

VILLAGE OF FERINTOSH

VIABILITY PLAN

AUGUST 2018

A report concerning the viability of the Village of Ferintosh
Drafted by the Village of Ferintosh Viability Review Team

Village of Ferintosh Viability Review Team
Village of Ferintosh Viability Review
Alberta Municipal Affairs
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INTRODUCTION

This report reflects the spirit of the Government of Alberta's Municipal Sustainability Strategy and the Village of Ferintosh Viability Review Team's plan for the long-term viability of Ferintosh.

Ferintosh is a village in central Alberta, Canada established in 1911. It is located 38 kilometres south of Camrose, and 102 kilometres southeast of Edmonton. The village is situated on Little Beaver Lake. The Village of Ferintosh (village) has a population of 202 (2016), an increase from 181 in 2011. The village is located within Camrose County (county).

Electors previously petitioned the Minister for a viability review in September 2013. That petition was found to be insufficient, and no further action was undertaken by the ministry at that time.

In December 2015, a sufficient petition from village electors for a viability review was received. The Minister subsequently approved a viability review on February 3, 2016.

A viability review is a process wherein a municipality's governance, finances, infrastructure and services are reviewed to determine whether changes to the municipality are required for it to remain viable.

The Village of Ferintosh Viability Review presents two possible options for the long-term viability of Ferintosh:

OPTION 1: FERINTOSH REMAINS AS AN INCORPORATED VILLAGE AND IMPLEMENTS CHANGES TO MAINTAIN VIABILITY AS IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE REVIEW.

OPTION 2: FERINTOSH DISSOLVES AND BECOMES A HAMLET WITHIN CAMROSE COUNTY.

VILLAGE OF FERINTOSH VIABILITY REVIEW

VIABILITY REVIEW TEAM

A Viability Review Team (VRT) was established to analyze information and assess whether the Village of Ferintosh is viable and to develop a plan to address factors contributing to the long-term viability of the village. The Viability Plan report includes information collected from the village and county to form a foundation for the viability review.

The VRT consisted of three elected officials from the Village of Ferintosh; one elected official from Camrose County; one administrative official from each of the Village of Ferintosh (review municipality) and Camrose County (potential receiving municipality); and one representative from each of the Rural Municipalities of Alberta, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the Alberta Rural Municipal Administrators Association, the Local Government Administration Association; and Alberta Municipal Affairs.

VIABILITY REVIEW MANDATE AND APPROACH

The Minister gave the Village of Ferintosh VRT the mandate to collaboratively:

- evaluate the viability of the Village of Ferintosh;
- lead public engagement of local residents, property owners, and other stakeholders in the affected municipalities (village and county);
- develop a viability plan for Ferintosh that provides options to support the viability of the community going forward; and
- provide feedback to Alberta Municipal Affairs on the municipal viability review process.

The VRT assessed municipal viability by considering eight broad areas:

1. **Sustainable governance** addresses topics such as council practices and procedures, compliance with legislation, citizen engagement, and strategic planning.
2. **Regional co-operation** addresses the municipality's approach to collaborating with neighbours for the benefit of local and regional residents.
3. **Operational and administrative capacity** addresses the capacity of the municipality to operate on a daily basis and support council decisions.
4. **Financial stability** addresses the municipality's capacity to generate and manage revenues sufficient to provide necessary infrastructure and services to the public.
5. **Infrastructure** addresses the municipality's capacity to effectively and efficiently manage public infrastructure on behalf of residents.
6. **Service delivery** addresses the capacity of the municipality to provide essential services that meet residents' expectations and any appropriate standards.
7. **Community well-being** addresses local community characteristics that contribute to the vitality of the community and the long-term viability of the municipality.
8. **Risk management** addresses the capacity of the municipality to identify and manage key risks on behalf of residents.

As the state of municipal infrastructure is integral to viability, an infrastructure assessment was completed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the village's current and future infrastructure needs. The Village of Ferintosh received a grant to assess the state of the village infrastructure and develop a long-term capital plan from the Alberta Community Partnership grant program.

A copy of the Infrastructure Assessment Report can be found at the village office. A summary of the Village infrastructure assessment is provided in **Appendix D**.

VIABILITY FACTORS

The Viability Review Team determined that during the past ten years the village had demonstrated the following viability factors:

- There is a lack of serviced lots available for development which would provide additional tax revenue through increased property assessment value;
- There is limited ability to attract and retain qualified administrative and public works staff within the current operating budget;

- The ability to finance the required major infrastructure repairs and replacement is hampered by borrowing limitations and the ability to generate additional funding through new development, improvement levies, or tax increases.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF FERINTOSH

From its analysis, the VRT has developed six recommendations towards the long-term viability of the Village of Ferintosh. The Minister may make these recommendations into formal directives for mandatory implementation after receiving the Viability Plan. The recommendations made throughout the Viability Plan are listed in **Appendix A: Recommendations for Long-Term Viability**.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The VRT led engagement with residents, property owners, and other stakeholders on April 12, 2018 through a public meeting and survey. Feedback collected through the stakeholder engagement and written submissions from residents was considered by the VRT when creating the Village of Ferintosh Viability Plan. The summary of community engagement input is provided in **Appendix F**.

NEXT STEPS

PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF THE VIABILITY PLAN

Alberta Municipal Affairs will present the Viability Plan at a public meeting to be held on October 1, 2018, in the Ferintosh Little Beaver Hi U Senior Centre.

The meeting will provide participants with an opportunity to:

- gain information about the Village of Ferintosh Viability Plan;
- provide feedback to the Minister regarding the viability options for Ferintosh; and
- learn the final steps in the viability review.

MINISTER'S DECISION

Following the public presentation of the Village of Ferintosh Viability Plan, the Minister of Municipal Affairs has the responsibility to determine the next steps for the Village of Ferintosh.

The Minister will consider the information contained in this Viability Plan, the feedback collected during the public presentation of the Viability Plan and received during a 30-day comment period following, and the input provided by the village and county councils.

If the Minister determines that the Village of Ferintosh should remain incorporated, no vote of the village electors will be held.

The Minister may issue a Ministerial Order providing directives to the village council and administration for implementation. Directives are specific actions for the village council and administration to complete and report back to the Minister on within given timelines. The directives

would be based on the VRT's recommendations in this Viability Plan. Alberta Municipal Affairs would monitor the completion of the directives and provide advisory assistance.

