

Subject:	Bearspaw Area Structure Plan: Request for Direction
Date:	November 21, 2023
Presenter:	Andrew Chell, Senior Planner
Department:	Planning

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Governance Committee with an update on the Bearspaw Area Structure Plan (ASP) amendment project, and to present a land use strategy for the Committee's consideration and further direction.

The land use strategy was developed primarily based on feedback gathered through the latest round of public engagement, through which the community expressed a general desire to maintain the country residential character in Bearspaw. The land use strategy envisions 2-acre residential lots throughout Bearspaw, with a small Community Core area to provide amenities to the community, with the center of the plan area designated for Future Development to be comprehensively planned as development pressure progresses from the east and west. The proposed land use strategy meets the requirement of the Calgary Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (RGP) that the ASP amendment does not cause an increase in the population.

## **ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Administration be directed to draft amendments to the Bearspaw Area Structure Plan and to seek community, agency and intermunicipal input based on the updated land use strategy set out within Attachment A, including for:

- The removal of agricultural lands from the Plan area.
- The designation of significant areas of unfragmented lands as future residential development areas, to ensure the orderly phasing of development and focused infilling of existing fragmented areas.
- The identification of a small community core where local institutional and commercial amenities will be focused.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Bearspaw ASP was originally adopted by Council in 1994 and current land use within the 25,000-acre Plan area primarily consists of agriculture and country residential development. A small node of commercial and institutional uses exists in the vicinity of Highway 1A and Bearspaw Road, and Watermark, an urban style community, has been developed just west of Calgary's Tuscany neighbourhood.

The Bearspaw ASP was amended in 2017 in response to the creation of the Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park. This amendment saw the removal of lands from the ASP to create the Glenbow Ranch Area Structure Plan. The purpose of this review is to address policy gaps in the existing ASP and ensure consistency with other County statutory and non-statutory policies. Further, the RGP was adopted on August 15, 2022, and provides a regional framework for how the County plans for growth.

The Bearspaw ASP project started in January 2019, and initial public engagement was conducted later that year. After a pause on the project to await the approval of the RGP, Council approved the updated Terms of Reference for the update of the ASP on May 23, 2023.

## **DISCUSSION**

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### **Guiding Policy Framework**

The Bearspaw ASP is required to align with the higher-level policies and requirements of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, the Calgary Metropolitan Region Growth Plan, the Rocky View/City of Calgary Intermunicipal Development, and the Municipal Development Plan.

#### ***Calgary Metropolitan Region Growth Plan Requirements***

The Bearspaw ASP is recognized as an existing statutory plan outside of a Preferred Growth Area that remains in full effect following adoption of the Growth Plan. Policy 3.1.10.4 notes that ASPs outside of Preferred Growth Areas are entitled to develop the Rural and Country Cluster placetype, which is consistent with the existing form found within Bearspaw currently. Overall average density within the Plan area is limited to 0.5 units per acre; at the quarter-section scale, this works out to a minimum lot size of 2 acres.

### **Communications and Engagement**

Public engagement was conducted for the Bearspaw ASP project in 2019, which included an Open House, questionnaire, and coffee chat sessions. Key themes identified included:

- Future development must reflect the existing character of the community with a preference for country residential lots of 2-4 acre size.
- Potential for allowing smaller parcels in the context of conservation design or development to be located adjacent to existing developed areas.
- General desire to allow for land use types that would cater to seniors.
- Lack of support for regional commercial areas with general support for businesses serving local needs, as long as those businesses are small-scale and designed to match the rural character of the community.
- Preservation of wildlife, open space and environmental features, and to a lesser extent, agricultural lands.
- Development to be accountable for any servicing infrastructure, stormwater conveyance, and transportation upgrades needed to support the development.
- Concerns regarding traffic safety and general desire for more pathways and bicycle paths to increase connectivity between communities.

### **Proposed Land Use Strategy**

A new land use strategy for Bearspaw has been drafted based on previous community feedback and alignment with all applicable statutory plans, including the RGP and Municipal Development Plan. The proposed land use strategy and policy areas are set out in Attachment A. Key highlights of the land use strategy include:

1. Removal of agricultural lands from the ASP. Development of these lands would be guided by the Municipal Development Plan.
2. Introduction of the Community Core for institutional and local-focused commercial amenities serving the Bearspaw community.

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3. Recognize that as Bearspaw has been developed over the last three decades, there is now demand for infilling of country residential areas, and where appropriate, 2-acre lots may be supported within the infill policy areas without a Conceptual Scheme.
4. Future Development areas would be planned as demand progresses from the east and west. Development would not be supported until a Conceptual Scheme is approved, which would conceptually plan roads, stormwater management, and municipal reserves to allow for orderly phasing of development.

The land use strategy proposes that most of the Plan area be developed in the country residential form that is typical of Bearspaw, to a maximum density of 0.5 units per acre as allowed under the RGP. Unclustered, this density results in minimum parcel sizes of 2 acres, which aligns with the community sentiments provided during the public engagement.

