is still gathering information before making any organizational changes. 3 issues prompted the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A retirement in the Agriculture Services Department • The potential of bringing in a permanent HR function • Review of the Assistant Manager role which has been vacant since 2008 	<p>The last organizational change was 6 years ago when the County consolidated 2 departments (enforcement and agricultural) under one manager. This was done to gain efficiencies and to reduce the number of employees reporting to the CAO.</p>	<p>The last time the County organization was looked at was about 20 years ago. There has been no need to change the organization since then, as management hasn't changed over since that time.</p>	<p>The last organizational change was in 1999 when the Fire Chief retired and another person was moved into the position of Director of Emergency Services. A new position was built around the strengths of an intern working at the County that combined the roles of Research Officer and Manager of Family and Community Support Services</p>
<p>2. What do you consider to be the County's "Senior Management" positions?</p>	<p>5 positions. The County Manager and the four Department Heads directly reporting to him.</p>	<p>6 positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Administrative Officer • West Country/Planning and Development Manager* • Corporate Services Manager • Public Works Manager • Agricultural Services Manager • Community and Protective Services Manager <p>Note: All positions are at a Director level</p>	<p>4 positions, one for each department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment and Protective Services • Corporate Services • Operations • Planning and Development 	<p>6 positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Administrative Officer • Assistant CAO • Financial Controller • Agriculture Service Board Director • Public Works Superintendent • Deputy Public Works Superintendent 	<p>The organization is very flat due to its small size. The Senior Management is basically the CAO and Assistant CAO.</p>

Topic	Mountain View County	Clearwater County	Lacombe County	Ponoka County	Wetaskiwin County
Is there a team approach to County planning and decision-making?	Right now, the management team communicates informally with each other when their projects or duties overlap, but there is no formal team communication structure in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County is still refining this process, but it is essentially a combination of Council working at the policy/broad strategy level, and using a transition strategy to bring County managers in to dialogue back and forth with Council. • Involvement of senior management team members depends on the topic, nature, scope and complexity of the issue. E.g. land-use compatibility issue would be planning department, public works, and finance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination of both team and individual decision-making, depending on the situation. • CAO involves the managers extensively in the decision making process. • Regular management meetings are held on a monthly basis. The County also has an open-door policy and the management team is back and forth to each other on a regular basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no formal senior management team • The CAO has a complete open door policy, and any issues can be brought to him for discussion • Issues get dealt with when they need to be dealt with instead of waiting for a formal process • The process is working well for the County 	There are management meetings every month that include the CAO and Assistant CAO and whichever Director needs to be present depending on the issues being discussed. This gathers the professionals in one room to do what needs to get done. This else in eliminating bureaucracy and silos within the organization.
3. Is any work contracted out? What functions and to whom? (P&D and Ops Services functions in particular)	Yes. The County contracts out construction and other capital projects. The work is contracted out to private contractors.	Yes. About 85% of public works budget is handled through contracted services. This includes activities such as road construction, paving, grading, and some maintenance activities (crack sealing is done by summer staff)	Yes. The County contracts out gravel crushing and major paving contracts, line painting, crack filling, engineering services, legal services and major planning studies (e.g. municipal development plan – these generally go out to tender but we offer some multi-year contracts). The planning department handles all of the day to day activities.	Yes. The County contracts out road construction and other capital projects. The work is contracted out to private contractors. Some road maintenance is contracted out to a private crew using the County's equipment.	Yes. The County contracts out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 of the 10 grader beats • Trucking and crushing of gravel for winter gravelling program • Road construction • Planners for the development of Land-Use Bylaw amendments and Area Concept Plans The County is also part owner of the West Central Planning Agency

Topic	Mountain View County	Clearwater County	Lacombe County	Ponoka County	Wetaskiwin County
<p>Do you have part-time and/or seasonal employees? In what functions (e.g. Ops Services)?</p>	<p>The County hires seasonal employees for the Operational Services department. These employees are hired for the summer months to take care of road maintenance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer staff: crack sealing, cemetery, weed inspector, communication student (road maintenance activities) • Part-time staff (.6 to .8 FTE): A/P is .8, and office support staff is from .6 to .8 	<p>Yes. There are 2 main areas: Agriculture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer students for wheat inspection • Seasonal operators such as road-side mowing <p>Public works/operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P/T staff to look after ground and parks maintenance • Road construction program staff (returning staff) (covers all aspects of road construction with exception of paving) 	<p>Public Works utilizes 10 part-time seasonal staff to augment the maintenance work it has contracted out. Many of these employees are summer students.</p>	<p>The County peaks out at around 80 seasonal staff in the summer months. Most of these staff work for Public Works, with some working for Agricultural Services</p>
<p>4. What are your seasonal work management practices? Are there unique compensation practices?</p>	<p>There are no different practices for seasonal workers. However, seasonal workers are the first to get sent home if weather or some other factor creates a situation where the County needs fewer workers on a given day.</p>	<p>The County has a seasonal strategy where summer vacancies are filled with students in post-secondary. These employees start at a junior position and return to more and more senior positions each year in the summer season. These are local kids that get security in terms of financing their education. They are also individuals are capable of being trained which reduces the County's supervisory needs. This has been effective, and it also a way of transitioning</p>	<p>Seasonal employees who come back year to year get stand-by pay that is equivalent to cost of county benefits (must return a minimum of 5 seasons years in a row to qualify).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees receive pay equivalent to the benefit premiums to offset the cost (benefits are through the county.) Employees also participate in pension plan (LAPP) • This program has been successful, and staff return 	<p>Seasonal employees receive an hourly wage that is well above the average. Aside from that, the County sticks to provincial employment standards. Seasonal employees are paid on the same pay cycle as other wage employees.</p>	<p>Seasonal staff are not guaranteed full-time hours but receive competitive hourly rates and "family-related" days. Pay dates are the same as other employees.</p> <p>The Count doesn't see a lot of turnover in its staff due to a strong corporate culture of a "team approach".</p>

Topic	Mountain View County	Clearwater County	Lacombe County	Ponoka County	Wetaskiwin County
		people into full-time roles The County hires for attitude and attributes and trains employees in the skill-sets that they need. Preference is to hire people with roots in the community to aid in staff retention. The County also transitions people between departments wherever possible to help them grow and diversify their knowledge and skills.	every year, even in boom times. At one point the County lost an equipment operator to Fort McMurray, but he came back 4 months later and has been with the County ever since. We have a lot of long-term employees. Note: Lacombe County is non-union		
5. Are there written policies to guide County practices? What kinds of issues are policies intended to address? Do your policies require Council approval?	The County's policies are available on their website at http://www.mountainviewcounty.com The policies are intended to address both high-level strategic issues, and provide guidance for "how-to" procedural issues. Policies require Council approval, and operational procedures require CAO approval.	Yes. Available on the County's website at http://www.county.clearwater.ab.ca/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policies are intended to address everything that could be confrontational for the County and for the public. All administrative policies require CAO approval. 	Yes. Available on the County's website at http://www.lacombecounty.com/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policies are intended to give high level direction from Council to the CAO. Both policies and procedures are adopted by council – if further clarification is required an administrative directive is issued. Policies and procedures require council approval. 	Policies are limited. They are more on a "how to do things" level and require Council approval.	The County has a policies and procedures manual.
"Operational	The County has all three	There are different		The County has the	The County maintains

