



growing opportunity

OUR HAMLETS, OUR FUTURE
HAMLET OF VIMY
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAY 19, 2026

Prepared by:



**RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

RDN acknowledges that our physical office is located on amiskwacîwâskahikan ᐱᓄᑦᕿᔭᓴᒃᕈᓂ, 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 Vimy. The in-person engagement session took place on the evening of May 19, 2026. Similar engagement sessions were also held in the Hamlets of Pickardville and Busby on May 20 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 Vimy:

- *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, Vimy 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 Vimy 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.

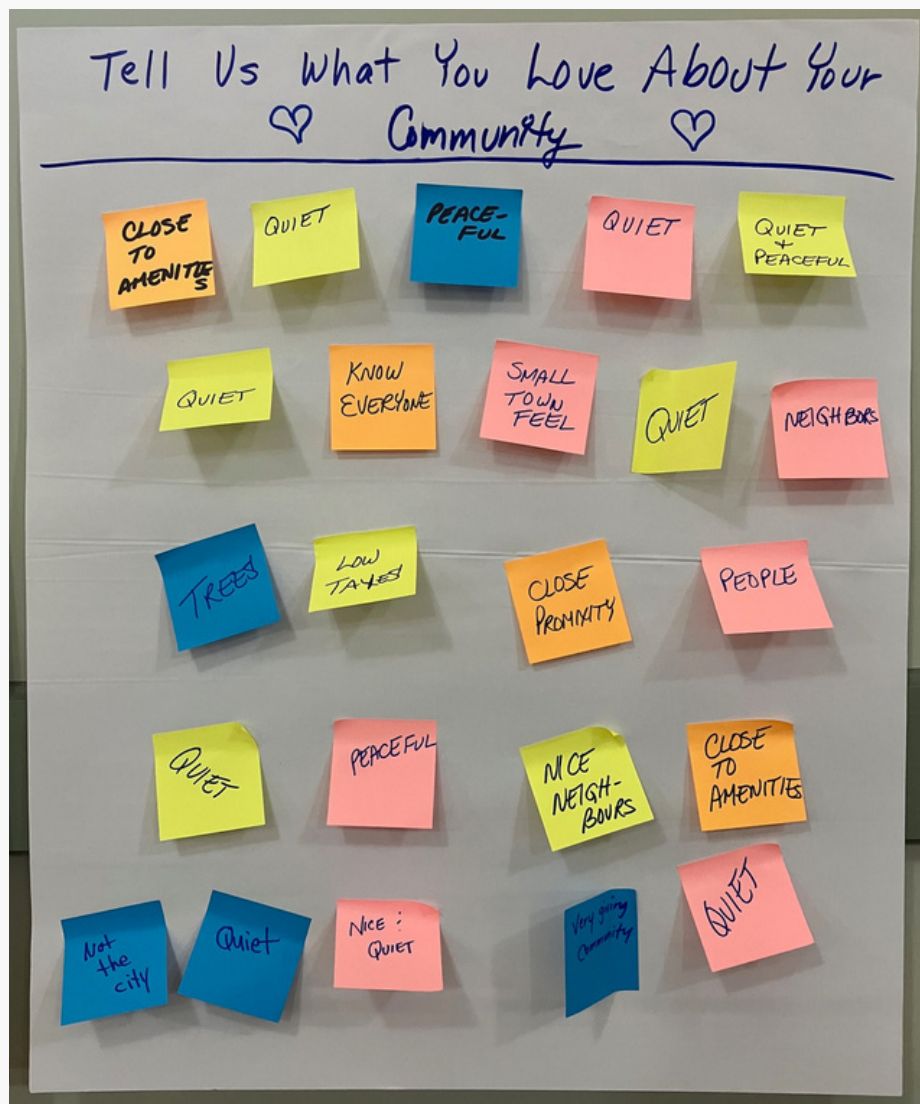
The third and final questions, *Tell Us the Concerns You See in Your Community* and *Tell Us the Opportunities You See in Your Community*, were both conducted as break-out sessions, where participants gathered in smaller groups to discuss the questions and Westlock County staff provided the note-taking 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 responses regarding living in the Hamlet of Vimy were *Quiet* (noted 9 times) and *Peaceful* (noted 3 times) with *People/Neighbours* (noted 3 times) and *Close to Amenities/Proximity* (noted 3 times) both in third place.
- Other responses noted the *Small Town Feel*, *Not the City*, and *Know Everyone* related to the size of the community.
- Other strengths noted were *Low Taxes*, *Trees*, and *Very Giving Community* all speaking to quality of living in Vimy.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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

