



growing opportunity



OUR HAMLETS, OUR FUTURE

HAMLET OF PICKARDVILLE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

MAY 20, 2026

Prepared by:



RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

RDN acknowledges that our physical office is located on amiskwacîwâskahikan ᐱᓂᑦᕈᓇᓂᓄᓐ, known as Beaver Hills House or Edmonton, the historical land of Treaty 6 Territory and a traditional gathering place for all peoples. We would like to thank our hosts the Nehiyawak (Cree), Saulteaux, Niisitapi (Blackfoot), Red River Métis and Îyāñé Nakón (Stoney) whose traditional land in which we live and work. As a national organization, we also acknowledge and respect the histories, languages, and cultures of all First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Turtle Island whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community. We acknowledge that we are all Treaty People. This means we all have a responsibility to uphold and respect the Treaties signed to affirm our commitment and responsibility to improve relationships between nations and improve our understanding of the vast differences between the many First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples across Turtle Island and their own unique cultures. We recognize the land as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside. RDN recognizes the ways in which settler relationships to both the land and the Peoples of this land have been broken and misused, causing and contributing to First Nation, Métis and Inuit houselessness. In an ongoing effort to support First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities in addressing housing, homelessness, and service needs, we are committed to decolonizing homelessness research and advocating to funders for Indigenous self-determination in the housing and social sectors.

We share this acknowledgement to reaffirm our responsibility and commitment to reconciliation. We also recognize that this land acknowledgment is just that, an acknowledgment; it is but one step in our journey. We commit to working to uphold the conditions of the treaties that govern this land.



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PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Westlock County initiated a hamlet development project titled Our Hamlets, Our Future with the description “A place to stay, a place to grow. Shaped by the people who live here.” The first phase of the project was to create Community Development Plans for their 3 southern hamlets in Westlock County – Busby, Pickardville and Vimy. In order to create these Plans for the 3 hamlets, Westlock County first wanted to conduct in-person engagement with residents, surrounding landowners, and community groups in each hamlet in the Spring of 2026 to gather feedback.

The County was looking to gather feedback in 5 areas: Housing, Businesses, Facilities, Programs and Infrastructure to assist in the creation of the Community Development Plans. It was important to the County to hear from community members what they would like to see in these 5 areas, as well as what they do not want to see. After the initial engagement, What We Heard reporting was to be compiled for each hamlet and utilized to create preliminary Community Development Plans for each hamlet.

To facilitate engagement with the three hamlets, Westlock County contracted a third-party, Rural Development Network, to conduct the in-person community consultation in each hamlet in the Spring of 2026, as well as provide What We Heard reporting to support the next steps of the Our Hamlets, Our Future project. Rural Development Network (RDN) was selected, since they are a non-profit organization that works with rural, remote and Indigenous communities and organizations across Canada. RDN collaborates to identify and bring focus to rural issues, build local capacity, and develop innovative, rural-based solutions to social and economic challenges.



PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The purpose of this engagement for the Our Hamlets, Our Future project was to gain resident feedback on community strengths, concerns/challenges and opportunities in relation to Housing, Businesses, Facilities, Programs and Infrastructure to assist in the creation of a Community Development Plan for the Hamlet of Pickardville. The in-person engagement session took place on the evening of May 20, 2026. Similar engagement sessions were also held in the Hamlets of Vimy and Busby on May 19 and May 21, 2026 for the same purpose.

The same four questions were asked in all three in-person sessions for the three hamlets, including Pickardville:

- *Tell Us What You Love About Your Community* (strengths)
- *Tell Us What We Need to Know About Your Community* (site analysis)
- *Tell Us the Concerns You See in Your Community* (challenges)
- *Tell Us the Opportunities You See in Your Community*

The first question, *Tell Us What You Love About Your Community*, was conducted as a sticky-note exercise that participants completed as they arrived at the venue, Pickardville Community Hall. Participants were not asked to provide their personal information, in order to maintain anonymity, and were asked to mark their general residential location on a map of the Hamlet of Pickardville instead.