Alternatively, the Minister may determine that a vote of the village electors should be held on the question of dissolution. The vote will be conducted in accordance with the *Local Authorities Election Act*. Notice of the time, date, and location of the vote will be provided to electors by Municipal Affairs.

RESULTS OF A VOTE ON DISSOLUTION

If a vote is held and village electors vote that Ferintosh should not be dissolved, Ferintosh would remain an incorporated village and the Minister would issue a Ministerial Order providing directives to the village council and administration. The directives would be based on the VRT recommendations contained in this report and could include other directives the Minister deems appropriate.

If village electors vote that Ferintosh should be dissolved, the Minister must recommend to the provincial Cabinet that the Village of Ferintosh be dissolved to become a hamlet in Camrose County. Cabinet is the decision-making body that would determine if the village will be dissolved.

IMPACTS TO RESIDENTS

The viability review demonstrates that changes are required for the community to be viable into the future. Both Option 1 and Option 2 will impact residents and property owners as steps are taken to support the viability of Ferintosh. The following pages present a summary of the Village of Ferintosh at this time, as well as what residents can expect under Options 1 and 2.

1. SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE

As the governing body of the municipality, the elected council sets the overall direction of the municipality through the creation and review of bylaws, policies and programs. The council of the Village of Ferintosh consists of three elected councillors. The mayor is appointed annually by council at its organizational meeting. The current mayor is serving his third term on council and has been appointed mayor by council for all three terms.

The village council passes bylaws, adopts policies, sets budgets, raises revenues through property taxes and business taxes, sets fees for services, borrows, fines, adopts plans and bylaws for the use and development of land, and provides for the services required or desired by residents within the boundaries of the village

The council was elected by acclamation in 2017. Lack of more candidates is attributed to the uncertainty of the viability review process. Previous elections and by-elections saw more candidates than positions.

Council members have completed orientation training that includes:

- role of municipalities in Alberta;
- municipal organizations and functions;

- roles and responsibilities of council and councillors, the chief administrative officer, and the staff;
- budgeting and financial administration;
- key municipal plans, policies, and projects; and
- public participation and engagement.

Council is working towards having three-year operating and five-year capital budgets.

The village conducted well-attended public consultations to receive input in defining future priorities. The *Strategic Plan* and *Economic Development Options and Strategies* were produced in 2017; however, the village has limited capacity to implement these plans.

Option One - If Ferintosh remained a Village	Option Two – If Ferintosh became a Hamlet
<p>The village council would continue to be responsible for governing and providing services to residents and it would have the authority to pass bylaws and collect property taxes or other revenues to support those services.</p> <p>The village council would be responsible for ensuring the village is compliant with all legislated requirements, including updating the Municipal Development Plan Inter-Municipal Development Plan, and establishing a Council Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The village would implement its strategic and economic development plans.</p> <p><u>Recommendations for Long-Term Viability</u></p> <p>Council should develop a comprehensive three-year implementation plan incorporating the recommendations of the Viability Plan, asset management, an operating/business plan, and its existing strategic and economic development plans.</p>	<p>Camrose County (population 8450) has ten hamlets within its boundaries (Armena, Duhamel, Kelsey, Kingman, Meeting Creek, New Norway, Ohaton, Pelican Point, Round Hill, Tillicum Beach).</p> <p>Camrose County council would govern the hamlet of Ferintosh. The county would have the responsibility to provide services to residents and the authority to pass bylaws and collect property taxes or other revenues to support those services.</p> <p>Residents of Camrose County are represented by seven councillors elected from seven electoral divisions, based on population, the number of roads, and geographic area. The Reeve is appointed annually at the organizational meeting. Council meetings are held during the day on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month in Camrose.</p> <p>Camrose County may review electoral boundaries before the next municipal elections.</p> <p>The hamlet of Ferintosh would become part of Camrose County Division No. 2. Ferintosh residents would be eligible for nomination and election to the county council.</p> <p>Residents have access to local government through the Division 2 councillor Cindy Trautman, administration, and by presentation at council.</p> <p>Existing village bylaws would remain in force until Camrose County amends, repeals, or replaces them. The county would assume the assets, liabilities, rights, duties, functions, and</p>

	<p>obligations of the Village of Ferintosh upon dissolution.</p> <p>Camrose County Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Bylaw 1372 would need to be revised to include Ferintosh.</p> <p>Camrose County follows a four-year operational planning cycle that involves broad public consultation, inclusive of hamlet residents.</p>
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2. Regional Co-operation

<p>The Village of Ferintosh has strong working intermunicipal relationships with Camrose County, the Village of Edberg, and the Town of Bashaw.</p> <p>Ferintosh participates in the following bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Fire Services Committee; - Regional Assessment Review Board; - Highway 12-21 Regional Water Services Commission. - Camrose and District Support Services(FCSS); - West Dried Meat Lake Regional Landfill Authority; <p>The Village of Ferintosh also has an arrangement with Camrose County for planning and development services, safety codes, and bylaw enforcement. There is also a mutual aid agreement for fire services between the two communities.</p> <p>A 2014-15 study examined the feasibility of increasing shared services with the Village of Edberg (15km apart), but concluded collaboration could not be further improved. The two communities maintain a good relationship. Ferintosh and the Village of Edberg share the same CAO. The communities have a working agreement for the Ferintosh public works foreman and administrative assistant to assist the Village of Edberg on a cost-recovery basis.</p> <p>New legislation requires municipalities to develop intermunicipal collaboration frameworks (ICFs) that list services provided by each municipality, shared intermunicipal services, and services provided by third parties.</p> <p>Camrose County is currently working with Ferintosh to develop its ICF.</p>	
Option One - If Ferintosh remained a Village	Option Two - If Ferintosh became a Hamlet
<p>The village is developing an ICF with the county.</p> <p>The village is developing an intermunicipal development plan with the county.</p>	<p>Village participation on commissions, authorities, and in regional service agreements would transfer to Camrose County.</p> <p>Ferintosh would be represented by Camrose County in its relationships with other municipalities in the region.</p>

3. Operational and Administrative Capacity

The village office is open Tuesday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Residents pay utility and tax bills at the village office and on-line.

All municipalities in Alberta must appoint a chief administrative officer, (CAO) who has overall responsibility for the operation of the municipal corporation. Local government administration requires well-trained and knowledgeable personnel. Attracting and retaining capable staff requires fair and adequate compensation and benefits.

