



## Request for Decision

<b>Title</b>	<b>Vegetation Management Standards Policy Amendment</b>
<b>Proposed Motion</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That Council approve the proposed amendments to the Vegetation Management Standards Policy as presented.</li><li>2. That Council approve the transfer of \$44,000 from the Agriculture Services Operating Reserve to the Agriculture Services Operating Budget to fund the service level increases resulting from changes to the Vegetation Management Standards Policy for 2017.</li></ol>
<b>Administrative Recommendation</b>	That Council approves the above-listed motions as presented.
<b>Previous Council Direction</b>	<p>February 14, 2016 – Committee of the Whole Presentation made to Council regarding policy change options that could enhance current service levels.</p> <p>December 13, 2016 – Motion 468/16: That Council direct Administration to bring forward a recommendation or policy amendment, defining levels of service for area Type 2 vegetation management, to include trimming around road signs and obstacles on road rights-of-way, and provide information regarding fiscal impact.</p> <p>May 10, 2016- Motion 170/16: That Council approve the Vegetation Management Standards Policy as presented.</p>
<b>Report</b>	<p><u>Background Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The current Vegetation Management Standards Policy was approved by Council on May 10, 2016. This policy outlines Vegetation Management Standards (service levels) for all County-owned reserve lands and roadsides.</li><li>• During the 2017 Budget Process, concerns regarding vegetation management adjacent to Sturgeon County entrance signs and obstacles along high-traffic, paved roadways were brought forward.</li><li>• Upon further discussion, Council discussed the need to review and amend the current policy before committing additional resources to enhance current service levels. \$44,000 was allocated to an operating reserve, should Council elect to amend the policy to increase service levels for 2017.</li></ul>

- Based on Council discussions, two main areas of concern have been identified as:
  - 1) The lack of weed trimming around obstacles along high traffic county roadways.
  - 2) The lack of weed trimming around Sturgeon County entrance signs.
- During Committee of the Whole on February 14, 2017, Administration presented multiple options to Council on policy amendments that could address the above-listed concerns. Council’s response was to bring forward a combination of ‘Option 2’ and ‘Option 3’ for their consideration and deliberation.
- ‘Option 2’ includes the creation of a new category for Paved County Roadsides. The service levels for these areas would include mowing and trimming around signs and man-made obstacles a minimum two (2) times per growing season.
- ‘Option 3’ does not involve a policy amendment, as the current policy allows for Sturgeon County to perform vegetation management on lands which are not owned by Sturgeon County, provided “there is public benefit in doing so.” Sturgeon County would obtain a permit from Alberta Transportation which would allow the County to perform weed control and trimming around Sturgeon County entrance signs within Provincial Highway road allowances.
- The estimated cost for implementing the two options is \$44,000. This includes labour, equipment and materials costs.

External Communication

- None.

Relevant Policy/Legislation/Practices:

Sturgeon County Vegetation Management Standards Policy (2016)  
 Alberta Weed Control Act, SA 2008,c.W-5.1 and Regulations

**Implication of Administrative Recommendation**

Strategic Alignment:

This recommendation is consistent with multiple goals under each focus area of the Sturgeon County Strategic Plan, in particular **Operational Excellence** – *executing consistently against a defined level of service.*

Organizational:

Approval of amendments to the Vegetation Management Standards Policy will provide formal and clear direction to Administration regarding the service levels that Council wishes to provide to the residents of Sturgeon County.