The second question, *Tell Us What We Need to Know About Your Community*, was conducted as a group exercise with RDN facilitating and note-taking, in order to conduct a site analysis of the hamlet.

The third question, *Tell Us the Concerns You See in Your Community*, was conducted as a group exercise with RDN facilitating and note-taking.

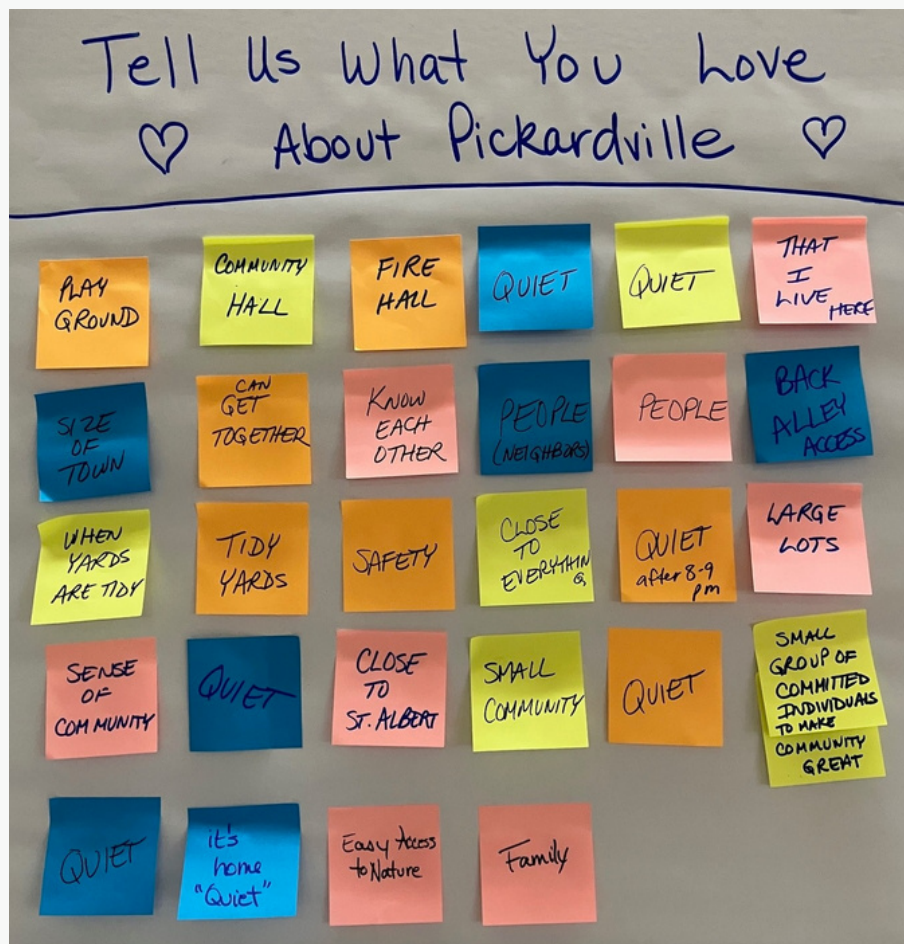
The fourth and final question, *Tell Us the Opportunities You See in Your Community*, was conducted as a break-out session, where participants gathered in smaller groups to discuss the questions and Westlock County staff provided the note-taking in each group. Then each group's answers were shared with the larger group for discussion.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Strengths (What You Love about Your Community)

- The most popular response was *Quiet* (noted 7 times) including *Quiet After 8-9 pm* and *It's Home (Quiet)* and in second place was *People (Neighbours)/Know Each Other* (noted 3 times) regarding living in the Hamlet of Pickardville.
- Several responses were in third place (all noted 2 times) including:
 - *Close to Everything/Close to St. Albert,*
 - *When Yards are Tidy/Tidy Yards,*
 - *Can Get Together/Sense of Community, and*
 - *Size of Hamlet/Small Community.*
- Other responses noted *That I Live Here, Family, Safety, Easy Access to Nature, and Small Group of Committed Individuals to Make Community Great* relating to connections and quality of living in Pickardville.
- Other strengths noted were *Playground, Community Hall, Fire Hall, Large Lots, and Back Alley Access* all speaking to amenities and features in Pickardville.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Site Analysis (What We Need to Know About Your Community)