Topic	Mountain View County	Clearwater County	Lacombe County	Ponoka County	Wetaskiwin County
<p>Services” Questions Transportation / Roads</p> <p>1. What types of roads are present in the County? (gravel, chip seal, paved) How do the services differ?</p>	<p>types of roads: gravel, chip seal and asphalt. The types of services required are different for each kind of road, but service levels are constant. Service levels only differ based on the amount of use the road experiences.</p>	<p>services and standards for different types of roads.</p>		<p>following types of roads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gravel (1200 mi) • Hot mix asphalt (100 mi) • Chip seal (100 mi) <p>Different types of roads have different maintenance requirements, but all are treated the same with regards to service standards</p>	<p>the following types of roads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gravel • Chip seal • Paved • Oil-sealed <p>The standards differ between the different types of roads.</p>
<p>2. Does your Transportation Department have service standards established in policy? (i.e. depth of gravel, potholes, how often things are refinished, snow clearing, etc.)</p>	<p>There are no service standards established in policy. There are informal standards that the Department abides by.</p>	<p>Yes. See website for standards information.</p>	<p>Yes. Standards are not available for all, but for some of them (refer to website – OP16 Road Maintenance). Please note that there is discretion to change this based on the circumstances. It is the CAO’s discretion but he delegates it.</p>	<p>No standards are written down. The County relies on its long-term employees knowing what they are doing, having done it for so long.</p>	<p>There are some service standards dictated in policy. Every year Council and Administration undergo a Strategic Planning process, and as a result Council sets certain standards and Administration works to enact those standards.</p>
<p>3. Do you contract any of your roads services out? If so, what services?</p> <p>How and when did you make the choice?</p> <p>How is it working for you?</p> <p>Strengths/pros</p>	<p>Road construction is contracted out. This choice was made a number of years ago and works out well for the County. The County has enough control over the work, while getting contractors who are familiar with the building / engineering codes set out by the provincial government.</p>	<p>Yes. Road paving, maintenance on 10 grader beats, some gravel road construction (depends on complexity, cost, scope of work/volume)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros: providing support to small owner operators that can’t compete for provincial contracts. Don’t have to find work for municipal staff if they get 	<p>The paving piece is contracted out. Lacombe County does not currently have the in-house expertise or equipment to provide services in a cost effective manner equivalent to industry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros: This system is working well, and the County has been able to obtain contractors. • Cons: County pays a premium when the 	<p>Road construction is contracted out, along with a large portion of the maintenance. The choice was made 25 years ago to increase efficiency and productivity. This reduced having crews hired on for the whole year with nothing to do in the winter.</p>	<p>See question 3 of “General Questions”. Many years ago it was determined that it would be more efficient for the County to contract some work out rather than retain employees. It is working quite well because it rewards those contractors who stuck with the County through the boom by going to them for work during the harder times.</p>

Topic	Mountain View County	Clearwater County	Lacombe County	Ponoka County	Wetaskiwin County
and weaknesses/cons.		rained out or during the winter months (e.g. seasonal staff) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cons: there is always a challenge with the rates that you have to pay for contract services 	industry is busy, which seems to be the majority of the time.		
Grading 1. What is the size of your grader beats?	The county is split into four service quadrants with 4-5 operators in each quadrant. There really aren't any "beats".	12 grader beats (2 served by county staff, 10 are serviced by contractors). Range of grader beats is approximately 250km (3000/12). This varies, especially with high use roads of industrial traffic. Some roads are hit more often than others.	Average size of our grader beats is 267 Km. Lacombe County has 1700 km of gravel road and 7.5 graders. The other half time grader is used as a flex grader to help out with specific trouble areas or truck hauls.	There are 9 grader beats with 130 miles/beat.	10 grader beats at 100 miles each.
2. What service standards are currently in place for grading?	No service standards currently exist	No service standards currently exist	No service standards currently exist	No service standards currently exist	No service standards currently exist
3. How are these activities organized /managed / overseen?	Each quadrant has a foreman who supervises the operators in their quadrant. The foremen report to the Manager of Infrastructure Maintenance.	The grader foreman works with the maintenance supervisor who is ultimately in charge of meeting the weekly and monthly objectives. There are set rotations and expectations on these activities which are based on industry activity.	Patrol operator at the site – overseen by the grader foreman who reports to public works supervisor, etc.	The Public Works Superintendent and his Deputy each take half of the County and supervise their employees directly.	Day-to-day activities are managed by the foremen. Grader operators report directly to the foremen and the foremen report to the Director of Public Works.
Airports	The County operates two airports (Old/Didsbury)	Jointly own an airport with the Town of Rocky	No	The towns own the airports, but the County	The County no longer owns the Wetaskiwin

Topic	Mountain View County	Clearwater County	Lacombe County	Ponoka County	Wetaskiwin County
1. Does the county own / operate an airport?	and Sundre)	Mountain House		contributes financially.	airport.
<p>Buildings</p> <p>1. What buildings does the county own / operate?</p>	<p>The County owns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration building Repair shop 2 equipment yards <p>In addition to this, the County has equipment storage space in each of the quadrants that they borrow from the towns.</p>	<p>2 main buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration Building: Agricultural services, Public Works, Planning and Development, Finance and Admin (aka Corporate Services), and the CAO's office. Protective Services Building: Community and Protective Services, Community Peace Officer, and the Fire Department. 3 fire buildings: garages, equipment, storage sheds. 	<p>2 main buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County administrative office public works shop facilities <p>These buildings are located on the same site, although graders are stationed out around the County – either on Lacombe county property or arrangements with private landowners (5 different locations in total)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is also a small fire hall/public works building in hamlet of Mirror. 	<p>The County owns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County administration building Two shops Landfill that accommodates the waste from the two towns in the County 	<p>The County owns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County administration building 3 public works buildings Recreational facility in a hamlet (hall and a hockey rink) <p>These buildings are maintained by the Agricultural Services Board</p>
<p>Vehicle & Equipment Maintenance</p> <p>1. What vehicles and mobile equipment does the county own / operate? Bought or leased?</p> <p>2. How are they maintained? By whom? Do you have maintenance / operational standards?</p>	<p>The county owns and operates all of their own road maintenance equipment, as well as the fleet of vehicles for all County departments.</p> <p>The vehicles and equipment are maintained by the County's maintenance team. There are no written maintenance standards, but there are established practices.</p>	<p>2 graders owned, 3 snow plows/gravel trucks, 2 picker trucks, fleet of approx 25-35 1 ton to ½ ton trucks</p> <p>The County has 2 licensed mechanics on staff and 1 apprentice. The mechanic is licensed in heavy duty and light duty. Clearwater County handles 80-90% of repairs in house, but sometimes has Finning come out to repair equipment when it makes</p>	<p>Everything is bought/owned by the County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gravel trucks (are also used for snow plowing), mowers, tractors, graders (~10), 5 motor scrapers, 3 crawler tractors, ~10 farm tractors, ~20 half tons, excavator, 3 packers, 2 service trucks. Equipment is managed internally, 	<p>The County owns all their vehicles and disposes of them once they outlive their warranty. The County only requires one foreman for mechanical work.</p>	<p>The County owns all their vehicles and equipment. They do not own any road construction equipment as that work is all contracted out. They try to flip graders every 5 years so they stay under warranty.</p> <p>There is a repair shop that performs daily, routine maintenance.</p>

Topic	Mountain View County	Clearwater County	Lacombe County	Ponoka County	Wetaskiwin County
		more sense. The County typically gets 250-300K out of its vehicles before purchasing new ones. Having newer vehicles results in less maintenance requirements.	supplemented by contract if necessary (due to high volumes or specialized repairs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every piece of equipment has a maintenance plan set up and a separate schedule in terms of life expectancy and when the vehicle will be replaced. 		
Other Utilities/ Public Works 1. Do you operate any water systems? (Water treatment, water distribution?)	No	Yes. 1 water system in Nordegg, and 2 licensed operators in the organization.	Yes, system for the hamlet of Mirror (water distribution – reservoir and some supplementary treatment from a regional system)	Yes, there is a sewer system in the hamlet of Bluffton.	The County owns three water systems, one of which buys its water from the City of Wetaskiwin's water treatment plant. It also operates five waste water systems and belongs to a waste water commission that the County manages.
2. Does the County maintain any water wells for parks / campgrounds / other sites?	No	Kind of. The County has 3 campgrounds that are licensed with wells in them. The licenses are being managed by campground groups. The 4th well is in the process of being decommissioned.	No	No	No
3. Do you operate any waste water/sewage systems? (wastewater collection and / or	No	Yes, the County currently has 3 wastewater systems and is in the process of constructing a 4th. Condor, Leslieville, and Nordegg each has	Yes, Hamlet of Mirror (lagoon system)	No	Yes, see above

Topic	Mountain View County	Clearwater County	Lacombe County	Ponoka County	Wetaskiwin County
treatment)		its own lagoon system. The County used to have an arrangement with the Town of Rocky Mountain House but is looking at locating a 4th site.			
4. Does the county operate any other (eg. Electric power or gas) utilities?	No	No	No	No	No
5. Are there any other functions assigned to your county's "public works" group.	All covered above	Gravel roads. The County maintains 25 gravel pits and the environmental compliance and reclamation associated with those.	Operations have a bridge sales site. They sell bridge materials and operate out of gravel pit north of the office. They sell to industrial, municipal and provincial customers.	It is all covered above	The County maintains 8 waste transfer stations.