Vimy is a hamlet of about 180 people in Westlock County, located about 60 km northwest of Edmonton and about 23 km south of the Town of Westlock. During the engagement session, participants were led through a discussion whereby 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. Since the sewage lagoon is to the east of the hamlet, locals don't experience any adverse effects from it.
- The hamlet is surrounded by agricultural lands, with a variety of crops being farmed – primarily wheat, canola and alfalfa. There is no ranching in the immediate area.
- Water for the hamlet comes from Westlock, although the hamlet also sits on a natural spring, so there are wells in it as well. People noted that they were not sure where all the wells were, and were concerned about the potential danger of collapsing well shafts.
- Most of the 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.
- The former rail line that ran through the hamlet was abandoned in 1985 and the lands are now privately owned.
- Fire and emergency services are provided to the hamlet from Clyde or Westlock; there is limited garbage and no recycling service¹; there is no transportation service (i.e. handibus).
- People travel to Westlock (22 km) or St. Albert (40 km) for groceries, medical appointments and other personal services.
- Participants noted that the hamlet is generally very quiet, with some road noise at night from Highway 2 to the west.
- Kids in the hamlet generally play in the streets, in the playground at the manufactured home park, at the basketball court, and outdoor skating rink. Participants noted that the playground needs some work, but that upgrades would be expensive.

¹ Municipal garbage collection is bi-weekly and curbside recycling is not available as of the date of this report. Recycling can be taken to the regional landfill.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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

- In general, people felt safe walking around their community, except for a few aggressive dogs and issues at the former hotel that has now been shut down.
- Elementary school-age kids take the bus to Clyde (14 km north) for Kindergarten to Grade 9, and then to Westlock for high school (22 km northwest).
- In terms of non-residential uses and structures in the hamlet: the Cenotaph (honours 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge in France) is a very visible monument upon entering the hamlet; a long-standing Catholic church is the only religious building in the hamlet; the Lions Hall, across the street from the Cenotaph is another dominant structure in the hamlet, along with a smaller hall on the other side of the Cenotaph and next to the outdoor skating rink; finally, a mechanic shop is the sole business that operates out of a commercial building in the hamlet.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Challenges (What Concerns You See in Your Community)

During the session, participants identified several concerns about the community that included infrastructure, age of the community, recreation, housing, transportation, dangerous & criminal activity, community appearance & amenities, and growth.

- **Infrastructure** – In regards to infrastructure, residents raised the following concerns:
 - Poor street lighting (i.e. children walk in the dark to school bus)
 - Drainage issues that cause flooding
 - For example, west back alley of manufactured home park has no culverts, so surrounding yards get flooded
 - Road maintenance
 - Potholes and road maintenance & conditions (i.e. pavement cracking)
 - Snow removal is not timely, so residents help clear snow
 - Sidewalk conditions (i.e. crumbling sidewalks)
 - Cell service is poor and internet connectivity needs to be upgraded
 - Not all fire hydrants are functional
 - Sewage system has limited capacity and concern about aging sewage system outside of manufactured home park
- **Age of the Community** – The concerns about the age of the community were considered:
 - Difficult to attract young families
 - Also difficult to get volunteers, especially younger volunteers, to assist the local Lions Club
 - Community has a more senior population, but senior supports are limited
 - A mobile medical clinic was mentioned as a possible needed service
- **Recreation** – Recreation is a community need, especially for children, as there is:
 - No playground near the community hall
 - Only playground in the hamlet is in need of repairs
 - Concern that the old school grounds has a sink hole
- **Housing** – Housing discussion centered around:
 - Available vacant lots that people can purchase to develop single family homes or buy a manufactured home
 - Desire to attract more families to the community
 - Servicing expense as a barrier to housing growth



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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