Pickardville is a hamlet of about 300 people in Westlock County, located about 80 km northwest of Edmonton and about 15 km south of the Town of Westlock. Highway 44 is 2.5 km east of the hamlet. During the engagement session, participants were led through a discussion where they described their community to the RDN facilitators. This discussion was intended to start a conversation about the hamlet, without focusing on what was good or bad about it.

- As is typical in most of Alberta, the predominant wind direction is from the west or northwest. The sewage lagoon is immediately west of the hamlet, so residents occasionally experience adverse effects from it. Participants indicated that vac trucks from other areas use the lagoon to empty their loads, which they felt affected capacity for hamlet residents.
- The hamlet is surrounded by agricultural lands; some participants felt it is the best land in Alberta.
- The Canadian National Railway (CN) line divides the community into 2 very distinct parts. According to participants, the train goes through the hamlet at least 2 times per day and the noise is quite disruptive.
- The main street through the hamlet is Township Road 585. Participants indicated that there is a fair amount of traffic through on this street and that speeding is sometimes an issue.
- The post office is located in a large former warehouse on the west side of the hamlet. Since there are no sidewalks along the main street (Township Road 585), residents felt that walking safely to the post office from within the community was difficult.
- The former warehouse building has also housed several businesses over the past decades. It sits on a 9-acre parcel that has a large amount of industrial waste on it. Residents felt this waste is a hazard for the community and would like to see it removed.
- Participants repeatedly brought up issues around the poor state of streets and back alleys in the hamlet – both paved and gravel. They also indicated that the hamlet has drainage and flooding issues.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Site Analysis (What We Need to Know About Your Community) – CONTINUED

- Facilities in the hamlet include a fire hall, a community hall, a post office, a playground, 2 churches and an automotive shop. The community hall includes a stage and kitchen area and is well used by residents. Participants indicated that the playground is on County land and needs updating and/or repair. They felt that the Catholic Church was historically important.
- The school in the hamlet is no longer in use. While the building still exists, it is in disrepair and not habitable. Elementary school-age children are bussed to Busby (17 km south) for Kindergarten to Grade 6, and then to Westlock (14 km north) for Grades 9 to 12.
- In terms of things to do in the hamlet, participants talked about the ball diamonds, which are owned by the community but are in need of repair. Other activities in the community include biking, motorbiking, and quadding. The Pickardville Community Group manages the hall and hosts such events as the Mother's Day and July 1st celebrations. This group is working to get the community organized to repair and operate the ball diamond area.
- Water for the hamlet is piped in from Westlock; in the past, many of the homes used well water. Most homes in the hamlet are connected to the sewer lines; liquids are pumped to the lagoon and solids are collected in tanks, which then must be pumped out by vac truck.
- When residents are looking for groceries, medical services or household goods, they travel to Westlock (14 km), Spruce Grove (66 km), St. Albert (60 km) or Barrhead (42 km). When asked if they go to Westlock for any of these services, most said no.
- Some of the participants indicated that they work from home, but most said they commute to Westlock for work.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Challenges (What Concerns You See in Your Community)

During the session, participants identified several concerns about the community that included infrastructure & services, community safety & appearance, and commercial & residential development.