APPENDIX B: 176-HOUR GUARANTEE

As part of the Mountain View County (MVC) Operational and Process Review, Sierra Systems was asked by the CAO to review in detail a procedure called the ‘176 Guarantee’ that outlines a modified work schedule for certain operational services employees. After speaking with a number of individuals regarding this program, it became clear that the 176 Guarantee impacts a significant number of MVC employee (all of them in the Operational Services Department) and there are several issues surrounding the program including the intent of the program, how it is managed and the associated costs to the County. Sierra obtained MVC approval to conduct additional information gathering regarding the 176 Guarantee. The information gathering was intended to further elaborate and validate the program and to address a perception that it results in a high financial cost and may not be well understood.

Approach

In order to gather information about the current state of the 176 Guarantee and determine each Department’s understanding of the program, Sierra Systems spoke with individuals from the three Departments involved in the procedure: Human Resources, Operational Services, and Corporate Services. The purpose of these conversations was to clarify all of the issues and concerns surrounding the 176 Guarantee so as to be able to move forward with a common understanding.

Human Resources/Payroll	Provided information on the program from a pay practice point of view including the requirements to administer the program.
Corporate Services	Provided information on the financial impact of the 176 guarantee.
Operational Services	<p>Provided information on the management of the program including shift scheduling and tracking of employee hours.</p> <p>Sierra spoke with employees and managers who are affected by the program in order to obtain their perspective.</p>

Program Details and Intended Outcomes

Based on the documentation reviewed, information collected and conversations conducted with MVC employees, Sierra was able to develop an understanding of the purpose of the program and its intended outcomes as follows.

The 176 Guarantee was introduced in 2006 and is a program where permanent, full-time employees (a.k.a.: “core employees”) are guaranteed to be paid a minimum number of hours in a 4-week cycle. Each 4 week cycle consists of 176 hours (44 hours per week X 4 weeks = 176). The normal daily hours of work are nine (9) hours per day from Monday to Thursday and eight (8) hours on Friday. According to the procedure, “these hours may be altered at the CAO’s discretion to allow for summer and winter hours provided that the annual total is 2288 hours”. This procedure currently applies to 29 employees in the Operational Services Department including the four Quadrant Foremen, 8 Grader Operators, and 17 Equipment Operators. During our review Sierra was able to review the County’s *Procedure No. 2001, Operational Services Modified Work Schedule*, which was officially rescinded by the County on January 1, 2011 and were also able to review and discuss its proposed replacement.

Sierra understands that the 176 Guarantee was initially put in place to achieve the following outcomes:

Employee-Focused Outcomes	
1. Reduce variability of pay for seasonal employees	<p>Prior to the 176 Guarantee, seasonal employees did not have a guaranteed number of hours and their pay was variable depending on a number of factors including workload and weather conditions (especially during the winter months). For example: a dry winter without much snow would mean less pay for seasonal employees.</p> <p>This variability in pay created a challenge for employees as there was no guarantee of income for the off-season months, making normal quality of life difficult and morale poor. The variability of their pay could also impact an employee’s ability to qualify for mortgages and/or loans.</p>
2. Provide benefits for long-term seasonal employees (including pension)	<p>Prior to the 176 Guarantee, employees did not have consistent benefits and they were only able to join the benefit plan after 2 consecutive seasons of employment. Also, employees were not able to join the County’s pension plan due to their variable work schedules and pay. This was especially troublesome for long-term seasonal employees who had been with the County for 10 years or more and had little or no source of income for their retirement years.</p>
Organization-Focused Outcomes	
3. Retain valued seasonal employees and avoid turnover during times of economic prosperity	<p>During the oil and gas boom in 2005, there was concern that seasonal employees would leave employment with Mountain View County to work for organizations in the oil and gas industry.</p> <p>*It should be noted that although this was identified as a risk, there has been no evidence of employees, past or present, leaving the organization for this reason.</p>
4. Increase flexibility in scheduling	<p>Prior to the 176 Guarantee, seasonal employees would work only when required. During the winter months, this often translated into overtime costs for the County during inclement weather.</p> <p>The 176 program was meant to provide flexibility in scheduling so that MVC could compress the hours of “core employees” into fewer work days when required. This would allow the County to “staff-up” during peak times while keeping overtime hours at a minimum, and “staff down” during non-peak times.</p>

MVC has been successful in achieving 3 out of the 4 outcomes above by providing consistent pay to seasonal/core employees, providing benefits including enrolment in the pension plan, and retaining core staff. However, MVC has not been successful in achieving the fourth outcome, increased flexibility in scheduling. Although the 176 guarantee was designed to provide greater flexibility in theory, in practice, the program appears to have resulted in less flexibility. The reasons for this lack of flexibility are discussed in the section below (see *Findings*).

It should be noted that, from the time of implementation in 2006, no documentation was found concerning the overall or projected cost of this program. We assume that the additional cost of benefits and salary were taken into account and considered to be acceptable as these became fixed costs for the Operational Services Department. However, in recent years, the cost of the program has become a concern and is part of the reason for this review.

Findings

On its face, the 176 Guarantee can be seen as a straightforward procedure. Although this is true in theory, in practice, management of the program is neither straightforward nor simple. This has been demonstrated by the fact that, although the 176 Guarantee has been in place since early 2006, MVC has not been able to take advantage of the increased flexibility in scheduling that this program was designed to provide and the cost of the program has become a contentious issue within the County Administration. The reason for this cannot be pinpointed to one person or one department, but rather a combination of factors. Some of the most significant factors are outlined below.

Lack of Flexibility due to Operational Services Culture

Prior to the 176 Guarantee, seasonal employees worked only when MVC had a need for their services. Seasonal employees were accustomed to having fewer hours during the shoulder seasons or in a mild winter, and offsetting those hours with times of high demand such as heavy snowfalls or freeze/thaw conditions. After the 176 Guarantee was introduced, core employees were assigned a normal work week (Monday to Friday) and were guaranteed 44 hours per week regardless of the demand for their services. This change resulted in a situation where employees became accustomed to their normal work week and lost the incentive to work modified or overtime hours.

Although the 176 Guarantee was designed to allow MVC to make changes to the normally scheduled work days, there were no procedures or guidelines regarding how this should occur. Section 2.11 of the procedure states “The CAO shall provide procedures regarding the notification of employees” and explains that this information is to be outlined in a separate procedure. That separate procedure was not developed, further compounding the issue¹. Now that the policy has been in place for over 5 years, the current situation has become accepted practice and a specific, directed effort will be required to re-set employee expectations regarding notification procedures and scheduling practices.

Lack of Understanding and Collaboration

As outlined in the *MVC Operational and Process Review Final Report*, MVC Administration has demonstrated a silo-approach to planning, working, and managing. These silos are clearly demonstrated by each department’s understanding and approach to the 176 Guarantee. Rather than working together collaboratively, each department takes responsibility for its own area and does not look to understand or assist the other involved departments. This silo approach combined with a lack of open communication and dialogue has resulted in perceptions and assumptions that are often not correct. For example, the 176 Guarantee has been described as a simple pay practice, and although this is true, it is a pay practice that has significant implications regarding the management of MVCs “core employees” by their managers and supervisors and should be looked at from a company-wide perspective.

¹ A draft procedure regarding *Reporting Pay* has since been created and is currently awaiting CAO release.

It is important to note that the purpose of this document is not to look at how the program could have been better managed in the past, nor to point the finger or cast blame. The purpose of this document is to evaluate the current situation and determine how best to move forward to achieve the intended outcomes. It is vital for MVC departments and employees to leave the past behind and take the time to work together to develop ways to improve the program and make the 176 Guarantee a success in the future.

Alberta Highway Services Contract

The introduction of the Alberta Highway Services (AHS) contract added another layer of complexity to the 176 Guarantee. The County entered into a contract with Alberta Transportation to maintain the highways within MVC boundaries. In return for providing these services, Alberta Transportation provides MVC with 4 additional trucks/snowplows and compensates the County for providing the required highway maintenance services. Under the contract, MVC must have 3 trucks respond to a snowfall of 3 or more centimeters within 1 hour, and all 4 trucks respond within 2 hours.

This level of response requires MVC to maintain a group of 12 employees to provide coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during the winter season (i.e. from October 15th to April 15th). The shift schedule for the AHS contract covers a 12-week period with each employee working a rotation of 8 days on and 4 days off. This schedule does not align with the 4-week period for the 176 Guarantee as each employee on the AHS schedule works a total of 504 hours in a 12-week period (7 rotations comprised of 72 hours each = 504 hours). This is 24 hours less than the normal hours paid in the 176 Guarantee (44 hrs/week x 12 weeks = 528 hours) and results in the under-utilization of resources. In addition, depending on the timing of the payroll cycle compared to the AHS schedule, there is the possibility of paying employees on the AHS contract overtime for working more than 176 hours in a 4 week cycle, or under-utilizing employees who work less than 176 hours in the 4 week cycle.