- **Transportation** – Two transportation-related concerns were provided:
 - No handibus service in the community for seniors
 - School bus stops are not in good locations for pick-up
- **Dangerous & Criminal Activity** – The community discussed the dangerous and criminal activity present:
 - Impaired driving, speeding, racing, drinking, drug use, and theft were listed as concerns
 - Concerns are often tied with perceptions about low-income housing, renters, or transients
 - Hotel was listed as a place of concern and the recent hotel closure has assisted with a reduction in drug use, crime, and dogs running loose
 - Citizens on Patrol (COP) is active in the community with the same volunteers from the Lions Club, and was more active when the hotel was in operation
 - Concerns about the COP patrols, especially at night, since residents did not know if it was COP or criminal activity
 - Not every resident seemed to be aware that COP existed in the community
 - Surveillance options mentioned, such as tracking license plate numbers
 - Another concern was unlicensed vehicle use, such as off-road vehicles
- **Community Appearance & Amenities** – Residents commented on the community's appearance and lack of amenities:
 - Unsightly premises and unkept yards, trash in the ditches, vacant trailers in manufactured home park, and need for more cleanliness were listed concerns
 - Need for amenities to encourage people to stay and address mobility issues, such as for those that can no longer drive
 - For example, have to travel to purchase loaf of bread – need for a store
 - Possible contamination in south lot of manufactured home park
 - Google Maps does not recognize Vimy's addresses
- **Growth** – There was discussion on growth and residents remarked on:
 - Concerns about maintaining the small town atmosphere and supportive community
 - Having no services to attract residents
 - Being too expensive to support small business or a small store
 - Close proximity to larger towns mentioned as a limitation for business growth
 - Desire to organize the community in a way where its collective voice and resident concerns could be heard to develop solutions
- There was a compliment to Westlock County on how they have done a great job to try to improve Vimy

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Opportunities (What Opportunities You See in Your Community)

During the session, participants identified several opportunities for the community including recreation, housing, and business growth.

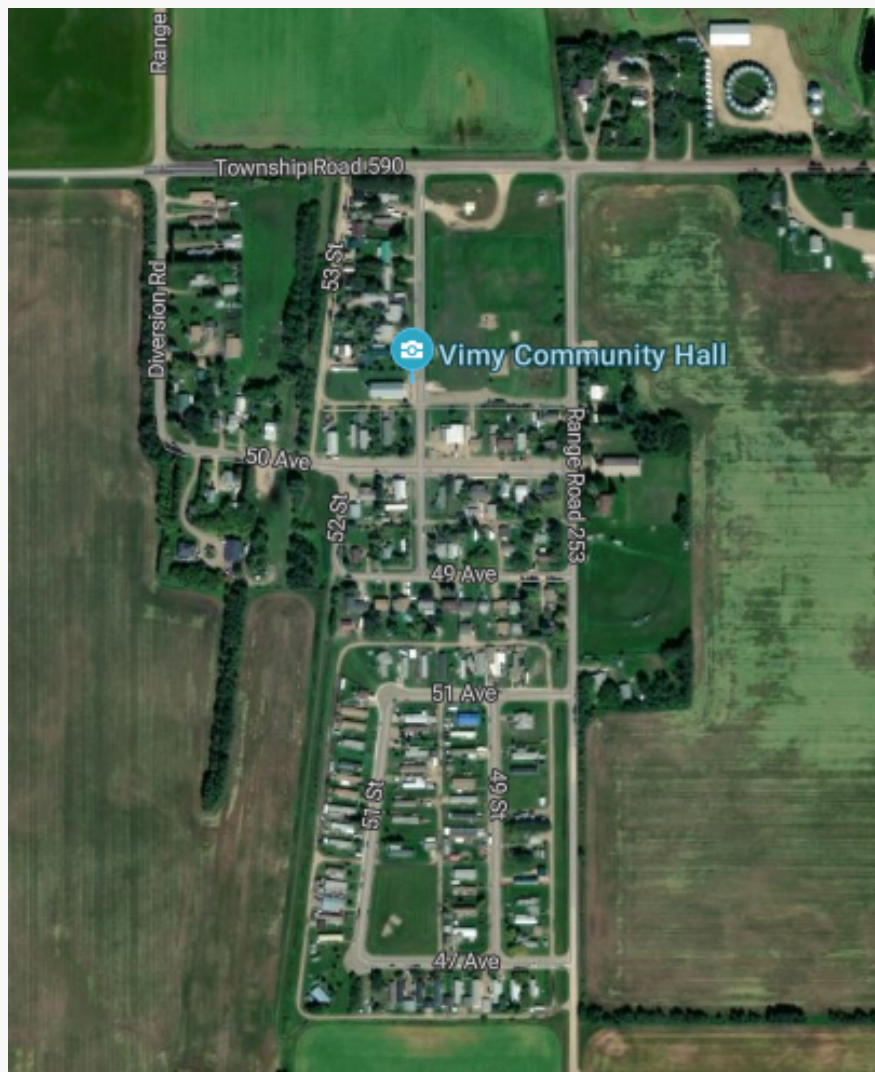
- **Recreation** – Recreation opportunities focused on activities for children and families to attract visitors and residents:
 - Playground/outdoor exercise equipment
 - Campground
 - Dog park and park areas near skating rink
 - Motocross park
 - Redeveloping the old school grounds and old baseball diamonds that are for sale
- **Housing** – Residents saw:
 - Potential for housing development along the east side of the hamlet
 - Vacant lots/land available for development of single family homes or purchase of manufactured homes²
 - A need for seniors housing, but the senior services would be required to support this type of development
 - Affordability of the land as an incentive for new residents
 - Lots would need to be serviced to be attractive to buyers
- **Business Growth** – Residents listed some business opportunities:
 - Convenience store/ice cream shop
 - Gas station
 - Hairdresser/barber shop
 - Taxi service
 - Utilizing community hall for multiple purposes, including small businesses
 - Repurposing or demolishing the hotel to make way for commercial development
 - Potential of the old railway lands, which are privately owned, for commercial or industrial development
 - Light industrial development potential along Township Road 590
 - Old school grounds as potential site for a commercial business
 - Campground and motocross park would provide recreation and could serve as visitor attractions and venues for events
 - New zoning could bring opportunities outside of residential use



