

Village of Minburn Viability Review

What We Have Heard: a summary of public input

October 2014

Village of Minburn Viability Review Team

Introduction

The **What We Have Heard** report is intended to inform and support the Village of Minburn Viability Review Team's work in determining the viability of the Village of Minburn. The What We have Heard report contains a compilation of public input that was received by the Viability Review Team following the release of the Initial Findings Report in July 2014.

Input was gathered from a public meeting held in Minburn on July 30, 2014, and from written submissions received from July 16, 2014 to August 8, 2014. Written submissions were accepted by mail, fax and email.

This report is divided into three sections.

Section 1 – Stakeholder input received

A summary of the input gathered from the participants at the public meeting held at the Minburn Ag Society Hall on July 30, 2014, and from written submissions and completed stakeholder engagement workbooks.

Section 2 – Viability Determination

The Viability Review Team's determination on the viability of the Village of Minburn is found in this section.

Section 3 – Next steps

The next phase of the viability review is outlined in this section.

Please note that some comments may have been edited to improve clarity (e.g. spelling and grammar). References to specific persons and names may be edited to protect the anonymity or privacy of both the contributor and/or the named individual(s). Comments which are of a similar tone and message may be grouped together. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times the comment was submitted.

What We Have Heard and Viability Determination Report
Village of Minburn Viability Review
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Section 1 – Stakeholder input received

A. Stakeholder engagement overview

As part of the Village of Minburn Viability Review, the Viability Review Team (VRT) was tasked with leading stakeholder engagement with residents, property owners, and other stakeholders from the Minburn community. From July 2013 to June 2014, the Viability Review Team met to review and evaluate the state of governance, finance, and programs and services at the Village of Minburn. From July to August 2014, stakeholder engagement was held to provide community stakeholders with the opportunity to learn about the initial findings, and to provide input to the Viability Review Team.

The stakeholder engagement held consisted of two components. First, a public meeting was held in conjunction with a community dinner hosted by the Village of Minburn on July 30, 2014. Second, the Initial Findings Report was sent to each Minburn resident and property owner who owned property in the village and written submissions were accepted for a three week period from July 16, 2014 to August 8, 2014.

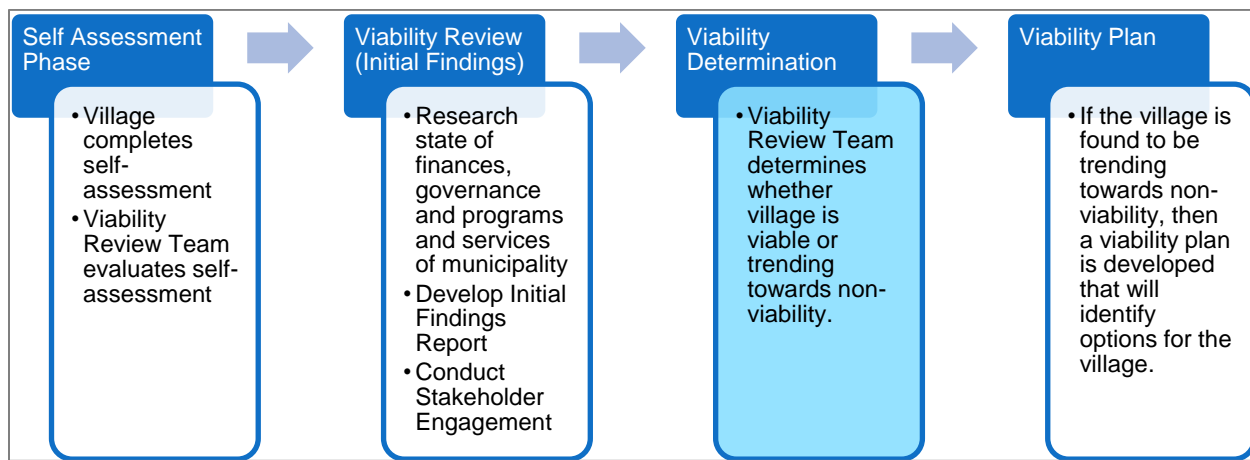


Figure 1 - Overview of the Viability Review Process

The Village of Minburn Viability Review Team held a public meeting at the Minburn Ag Society Hall on the evening of July 30, 2014 to present information from the Village of Minburn Viability Review Initial Findings Report and to gather input from the attendees on specific questions concerning the viability of the village. Approximately 25 adult members of the Minburn community attended the meeting and participated in the discussions.