Overtime Example: There is the possibility of AHS assigned employees working 180 hours in a 4 week period if their schedule begins with 8 days on followed by 4 days off. This would result in 4 hours of overtime pay for those hours above 176.

176 Guarantee: 4 week cycle = 28 days; 176 hours					TOTAL
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4		28 days
44 hours	44 hours	44 hours	44 hours		176 hours
AHS Contract Schedule: 4 weeks of 12 week schedule					TOTAL
8 days on	4 days off	8 days on	4 days off	4 days on*	28 days
9 hours/day =72 hours	0 hours	9 hours/day =72 hours	0 hours	9 hours/day =36 hours	180 hours

*Note: The 8-days on has been split to fit the 176 Guarantee pay cycle. In this example, the subsequent pay cycle would begin with the remaining 4 days on, followed by 4 days off, then 8 days on, etc.

Under-Utilization Example: There is the possibility of AHS employees working only 144 hours in a 4-week period if their schedule begins with 4 days off followed by 8 days on. This would result in the under-utilization of 32 hours as the employee worked 144 hours but was paid for 176.

176 Guarantee: 4 week cycle = 28 days; 176 hours					TOTAL
<i>Week 1</i>	<i>Week 2</i>	<i>Week 3</i>	<i>Week 4</i>		28 days
44 hours	44 hours	44 hours	44 hours		176 hours
AHS Contract Schedule: 4 weeks of 12 week schedule					TOTAL
<i>4 days off</i>	<i>8 days on</i>	<i>4 days off</i>	<i>8 days on</i>	<i>4 days off</i>	28 days
0 hours	9 hours/day =72 hours	0 hours	9 hours/day =72 hours	0 hours	144 hours

Findings Summary

Based on Sierra’s information gathering activities and conversations with employees, it is clear that there are varied perceptions and understandings regarding the 176 Guarantee and that it is a highly sensitive topic. Although the 176 Guarantee can be viewed as a forward thinking program, it is not a good fit with the current state of the County and its corporate culture. The program requires strong leadership, clearly stated outcomes, clear roles and responsibilities (including documented processes for managing the program), internal support and collaboration, and clear communication in order to be successful.

Recommendations

Sierra understands that Mountain View County has the following options regarding the 176 Guarantee:

1. Maintain the Status Quo.
2. Modify or make changes to the program.
3. Terminate the program.

Sierra believes that there are significant risks to making any immediate changes to the program, such as termination or significant modification of the 176 Guarantee, as it has been in place for over five years and has strong connections to staff job security and pension benefits for a large number of county employees. There were also concerns expressed during Sierra’s Operational Process Review that a review of the procedure would result in the cancellation of the program. This perception may negatively impact staff morale which is already low due to a state of change and uncertainty.

Sierra’s recommendation is to maintain the status quo and better manage the existing program that is in place. In order for the 176 Guarantee to operate effectively, it is important for all parties involved to fully understand the procedure and have common understanding and agreement.

The specific recommendations which follow are intended to move all parties forward with a common understanding that will ensure effective administration and management of the procedure going forward. In addition, Sierra’s recommendations include an established timeframe at the end of which MVC will be able to conduct a complete assessment of the program to determine if it is achieving its intended outcomes and if it should continue to be used. The specific recommendations are as follows:

- **Conduct a Review of the Intended Outcomes;**
- **Establish Clear Processes, Roles and Responsibilities;**
- **Establish Internal Support and Collaboration;**
- **Provide Clear Communication to MVC Employees;**
- **Establish and Communicate a Timeframe and Framework for Reassessment; and**
- **Conduct the Reassessment.**

1. Conduct a Review of the Intended Outcomes

The first priority for MVC should be to reaffirm the intended outcomes of the program. MVC needs to determine if the original intended outcomes are still valid in today’s climate and to ensure that the outcomes take into consideration the needs of all stakeholders. Should MVC determine that changes are required, Sierra suggests the addition of 2 outcomes beyond the 4 outcomes stated earlier in the document (see table on page 2) to ensure the program is balanced. The suggested additional outcomes are noted below.

Additional Outcome Suggestions	Explanation
Ratepayer-Focused Outcome	
Provide accountability to MVC ratepayers	MVC has a responsibility to its ratepayers to ensure a reasonable balance between the service levels provided and the associated costs of the service. The addition of this outcome will ensure that the program balances the needs of employees, the County, and its ratepayers.
Employee-Focused Outcome	
Provide a reasonable quality of life for core employees	Although the program already takes into account the variability of pay and the provision of benefits for its core employees, the program should also ensure that core employees have a reasonable quality of life. A healthy work-life balance is key to maintaining a positive and productive workforce. The addition of this outcome will ensure that the needs of the county are balanced with the needs of its core employees. In particular this provides a basis to consider call-out, stand-by and other such process factors.

2. Establish Clear Processes, Roles and Responsibilities

In order for the 176 Guarantee to be effective, it is important for everyone involved to have a clear understanding of both the program and their individual roles and responsibilities within it.

Clear Understanding

The details of the 176 Guarantee were initially outlined in the document *Procedure No. 2001, Operational Services Modified Work Schedule*. This procedure was rescinded on January 1, 2011. In its place, MVC has created a separate payroll category under its employment classifications called the *176 Hour Guarantee (CORE)*, and has also created 2 draft procedures related to reporting pay and on-call pay (note: at the time of this report these procedures were waiting CAO release and therefore cannot be included in this report).

In addition to the creation of a separate payroll category and procedures for reporting and on-call pay, Sierra recommends the creation of more detailed documentation regarding the management of the program. This documentation could take a number of forms including an amendment to the draft procedures, the creation of a process description, administrative directives, or guidelines. The objective of this documentation is to supplement the overarching policy or procedure and provide specific details of how the program will work. This does not have to be a formal document, but it does have to be shared with all employees that are affected by the program. Specifically, this documentation should include the following:

Topic	Explanation
Notice period for changes to scheduled shifts	<p>It is our understanding that it is MVC practice to provide at least 24 hours notice to employees for a temporary interruption to regular shift times. This practice must be clearly communicated and documented so that all parties understand what this means. MVC should also clearly outline the minimum notice period if it is not possible to provide 24 hours notice due to unforeseeable circumstances such as weather conditions.</p> <p>This documentation should also include the notification protocol (e.g. who will provide the notification and what method of notification is acceptable).</p>
Employee expectations regarding shift changes	<p>Clearly define expectations of employees regarding shift changes. If the County alters an employee's normal work week schedule due to winter or summer conditions, what is expected of the employee?</p> <p>E.g.: Are "core employees" expected to work overtime provided they receive the appropriate notice? Can a "core employee" refuse to work overtime hours? If so, when is this acceptable? If not, how will refusals be addressed?</p>
Overtime details and maximum number of hours	<p>Clearly define when "core" employees will receive overtime pay including information on the maximum number of hours that can be worked (i.e. core employees can work up to 12 hour-shifts, but will only receive overtime pay if their hours exceed 176 in a 4 week period).</p> <p>This documentation should also include information on the Alberta labour standard and how MVC practice may differ (e.g. provide an explanation of why core employees can work up to 12 hours in a day without receiving overtime).</p>
Timesheet management	<p>Clearly define timesheet requirements for "core employees", their Foremen, and Manager. These requirements should meet the needs of HR, payroll, and Operational Services.</p>

It is vital to the success of the program for MVC departments and employees to fully understand the program and to work together to make it a success.

Roles and Responsibilities

Establishing roles and responsibilities for all affected MVC stakeholders will help them to understand the program and set clear expectations regarding how the program will affect them. At a minimum, the CAO, Human Resources, Payroll, and applicable Operational Services staff (e.g. the Director of Operations Services and the Manager of Infrastructure Maintenance) should be involved in the creation and establishment of the roles and responsibilities. The following table provides some roles and responsibilities suggestions to act as a starting point.

MVC Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
"Core Employees"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the 176 Guarantee and its impacts; • Adhere to the program; and • Voice any questions or concerns regarding the program through the appropriate channels (e.g. Operational Services, Human Resources, or Payroll).
Operational Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own and manage the 176 Guarantee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assign specific responsibilities to key positions and their incumbents; – Clearly define the information requirements necessary to effectively manage the program; • Address any employee concerns; and • Work in collaboration with HR and payroll to ensure ease of administration.
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide interpretation of the policy; and • Work in collaboration with payroll and operations to provide the necessary management information and support.
Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in collaboration with operations to provide the necessary management information and support (e.g. financial information such as budget variance reports); • Report budget variance information as part of regular variance reporting processes); and • Voice any questions or concerns regarding the program through the appropriate channels (i.e. directly with the Director of Operations or in Senior Management Team meetings).
	Payroll: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer the 176 Program to ensure employees get paid in an accurate and timely manner; and • Work in collaboration with HR and Operation Services to provide the necessary management information and support.
CAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strong leadership and direction regarding the 176 Guarantee; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Including <i>expectations and performance management</i>; • Ensure a collaborative approach regarding the administration and management of the program; and • Resolve any misunderstandings regarding the 176 Guarantee.