² Perception of available vacant lots/land for housing development and will be investigated further.

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 Vimy 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 Vimy – May 19, 2026

Tell Us What You Love About Your Community

- Quiet (x8)/Nice & quiet
- Peaceful (x3)
- Close to amenities (x2)/Close proximity
- Know everyone
- Small town feel
- Neighbors/People/Nice neighbours
- Trees
- Low taxes
- Not the city
- Very giving community

Tell Us About Your Community

- Wind from NW & north
- Lagoon is east of hamlet
- Best agricultural land all around the hamlet (best in the world)
- Crops are canola, wheat, alfalfa, and some barley
- Rail not operational – gone for 30 years and land is privately owned
- Road noise sometimes; at night, in back alleys (some theft)
- Unsafe to walk due to dogs (aggressive)
- Roads – Main Street bad by church and paving cracking in hamlet
- 50th Street is Main Street
- One business – the mechanic shop
- No ranching immediately around the hamlet
- Grain bins
- Water bodies – under Vimy (natural spring)
- Water supply from Westlock (piped in)
- Sewage – some have own pumps to a lift station for grey water; otherwise use septic tanks and solids are pumped out
- Garbage and no recycling
- Travel to St. Albert for groceries, doctor, etc. (same distance to Westlock); St. Albert is cheaper than Westlock
- Cenotaph is 10 years old and honours the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge
- Catholic church – built in the 1960's
- Vimy Lions Hall
- Outdoor skating rink
- Karate
- Lions organization has 6 members
- Playground in trailer park; one playground near hall removed

- Expensive to replace playground equipment (a refurbish opportunity was mentioned during the session by one participant)
- Kids play in street, including riding bicycles
- Basketball court; baseball diamond is for sale
- Clyde (K-6) and Westlock (high school) for school
- Fire hydrants don't work in trailer park (not enough pressure)
- Fire halls in Clyde and Westlock
- No street lighting in some spots/areas (kids walk in the dark to school bus)
- School division has a few bus stops in Vimy; bus cannot drive through trailer park; kids walking to cenotaph, including in cold/bad weather conditions
- Roads not maintained in hamlet of Vimy
- Alley access

Tell us the Concerns/Challenges in Your Community

Group #1

- Snow removal on roads – takes too long; residents help each other clear snow
- Crumbling sidewalks
- Crime
 - Has slowed down, but still an issue
 - People familiar with the area
 - Vehicles/trailers stolen
 - Drug use not as visible as before
 - Drug deals at dark corner
- Hotel closing improved things – crime, dogs and drugs
- Concerned with low-income housing or renters or transients
- Community cannot support small business or small store – too expensive
- Want to see new families move in that own and have community pride
- County has done a great job to try to improve Vimy
- Community members help each other out and want to keep that vibe

Group #2

- Hotel
- Unsightly yards
- Vacant trailers in the court
- West back alley of trailer park has no culverts; surrounding yards get flooded
- Potholes
- Not able to get a loaf of bread; once people can no longer drive, they cannot stay
- Growth seems impossible – no services to attract anyone
- Cell service not good
- Internet not good; may be getting upgraded service soon
- Aging community – hard to get young people involved (Lions Club runs this community but no one will join)
- Handi-bus – no service to Vimy anymore
- Community of seniors, but no support for seniors
- Citizens on Patrol (COP) – same 6 people as Lions Club; much busier when hotel was active; community complained about COP patrolling