Diverse functions for the administration of a municipality include: general administration (implementing policies and procedures), governance processes (supporting council), property assessment and taxation, , budgeting and accounting, payables and receivables, audit and legal functions, public relations, and election processes, among many others.

The Ferintosh CAO and the administrative assistant perform all administrative functions of the village on a part-time basis, 20 hours and 16 hours a week respectively. The Public Works Foreman works 35 hours each week. The public works foreman is a certified water operator. Back-up support is available from both the Town of Bashaw and the Highway 12/21 Water Commission.

Property assessment is contracted to KCL Consulting Inc.

Ferintosh budget limitations restrict professional development for the CAO, as well as exclude mileage expenses and health and pension benefits.

Bylaw enforcement is complaint-based.

Option One - If Ferintosh remained a Village

The village would continue to keep its office open three days each week.

Recommendations for Long-Term Viability

- Council should budget sufficiently to ensure staff positions are resourced appropriately for compensation, training, and work-related travel to ensure the ability to attract and retain the qualified employees required to fulfill the duties established by council and the *MGA*.
- Council should explore the contracting of administrative services.

Option Two - If Ferintosh became a Hamlet

Camrose County office is open to the public five days a week. The county would not operate a satellite office in Ferintosh.

Residents could access services and information at the county office, by telephone, and through its website. Utilities and taxes can be paid on-line.

The county currently administers ten hamlets comprehensively as part of the whole county.

The County would consider alternate use of the public works shop and office for storage or alternate operations.

Camrose County CAO would be responsible for the management of the county including the hamlet of Ferintosh. Municipal services would be provided by county staff and contractors.

Personnel records and liabilities of village employees would be transferred to the county.

	<p>Community peace officers would enforce traffic safety and speeding laws, and conduct regular patrols of Ferintosh.</p> <p>Camrose County has identified commercial and residential growth nodes for sustainable economic development, according to existing land use. Ferintosh would be considered as a potential residential growth node.</p>
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4. FINANCIAL STABILITY

FINANCIAL POSITION

The *Municipal Government Act* requires municipalities to prepare a written plan respecting its anticipated financial operations over a period of at least the next three financial years and its anticipated capital property additions over a period of at least the next five financial years. The revenues for each year must be sufficient to cover expenditures for each year.

According to the village’s 2016 audited financial statements, the village had total revenues of \$424,587 and total expenses of \$490,722 with a deficit of \$66,135 before government transfers of \$294,914 for capital projects.

The campground provides a net operating surplus to the village (about \$12,000 in 2016).

An overview of the village’s revenues and expenses for 2012 to 2016 may be found in **Appendix B**.

Financial Information Returns submitted by the Village of Ferintosh to Municipal Affairs are summarized in **Appendix C**: Financial Information 2012 – 2016: Table 1: Financial Position, Table 2: Accumulated Surplus, and Table 3: Financial Activities by Function (Revenues and Expenses).

Municipal debt limits and debt service limits are legislated in the Alberta Debt Limit Regulation. The village has no long-term debt. The village has the legal capacity to borrow up to \$538,500 for major repair and replacement projects, and an annual debt service limit of \$89,750. Annual payments on debentures and loans may be funded through utility fees or property taxes.

Major revenue sources for all municipalities include municipal property taxes, grant funding, fees-for-service, and utility fees.

Assessment is the process of assigning a dollar amount to property, based on the market value of the property. Property assessments are used to determine the proportion of taxes to be paid by each property owner in the municipality to fund municipal expenses.

Unpaid property taxes may indicate viability concern. More than 5 per cent in outstanding current property taxes is considered a Viability Factor. Unpaid taxes have been 10.2% in 2014, 16.4% in 2015 and 8.9% in 2016.

Unpaid taxes are recovered through a collection agency, and may result in public auction of property.

The village has imposed a minimum tax for years with the following amounts:

Year	Minimum Tax Amount
2013	\$550

2014	\$500
2015	\$525
2016	\$525
2017	\$550

Minimum tax is currently levied on 66 out of 162 properties.

Provincial government grant funding must be directed towards four support areas:

- initiatives that promote the viability and long-term sustainability of municipalities;
- the maintenance of safe, healthy, and vibrant communities.
- the development of and maintenance of core municipal infrastructure to meet existing and changing municipal needs; and
- capacity-building within municipalities.

Municipalities in Alberta are eligible for population-based grants. The Provincial Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) Capital and (MSI) Operating funding includes funding from the Basic Transportation Grant.

Currently, the Village of Ferintosh uses MSI Capital funding for major repair and replacement infrastructure projects. The village's MSI Capital allocation for the period, 2010 to 2017 in total was \$1,032,675, an average of \$129,084 annually over the same time period.

In the period 2007 to 2017, the village MSI Operating funding allocations have totalled \$344,599, and has been used towards general administration costs.

Unexpended grants and other funds received by the municipality are reported in the audited financial statements as deferred revenue and must be expended for the purpose they were received. Unspent MSI allocations could be used for projects identified in the infrastructure assessment.

Federal grants are another source of funding for municipalities.

Option One - If Ferintosh remained a Village

With the rising operating costs of providing services, village residents could face increases in taxes, user fees, and/or reductions in service delivery in order for the village to have sufficient revenue to fund the estimated expenditures.

Without residential or commercial development/growth, property taxes will increase.

The village would need to examine the use of debt to ensure critical infrastructure upgrades are completed.

The village would continue to access grant funding to subsidize capital projects and general operating costs as it is available.

The village may be eligible for additional federal and provincial grants based on specific programs and project, as they became available.

Option Two - If Ferintosh became a Hamlet

All village assets and liabilities would be transferred to Camrose County. Assets include: cash, investments, reserves, buildings, infrastructure, vehicles, machinery, and equipment.

The county would be required to account separately for funds received from the village, including money from the sale of any assets. All funds transferred from the village to the county and all money received from the sale of village assets must be used to pay or reduce liabilities of the former village, or for projects in the new hamlet of Ferintosh.

A primary source of revenue for municipalities, property taxes are used to finance local programs and services such as road construction and maintenance, parks and leisure facilities, and fire protection.

A decrease in property tax revenue means that Camrose County may not be able to provide the

Recommendations for Long-Term Viability

- The village should develop a capital plan to address items in the infrastructure assessment.

services and service levels currently provided by the Village of Ferintosh without additional funding sources.