3. Establish Internal Support and Collaboration

As previously stated, the purpose of this recommendation is not to look at how the program could have been better managed, nor to point the finger or cast blame. It is important for all MVC departments and staff to work together in order to make this program a success. Human Resources, Corporate Services and Operational Services departments must be open with each other and communicate concerns and issues constructively. Only by working together will the program be a success. This includes regular and open communication regarding how best to manage and administer the program including an understanding of how each department is impacted by the program and who ultimately owns the program. A better understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities is the first step in achieving a collaborative approach to effectively managing and administering the program. For example: understanding how scheduling and "core employee" timesheets affect both the payroll function and operational services' ability to manage the program, and how each department can make small changes or compromises to their work processes in order to enhance the other department's effectiveness.

4. Provide Clear Communication to MVC employees

Once the intended outcomes of the program have been confirmed, the roles and responsibilities have been established, and all departments have reached a common understanding, MVC must clearly communicate this information to all affected employees. At a minimum the communication should include:

- The reason for the communication (i.e. the review of the 176 Guarantee);
- The initial intent of the program and its original outcomes, including which outcomes have been achieved and which outcomes have not been achieved;
- The review of the intended outcomes and any additional outcomes that have been developed as a result of the review;
- Recognition that the program has not achieved its intended flexibility and what specific changes employees can expect to see moving forward regarding the management and scheduling of the program. It is important to be very clear on what this means to all affected employees and what changes they will see moving forward (e.g. provide information in writing to each employee group including Operators, Foremen, Managers, Directors, etc). This is the opportunity for MVC to reset employee expectations in order to manage the program as it was originally intended; and
- Provide information on the timeframe for reassessment of the program including the possibility that the program could be terminated if the reassessment determines that the intended outcomes are not achieved. From an employee and labour relations perspective, this will act as the necessary notice period if any significant changes are to be made to pay and benefits practices. Using this approach will provide advance notice of the potential for such changes and may also act as an incentive for "core employees" to do their best to help achieve the program's intended outcomes.

5. Establish and Communicate a Timeframe and Framework for Reassessment

Sierra recommends that the program be monitored over a two-year (2) timeframe to assess its effective administration and management. A two-year timeframe was chosen because one year (1) is not enough time to reasonably affect change, and might be impacted significantly by seasonal or weather related events. We believe that three years (3) is too long to continue to run such a high-cost program before conducting a re-evaluation. Two years also provides a reasonable notice period for "core employees".

During the assessment period, all affected parties should document ongoing issues and challenges regarding the management of the 176 Guarantee in order to have a written record for the reassessment. The timeframe for reassessment should be clearly communicated to all affected stakeholders and should include specific details of what will be reviewed (e.g. intended outcomes). It is essential that clear and ongoing communication is provided to employees throughout this two-year period to ensure that employees are involved in the process and understand the reasons for any potential change.

The Operational Services Department also needs to have clearly defined service levels and standards in order to effectively manage and measure the program's effectiveness, and to be able to compare themselves to other Counties at the end of the review period. Although Operations Services has stated some of the service levels publicly, they have not been clearly documented or communicated (see Operations Services section recommendation in the *Operational Process Review* report for more details regarding documentation of policies, procedures, and processes).

6. Conduct the Reassessment

An agreed project plan will be necessary to guide reassessment. The CAO should require the three key departments to develop a reassessment plan, including information to be collected and analyzed, roles and responsibilities in the reassessment process and clear definition of the expected reassessment outcomes (such as to identify the impacts of the 176 Guarantee program and its ability to achieve established outcomes and recommend its continuance, modification, or replacement).

At the end of the two-year period, MVC Senior Management should complete a thorough assessment of the program to determine if it is being managed effectively and if it is achieving its intended outcomes. At this time, the County may wish to continue with the program, make modifications to the program, or cancel the program completely. The County should also review the comparator information from other Counties that was collected during the Operational Process Review. This will provide the County with information on what others are doing and may provide viable options for changes to the 176 Guarantee. It will be important for the County to refer to the intended outcomes of the program to determine whether or not an option is viable.

Regardless of the outcome of the reassessment, MVC must continue to communicate clearly and openly with the affected employees and provide the results of reassessment including how the final decision was reached.

Implementation Considerations

The information below provides implementation suggestions to support the above recommendations on how the 176 Guarantee can be better managed.

- As outlined in the *Operational Process Review* report, the County's senior management team should act as the sponsor for these recommendations and sponsor the review of intended outcomes, establish clear processes, roles, and responsibilities, provide clear communication to employees, and establish and communicate the timeframe for reassessment. This assignment will encourage senior management to work together to collectively solve an outstanding issue that has potential impacts for the entire Administration; and

- The total timeframe for completing these recommendations(except for reassessment) should be no longer than six (6) months from the time the Senior Management Team is completely formed (with current vacancies filled on a permanent basis) and in place to the time of communicating the reassessment timeframe to employees.

The senior management team should take a collaborative approach and seek feedback and input from a variety of additional sources including Human Resources, payroll, and Operational Services staff including the Manager of Infrastructure Maintenance, Foremen, and Grader and Equipment Operators.

APPENDIX C: PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT RELATED FINDINGS

As a result of our review of Mountain View County documents and material from other communities Sierra's consultants have developed a number of observations and suggestions.

The following pages include:

- Some specific suggestions for changes to the MVC land use bylaw;
- Comparative content from the County of Ponoka's municipal development plan;
- An example of content from a fact sheet on subdivision from the County of Wetaskiwin; and
- A comparison of subdivision approval correspondence examples from MVC and Ponoka County.

Some detailed comments on and suggestions for the Mountain View County Land Use Bylaw

The introductory "how to use this bylaw" is very good, but the overall impression of the bylaw is one of overkill. Here are a few ways to improve it.

1. Add a presumption of approval for discretionary uses and minor waivers (2.2.9 and 5.2.7). Possible wording for 5.2.7: "Where a use of land or buildings is listed as discretionary, the approving authority shall issue a permit unless there are compelling reasons to refuse it."
2. Adopt the policy de minimis non curat lex (2.2.8). {"The law is not concerned with trifles"}.
3. Exempt more things from the development control process (4.21 and 2).
4. Avoid "mission creep" by adding underlined words in 4.4.1: "A description of potential supplementary requirements and when they may be called for is found in Appendix B."
5. Similarly in 4.4.2, concept plans, add new sentence "Concept plans may be required [describe where] ... but will not be required for..."
6. Delete ultra vires items such as controls on communications towers (4.8) and re-application of refused subdivisions (6.8.2).
7. Simplify the development permit process by adding a new clause 5.5.4 saying that a development permit need not be advertised if it is for a permitted use and the bylaw was varied or relaxed by the DO.
8. Direct SDAB to approve applications unless the land use bylaw clearly forbids it (8.2.8)
9. Use Rimbey's approach to parking by adding to section 12:

On-site parking requirements for non-residential uses, and for residential uses in commercial and industrial areas, may be relaxed where in the opinion of the Development Authority

 - (a) sufficient on-street parking is available without causing congestion, or
 - (b) sufficient parking is available in public parking lots, or
 - (c) private parking can be shared because peak use times are different.
10. Appendix B: clearly state what triggers the need for a traffic study, drainage study, etc
11. In the monthly report to council, give the reasons for delays in approvals.

Commercial and industrial design guidelines

The guidelines are generally good, but the language should be cleaned up and made more intelligible in places. Remember who is using this document, and use words they understand. Following are some specific observations.

1. Some examples of poor word choice:
 - a. "Typology": It is unclear what that means, so it is doubtful if most users will understand. The dictionary definition is "doctrine, interpretation of (esp. biblical) types" but that's not how it's used here.
 - b. "Massing should articulate building corners".
2. Spelling and grammatical errors, such as:
 - a. "Site line" when the context suggests it means "sight line"
 - b. "Complimentary" when the context requires "complementary"
3. General readability: sentence length; misuse of commas changes meaning.
4. Recommend that the document be reviewed and re-written by an editor who can tailor it to the likely users.
5. Signs section is full of "shoulds" which have no legal power. Why not simply import or refer to those parts of the LUB?

