Strategic Communications Plan
“Mission: Main Street” (Main Street Revitalization Trial)
Last updated: August 27, 2019

Background
The objective is to “test drive” one component of the proposed future Main Street Revitalization, using temporary appurtenances and other features to trial a design concept. During the trial, residents and visitors are able provide feedback on what they like and don’t like about the design concept by seeing it and experiencing it (or an approximate version of it) first-hand. This feedback can test the community’s acceptance of a proposed change before significant funds are allocated and work is commissioned.

The goal of the Main Street Revitalization is to enhance the hamlet of Lac La Biche’s downtown core, to encourage residents and visitors to spend more time in the area, thereby supporting the County’s economic development goals. “Mission: Main Street” is the name of the proposed communications and public engagement program that will allow people to experience and provide feedback on a small part of the greater revitalization program, at the intersection of 101 Ave. (Main Street) and 101 St.

Purpose
- Inform residents of “Mission: Main Street” and by extension, the Main Street Revitalization.
- Gather feedback from residents and visitors during the trial period, and use this feedback to inform future decisions regarding the Main Street Revitalization.

Strategy
- Temporarily “rebuild” the intersection of 101 Ave. and 101 St. to replicate the results of the proposed Main Street Revitalization in that area (see Figure 1 on page 2):
  - Use traffic barriers to indicate where new curbs will be, and the effects they will have on driving lanes.
  - Use benches, picnic tables and planters to demonstrate how curb extensions can create more animated, appealing and pedestrian-friendly spaces.
- Offer two different surveys as feedback mechanisms:
  - Survey 1, the “on-the-street and in-the-moment” survey for pedestrians to complete while seeing and experiencing the design concept trial.
  - Survey 2, a general online survey for all members of the public.
- Station staff members on street corners at different times throughout the trial period, to interact directly with residents and visitors and gather feedback using Survey 1.
- Make the project as collaborative as possible by informing and, when appropriate, directly involving local business owners:
  o Invite business owners in the affected area to an information session.
  o Partner with businesses in the affected area to boost engagement levels and at the same time demonstrate how curb extensions can be utilized (e.g. invite Eats & Sweets or Café On Main to “adopt a corner” for an afternoon and sell treats there while gathering feedback).
- Encourage the public to actively participate in the design trial, rather than simply pass through, by facilitating sidewalk games and other activities.

Figure 1 – “Mission: Main Street” Site Plan
Strategic Considerations

- No major community events are taking place during the trial period.
- World Archery 3D Championships begin on September 2. There may be increased pedestrian and vehicle traffic in the downtown area as the event approaches.
- There is a possibility of inclement weather, vandalism and other concerns limiting our ability to engage with people.
- The level of support for the Main Street Revitalization may start to change or decline as people learn more about the ramifications of completing the project.
- Whether or not the Main Street Revitalization is approved, there will be construction to replace water and sewer lines along 101 Ave. People need to understand that the Main Street Revitalization is a potential but unconfirmed “added bonus” of replacing the utilities.

Current Attitudes

- The general public is supportive of enhancing the hamlet of Lac La Biche's downtown core, for appearance, friendliness and safety reasons.
- Conversations about the downtown core tend to linger on sensitive subjects (vacant buildings, vagrancy, etc.) that will not be addressed as part of “Mission: Main Street” but that may be addressed as part of future initiatives. As it pertains to “Mission: Main Street,” the conversation should focus on street functions and aesthetics.

Target Audiences

- Local residents
- Visitors to the community
- Downtown business owners
- Media

Key Messages (Can be completed by Communications)

- What are you going to say to your target audiences?

Timing
Communication will start as soon as the program plan is approved by Council.
The actual trial period is expected to be September 9 - September 27, with varying levels of on-site staff presence and “engagement efforts” throughout.
An email address for people to submit feedback will be available until October 4.

Communication Tools

- News release, when the program receives Council approval
- Newspaper advertisements (September 10 and 17)
- Radio advertisements (scheduled throughout the week of September 9)
  - Municipal Minutes on September 12 and September 26
  - “Live On Location” as part of the program kick-off on September 9
- County’s website (dedicated webpage and homepage slider to be published when the program receives Council approval)
- County’s Facebook page
- Signboards on corners in affected area

Cost

- The current expected budget for all of “Mission: Main Street” is approximately $15,000.
- Newspaper advertising costs: approx. $700
- Radio advertising costs: TBD

Evaluation

- Survey responses will be collected and reviewed.
- Questions that are asked and comments that are shared may shed light on how much of the background information is received, read and understood by stakeholder.