Property taxes may not be the only financial cost that would change. Utility rates could change, and additional fees may be considered for services that the Camrose County does not provide in hamlets. These factors would have an effect on the cost of living in the village.

Provincial Alberta Community Partnership grant monies are available to assist the receiving municipality with restructuring costs associated with administration, governance, and legislation; and to assist in funding capital projects identified in the infrastructure assessment.

Debt incurred by the county for major projects in Ferintosh may be funded through local improvement taxes.

Camrose County will receive the village's rights to revenues on the date of dissolution including village property taxes and utility fees.

Assessed values of property would not change significantly as property assessment is based on the same methods and information throughout the province.

Property taxes previously levied and owed to the village would be owed to the Camrose County.

Future county tax rate bylaws and the county's tax due dates and tax penalty schedule would apply to properties in Ferintosh. The county does not have a minimum tax.

The county's practice upon dissolution has been a local improvement levy on benefitting properties in a hamlet to fund annual payments on required infrastructure improvements, including to water distribution and wastewater collection systems. These levies would be in addition to the county tax rates levied on all properties in the county.

Grants previously allocated to the village will transfer to Camrose County for use in Ferintosh.

The county would be eligible to apply for grants to assist with the funding of future projects in Ferintosh subject to the availability and conditions of the grant.

According to the 2017 MSI Capital program guidelines, village funding allocations would

continue to be available to Camrose County for five years following dissolution.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE

Municipal infrastructure consists of all the assets involved in providing services to the community, including buildings, parks, roads and sidewalks, water, wastewater and storm water systems, and significant equipment used to service the assets.

Regular maintenance and replacement of infrastructure is required to ensure service is provided. In particular, properly functioning water and wastewater systems are critical for the health and well-being of residents. Many towns and villages in Alberta are seeing infrastructure, initially installed in the 1950's and 1960's, coming to the natural end of its expected lifespan.

In 2016, the village received a grant from the Government of Alberta to assess the overall state of its infrastructure and develop a 10-year capital plan to address emerging and future infrastructure needs.

The completed Village of Ferintosh infrastructure assessment was accepted for information by the village council and provided to the Ministry in January 2017. It identified major repair and replacement projects estimated to cost \$2.29 million, and provided a ten-year phasing to complete them.

The infrastructure assessment report is available at the village office.

Not included in the infrastructure assessment is a curling rink that requires demolition.

The infrastructure assessment identifies the age of the water distribution and waste water systems as areas of concern. Camrose County would undertake an increased technical examination of infrastructure to refine the scope of work to be completed.

The Highway 12-21 Water Commission advised on water capacity in Ferintosh for fire services, saying the 12-21 line can deliver 15 to 18 litres of water per second and fill the reservoir (270 cubic meters) in less than 40 hours. Municipalities further up the line would use what is stored in their reservoirs/line. New Norway has 10 days of storage.

The village is experiencing significant water leakage, with investigation and repairs underway. \$42,000 has been initially budgeted for the project, but the final cost will not be known until the project is complete. In addition to repair costs, this impacts the utility operating expense budget.

The infrastructure assessment recommended 10 phases to be completed over a ten-year period:

Phase 1 - Upgrade/Replacement of Water and Waste Water on Adam Avenue	\$ 324,408
Phase 2 - Village Office, Maintenance Shop, and Fire Hall Upgrades	\$ 255,723
Phase 3 - Upgrade/Replacement of Water and Waste Water on McLeod Street	\$ 342,846
Phase 4 - Sanitary Waste Water Lagoon	\$ 310,109
Phase 5 - Waste Water Lift Station and Water Pump-house Building Upgrades	\$ 234,430
Phase 6 - Infrastructure Upgrades on West Alley between McGill and Beaver	\$ 87,826
Phase 7 - Upgrade/Development of Infrastructure on McLeod Street	\$ 304,239
Phase 8 - Infrastructure Upgrades on West Alley between Main and McLeod	\$ 54,428
Phase 9 - Upgrade/Development of Infrastructure on McLeod Street	\$ 219,032
Phase 10 - Upgrade/Replacement of Infrastructure on Alley between Adam Avenue and Railway Avenue	<u>\$ 157,058</u>
TOTAL	\$2,290,100

The total projected cost over the ten years is \$2,290,100 - an average expenditure in each year of \$229,100. The provincial MSI Capital funding has averaged \$174,392 annually. The village would need to raise the necessary additional funds annually through property taxes or utility fees, by entering into long-term debt, or by sourcing additional grants. This analysis does not take into consideration funding of new projects or emergency situations.

A water leak is resulting in the Village completing Phase 3 projects over the summer of 2018, a head of Phase 1 and 2 projects.

Option One - If Ferintosh remained a Village

The village would be responsible to develop an infrastructure management plan, inclusive of anticipated funding sources, to ensure infrastructure addresses community need and safety.

The village council, in its annual capital budget process, would determine the projects and funding sources to be completed each year. Projects could be funded through a number of municipal revenues sources including:

- Property taxes;
- Local improvement taxes imposed on those properties that would benefit from the improvement;
- Provincial grants;
- Transfers from other municipalities;
- Debt - annual payments would be funded through one of the other listed revenue sources; and
- Utility rates.

The village anticipates it will take 22 years to complete all the projects in the *Infrastructure Assessment* based on the use of:

- annual infrastructure grants and village revenue at current levels,
- long-term borrowings up to the village’s legislated limits,
- local improvement tax over a 30 year period on benefitting properties to repay borrowings.

Recommendations for Long-Term Viability

- Council should examine the use of debt to pay for capital projects.

Option Two - If Ferintosh became a Hamlet

Camrose County would review the Ferintosh infrastructure requirements in conjunction with other county needs and available funding.

All county projects are ranked and funded in accordance with established council priorities. It will be the responsibility of the county council to determine which projects will be completed and how they will be funded.

The county council and administration would determine priority of the projects in the capital plan based on the urgency of capital replacement and funding availability.

The county practice has been to levy local improvement property taxes on properties that benefit from an infrastructure upgrade/project to partially cover its costs.

The county anticipates it will take two years to complete all the projects in the *Infrastructure Assessment* based on the use of:

- one-time provincial grant funding of \$803,000 available to dissolving municipalities for infrastructure costs,
- annual infrastructure grants at current levels,
- long-term borrowings within county’s legislated limits,
- local improvement taxes over a 10 year period on all benefitting properties to repay borrowings.