The input provided by those who attended the public meeting and from written submissions is shown in Section 1B.

B. What We Have Heard

Description

Participants were provided with workbooks at the open house and information displays highlighting information from the Initial Findings Report were distributed around the hall. Five questions were asked of the participants, which are:

1. What is important to you about being a village?
2. What municipal services are important to you?
3. How could these municipal services be funded in the future?
4. Do you see potential for growth in Minburn?
5. Based on your knowledge and the information provided in the Initial Findings Report, do you believe that the Village of Minburn is a viable municipality?
6. What else does the Viability Review Team need to hear?

Residents and property owners of the Village of Minburn were mailed copies of the Village of Minburn Viability Review Initial Findings Report. The stakeholder engagement workbooks, along with any other written submissions have been compiled in this section and are shown below.

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

- A whole bunch of half-decent people living in a small space.
- Able to address problems in timely manner. (4)
- Access to pool of grants funding.
- Accountability of our infrastructure. (2)
- Being able to receive grants to improve living conditions in village.
- Being in control of our own destiny.
- Complete control over our own finances. (3)
- Control of our own destiny. (2)
- Decisions made locally. (9)
- Ease of voicing concerns at town office. (2)
- Having a representative in village to take care of day to day operations and matters of concern.
- Having our own council. (6)
- Having our own water. (2)
- Independence. (3)
- Keeping our community clean. (4)
- Maintenance. (2)
- Opportunity to voice concerns locally.
- Self control of infrastructure (ie snow removal, garbage pickup).
- Services in a timely manner. (2)
- Snow removal. (2)
- We have security. Our neighbours look after one another. (3)
- Working together as a community. (4)

2. What municipal services are important to you?

- Alley maintenance/street cleaning. (5)
- Communication. (3)
- Cultural events.
- Fire.
- Garbage pickup. (8)
- Grass cutting. (2)
- Green spaces.
- Infrastructure maintenance. (3)
- Internet. (4)
- Planning and development. (3)
- Police.
- Proper snow removal.
- Property maintenance (village and personal).
- Recreation. (3)
- Seasonal infrastructure upkeep/roads and sidewalks. (3)
- Sewer maintenance. (11)
- Snow removal. (15)
- Town maintenance.
- Trees trimmed.
- Village office. (3)
- Waste management. (4)
- Water (our own). (6)

3. How could these municipal services be funded in the future?

- Business/residential incentives.
- Decrease spending where can. (3)
- Encourage businesses. (3)
- Encourage empty lot owners to develop them.
- Grants. (7)
- I see County takeover as inevitable.
- Increase grant applications and more grant research.
- Lot lottery on village owned lots. (2)
- Lower taxes to make it so more people would move in and more taxpayers more money. (3)
- Obtain government grants/funding.
- Provide billable services (i.e. internet).
- Sharing costs between communities. (2)
- Taxes. (4)
- User fees. (2)
- Village managed/owned business. (2)
- Village owned and run industries.
- Volunteers.
- Water sales. (4)

4. Do you see potential for growth in Minburn?

- Advertise community events and development. (2)
- Community events.
- Community investments – dog park, spray walk, walking trails.
- Develop ball diamonds area - business development.
- Develop lots.
- Dog park/spray walk.
- Grow corn on vacant lots. (2)
- Lower taxes to encourage people to move here. (3)
- No, not without businesses or infrastructure. (3)
- No.
- Online businesses. (3)
- Parks and recs grants
- Possible, but not likely.
- Residential/business growth incentives – e.g. free land, storage facilities, lease land (3)
- Tax incentives for business growth. (5)
- Yes, as the older population goes to care centres, younger families move in with children.
- Yes, community development.
- Yes, if we developed the land and put in a storage unit or leased the land as a pipe yard, etc.
- Yes. (2)

5. Based on your knowledge and the information provided in the Initial Findings Report, do you believe that the Village of Minburn is a viable municipality?