The proposed land use strategy generally aligns with the RGP, community input, and statutory plans; however, the next steps of the project include public engagement, intermunicipal collaboration, and supporting technical studies, which would further inform the land use strategy and resulting amendments to be presented to Council.

### **Path Forward**

The next steps for the project include:

- Preparing draft ASP amendments and preliminary technical studies (Q4 2023 – Q2 2024);
- Public engagement (focus groups and open house) on revised ASP (Q2 2024);
- Finalization of the draft ASP and technical studies (Q3 2024);
- Schedule Public Hearing, 1st and 2nd reading of draft ASP (Q4 2024);
- Referral to Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (Q4 2024); and,
- Schedule Council 3rd reading for adoption of ASP (Q1 2025).

### **Strategic Questions**

1. Does the proposed land use strategy align with the Committee's vision for the Bearspaw ASP, considering the public input previously received and the overall guiding policy framework?
2. Does the removal of agricultural lands from the ASP align with the Committee's vision on how to manage development on agricultural lands within the County?
3. Does the Future Development concept and proposed boundary align with the Committee's vision?

### **ALTERNATE DIRECTION**

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Administration does not have an alternative direction for the Committee's consideration.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

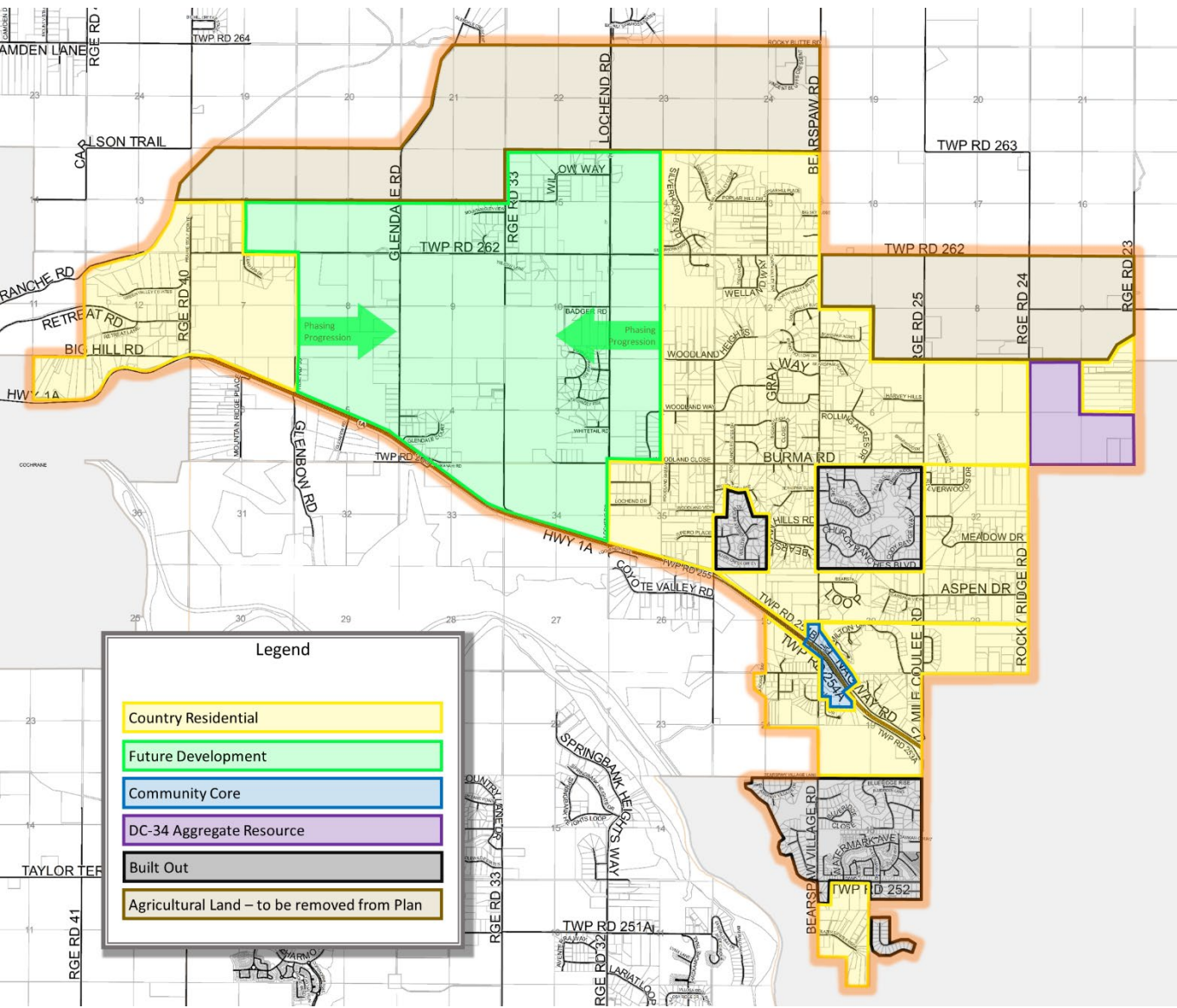
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Attachment A: Proposed Land Use Strategy and Policy Areas