- Council should finance capital projects through increasing property taxes and utility rates.

6. SERVICE DELIVERY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The purposes of a municipality include the provision of services and facilities that are necessary for residents and to develop and maintain safe and viable communities. The most basic of services are the provision of roads, water and waste water systems, and emergency services. Water services includes: the source, treatment, transmission, and distribution of the water, along with the maintenance of facilities and water lines.

Wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal includes: sanitary sewers, storm water collection, lagoons, manholes, lift-stations, and the removal and treatment of sludge from lagoons.

The village is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the water and wastewater infrastructure; and contracts services for water testing.

Waste management includes collection of garbage and other waste materials, including recycling initiatives. Costs associated with waste management include those for the operation of transfer and landfill sites and the equipment used for collection and disposal of waste.

Weekly solid waste (garbage) pick-up for residential properties and commercial properties is provided by the village. Bi-weekly recycling pick-up is a contracted service.

Ferintosh residents can take solid waste directly to the landfill.

The Village of Ferintosh operates its utilities on a full cost recovery basis. This includes costs for water from the 12/21 Regional Water Commission, public works operating/maintenance hours, equipment maintenance/operation/purchase, operating/maintenance expenses, and major repair and replacement projects.

Utility users are billed on a monthly basis. The village imposes a penalty of 5 per cent on current monthly billings and overdue accounts may be added to the tax roll and the village may shut off water when a utility account is ninety days past due.

A comparison of current Ferintosh and Camrose County utility rates as of February 2017 rates are as follows:

	Ferintosh	Camrose County
Water – Monthly connection	\$30/month	\$30/month
Water - Consumption Fee	\$5.25/m3	\$5 /m3
Waste Water	\$1.5/m3 after the first 15m3	\$35/month (New Norway Rate)
Garbage Collection	\$12.25/month	\$15/month
Recycling and Disposal	\$5/month	At contracted cost

Appendix D: Table 7 *Village of Ferintosh Utility Services* provides a detailed analysis of the water, wastewater and waste management utility revenues and expenses and Table 8 provides a summary of all village utilities.

The summary in Table 8 shows that combined operating revenues for the three utility services are providing a surplus which could be restricted by policy to help fund major utility repairs and replacement.

Village services include:

- Maintenance of roads and sidewalks
- Street lighting
- Water supply and distribution services
- Wastewater collection and treatment services
- Garbage collection
- Fire & emergency services

Land use planning and development includes services that are provided by Camrose County.

Option One - If Ferintosh remained a Village	Option Two - If Ferintosh became a Hamlet
<p>Utility rates would likely increase to be able to conduct necessary major maintenance and replacement projects.</p>	<p>Services will be continued to be provided to residents.</p> <p>Utility facilities and responsibility for utility services would transfer to Camrose County.</p> <p>The costs for utility services would be allocated to Ferintosh residents through the municipal fee-for-services bylaw.</p> <p>Garbage collection and recycling services will continue at cost to all village residents.</p> <p>County utility rates are set annually, and are increasing towards full cost recovery.</p> <p>Improvement taxes would likely be levied in Ferintosh to conduct necessary major maintenance and replacement projects.</p> <p>The County dedicates trucks to plow and sand hamlets and paved county roads.</p> <p>Fire & emergency services would be managed by the county. The Ferintosh Fire Department would be resourced at the same level as other hamlet fire departments. Honourariums are provided for training and attendance at fires.</p> <p>The county is examining the regionalization of Fire and emergency services.</p>

7. Community Well-being

Municipalities provide recreation facilities, programs, and activities based on local priorities that often involve partnerships with local volunteer organizations and community groups.

Over the past 20 years, the Ferintosh population has increased from 129 in 2004 to 202 in 2016. Growth is the result of proximity to Camrose and affordable property.

Community Age Breakdown (2016 Federal Census)

Ages: 0-14	30
15-64	130
65 +	40

The village website lists 6 businesses operating in the Ferintosh area, primarily home-based services.

Public consultation towards the development of an economic development plan was conducted in July 2017.

According to the village website, Ferintosh residents work together to retain a small town charm where the pace is relaxed and the neighbors are friendly.

The active community groups in Ferintosh are:

- Little Beaver Hi-U Seniors Hall
- Ferintosh Community Club
- Friends of Little Beaver Lake
- Ferintosh Recreation Association

The village leads or supports clean-up days and Canada day (with Edberg). Community groups organize a number of annual events.

Annual financial support to organizations is \$3000. The village also photocopies a newsletter without charge, and includes promotion of the groups and their events on its website and social media.

Community groups own and operate the recreation centre and seniors hall.

The Village of Ferintosh owns and operates a campsite with 19 serviced sites, located on Little Beaver Lake.

Council is responsible for the annual appointment of all councillors to serve on the emergency advisory committee; appointment of a Director of Emergency Management; and ensuring that emergency management plans and programs are prepared to address potential emergencies or disasters in the village; and reviewing the status of the emergency management program and plans at least once a year.

The emergency advisory committee is responsible for the annual review of the emergency management program and plans, and coordinates the municipal emergency management program for the village.

A committee comprised of one member of council may declare a state of local emergency.

Village of Ferintosh bylaws are enforced through a contract with Camrose County.

The Ferintosh and District Recreation Association has closed its hall following the determination of structural problems. The Association is selling the property, located on land zoned for Parks and Recreation.

Option One - If Ferintosh remained a Village	Option Two - If Ferintosh became a Hamlet
<p>The village would look for economic development opportunities within its ability and capacity, and continue to support local events and community groups.</p>	<p>Camrose County would continue to focus economic development activities for the county as a whole.</p> <p>Community groups will be eligible for the Camrose County Legacies Grant program.</p> <p>Camrose County's recreation department currently oversees two campgrounds, and would assume responsibility for the operation of the Ferintosh Campground.</p> <p>Camrose County has an agreement with Ferintosh Rural Fire Association for provision of services. The fire hall would remain operational.</p> <p>Policing would continue to be conducted by the RCMP out of Bashaw and Camrose County Protective Services officers.</p> <p>Camrose County would enforce bylaws.</p>

Appendices

APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LONG-TERM VIABILITY

1. Council should develop a comprehensive three-year implementation plan incorporating the recommendations of the Viability Plan, asset management, an operating/business plan, and its existing strategic and economic development plans.
2. Council should budget sufficiently to ensure staff positions are resourced appropriately for compensation, training, and work-related travel expenses to ensure the ability to attract and retain qualified employees required to fulfill the duties established by council and the MGA.
3. Council should explore the contracting of administration services.
4. The village should develop a capital plan to address items in the infrastructure audit.
5. Council should examine the use of debt to pay for capital projects.
6. Council should finance capital projects through increasing property taxes and utility rates.