- **Infrastructure & Services** – In regards to Infrastructure and services, residents raised the following concerns:
 - Drainage and culvert repair needed throughout hamlet
 - Piled up dead grass in ditches needs to be removed
 - Sidewalks need maintenance/repair
 - Roads need maintenance
 - Uneven paving
 - Re-painting lines on Main Street and road out of hamlet
 - Back alleys need work
 - No ditches for drainage
 - Some back alleys need gravel
 - Snow removal
 - Lack of snow removal
 - Where snow is dumped is an issue
 - Water/Wastewater
 - Lagoon capacity is a concern, especially considering the number of vac trucks that use the lagoon
 - Sewage pressure is a concern and seems to be caused by line design
 - Hose clamps on CC valves are not to code
 - Fix railroad crossing
- **Community Safety & Appearance** – In regards to community safety and appearance, several concerns were mentioned by residents:
 - Crime from the city and the need for more police presence in the community
 - Stray animals being dropped off in the community and no group (i.e. SPCA) to deal with strays
 - Highway signage as you enter the hamlet needs to be fixed (potential Alberta Transportation responsibility)
 - The excessive number of trucks travelling through the hamlet to access the lagoon (potentially could be re-routed outside of the hamlet)
 - Speeding on Main Street; residents suggested changing speed back to 40 km/h from 50 km/h (they advised it has been done once and changed back to 50 km/h)
 - Keeping homes and yards maintained
 - Playground needs updating and repairs

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Challenges (What Concerns You See in Your Community) - CONTINUED

- **Commercial & Residential Development** - In regards to development, both commercial and residential, the community had both concerns and suggestions:
 - The 9-acre parcel next to post office is a possibility for development, but leftover concrete and industrial waste needs to be dealt with first
 - The land where the old gas station was located could be developed, but it will need to be reclaimed/cleaned up first
 - Preference by community members for single family homes to attract families and seniors and no desire for diversified housing types, like duplexes or apartments
 - Need for zoning bylaw for hamlets in regards to housing and commercial development
 - Education on bylaws and enforcement of bylaws
 - Using industrial lots for housing or commercial development
 - Current lot availability in the hamlet is limited
 - Advised there are two vacant lots where two old gas stations were once located
 - Infrastructure deficits need to be addressed before developing new homes and commercial spaces
 - Suggested housing improvement incentives



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Opportunities (What Opportunities You See in Your Community)

During the session, participants identified several opportunities for the community including residential & light industrial development, infrastructure, transportation, and recreation:

- **Residential & Light Industrial Development** – In regards to residential and light industrial development, residents discussed:
 - There are some vacant lots for development (they may need to be reclaimed and there was an inquiry if it could be forced)
 - Industrial development possible near rail line, but a proper infrastructure study is needed
 - Surveying land prior to development to ensure it is not impacted by old mine shafts
 - The 9-acre parcel (sometimes it was called 10 acres) west of the hamlet could be developed, once cleaned up
 - Demolishing the school to make a new available space
 - Residents felt that light industrial or commercial development was appropriate for the community
 - Future commercial developments suggested were:
 - Convenience store (potentially in post office)
 - Gas station
 - Car wash
 - Small personal service shops
 - Greenhouse
 - Event space
 - Bakery/coffee shop
 - Mechanic/body shop
 - RV park/campsite
 - Storage facility
 - Attraction businesses, like mini golf, go karts or paintball, to make Pickardville a destination
 - More remote-based businesses
 - Community preference for manufactured homes or single family detached homes over attached housing
 - Seniors housing was discussed, but transportation to services would be needed to make it viable
 - There was discussion on potentially converting or repurposing the post office building to residential or commercial use
 - Potentially need to purchase land for development
 - West of hamlet and east/southeast of hamlet suggested for development
 - Community was open to development that is appropriate to the area, but wanted traffic and infrastructure to be considered first

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Opportunities (What Opportunities You See in Your Community) - CONTINUED

- **Infrastructure** – For infrastructure, community members discussed the following:
 - Proper records for utilities/services
 - General maintenance and updating services, including CC valve connections, to help attract residents and businesses
 - Fix concave road tops on Township Road 585 (Main Street)
 - Fiber optic lines for internet
 - A recycling program
- **Transportation** – For transportation, residents advised:
 - Need for a shuttle bus to take residents to town
 - If developed senior housing, access to transportation is a requirement
- **Recreation** – For recreation, residents requested more youth and family recreation, which could include:
 - Reviving the existing sports grounds including ball diamonds (could support businesses or provide campground and day use)
 - Fully boarded outdoor rink with skate shack
 - A new playground and/or upgrade current playground
 - A walking/cycling path from Pickardville to Highway 44 (improve safety, since walkers/joggers not on road)
 - More family-oriented events and support needed for the community to host more events
 - More youth recreation spaces



