



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

2022 Focus Group
Economic Development Strategy and Direction
Overall Findings

In the Fall of 2022, members of the Rocky View County economic development team held a series of focus group sessions to gather feedback to support the development of a new economic development strategy.

A total of five sessions were held with the following groups:

- Rocky View County Agriculture Services Board
- Representatives from the Commercial Real Estate Brokers Network
- Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations within Rocky View County's service area
- Rocky View County's Management Staff
- Rocky View County's Municipal Council

Participants shared suggestions that tie closely into the County's efforts to create a business culture that makes it easy for businesses to operate and grow. Our thanks to all who participated in focus groups. While merely a snapshot of the thoughts and ideas that will guide the future of the County, this feedback can inform decisions and influence the implementation future policies that will ensure investment and future economic development occur in the most advantageous manner possible.

Below is a summary of the major themes shared.

Location:

Rocky View County's location adjacent to urban neighbours translates to major economic opportunity, especially within logistics, transportation, and warehousing sectors. Recent builds near 1 million square feet (approximately 23 acres) in addition to intermodal railways, are significant factors driving future investment.

The region continues to emerge as Canada's largest inland port in response to supply chain disruptions that were felt throughout the global pandemic. As such, the region is becoming an increasingly sought after as a place with a dependable and growing labour market that can move goods throughout Canada and into the USA. The economic appeal of the region is also underscored by the relative affordability of land and lower cost of construction when compared to market conditions in other parts of Canada.

Agriculture:

Agriculture is Rocky View County's original industry but the emphasis on this sector is not merely historical. Today the County continues to act as an agricultural hub where numerous services and industry headquarters are located as farmers continue to produce some of Canada's best crops.

Rocky View's long-standing collaboration with the Western Irrigation District provides access to a dependable commercial and residential water source. This is of particular importance as allocations in the region have struggled to secure future water allocations.

The emphasis on water conservation means that future opportunities in agriculture may take shape in the form of sustainably managed large-scale greenhouses and vertical farming operations. Greenhouse operations with controlled water and nutrient management systems will be important to the future of food production and processing industries in the County.

Infrastructure and services:

Other services in the region, such as reliable sources of power and the ability to support the emergence of partnerships that leverage the emerging new energy economy and the development of electrical infrastructure that can support future growth and demand. This is underscored by the anticipated shift to greater reliance on electrical vehicle use. The potential for more solar farms, wind farms, electrical battery storage facilities, and hydrogen infrastructure are expected to remain major factors in the future.