APPENDIX B: MUNICIPAL INDICATORS

Alberta Municipal Affairs has established a set of indicators intended to measure specific aspects of municipal governance, finance and community. Each indicator has a defined benchmark. The benchmarks are rules of thumb that set a general level of acceptable risk. However, each municipality may have unique circumstances or alternative strategies that justify a different result.

If a municipality does not meet the criteria for being “not at risk”, it does not necessarily mean there is any cause for concern; however, the municipality is encouraged to review the circumstances giving rise to the indicator results to ensure it is not exposed to potential or emerging risks. An exception to an indicator benchmark does not indicate fault or mismanagement on the part of the municipality; an indicator may be triggered by events that are beyond the control of council and administration, or may result from circumstances that are being effectively managed by the municipality.

Indicator	Description	Expected Result and What It Means	Ferintosh Actual Result – 2016
Audit Outcome	Audit report in the municipality’s audited annual financial statements.	The audit report does not identify a going concern risk or denial of opinion.	OK – no exception The municipal auditor has been able to complete the audit and express an opinion, and has not identified a specific concern about the ability of the municipality to meet its financial obligations.
Legislation-Backed Ministry Interventions	Interventions authorized by the Minister of Municipal Affairs in accordance with the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> , such as a viability review, or where directives have been issued pursuant to an inspection.	The municipality has not been the subject of a Municipal Affairs intervention.	Exception – viability review in process
Tax Base Ratio	Tax base ratio is the proportion of the total municipal tax revenue generated by residential and farmland tax base, regardless of whether it is municipal property taxes, special taxes, or	The municipality’s residential and farmland tax revenue accounts for no more than 95 per cent of its total tax revenue.	OK – no exception Residential and farmland tax revenue accounts for 93.1 per cent of total tax revenue. The municipality is able to rely in some measure on its non-

Indicator	Description	Expected Result and What It Means	Ferintosh Actual Result – 2016
	local improvement taxes.		residential tax base to generate a portion of its tax revenues. These properties are typically taxed at a higher rate than residential and farm properties.
Tax Collection Rate	The ability of the municipality to collect own-source revenues, including property taxes, special taxes, local improvement taxes, well drilling equipment taxes, and grants-in-place-of-taxes.	The municipality collects at least 90 per cent of the municipal taxes (e.g. property taxes, special taxes) levied in any year.	OK – no exception The municipality collected 91.1 per cent of the municipal taxes. The municipality is able to collect its tax revenues and use those funds to meet budgeted commitments and requisitioning obligations.
Population Change	The change in population of the municipality over the past ten years based on the Municipal Affairs Population List.	The population has not declined by more than 20 per cent over a ten-year period.	OK – no exception The population increased by 18 per cent over a ten-year period. The population of the municipality is stable or growing.
Current Ratio	The ratio of current assets (cash, temporary investments, accounts receivable) to current liabilities (accounts payable, temporary borrowings, current repayment obligations on long-term borrowings).	The ratio of current assets to current liabilities is greater than one.	OK – no exception The ratio of current assets to current liabilities is 4.2 to 1. The municipality is able to pay for its current financial obligations using cash or near-cash assets.
Accumulated Surplus	The total assets of the municipality net of total debt, excluding tangible capital property and debts	The municipality has a positive (above zero) surplus.	OK – no exception The municipality has a surplus of \$327,650.

Indicator	Description	Expected Result and What It Means	Ferintosh Actual Result – 2016
	related to tangible capital property.		The municipality has more operational assets than liabilities, which generally provides the municipality with cash flow to meet ongoing obligations and manage through lean periods of the year where costs may exceed revenues.
On-time financial reporting	Whether the municipality has completed submission its annual financial statements and financial information returns to Municipal Affairs by the legislated due date.	<p>The municipality's financial statements and financial information returns for the preceding calendar year are received by Municipal Affairs no later than May 8.</p> <p>Financial reporting is an important aspect of municipal accountability to its residents and businesses.</p>	<p>OK – no exception</p> <p>The village's financial statements and financial information returns were submitted on time.</p> <p>The municipality is preparing its audited financial reports on a timely basis.</p>
Debt to Revenue Percentage	The total amount of municipal borrowings, including long term capital leases, as a percentage of total municipal revenues.	The municipality's total borrowings represent less than 120 per cent (160 per cent for municipalities with a higher regulated debt limit) of its total revenue.	<p>OK – no exception</p> <p>The village has no borrowings.</p>
Debt Service to Revenue Percentage	The total cost of making scheduled repayments (including interest) on borrowings as a percentage of total municipal revenues.	The municipality's total costs for borrowing repayments do not exceed 20 per cent (28 per cent for municipalities with a higher regulated debt limit) of its total revenue.	<p>OK – no exception</p> <p>The village has no debt repayments.</p>

Indicator	Description	Expected Result and What It Means	Ferintosh Actual Result – 2016
Infrastructure investment – asset sustainability ratio	The total cost of current year additions (through purchases or construction) to tangible capital assets (vehicles, equipment, buildings, roads, utility infrastructure, land) relative to the current year's amortization (depreciation) on all tangible capital assets.	<p>The municipality's current capital additions exceed the current year's amortization (depreciation).</p> <p>This measure does not account for the effects of inflation; typically, replacement costs for new assets exceed the historic cost of existing assets.</p>	<p>OK – no exception</p> <p>The municipality is replacing its existing tangible capital assets and investing in new assets and infrastructure at a rate of 2.3 to 1 in relation to the estimated wear or obsolescence of its existing assets.</p>
Infrastructure age - net book value of tangible capital assets	The net book value of tangible capital assets as a percentage of the total original costs. Net book value is the original purchase cost less amortization (depreciation).	<p>The net book value of the municipality's tangible capital assets is greater than 40 per cent of the original cost.</p> <p>If the municipality is adding new services or expanded facilities and infrastructure, it would be expected that the ratio would be higher than 40 per cent.</p>	<p>Exception – net book value is 39.8 per cent of original cost.</p> <p>The municipality may not be replacing existing assets on a regular basis.</p>
Interest in Municipal Office	The number of candidates running in the most recent municipal election relative to the total number of councillor positions up for election.	<p>The number of candidates exceeded the number of councillor positions.</p> <p>The ratio of candidates to total council positions measures the willingness of electors to run for municipal office.</p>	<p>OK – no exception</p>

