



# Community Investment Readiness (CIR)

## Strategic Action Plan

August 11, 2010



*Your partner in sustainable opportunities*

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## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE BACKGROUND

Central Alberta is one of the fastest growing industrialized regions in the world. The population of Central Alberta increased at a rate of 19.0 percent over the ten years from 1996 to 2006 – among the fastest in the Country and almost four times the national average. Based on 2008 Municipal Affairs population data, 269,562 people or 7.9 percent of Alberta’s population now resides in the Central Region.

Located strategically within two hours of both Calgary and Edmonton, the Central Alberta region has access to excellent transportation corridors, infrastructure, institutions, natural resources, growing markets, and an unsurpassable lifestyle.

The Central Alberta Economic Partnership Ltd. (CAEP) is a regional economic development alliance (REDA) of 41 municipalities (including the Town of Olds), 1 Indian Band and 15 Associate members. CAEP represents a broad geographic region that encompasses the western boundary of Clearwater County to the eastern edge of the County of Paintearth, and the northern boundary of Wetaskiwin County to the southern boundary of Mountain View and Kneehill counties. The landscape of the central Alberta region ranges from foothills to parkland to prairies. The variety and abundance of industries in the region are as remarkable as they are diverse.

CAEP’s purpose, in part, is to represent its members in matters dealing with economic growth and long-term economic viability of the Central Alberta region. CAEP facilitates the adoption of best practices in economic development and supports all members in meeting the thresholds of basic business readiness. CAEP is a unique organization that engages leaders and practitioners to work across boundaries, putting collaboration into action and developing innovative solutions with substantial impact.

## TOWN OF OLDS OVERVIEW

The Town of Olds is ready to effectively engage investors who make decisions based on their business needs, available infrastructure supports, and the flexibility and ease of local planning and development processes.

The attached action plan is based on community needs and resources, identifies realistic and attainable goals and can be used as a tool to increase the Town of Olds capacity to attract investment as well as retain and expand existing businesses in your community.

## TOWN OF OLDS – COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Olds with a trading catchment area of 42,000 is becoming recognized throughout the Province as the small town that does. Located in Mountain View County in the region of Central Alberta and just 45 minutes from the Calgary International Airport, Olds is conveniently nestled at the junction of Highway 2A and Highway 27, just west of the Queen Elizabeth II Highway and just 61 kilometres south of the City of Red Deer and 90 kilometres north of Calgary, Olds is strategically positioning itself to take advantage of these economic benefits.

The settlement began in 1890 when David Shannon, a foreman with the Calgary & Edmonton Rail Line established squatter's rights to a quarter section of land, at the sixth siding of the railway. Shannon declined the honour of having the settlement named after him, so it was instead named for CPR traffic manager George Olds. By 1894 the population had reached 100. The village was incorporated in 1900, and in 1905 Olds became a town.

Olds is more than a small rural college town; it is also a major agribusiness hub and a base for oilfield services and light industrial manufacturers. Olds boasts an impressive array of sports, recreational, arts, and leisure facilities and activities usually found in much larger centres - Sportsplex (home to the Olds Grizzlys Junior A Hockey franchise), curling rinks, Aquatic Centre (pool and waterslide), Ralph Klein Health & Wellness Centres (indoor track, exercise equipment facility, and five basketball courts), Fine Arts & Media Centre housing the 375 seat Trans Canada Theatre, heritage museum, old fashioned movie theatre, arts clubs, cultural activities, festivals, concerts, rodeo events, a new public library scheduled to open in fall 2010, and more than 100 acres of parks playgrounds, picnic areas and golf courses. Olds also has a wide cross-section of restaurants and accommodations - and Olds College has the perfect facilities and amenities for convention groups, large or small. Olds is currently served by four public schools, a special-needs school, an outreach school, a private Christian school and the new Catholic school is scheduled to be open in September 2010. Olds College, soon to celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013, offers hands-on learning and training programs in career and academic preparation, animal sciences, horticulture/landscaping, land use and environment, fashion, machinery/trades, agriculture, and applied business. The Chinook's Edge School Division in partnership with Olds College, recently opened the Community Learning Campus (CLC), a phenomenal new secondary learning perspective for the Olds area.<sup>1</sup> Health care facilities include the Olds Hospital and Care Centre, two health clinics, and a full complement of doctors, dentists and other health care professionals.