Attachment B: Existing Land Use Strategy

Attachment C: Proposed Land Use Policy Areas

ATTACHMENT A: PROPOSED LAND USE STRATEGY AND POLICY AREAS



ATTACHMENT B – EXISTING BEARSPAW LAND USE STRATEGY MAP

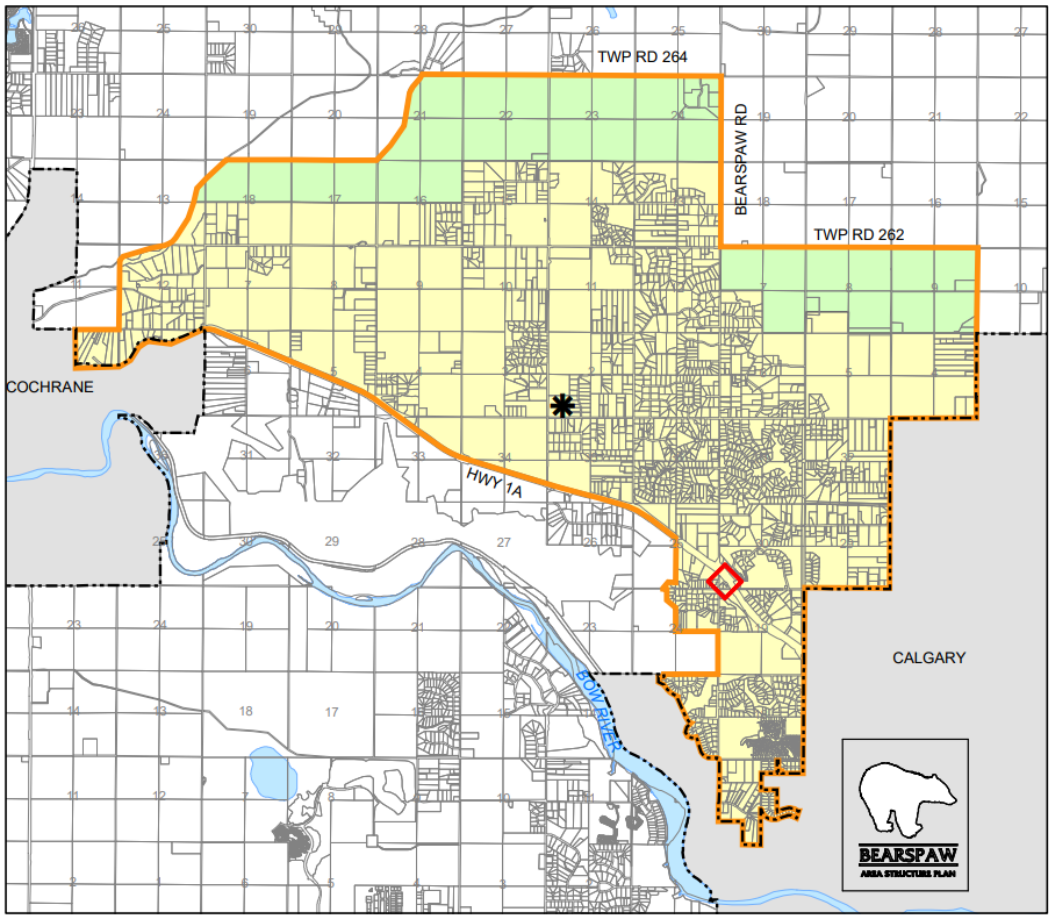


Figure 7:  
Future Land  
Use Scenario

- ASP Area
- Public Institutional
- Rural Commercial
- Agricultural
- Country Residential

This map is conceptual in nature. No measurements or area calculations should be taken from this map.

## **ATTACHMENT C – PROPOSED LAND USE POLICY AREAS**

A new land use strategy has been prepared for the Bearspaw ASP that includes new and updated policy areas as detailed in the table below.

<b>Policy Area</b>	<b>Description</b>
Country Residential	This policy area primarily consists of country residential development, typically between 1.98 and 4 acres. Subdivision to smaller than 4 acres may be supported without a Conceptual Scheme, where appropriate.
Future Development	Consisting primarily of agricultural and undeveloped land, development in these areas would be unsupported unless a Conceptual Scheme were adopted to guide development. The County would initiate skeletal Conceptual Schemes according to the phasing progress from east and west. Existing Conceptual Schemes could develop as approved.
Community Core	Institutional and local-focused commercial amenities serving the Bearspaw community.
DC-34 Aggregate Resource Extraction	Aggregate Resource Extraction use under Direct Control DC-34 district.
Built-Out	These areas are considered fully built-out and no further development is supported.
Agriculture	To be removed from the ASP; guided by the Agricultural policies within the Municipal Development Plan.