APPENDIX C: FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2011 – 2015

TABLE 1: FINANCIAL POSITION

Financial Assets	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	5-Year Change
Cash and Temporary Investments	\$386,349	\$537,862	\$577,150	\$470,037	\$367,201	\$19,148
Taxes and Grants in Place of Taxes Receivables	\$70,115	\$41,831	\$39,920	\$54,463	\$45,572	\$47,833
Other Receivables	\$15,667	\$17,323	\$15,118	\$14,858	\$16,979	\$1,312
Total Financial Assets	\$472,131	\$597,016	\$632,188	\$539,358	\$429,752	\$65,673
Liabilities						
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	\$28,519	\$21,199	\$48,749	\$90,527	\$21,864	\$6,665
Deferred Revenue	\$256,813	\$361,502	\$338,968	\$171,921	\$71,131	\$185,682
Long Term Debt	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Liabilities	\$1,200	\$15,291	\$9,107	\$9,107	\$9,107	\$7,907
Total Liabilities	\$286,532	\$397,992	\$396,824	\$271,555	\$102,102	\$184,430
Net Financial Assets	\$185,599	\$199,024	\$235,364	\$267,803	\$327,650	\$142,051
Non-financial Assets						
Tangible Capital Assets	\$2,144,078	\$2,123,073	\$2,235,167	\$2,475,381	\$2,644,313	\$500,235
Prepaid Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		
Total Non-financial Assets	\$2,144,078	\$2,123,073	\$2,235,167	\$2,475,381	\$2,644,313	\$500,235
Accumulated Surplus	\$2,329,677	\$2,322,097	\$2,470,531	\$2,743,184	\$2,971,963	\$642,286

TABLE 2: ACCUMULATED SURPLUS

Accumulated Surplus	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	5-Year Change
Unrestricted Surplus	\$83,520	\$96,945	\$133,285	\$165,724	\$223,071	\$139,551
Restricted Surplus	\$102,079	\$102,079	\$102,079	\$102,079	\$104,579	\$2,500
Equity in Tangible Capital Assets (non-cash)	\$2,144,078	\$2,123,073	\$2,235,167	\$2,475,381	\$2,644,313	\$500,235
Total Accumulated Surplus	\$2,329,677	\$2,322,097	\$2,470,531	\$2,743,184	\$2,971,963	\$642,286

TABLE 3: FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES BY FUNCTION (REVENUES AND EXPENSES)

Revenues	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
General (Not Function Specific)	\$533,070	\$195,370	\$175,576	\$169,847	\$197,156
General Government	\$671	\$2,912	\$80,593	\$2,701	\$71,085
Protective Services	\$24,111	\$10,147	\$16,540	\$22,039	\$12,862
Transportation	\$2,300	\$44,831	\$83,892	\$68,467	\$92,322
Environmental Use and Protection	\$103,465	\$145,131	\$253,084	\$372,548	\$301,913
Public Health and Welfare	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Planning and Development	\$50	\$0	\$225	\$0	\$600
Recreation and Culture	\$18,510	\$17,905	\$18,540	\$83,773	\$43,563
Total Revenue	\$682,177	\$416,296	\$628,450	\$719,375	\$719,501
Expenses					
General Government	\$114,923	\$123,640	\$179,957	\$104,162	\$146,565
Protective Services	\$31,292	\$18,679	\$17,687	\$21,605	\$14,866
Transportation	\$96,390	\$83,184	\$91,030	\$88,589	\$92,678
Environmental Use and Protection	\$171,410	\$173,862	\$165,553	\$201,150	\$203,277
Public Health and Welfare	\$1,319	\$1,630	\$1,647	\$1,538	\$1,364
Planning and Development	\$4,526	\$576	\$606	\$2,698	\$3,020
Recreation and Culture	\$24,455	\$22,305	\$23,536	\$26,980	\$27,952
Total Expenses	\$444,315	\$423,876	\$480,016	\$446,722	\$490,722
Net Revenue/Expenses	\$237,862	(\$7,580)	\$148,434	\$272,653	\$228,779

Table 4 compares the Village of Ferintosh and Camrose County 2017 property tax rates and the amount of property tax that property owners would pay on a property assessed at \$100,000. This does not reflect any levies or fee changes based on different service levels.

TABLE 4: 2017 COMPARISON OF VILLAGE OF FERINTOSH AND CAMROSE COUNTY PROPERTY TAX

	Village of Ferintosh		Camrose County	
	Residential	Non-residential	Residential	Non-residential
2017 Municipal Property Tax Rate	9.3970	9.3970	3.0840	13.8012
Alberta School Foundation Fund	2.2296	4.5916	2.4152	3.6900
Total	11.6266	13.9886	5.4992	17.4912
Assessed Property Value	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
2017 Total Property Tax	\$1,162.66	\$1,398.86	549.92	1749.12

The village's minimum tax in 2017 was \$550.

APPENDIX D: INFRASTRUCTURE 10-YEAR PLAN

The following two-part table provides an overview of the projected annual costs of the recommended projects as listed in the **Village of Ferintosh Infrastructure Condition Assessment**.

TABLE 5: VILLAGE OF FERINTOSH 10-YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Infrastructure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Sub-total
Water System						
Wastewater						
Roads and Sidewalks						
Drainage						
Municipal Buildings						
Total	\$324,408	\$255,723	\$342,846	\$310,109	\$234,430	\$1,467,516

Infrastructure	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Water System						
Wastewater						
Roads and Sidewalks						
Drainage						
Municipal Buildings						
Total	\$87,826	\$304,239	\$54,428	\$219,032	\$157,059	\$2,290,100

Note: Estimated costs are inclusive of engineering fees and contingency allowances.