Comparative Information from Ponoka County

The following is an extract from Ponoka County's municipal development plan and is provided as an example of that municipality's approach to the content and wording of their MDP.

17 The Planning Process

The previous sections of this document have dealt with the content of land use policies. This section deals with the process by which decisions are made.

In Alberta this process is governed by two principles. First, it is conducted under the rule of law, which may be summarized as meaning that the rules must be known to all, equally applicable to all, and impartially administered. Second, planning tries to strike a balance between the rights of landowners and the rights of neighbours. The second principle is summarized in section 617 of the Municipal Government Act, which says that policies must be set and decisions made "without infringing on the rights of individuals ... except to the extent necessary for the overall public interest".

Both of these principles are well served by an open, public process. Provincial legislation requires public consultation at most stages of the planning process, but in Council's opinion, these legal requirements are just the start. Therefore:

- Policy 17.1** *Before opening up a new area for residential development, Council will require that an "overview plan" for the district is completed, discussed with the public, and formally adopted as an area structure plan so that the interests of all parties may be considered. (See also section 4.3)*

Policy 17.2 Before rezoning a parcel of land for multiple lot subdivision, Council will require the owner to prepare an outline plan showing the general scheme of development, roads and drainage, lot sizes, how water and sewer will be provided to the lots, and how the development will relate to surrounding lands. This outline plan must be accepted by Council before any of the land is rezoned for residential use. Council may choose to adopt the outline plan informally, or by bylaw as an area structure plan.

Policy 17.3 All proposed changes in land use, both subdivision and development, will be referred to adjacent municipalities for comments before a decision is made. Referral areas will be:

- *within two miles of Ponoka and Rimbey, and*
- *within half a mile of the counties of Camrose, Clearwater, Lacombe, and Wetaskiwin, the Summer Village of Parkland Beach, and the Montana and Samson Reserves.*

Proposals on land close to important recreational lakes will be referred to the other municipalities which share the shoreline. They are:

- *the entire Gull Lake watershed, and*
- *land within a mile of Chain Lakes and Red Deer Lake.*

These areas are shown on Map 8.

Policy 17.4 Council receives many zoning and subdivision applications which are unlikely to be approved because they conflict with municipal or provincial policies. Some of the common conflicts are set out in Appendix A. To reduce the wasted time and effort, Council directs staff to review every application with the would-be developer to see if the proposal is consistent with the County's policies. Proposals which do not comply will be discouraged from proceeding to a formal application.

Policy 17.5 As required by the Municipal Government Act, Council will continue to make all decisions which must be enacted by bylaw. This includes the adoption and amendment of intermunicipal development plans, the municipal development plan, area structure plans, the land use bylaw, and off-site levy bylaws. Council will also adopt or amend outline plans. However, Council will not make administrative decisions. Simple subdivision and development decisions will be made by County staff, while more complex decisions will be made by a Municipal Planning Commission (MPC). Commission members will be appointed by Council, and may include County staff, outside experts, and members at large.

Policy 17.6 The Subdivision Authority (staff or MPC) will refuse any application for subdivision where a neighbour submits a signed, written objection, based on the policies in this municipal development plan. The applicant (landowner) will then be invited to appeal the refusal, and the matter will be decided at a hearing of the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board.

Despite the above, the Subdivision Authority is not bound to refuse an application because of a neighbour's objection if the land was recently rezoned for that purpose.

- Policy 17.7 Councillors may sit on the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, but (as required by section 627 of the Act) must not form a majority of the Board.*
- Policy 17.8 In order to allow all parties to prepare for hearings and appeals, the County will ask that all written submissions are provided at least two days in advance, and these submissions will then be posted on the County website.*

The following is another extract and example from Ponoka County's municipal development plan.

Appendix A

Requirements for Rezoning

Council will approve the rezoning of land for multi-lot residential or large-scale industrial or commercial subdivision only if the following conditions are met.

- 1 The land is the subject of an outline plan or area structure plan which has been adopted by Council.*
- 2 The subdivision or development will have no adverse effect on nearby farming operations.*
- 3 The land is suitable for the proposed use, using the criteria set out in section 7 of the provincial Subdivision and Development Regulations and the County's land use bylaw.*
- 4 Alberta Transportation has indicated, in writing, that they have no objection to the development. (This applies only where the land is within half a mile of a numbered highway.)*
- 5 The land is accessible from the nearest highway by a road which meets current County standards.*
- 6 Where there will be more than 5 lots on a quarter section, the owner has supplied proof of water supply, using the criteria set out in section 23 of the Water Act.*
- 7 On land within one mile of Ponoka or Rimbey, the town council has no objection.*
- 8 There is no conflict with provincial policies.*

Subdivision Information for Applicants

The following is content from a 2004 fact sheet developed by the County of Wetaskiwin to provide to people who enquired about subdivision within the County. (Note: in some case the costs and processes have changed.) This material is provided as an example of the simple information that can be provided.

Subdivision costs in the County of Wetaskiwin

Re-zoning Re-zoning may not be necessary, but if it is, the fees are set by and payable to the county. Proposed rezonings must be advertised in the local paper, and the county charges the applicant \$100 to cover this cost.

	<i>Because of the need to advertise and set up a hearing, rezoning usually takes six to eight weeks.</i>
<i>Area Structure Plan</i>	<i>The County requires a developer to prepare an area structure plan (ASP) if a subdivision will result in there being more than three lots on a quarter section. ASPs show the overall layout and staging of development, and how it will fit in with neighbouring land. Continuity of roads, drainage, and utilities are very important. The county has a spec sheet detailing what is required.</i>
	<i>ASPs must normally be prepared professionally. West Central can provide the names of consultants who do this work.</i>
<i>Design and engineering</i>	<i>This is usually necessary only for multi-lot subdivisions, where roads and drainage have to be designed.</i>
<i>Water tests</i>	<i>Provincial legislation requires water tests if more than six lots on a quarter section will use groundwater. These tests must be conducted by a professional engineer and may cost several thousand dollars.</i>
<i>Subdivision application</i>	<i>The County has contracted with West Central Planning Agency to process subdivisions for them. West Central charges \$450 for an application, plus \$100 for each new lot to be created, so subdividing one lot into two costs \$550. This pays the cost of processing an application, including at least one site visit.</i>
	<i>Subdivision applications must, by law, be referred to neighbours, utility companies, and some government departments before a decision is made.</i>
	<i>Although West Central administers the process, the actual decision (approve, approve with conditions, or refuse) is made by the county.</i>
<i>Approval</i>	<i>Simple subdivisions can be approved by the County Manager. More complicated or contentious ones go to council's monthly meeting for a decision.</i>
<i>Conditions of approval</i>	<i>Most subdivisions are approved subject to various conditions. A sample approval letter is attached. The owner must meet all these conditions before the new lot can be registered at Land Titles. The most common conditions are listed below.</i>
<i>Road building</i>	<i>This is usually required only for multi-lot subdivisions, but occasionally a single lot will require road construction. All roads must meet county standards. Rural roads cost from \$60,000 to \$100,000 per mile, but costs can run higher in difficult conditions, or for small jobs.</i>
<i>Development agreement</i>	<i>The county may require the developer to enter into an agreement to undertake certain works as a condition of subdivision approval. This</i>

usually relates to roads, but may also apply to installation of drainage ditches, sewer lines, etc.

Approaches

Every rural lot must have an approach off a maintained road. Because the approach is actually on the road allowance, it must be built to county or Alberta Transportation standards. Usually this involves excavating black dirt, installing a culvert, backfilling with suitable material, compacting, and gravelling. An approach and culvert may cost over \$1,000 if the work is contracted out.

The county charges \$100 for a site visit to inspect an approach to ensure it meets their standards.

Municipal reserves

A municipality may take up to 10% of the area of a subdivision for parks, schools, or buffer strips. If they do not want land they can take money to the same value. This is calculated as 10% of the raw land value of the resulting lot(s).

No reserves are payable on the first subdivision out of a quarter, or on lots of 40 or more acres which will be used for farming.

Upgrading sewer systems

A sewer system which is legal on a quarter section may not be legal on a small parcel. Where there is a system in place, it must be brought up to standard before the subdivision can be registered. Replacing an open discharge with a buried field can cost several thousand dollars.