- No. (11)
- No. Increases in taxes will kill any future development.
- Yes, the resources are available to make the village viable with the right leadership and decisions being made.
- Yes, with proper management, we have to replace council that is interested in breaking the town and selling off the assets in order to go county.
- Yes. (4)
- Yes. Provided municipal leaders are properly trained and CAOs are properly supervised.

6. What else does the Viability Review Team need to hear?

- 50 Av hasn't been cleaned in a few years.
- Accountability.
- Lack of maintenance.
- Land taxes keep going up.
- Look at all the info and make a good decision.
- Look into the sale of the internet and the community provided input on this issue and sale of a community asset.
- Manitoba and New Brunswick on amalgamation.
- Minburn was viable before, it can be again with right people.
- More communication. (2)

- Our taxes go up and we get less maintenance, we used to get our sidewalks shoveled and the grass cut on the boulevard.
- Pay bills then get billed again for same bill.
- People wouldn't move here.
- Roads flood because of plugged drains.
- Since present council was elected, billing for internet, sewage and garbage was neglected. They have sold the village water truck (used for street cleaning, sewage flushing, culvert cleaning and standby for fire). They sold the village internet which provide income to support office operations. We have no water bill here (everyone has a well) which saves every household more than most people pay in taxes. What are people complaining about?
- Taxes keep going up, services keep going down.
- That concerns will be handled properly at a county level.
- The village has always been viable. The petition was about a group of people that just wanted to pay less property tax.
- Transparency. (3)
- Trees need trimming.
- We need a CAO who can be long term, reliable but at a pay level we can afford.
- We need better and more knowledgeable town council and more accountability for spending.
- We should go county.

Section 2 - Viability Determination

Based on the information analyzed by the Viability Review Team and the input collected from residents, the Viability Review Team has determined that the Village of Minburn is trending towards non-viability.

The Viability Review Team came to this determination due to the following factors:

1. The village's finances are trending negatively and the net financial assets have declined in every year in the past five years.
2. The village's finances are projected to show deficits due to the pending cuts to provincial government grants for the village's operations. The impact of these cuts will result in future tax increases, or the eventual depletion of the village's financial reserves.
3. The village's aging infrastructure (mainly, the sewage lagoon) will require some upgrades which the village may not be able to afford with its limited financial capacity.
4. The village's population fluctuated between 65 and 105 residents for the 1991 to 2011 time period and have not grown in twenty years.
5. The village has very few non-residential (business) tax payers and the lack of development and growth in the municipality has led to a further dependence on the village's residential tax base.
6. The village has experienced difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified staff to maintain operations of the village's infrastructure systems. These personnel challenges continue to exist due to budget constraints and a tight labour market.

Section 3 - Next Steps

The What We Have Heard Report is meant to provide members of the Minburn community with information on the public input collected to date. The information gathered will be analyzed and will be used by the Viability Review Team's determination of the Village of Minburn's viability.

The Viability Review Team has begun the development of the Viability Plan in August 2014 with the Village of Minburn and the County of Minburn councils. During the upcoming months, options will be developed on solutions that will allow Minburn to become viable in the long-term. These options may include changes to the way that Minburn is governed and administered, how Minburn works with its municipal neighbours, and whether Minburn should be dissolved and become a hamlet in the County of Minburn.

Residents will be informed of project updates and further stakeholder engagement will take place once the Viability Plan has been completed.

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