Olds has a population of 7,248 living in 3,190 dwellings (2006 Census), a 9.7% increase from 2001. The town has a land area of 11.05 km<sup>2</sup> and a population density of 656.1 /km<sup>2</sup> (1,699.3/sq mi).

“Olds has adopted innovative and aggressive direction with respect to sustainable economic growth. The four essential members and two associate members of the Olds Institute for Community & Regional Development (Town of Olds, Olds College, Olds Agricultural Society, Olds & District Chamber of Commerce, Chinook's Edge School District, and Mountain View County) have adopted policies and

practices based on the five dimensions of sustainability and are executing strategies for economic and community development that are having far reaching effects.

## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT READINESS – VISION OF SUCCESS

### Short Term

- Redevelopment of existing commercial/industrial/residential land.
- Rezoning of Highway 2A - traffic flow effectiveness and safety
- Alternative and integrated 'people mobility' services – types of transportation / mobility modes by end user's needs – who, when, where, why and how.
- Attraction of hospitality/accommodation services – limited service hotel; restaurants – upscale, trendy, and healthy eating choices.
- Launch Olds Connected Community Network's Culture of Use projects – Fibre to the Premise and the Community Engagement Site – promoting Olds as the first rural community in Canada to deliver this level of technology and service to its citizens and business community.
- Business opportunity identification on Hwy 2A – food & beverage services needs resulting from opening of CLC
- Business retention planning and intervention for Hwy 27 businesses due to transportation traffic planning
- Feasibility study for an Olds Public Market
- Eco-Industrial Plan study for the development of Eco-Industrial Park bylaws

### Medium Term

- Convention and Trade Centre – medium size, limited services
- Attract developer for Olds Public Market
- Attract developer for Olds Eco-Industrial Park

### Long Term

- Utility corridor development – 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of the Municipal Access Agreement
- Attract developer for aging-in-place facilities

## SWOT ANALYSIS RELATED TO INVESTMENT READINESS

### Strengths

- Learning Community – Bell e-Learning Centre and the Community Learning Campus connect Olds, via satellite Community Engagement Sites, with several other rural Alberta towns and communities.
- Location – nestled between highways #2, #2A, and #27 in the heart of Mountain View County and adjacent to the Edmonton – Calgary Corridor
- Access to Transportation – less than 1 hour to Calgary international airport and minutes to regional (Red Deer) and municipal airports (Olds/Didsbury)

- Tourism & Recreation – convenient access via Hwy 27 to the foothills, Rockies, rivers & parks
- Sports & Leisure – Junior A Hockey Franchise; International Curling Tournaments; College Team Sports; Golf; Farm & Rodeo Events
- Uptowne Olds Heritage Management Plan - accredited Alberta Main Street Program community
- Alberta’s first Fair Trade Community
- Sub-regional trade centre – 42,000 trade catchment servicing Mountain View County residents
- Olds College – School of Innovation; School of Trades & Career Studies; School of Business; School of Agriculture & Land Management;
- Full time Community Economic Development Officer (CEDO)
- Olds Institute for Community & Regional Development (OICRD) – collaboration and cooperation of community economic drivers – Town of Olds; Olds College; Olds Agricultural Society; Olds & District Chamber of Commerce; Mountain View County; Chinooks Edge School District; Uptown Olds Group; and Olds Advisory Group for Sustainable Living
- Community and regional cooperation resulting in shared support, facilities, resources, and services
- Available land (938 available acres)
- Available services (water, sewer, telecom, energy, etc.)
- Established media channels - two local radio stations, local and county newspaper, Olds T.V. expanded to Central Alberta T.V.
- Strong service component
  - Financial, Insurance, and Commercial
  - Consumer services
- Multi-industry diversified community – agriculture, business services, health, trade, education services, government services, oil & gas, gravel
- Available labour pool – 50% of the population is under 50; access to 1300 full time post secondary students
- Four major grocery stores (Co-Op, Sobeys’s, No Frills, Wal-Mart)
- Big Box Stores (Wal-Mart; Canada Tire; and Staples)
- Residential compost pick-up, recycling drop offs, Eco centre for recycling as well as the Waste Commission Landfill (Didsbury) for additional recycling initiatives
- Regional Emergency Hospital and active health care center
- Safe and engaging community where volunteerism is non stop.