Survey

After you receive your approval, you will have to hire an Alberta Land Surveyor to prepare a plan to be registered at Land Titles Office. There are two sorts of plan:

A simple rectangular subdivision can often be done by Descriptive Plan. The surveyor prepares a drawing with dimensions and areas, but does not leave any monuments on site. This saves time and effort, so descriptive plans can be prepared and registered at Land Titles for under \$1,000.

A multi-lot subdivision, an awkward shaped lot, or a second subdivision out of a quarter section will usually require a full Plan of Subdivision. A survey crew posts all lot corners, and ties them to pre-existing monuments in the neighbourhood. This removes all doubt about boundaries, but is more expensive. A plan of subdivision is unlikely to cost less than \$1,500 and may be much higher if the surveyor has to search for or re-establish monuments.

Any subdivision may be done by plan of subdivision, but only Land Titles Office can allow a descriptive plan. If you wish to use a descriptive plan, your surveyor will get a ruling from Land Titles.

West Central includes a list of local surveyors when it mails out a subdivision approval.

Condition	Mountain View County Example (6004-01)	Ponoka County Example
	<p><i>The real property report shall include the location of the existing water and private sewage treatment system (PSTS) in relation to existing and proposed property lines.</i></p>	<p><i>approval.</i></p>
<p>Approaches</p>	<p><i>The applicant shall construct/upgrade approaches from the municipal road to the proposed and residual lots. All new and upgraded approaches shall be constructed/upgraded in accordance with the construction specifications of MVC as attached. (Insert any special access requirements or unique standards if applicable.)</i></p>	<p><i>Construct a new approach to serve the proposed lot / remainder of the quarter section. This is to be in a location agreed with the County and built to their standards. Contact Tom Webber at the County office for specifications.</i></p>
<p>Taxes</p>	<p><i>Payment of property taxes in arrears shall be made to MVC.</i></p>	<p><i>Pay any outstanding taxes on the property</i></p>
<p>Sewer</p>	<p><i>If any portion of the PSTS is situated closer than 90 metres to an existing or proposed property line, the applicant shall submit either of the following:</i></p> <p><i>(a) a copy of the PSTS permit application, and inspection reports as completed by a safety codes officer when the PSTS was installed, or</i></p> <p><i>(b) an inspection report from a Safety Codes Officer confirming that the PSTS complies with the regulations as outlined in the Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice.</i></p> <p><i>When not in compliance, the applicant shall undertake improvements to the PSTS to comply with the current Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice and provide confirmation in this regard to the satisfaction of MVC.</i></p>	<p><i>Have the sewage disposal system inspected by an accredited plumbing installerr and submit a copy of his report to this office. If the system does not meet current standards you must upgrade it and provide an installer's report certifying that this has been done.</i></p>
<p>Fees</p>	<p><i>The approval fee of \$___ shall be paid to Mountain View County within 30 days of the date of the notice of decision.</i></p>	<p><i>Pay an endorsement fee of \$200 to WCPA when the plan is submitted for endorsement.</i></p>
<p>Reserves</p>	<p><i>No reserves required pursuant to section 633(a) of the Municipal Government Act</i></p>	<p><i>No reserves are due as this is the first subdivision out of the quarter section.</i></p>
<p>Endorsement</p>	<p><i>(Wording was not contained in the MVC example)</i></p>	<p><i>When all these conditions have been met, we will endorse the surveyor's plan for registration at Land Titles Office, and your new titles will be created.</i></p>

APPENDIX D: CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

As a result of our review Sierra’s consultants have developed suggestions for the implementation of the recommendations made in this report.

The following pages include consultant suggestions about the recommendations summarized in the table on page 24 of the final report.

Recommendation
Immediately (within 3-6 months)
<p>County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set policy; let staff administer that policy.
<p>Responsibility: County Council</p> <p>As a (mostly) new Council there is a continuing need for Council to work with the County Manager to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand where the County has existing policy and the intent of that policy, • understand how policy is put into practice and monitor the outcomes achieved, and • seek out, review and approve new or revised policy where it is required. <p>Mountain View County has an established practice that County policy is reviewed and approved by Council whereas County procedures (guided by policy) are approved by the County Manager. This approach reflects the roles and responsibilities set out in Alberta’s Municipal Government Act and leading practice in municipalities across Canada.</p> <p>The role of the County Manager, and the staff who report to and through him, is to conduct County business as directed by County policy and established procedure.</p>
<p>Form a Senior Management Team and schedule regular meetings.</p> <p>Responsibility: County Manager</p> <p><i>CAO and the four Department Heads</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Commit to and develop the regular practice of working as the County’s senior management team to review and decide on matters impacting the corporation. b. Sponsor and champion key projects and initiatives to improve on the County’s efficiency and service delivery. c. Lead development of a corporate culture and reduce the “silo” culture by collectively examining practices, committing to and leading change. d. Review, affirm and enhance the County’s complaint policy and processes to ensure that residents and Council have an open, active, transparent, timely and informative method to address concerns and complaints about County services and practices.
<p>Implementation suggestions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CAO should gather the Directors to discuss the value, purpose and work of a senior management team within the County Administration. This should result in a documented agreement amongst the team members outlining the purpose of the

team, the principles they commit to in working together and the kind of issues they will put on their agendas.

2. Leading practice in other municipal Administrations sees the group of senior managers, led by the CAO, providing leadership and coordination of key cross-organizational matters, such as: multi-year planning, developing and balancing operating and capital budget requirements; developing corporate policy and procedures that impact across the organization; considering corporate people, process and technology issues and projects that cross normal departmental lines.
3. The senior management team in other leading practice municipalities also acts to sponsor or champion key organization-wide initiatives as well as important projects that require the involvement of more than one department and thus require clarity of role and responsibilities beyond normal day-to-day operations.
4. The senior management team could begin by considering the need to address issues raised in this review and determine if and how some of those matters will be resolved. The issues include: corporate culture improvement and reduction of the silo approach; sponsorship of the review of the 176 Guarantee; improving public information and communications; enhancing service management through process definition and the use of technology; developing a corporate policy maintenance plan; developing procedures to implement corporate policy; applying the complaint process to continuously improve on County performance.
5. The senior management team should build a workplan, carry out their work and evaluate their effectiveness over a set period of time. The team should establish their own “plan, do, evaluate” cycle to develop and improve on their team’s performance.

Develop policy to support a new comprehensive County asset management strategy.

Responsibility: Operational Services Department

- Develop a comprehensive asset management policy (for Council approval) and procedures (for CAO approval) to guide lifecycle management of core County capital assets and infrastructure (particularly roads, land and improvements, airports, buildings, vehicles and mobile equipment). The asset management policy should be comprehensive enough to apply to all County tangible capital assets as operated by any part of the County corporation or its contractors, authorities, boards or commissions.
- County policy should establish the County’s preferred core asset management concepts such as: build versus buy decisions; lifecycle management and budgetary factors; approaches to preventative maintenance; and end of lifecycle disposition of assets.

Implementation suggestions.

1. The Operational Services Department, under the leadership of the new Director, should define a project to develop County policy to guide asset management practices for all classes of the County’s tangible capital assets. The County’s assets are used by the public (eg. roads and bridges) and the County staff (eg. Vehicles, office equipment) to deliver the County’s services to residents and visitors. While certain types of assets

may be used by specific groups, all these assets represent an investment of County funds and require purposeful – policy based – approaches to their ongoing operations and management (including procurement, preventative maintenance, rehabilitation and potential disposal). Operational Services has the majority of asset management expertise and accountability and thus should be tasked with leading development of corporate policy and procedure – in planned collaboration with the rest of the corporation.

2. The project plan should be presented to the CAO and senior management team for review and concurrence as to its completeness and feasibility.
3. A draft policy with supporting rationale and information, including categories of assets covered and differences in approach to management of differing classes of assets, should be presented to Council for approval.
4. Following approval of policy, Operational Services Department should refine the project proposal for the development of specific County procedures and again seek CAO and senior management team concurrence.
5. Operational Services should act as project manager to ensure timely development of draft procedures and their consideration and approval by the CAO and senior management team.

Update and streamline written communications to the public in regards to Planning and Development.

Responsibility: Planning and Development Services Department

- Improve on County communications about land use and development, particularly in regard to subdivision matters. Ensure that conditions imposed by provincial legislation or external regulation are identified. Simplify the language used.

Implementation suggestions.

1. The County Manager should seek, from the Director of Planning and Development, a formal response and plan of action to the specific observations about communications in regard to land use and development matters included in this report.
2. The County Manager and Director of Planning and Development should implement changes which they believe reasonable and feasible, and report on their decision and progress in implementing changes to the senior management team as well as provide updates to Council as deemed appropriate.