Group #3

- Night time traffic, especially at night
- Road conditions and drainage
- Dangerous driving, speeding and racing
- Rental properties with transient residents
- Unlicensed vehicles – off-road vehicles
- Impaired driving
- Fire hydrants – not functional?
- Community crime watch would be benefit
- Need to organize community, find a voice, clear pathway for concerns to be heard – solutions to be developed
- Surveillance options? – track licence numbers
- Mobile medical clinic

Group #4

- No issues with the lagoon or smells
- Beer cans in the ditch
- Vimy garage
- Manufactured home park – south lot has possible contamination (previous owner did mechanical repairs, etc.)
- Old school grounds (sink hole?)
- Enough vacant lots – people can purchase and develop (single family homes/manufactured residence)
- No specific areas of concern – there are a couple of questionable properties, but they're in every community
- Playgrounds/roads/sidewalks all need improvement
- No flooding in hamlet
- Convenience store like Busby Hive
- Don't mind some growth, but want to maintain small town atmosphere

Group #5

- Sewage concerns (limited capacity)
- Potential flooding concerns
- Cleanliness
- Proximity to larger towns limits business opportunity
- Aging sewage system outside of trailer park
- Too many mobile homes outside of trailer park
- Old condemned hotel
- Theft
- No recreational space for kids

Group #6

- What is the current condition of lagoon?
- Street lights and hydrants
- Sewer and water infrastructure – drainage; ungraded for growth
- Trailer south of hotel
- RV/trailers as homes
- What business would come?
- Unsightly premises and unkept yards
- Google Maps doesn't recognize addresses
- Dogs running loose
- Snow removal, especially for bus routes

Summary of Challenges

- Infrastructure
 - Lights
 - Drainage – flooding
 - Roads – potholes, etc.
 - Cell/internet
 - Fire hydrants don't work
 - Sewage system
- Aging community
- Play areas for kids
- Handi-bus – no service
- School bus – not good places for pick-up
- Dangerous activity – speeding, drinking, and drug use
- Additional concerns
 - Concern hamlet cannot grow
 - Clean Energy Improvement Plan (developers pay)
 - Infrastructure maintenance
 - Trades and training
 - Housing
 - Servicing expense
 - Assessment value

Tell Us the Opportunities You See in Your Community

Group #1

- Playground
- More activities for kids
- Residential growth along east side of hamlet
- Seniors housing, if there is a need – seniors may need more services
- Lots of potential, but not sure what it looks like
- Legal crossroads for employment – Hwy 2 at Legal, Eco Flex, Legal Alfalfa, and SVF (Sturgeon Valley Fertilizers)

Group #2

- A campground would bring people and provide location for events
- Hotel could be repurposed
- Don't want to see development along tracks behind trailer park
- A taxi service would be beneficial
- Potential room for expansion? (talk to landowners)
- Affordable lands could bring people
- A motocross park could provide amenity to attract people

Group #3

- Vacant land to the NW - create a parcel(s) south
- Potential development of old railway lands?
- Old baseball grounds are for sale - someone buy and develop
- There are vacant lots
- Some buildings need to be torn down and lots sold and redeveloped
- Access from 590 X 2 into the hamlet
- Light industrial - along 590
- Commercial businesses - old school grounds on Main Street
- Hairdressers/Barbers shops

Group #4

- Gas station
- Convenience store
- New zones could bring opportunities outside residential use
- Park areas near skating rink
- RV park expansion (dependent on servicing)
- Development near railroad tracks - commercial/industrial

Group #5

- Develop ball park/school grounds/old ball diamonds
- Demo old hotel
- Hall as multi-purpose
- No primary access/poor
- Small convenience store
- Railway privately owned
- No access to developable lots
- Playground/outdoor exercise equipment
- Dog park

Summary of Opportunities

- Recreation
 - Baseball diamond/playgrounds
 - Campground/motocross park
 - Dog park/green spaces
- Commercial development
 - Demo or repurpose hotel - zoning (commercial)
 - Hall used for small business
 - Convenience store/co-op/UFA
- Railway privately owned
- Manufacturing or light industrial business at access from 590
- Vacant lands/houses - low cost
- Taxi service
- Review need for seniors housing

Index Card Feedback

- Synergy! - Attract people & businesses with 2, 3, 4 things, not just one (e.g. RV camping, convenience store, motocross/sports, ice cream shop for the kids)
- Senior homes to be considered in view of the age of the majority in the community



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July 30, 2026