### Weaknesses

- Market driven housing prices/real estate costs – high end \$400k - \$600k houses not moving
- Residential leakage to other communities – many families live outside of Olds but use Olds services
- Limited and high cost rental accommodation due to college student and oil& gas worker demands
- Limited higher paying jobs
- No local public transportation service
- Limited entertainment facilities and options

## Opportunities

- Promote Olds as a community that has embraced and incorporated all five dimensions of sustainability– economic, environmental, social, cultural, and governance into its policy, planning and development at both the Town and OICRD levels
- Promote Olds as being Alberta’s Centre for Rural Broadband Technology & Services
  - IT industry plus others (architects)
  - Fiber to the Premise Program – aim is to provide a level of broadband not currently available to other communities in Canada
  - Community Engagement Sites – link to ninety plus other communities
- Mobilize private investment back into the community – reduce investment leakage to major centres
- Development and attraction of business services catering to seniors and students
- Development and attraction of clean and green businesses – knowledge based; research & innovation; sustainable and low carbon footprint industry sector
- Attraction of young entrepreneurial families through local business succession planning, mentoring, and micro-lending opportunities
- Promote Olds College – School of Innovation - world class applied research facilities are available to industry and business partners seeking to develop commercial products that serve local or international markets.
- Explore direct and in-direct benefits of rail access for commercial and industrial businesses
- Further explore and investigate Rural Clusters
  - Tourism & Hospitality
    - Agri-tourism
    - Heritage and Culture
  - Research and Innovation
    - Information Technology and Communication Networks
    - Renewable Energy Production
    - National Beef Centre Concept
  - Manufacturing & Processing
    - Agriculture - Agri-food production
    - Oil & Gas services
    - Green industry sector – science, high technology
  - Construction
    - Aging-in-place residential development
    - Commercial and residential development
  - Small & Medium Enterprise Development (business retention, expansion, investment, attraction)
    - Uptowne Olds
    - Fair Trade
    - Public Market
    - Business Incubator
    - Cornerstone commercial
    - Highway 27 commercial
    - Olds East commercial

### Threats

- Pressure from being seen as a community supportive of those industries/businesses that have a reputation of not being environmentally friendly
- Energy corridor
- Restrictions on current water supply and limitations on truck line development
- Proposed high speed transit line – strong possibility of bypassing Olds – focus is on Red Deer
- Legislation/regulation

## STRATEGIC COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

<b>Community: TOWN OF OLDS</b>	<b>Date: June 28, 2010</b>
	<b>Community Representative: Gail Scott, CEDO</b>

### SHORT TERM GOALS (2010 – 2011)

#### Goal #1: Improve and enhance integrated and alternative mobility services

Actions Required	Additional Information /Resources Needed	Cost	Responsibilities		Measurable Results
			Who	When	
-Explore options to address integrated transportation / mobility issues of town residents	- Communication /meetings - Review MVC transportation study findings to identify potential solutions - Survey Taxi commission; Community Lifestyles Committee; Chamber; Uptowne Olds Group; Cornerstone Group;	-Grant \$ availability	-Town of Olds & OICRD – CEDO;	Fall / Winter 2010/2011	- An effective, efficient and reliable integrated mobility system in place and available to Olds residents
-Engage retailers in dialogue to address client pick up and delivery of products / services			OICRD - CEDO & Chamber	Spring / Summer 2011	
-Investigate business opportunities and partnerships for integrated modes of transportation / mobility			-FCSS/OI/ Admin		

#### Goal #2: Redevelop existing commercial/industrial/residential land located on or near highway 2A and CLC + Rezoning of Highway 2A