Develop wider acceptance for County approach to land use planning and development.

Responsibility: County Council

- Continue to work with the community, the CAO and the Planning and Development Services Department to reduce contention and uncertainty in regard to land use planning and decisions.

Responsibility: County Manager, Planning and Development Services Department

- Continue to support the community and Council in achieving greater agreement and understanding around land use in the County (as expressed in the Municipal

Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw) and reducing current uncertainty. Examine the alternative approach used in Ponoka County (see page 17) to address concerns about retention of agricultural land and the subdivision process.

Implementation suggestions.

1. Council should confirm an approach and timeline to bring ongoing consideration of the Municipal Development Plan and the Land Use Bylaw to a conclusion, and review and approve changes to County bylaws so that future direction for land use planning is confirmed.
2. The County Manager and the Director of Planning and Development should continue to provide Council with advice and guidance which will facilitate Council in the timely development and approval of County bylaws to guide future land use and planning decisions in the County.

Re-commit to, fully implement and communicate the “176 Guarantee” and initiate a reassessment of this program.**Responsibility: Operational Services Department**

- Re-commit to, fully implement and communicate the “176 Guarantee” and undertake a reassessment of this program over two years of full implementation.

Responsibility: Corporate Services Department and Human Resources

- Support the Operational Services Department in their full implementation and reassessment of the “176 Guarantee”.

Implementation suggestions.

1. The Operational Services Department, under the leadership of the new Director, should define a project to fully re-implement and communicate the “176 Guarantee” to all impacted employees and develop and communicate a program to reassess the value of the program to the County and its employees.
2. The project plan should be presented to the CAO and senior management team for review and concurrence as to its completeness and feasibility and to confirm the roles and responsibilities of all those who will be involved in re-implementation, communication and the multi-year assessment of value (ie. Operational Services managers, foremen and staff; other MVC staff such as human resources, payroll and others).
3. The Operational Services Director should regularly monitor and report on the project to the CAO and senior management team and should address any issues that arise or escalate issue resolution to the senior management Team or County Manager as required.
4. At the conclusion of the project the Operational Service Director should bring forward a comprehensive report recommending the continuation, modification or termination of the “176 Guarantee”. The report should also provide a comprehensive implementation plan and timeline to address all recommendations made in the report.

Reaffirm County policy and support the use of the County’s complaint policy and procedure so that resident concerns and complaints are properly documented, objectively investigated and appropriately responded to.

Responsibility: County Council

- Reaffirm County policy and support the use of the County’s complaint policy and procedure so that resident concerns and complaints are properly documented, objectively investigated and appropriately responded to.

Responsibility: CAO and the four Department Heads

- Review, affirm and enhance the County’s complaint policy and processes to ensure that residents and Council have an open, active, transparent, timely and informative method to address concerns and complaints about County services and practices.

Implementation suggestions.

1. The County can make better use of its existing Complaint policy and procedure by encouraging its use when residents identify issues, by recording and tracking submissions, objectively assessing the issues raised – as intended in County policy, and regularly reporting on the process.
2. The County Manager and senior management team should review the existing policy and procedures for potential improvements; particularly in the areas of tracking of complaints, the timeliness and transparency of the process, and consolidated reporting of outcomes. The process can provide Council, Administration and County residents with a significant means of communication and trust building that appears to have been underutilized by all parties.

Short-Term (within 6-12 months)

Develop procedures to support the new comprehensive County asset management policy.

Responsibility: Operational Services Department

- Develop a comprehensive asset management policy (for Council approval) and procedures (for CAO approval) to guide lifecycle management of core County capital assets and infrastructure (particularly roads, land and improvements, airports, buildings, vehicles and mobile equipment). The asset management policy should be comprehensive enough to apply to all County tangible capital assets as operated by any part of the County corporation or its contractors, authorities, boards or commissions.

Implementation suggestions.

1. Once the Operational Services Department, under the leadership of the new Director, has successfully concluded the development, and received Council approval of a new County asset management policy the Department should confirm a project to develop County procedures to guide asset management practices for all classes of the County's tangible capital assets in collaboration with the rest of the corporation.
2. The project plan for procedure development should be presented to the CAO and senior management team for review and concurrence as to its completeness and feasibility.
3. Draft procedures with supporting rationale and information, including categories of assets covered and differences in approach to the management of differing classes of assets, should be presented to the County Manager and senior management team for review and approval.
4. Following approval of procedures, Operational Services Department should ensure the communication and training (if necessary) of the new procedures as well as the ongoing identification of any issues and requirements for change to procedures and again seek CAO and senior management team concurrence if changes are required.

Improve on County communications about land use and development, particularly in regard to subdivision matters. (page 15 and Appendix C)

Responsibility: Planning and Development Services Department

Implementation suggestions.

1. Director of Planning and Development Services with Department staff as appropriate, should review the detailed ideas and practices of other jurisdictions incorporated in this report (page 15 and Appendix C) and determine any changes that are appropriate.
2. The Director should develop a plan of action, considering any proposed or actual change in County bylaws, to implement proposed communications changes.
3. The Director should present the plan of action to the County Manager and the senior management team for review and comment.
4. The Director should provide Council with a report for information on the communications changes to be implemented.

- The Director should ensure timely and effective implementation of changes.

Integrate the functions recently transferred in to the Planning and Development and train the staff in the use of the Department's processes and technology. (see #3 below)

Responsibility: Planning and Development Services Department

- Integrate the two functions recently transferred in to the Department and train the transferred staff in the use of the Department's processes and technology so that they become fully integrated parts of the whole.

Implementation suggestions.

- The Planning and Development Director should ensure that the engineering technical review function and the bylaw enforcement function which have been transferred to the Planning and Development Service Department are fully defined and that the processes to be used in both functions are properly integrated with existing Department processes. Functions and processes which cross Department lines should also be documented and confirmed with the Directors of those Departments and / or the County Manager and senior management team (this might include matters such as: the transfer of assets to the County; financial matters such as fine payments; legal matters such as access to legal resources and court related matters; etc.).
- The Director should ensure that once the functions' processes are fully defined and processes refined and integrated with the Department's other existing processes, that all staff of the Department (but particularly the transferred employees) are fully trained on the relevant Department processes and the use of Department records systems and technology .

Implement County information technology to support Operational Services Department processes and provide required management information. (See #4 and #9 below)

Responsibility: Operational Services Department

- Work with Corporate Services (information technology) and others as necessary to implement County information technology to support Department processes and provide required management information. Ensure that implementation of this technology considers the abilities, training and support requirements of current and future staff.

Responsibility: Corporate Services Department

- Support the Operational Services Department in implementation of information technology to support processes and manage the work of the Department.

Implementation suggestions.

- The Operational Services Department, under the leadership of the new Director, and with support from Corporate Services, should develop a project plan to document Department procedures and then implement additional information technology to

manage the work and report on results in the Operational Services Department. The project plan should ensure careful evaluation and (as much as possible) acceptance of basic processes built into the existing information technology (City Works and other related County technology) to ensure long term simplicity of and cost management of business processes and technology use.

2. The technology implementation project plan should be presented to the CAO and senior management team for review and concurrence as to its completeness and feasibility.
3. The Operational Services Director should appoint a project manager to lead the project. The Corporate Services Director and Operational Services Director should allocate the resources required for the project work.
4. The assigned project manager should deliver regular (at least monthly) project status reports to the Operational Services Director and the Director should provide progress reports to the County Manager and senior management team on a regular basis (at least once per quarter).

Long-Term (within 24 months)

Complete a reassessment of the “176 Guarantee” program and provide findings and recommendations to the CAO.

Responsibility: Operational Services Department

- Re-commit to, fully implement and communicate the “176 Guarantee” and undertake a reassessment of this program over two years of full implementation.

Responsibility: Corporate Services Department and Human Resources

- Support the Operational Services Department in their full implementation and reassessment of the “176 Guarantee”.

Implementation suggestions.

1. The project to reassess the “176 Guarantee” should establish evaluation criteria at the beginning of the project (as noted above).
2. The project plan should define roles, responsibilities and information requirements that will allow for the evaluation of the “176 Guarantee” program at the end of the reassessment period.
3. Operational Services Department, under the leadership of the new Director, and with support from Corporate Services and Human Resources, should develop a final evaluation report based on the evaluation criteria established for the project and the information collected during the reassessment period.
4. Evaluation findings should be presented to the CAO and senior management team at the end of the project period with recommendations for action. If the recommendations require it the County Manager may bring the evaluation report, recommendations and proposed implementation plan to Council for information.

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