TABLE 6: CAPITAL PROJECT EXPENDITURES – PURCHASE OF TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

In a municipality's audited financial statements, the amount expended on the purchase of tangible capital assets (acquisition of TCAs) equates to the amount the municipality expended on capital projects in that year.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total	Average
Purchase of TCAs	\$339,004	\$83,870	\$221,502	\$355,429	\$288,192	\$1,287,997	\$257,600

APPENDIX E: UTILITY REVENUES AND EXPENSES

TABLE 7: UTILITY OPERATIONS BALANCES

Municipal Utility	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Water					
Water - Operating Revenues	\$61,637	\$79,503	\$96,043	\$250,103	\$169,599
Water - Operating Expenses	\$75,621	\$76,697	\$70,027	\$79,799	\$93,781
Water - Net	-\$13,984	\$2,806	\$26,016	\$170,304	\$75,818
Wastewater (Sewer)					
Wastewater - Operating Revenues	\$21,926	\$43,857	\$135,948	\$100,626	\$109,984
Wastewater - Operating Expenses	\$78,754	\$83,879	\$80,104	\$106,165	\$91,514
Wastewater - Net	-\$56,828	-\$40,022	\$55,844	-\$5,539	\$18,470
Waste Management (Garbage)					
Waste Management - Operating Revenues	\$19,902	\$21,771	\$21,093	\$21,819	\$22,330
Waste Management - Operating Expenses	\$17,035	\$13,286	\$15,422	\$15,186	\$17,982
Waste Management - Net	\$2,867	\$8,485	\$5,671	\$6,633	\$4,348

TABLE 8: SUMMARY OF ALL UTILITY OPERATIONS

Water, Wastewater, and Waste Management Combined	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
All utilities - Operating Revenues	\$103,465	\$145,131	\$253,084	\$372,548	\$301,913
All utilities - Operating Expenses	\$171,410	\$173,862	\$165,553	\$201,150	\$203,277
All Utilities - Net	-\$67,945	-\$28,731	\$87,531	\$171,398	\$98,636

APPENDIX F:

Village of Ferintosh Viability Review Community Meeting Thursday, April 12, 2018 Summary of Community Engagement Worksheets

Total Worksheets Returned	37
Ferintosh Residents	28
County Residents	6
Other residency	3
Respondents who are property owners	30

1. What is important to you about Ferintosh being a village?

Comment	Number of responses
Self-governance/local Autonomy/Access to Council	12
Sense of community	7
Quiet/safe/friendly	1
Local services and action	1
Having our own equipment	1

2. What advantages or disadvantages do you see about Ferintosh today and about its future as a village?

Advantages	
Comment	Number of responses
Quiet	2
Have own fire dept.	1
Local self-governance	3
Information availability-tax rates, expenditures	1
Money stays local	1
Services	1
Less red tape	2
Can retire here	1

Disadvantages	
Comment	Number of responses
Lack of fire dept. support	1
High taxes/water rates	6
No money for operations/infrastructure/high debt needed	10
Aging population	1
No commercial/industrial taxes	2
Few services	1
Need a vehicle because no store	1

3. What advantages or disadvantages do you see about Ferintosh becoming a hamlet within Camrose County?

Advantages	
Comment	Number of responses
Lower taxes and water rates	10
Infrastructure work completed sooner	11
Increased services	12
Funding for fire dept.	2
Financial stability	2
Decreased expense costs	1
Better Governance	5

Disadvantages	
Comment	Number of responses
Loss of local autonomy	1
Loss of local employment	2
Loss of village equipment	1
Decreased services quality/quantity	5
Increased red tape	3
Grants will benefit county, not village	1
Higher taxes for infrastructure	1
Loss of identity	1
Loss of personal care	1
Inability to keep chickens	1

4. Rank the municipal services in order of importance to you: (1 being highest importance, 8 being lowest importance).

Ranked Responses:

Service	Ranking		
	High	Medium	Low
Paying bills at a local office	2	5	13
Residential Garbage pick-up	11	10	3
Drinking water	24	-	2
Wastewater Removal	20	2	1
Snow removal and road maintenance	13	11	-
Park and campground maintenance	-	14	12
Campground operation	1	5	17
Other – Fire Dept	3	-	-
Community group support	1	-	-
Council Integrity	1	-	-
Recycling	1	-	-
Income Generation	1	-	-
Low taxes	1	-	-

5. What do you see as the top priorities for the Village of Ferintosh?

Comment	Number of responses
Infrastructure repairs completed	15
Lower taxes	2
Water leak repaired	3
Decision on viability	7
Proper funding of Fire & emergency services	2
Support community groups	1
Bylaw enforcement	1
Snow removal	2
To get a store	1
Serviced lots/development	4
Long-range planning	1
Making the lake a draw	1
Financial sustainability	1

6. What solutions would you propose to improve the long-term viability of Ferintosh?

Comments
Promote and add commercial properties
Offer tax incentives to attract businesses
Service lots
Force property owners to develop empty lots
Attract businesses
Improve lake water quality
Mini storage on unserviced lots
Lottery
Solar power

7. What other viability issues should the Ferintosh Viability Review Team consider?

Comments
Financial questions need to be answered
Emergency services – fire, training, equipment
Money management better
Remember the needs of seniors in the village.
Bylaw enforcement
High taxes lead to reduced home re-sale value and ability to sell.
Community hall
Development of vacant lots

8. What do you feel are the characteristics of a 'viable village'?

This was too vague a question, the general answers are captured in other comments.

9. Why do you consider Ferintosh to be sustainable as a village over the long-term?

Comments
I have seen growth and improvement over the last 12 years.
New families will help us grow.
Newer residential buildings are moving in.
Residents will do what it takes to keep the village.

10. Why do you consider Ferintosh to be unsustainable as a village over the long-term?

Comment	Number of responses
Insufficient money/tax revenue	6
Unfriendly community	1
The population is aging	2
The taxes required will be too high.	1
The village is hidden from the highway.	1
The village can't afford the required infrastructure repairs.	3
There is no money for development of vacant lots.	1
There are few businesses/commercial properties in Ferintosh.	3

11. What other comments you would like to make?

Comment
Bylaws are not enforced.
There is no promotion of the village.
There is a lack of village support to community groups.
Insufficient commercial tax base
I feel too many times in today's world that bigger is not always better. When we work together we grow.
I really appreciate the local council and ability to talk to the people who make locale decisions. I also like seeing the grants that are applied for/granted put to work in the village itself.
People should remove 'self' from the equation
No more tax hikes. No more water hikes.
Do not slow the process – Quick action.
The community has lots to offer as a village or a hamlet.
It seems our government is able to give more funding to larger communities than smaller ones.
Change needs to happen for the safety of the village and people