	<p>The Agriculture Services Department has the ability and capacity to ensure that the proposed service level enhancements resulting from the proposed policy amendments are successfully delivered.</p> <p><u>Financial:</u></p> <p>The cost of implementing the Policy amendments as described above is approximately \$44,000. This includes all costs including manpower, vehicles, equipment and materials.</p> <p>The funding for these service level increases will be sourced from Operating Reserve. \$44,000 was transferred to reserves during the 2017 budget process for this designated use.</p>
<p><b>Alternatives Considered</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No amendments to the current policy.</li> <li>2. Amendment of the policy to include weed trimming around man-made obstacles for <u>all</u> Type 2 Areas at a frequency of two times per year minimum. Additionally, Sturgeon County would obtain permission (via permit) from Alberta Transportation to perform trimming around County Entrance signs on Provincial Highways.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Implications of Alternatives</b></p>	<p><u>Strategic Alignment:</u></p> <p>Both alternatives considered align with many of Sturgeon County's Strategic Focus areas.</p> <p>Alternative 1 may result in lower resident satisfaction in the services provided by Sturgeon County.</p> <p>Alternative 2 may result in increased service levels in areas where there may be limited benefit or value to the residents of Sturgeon County.</p> <p><u>Organizational:</u></p> <p>Administration has the ability to deliver the service levels that would result from both alternatives listed.</p> <p>Review and amendment of Council Policies ensures that administration receives clear direction on Council's priorities.</p> <p><u>Financial:</u></p> <p>Alternative 1: No cost implications</p> <p>Alternative 2: Approximately \$54,000, including manpower, vehicles, equipment and materials. Council would need to approve an extra \$10,000 in funding, in addition to the funds that were transferred to Operating Reserve for this use.</p>

<b>Follow up Action</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Update Policy Manual (Legislative Services, March 2017)</li> <li>2. Update County website to reflect amended standards (Agriculture Services, March 2017)</li> <li>3. Adjust area classification inventory and service level reporting documents to reflect new 'Paved Road' category (Agriculture Services, March 2017)</li> </ol>
<b>Attachment(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revised Vegetation Management Standards Policy</li> <li>2. Current Vegetation Management Standards Policy</li> </ol>
<b>Report Reviewed by:</b>	<p data-bbox="527 415 808 487"></p> <p data-bbox="527 499 1112 535">Angela Veenstra, Agriculture Services Manager</p> <p data-bbox="527 604 815 676"></p> <p data-bbox="527 697 1055 732">Ian McKay, P. Eng., GM Municipal Services</p> <p data-bbox="560 772 815 877"></p> <p data-bbox="527 882 1112 917">Peter Tarnawsky, County Commissioner – CAO</p>

## Strategic Alignment Checklist

**Vision:** Sturgeon County: a diverse, active community that pioneers opportunities and promotes initiative while embracing rural lifestyles.

**Mission:** Provide quality, cost effective services and infrastructure to meet the diverse needs of the Sturgeon County community, while improving competitiveness and sustainability.

Focus Areas	Not consistent	N/A	Consistent
<b>Strong Local Governance and Regional Leadership</b>			
<i>We promote consistent and accountable leadership through collaborative and transparent processes (Strategic Plan, pg. 27 MDP)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Consistent with neighborhood role (see MDP), master plans, policies</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Considers fiscal stability and sustainability</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Has a positive impact on regional and sub-regional cooperation</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Respect the Natural Environment</b>			
<i>We acknowledge the importance of a healthy environment and will minimize and monitor our impact on ecosystems (Strategic Plan, pg. 27 MDP)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Compliance with Provincial and Federal regulations and/or legislation</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ensure effective environmental risk management</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Community Identity &amp; Spirit</b>			
<i>We will build upon our strengths, where together we will create an inclusive, caring community (Strategic Plan, (Strategic Plan, pg. 27 MDP)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Promotes and/or enhances residents' identification with Sturgeon County</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Enhances service provision through community partnerships</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Supports Sturgeon County's cultural history</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Planned Growth and Prosperity</b>			
<i>We encourage varied and integrated enterprises that enhance our strong economic base, while balancing the needs of the community and natural environment. (Strategic Plan, pg. 27 MDP)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Does the proposal align with the Integrated Regional Growth Strategy (map/policies) pg. 26 MDP</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Considers cumulative costs and long-term funding implications</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Targets growth around current or planned infrastructure</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Maintain and Enhance Strong Communities</b>			
<i>We are committed to a safe, secure community, where our residents are respected and provided with access to opportunities. (Strategic Plan, pg. 27 MDP)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Positive impact on residents' quality of life</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Supports and promotes volunteer efforts</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Provides programs and services that are accessible to all residents</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Operational Excellence</b>			
<i>We have the organizational capability to deliver consistent and defined levels of service to all stakeholders in a professional, efficient, and cost effective manner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Staff have the knowledge, skills and capability to perform their jobs</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Streamlines operational processes and policies</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Promotes engagement and professional interaction with stakeholders</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Considers a cost-structure which allows Sturgeon County to remain competitive within a regional, national and global context</i></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>