NEXT STEPS

- In the Fall of 2026, there will be a second round of in-person engagement in all three hamlets (Vimy, Pickardville and Busby), facilitated by the Rural Development Network. The purpose of the Fall engagement is to bring information back to the Hamlet of Pickardville in regards to:
 - What We Heard reporting from the initial engagement in the Spring,
 - A draft Community Development Plan,
 - Gathering additional resident feedback on the draft Community Development Plan, and
 - Discussing next steps needed to execute the Community Development Plans.



APPENDIX 1: ENGAGEMENT NOTES

Hamlet of Pickardville – May 20, 2026

Tell Us What You Love About Your Community

- Playground
- Community hall
- Fire hall
- Quiet/Quiet after 8:00–9:00 pm/It's home (quiet) – x7
- That I live here
- Size of town/Small community
- Can get together/Sense of community
- Know each other/People (neighbours) – x2
- Back alley access
- When yards are tidy/Tidy yards
- Safety
- Close to everything/Close to St. Albert
- Large lots
- Small group of committed individuals to make community great
- Easy access to nature
- Family

Tell Us About Your Community

- NW wind
- Lagoon west of hamlet
- Best agricultural land – all around the hamlet
- Main rail line goes through hamlet – train goes through twice a day minimum
- Noisy by rail tracks
- Main Street
 - Speed is an issue
 - 50km/h limit went to 40 km/h limit back to 50 km/h limit
 - Accelerate on west end and road changes to gravel
 - Both sides and north road (gravel)
 - Snow clearing issue
- Back alleys need attention
- Pavement on street is not consistent with some gravel
- Snow removal a concern
- Drainage and water issues – makes culvert not useful with no ditches
- Thaw culverts only if someone calls (charge to unplug culvert)
- Email or call County office with issues
- Drain to east and north to slough
- Backyard flooding
- Wetland across from fire hall
- Pickardville built on a swamp

- Piped water
- Sewage – flood basements
- Lagoon capacity affects Pickardville residents
- Grey water – piped for sewer
- Solids pumped out
- Trucks pay to fill lagoon (there is capacity, but residents see otherwise)
- Rain water and piped water for lawns
- Sidewalks need repairs
- Old gas station has hole on sidewalk – reclaimed?
- Sidewalks – walk on roads or ditches; lots of truck traffic (tractors, hydratrucks & grain trucks)
- For groceries and doctor, go to Westlock or Spruce Grove (45 minutes) and St. Albert; doctor – Barrhead too (not Westlock)
- Work – either remotely or in Westlock
- Gas pipeline south of Pickardville
- Hall and Catholic Church are historically important
- Old school in disrepair
- Fire hall
- Olds wells previously used for water as well water was popular before; now piped (trickle) system
- Post office in old commercial building and is a private residence
- Need habitable housing – know lot prices and how to deal with material left behind
- 9-acre parcel (has industrial waste)
- Speed bumps to slow traffic down
- Ball diamonds (not used) – owned by Pickardville community group
- Playground needs repair
- No campground (no longer camping)
- Lemonade stand
- July 1st big celebration
- Pickardville community group – manages hall, bingos, Mother’s Day event, and Canada Day event
- Hard to get community members to be a part of community group
- FCSS does some events
- Biking, motorbiking or quadding
- Schools – Busby (K-6) and Westlock (including for French)
 - Several bus stops in hamlet including Main Street