Actions Required	Additional Information /Resources Needed	Cost	Responsibilities		Measurable Results
			Who	When	
- Engage in area redevelopment plan for southeast section of Town	-Research -survey / study - communication / meetings	-Budgeted - Grant \$ availability	Town of Olds; Council/ Consultant; Olds College	2010 / 2011	Identification of redevelopment opportunities
- Conduct a study for the planning & development of an Eco-Industrial Park			CEDO; B&IA: Chamber BR&E;	2011	
- identify and qualify investment and development opportunities			CEDO; B&IA; Chamber BR&E;	Spring 2011	
- Investigate possibility of using Olds College Land Management program / students to research & develop a land inventory					



<b>Goal #3: Redevelop existing commercial/industrial/residential land (Uptowne Development Plan)</b>					
<b>Actions Required</b>	<b>Additional Information /Resources Needed</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>		<b>Measurable Results</b>
			<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	
- identify business development options - conduct a feasibility study for a year round Olds Public Market concept	-Research -Survey Identify potential investors	-Grant ? RCAP	OICRD - CEDO, B&IA; Chamber BR&E; Uptowne Olds Group, Town Planning Staff	2010 / 2011	- revised websites with current and reliable CIR information; - Uptowne Olds Development Area Plan Report with business / development options for the Town of Olds
- Research & develop key community investment readiness (CIR) information; - Make all CIR and area structure plans available to potential investors via websites (Town and OICRD); - Research & analyze realistic opportunities, identify potential investors; - Create and implement a marketing plan to promote Olds on a global basis; - Create awareness tools and programs on where and how to obtain key investment readiness information - Regularly review, update and revise Town and OICRD websites with CIR information			OICRD - CEDO, B&IA, Marketing & Communication Committee, Town Planning Staff,	2010 / 2011	
-Conduct and develop a GIS inventory of available land and vacant buildings (possibly use Olds College Students)		-Grant ? CFDC	CEDO; B&IA; BR&E; Town; Olds College;	2010 / 2011	

<b>MEDIUM TERM GOALS (2011 - 2013)</b>					
<b>Goal #1: Investigate the development of a medium size Hospitality Trade &amp; Convention Centre</b>					
<b>Actions Required</b>	<b>Additional Information /Resources Needed</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>		<b>Measurable Results</b>
			<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	
-Explore hospitality trade & convention centre funding / development options	-Research	-Grants - RCAP, WD, P3Canada, etc.	- Olds Ag. Society; Town of Olds; OICRD & CEDO - B&IA	2011 / 2012	-A multi use facility that has meeting/convention space, food service and accommodations
-Determine primary trade/ convention/meeting facility needs	-Needs assessment survey	-Minimal			
<b>Goal #2: Attract developer for Olds Eco-Industrial Park Concept</b>					
<b>Actions Required</b>	<b>Additional Information /Resources Needed</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>		<b>Measurable Results</b>
Develop and implement new bylaws subject to Eco-Industrial Plan/Park Development	Council approval	Minimal	Town; Council; OICRD – CEDO; B&IA	2011 / 2012	Bylaws in place
Solicit interest from developers and work with developers to implement a plan of action	Expression of Interest				
<b>Goal #3: Attract developer for Olds Public Market Concept</b>					
<b>Actions Required</b>	<b>Additional Information /Resources Needed</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>		<b>Measurable Results</b>
Develop and implement new bylaws subject to Olds Public Market Plan/ Development	Council approval	Minimal	Town; Council; OICRD – CEDO; B&IA	2011 / 2012	Bylaws in place
Solicit interest from developers and work with developers to implement a business plan	Expression of Interest				

## BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING GOALS

- Retail – cost to private sector
- Municipal funding availability – competing objectives
- Attracting the ‘right’ green and clean entrepreneurs and commercial and industrial developers
- Organizational push back
- Hwy 2A transportation solutions
- Obtaining accurate, up-to-date, and readily available community investment readiness information
- Hospitality industry (minimal)
- Capacity – CEDO; OICRD Board and volunteers

## REFERENCES

- [www.olds.ca](http://www.olds.ca)
- [www.oldsinstitute.com](http://www.oldsinstitute.com)
- [www.centralalberta.ab.ca](http://www.centralalberta.ab.ca)