Tell us the Concerns/Challenges in Your Community

- Drainage and culvert repair (all over hamlet)
- Sidewalks
- Uneven paving
- Back alleys need work – no ditches for drainage and some need gravel
- Speed on Main Street (in and out of hamlet) – changed back to 50 km/h and accelerate out of hamlet
- Snow removal – where it gets dumped is an issue
- Lagoon capacity

- Excessive number of trucks in hamlet to lagoon
- Playground
- 9-acre parcel – concrete left over from past and next to post office
- Sewage pressure (line design)
- Old gas station – reclaimed?
- Fix signage (Alberta Transportation?)
- Zoning bylaw for hamlets for housing and commercial
- Education on bylaws and enforcement
- Industrial lot for housing
- Single-family housing (families and seniors)
- Limited lot availability
- Industrial lot – commercial
- Two vacant lots – two old gas stations
- Keep maintained – homes and yards
- Infrastructure deficient
- No diversified housing types
- Housing improvement incentives
- Crime from city (need for police presence)
- Stray animals dropped off (no SPCA)

Tell Us the Opportunities You See in Your Community

Group #1

- More single-detached development
- Convenience store in post office
- RV park/campsite
- Upgrade playpark
- Industrial development near rail line – needs proper infrastructure study
- More remote-based businesses
- More youth recreation spaces
- Shuttle bus to town
- More family-oriented community recreation events
- Surveying land prior to development to make sure that it isn't impacted by old mine shafts

Group #2

- On the vacant 10-acre lot west of the hamlet
- Repurpose existing Canada Post/Gaydosh building/residential units
- Township 585 and RR 265
- Westerly for development – light industrial – across/south of Gaydosh property
- Concave road tops (Township 585)
- Gas station/convenience store/small personal service shops
- Bakery/coffee shop
- Car wash
- No development on sports grounds
- Make Pickardville a destination point

Group #3

- Sports grounds
 - Grant
 - Industry/support
 - Business
 - Campground and day use
- Outdoor rink
 - Fully boarded
 - Skate shack
- Ball diamonds
- New playground
- Commercial greenhouse – coffee shop, event space, “Deb’s Greenhouse”
- Attraction-type business
 - Mini golf
 - Go karts
 - Paintball
- Event support
- County owned land to develop
 - Commercial/light industrial
- Manufactured homes over higher density housing types

Group #4

- West of hamlet
- Sports grounds
- Vacant lots to be reclaimed (can it be forced)
- Old school to be demolished
- Proper records for utilities/services
 - Updated services (e.g. CC valve connections)
- Nowhere on Main Street
- Would have to buy land
- East/southeast of hamlet
- Used to be lumber yard/gas station
- General maintenance
- Storage facility/light industrial (e.g. Atlantic Industries)
- Mechanic/body shop
- Open to development and consider traffic
- What type of development – seniors housing as long as there is access to transport
- Railway spur is used

Summary of Opportunities

- Development - vacant lots/west of hamlet (10-acre parcel)/demo school
- Set up records for infrastructure (Township 585)
- Light industrial - appropriate to community
- Convenience store/gas station/RV site/campsite
- Housing - manufactured homes and single family detached homes only; converting the post office building to residential
- Youth recreation/family recreation
 - Revive sportsgrounds
 - Outdoor rink/playground
- Greenhouse
- Shuttle bus

Index Card Feedback

- Lower the speed limit to 40 km/h, or four-way stop at 51st Street
- We appreciate that you've ACTUALLY taken the time to come out here BUT also interested to see what comes of it!
- I would love for Westlock County and the Town of Westlock to work more closely with its surrounding communities. There seems to be a disconnect between what we need and what Westlock is doing (or not doing). Would like to be more collaborative with the rural communities of Westlock & thank you for coming out!
- Hose clamps on ccv valves NOT TO CODE (ever); paint lines back on Main Street and road out of town; fix railroad crossing; get rid of piled up dead grass in ditches
- Get better lines in here from TELUS (fiber optic lines)
- A walking/cycling path from hamlet to Highway 44 would be amazing; also much safer than having all the walkers/joggers on the road
- A recycling program for Pickardville



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July 30, 2026