



COUNCIL REPORT

Consideration of New Municipal Development Plan

Electoral Division: All

Project: 1014-365

Date:	July 10, 2025
Presenter:	Gerrit Scheffel, Senior Regional Planner
Department:	Intergovernmental and Regional Services

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Bylaw C-8653-2025 *Municipal Development Plan (MDP)* for consideration of approval by Council.

The MDP Review project was undertaken in accordance with the Terms of Reference (TOR), approved by Council on December 13, 2022. The regional context has shifted considerably since the beginning of the project, with the dissolution of the Calgary Metropolitan Regional Board (CMRB), resulting in the Regional Growth Plan being rescinded on April 30, 2025. The MDP Review project remains a priority for the County as the *County Plan* (current MDP) was adopted 12 years ago in 2013. The MDP requires periodic updates to reflect changing community needs, best practices, and growth pressures.

The MDP proposes an updated 20-year vision for growth and development across the County, and outlines a set of goals, objectives, performance indicators, and action items to implement and achieve that vision. This report highlights several key policy areas, including the County's approach to Managing Growth, Building Communities, and County-Wide Policies.

The MDP Review project has included three formal rounds of engagement with residents, business owners, intermunicipal partners, and other interested parties. Feedback from project stakeholders and engagement participants has been generally positive. Throughout the engagement process, a number of concerns have been raised and addressed, extensively shaping the MDP. The methods of engagement and feedback received during Stage 3 Engagement have been summarized in the Stage 3 Engagement Summary Report.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT Bylaw C-8653-2025 be given first reading.

THAT Bylaw C-8653-2025 be given second reading.

THAT Bylaw C-8653-2025 be considered for third reading.

THAT Bylaw C-8653-2025 be given third and final reading.

BACKGROUND

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP; Attachment A) is the County's highest order statutory plan that sets a 20-year vision for growth and development across the County. The MDP establishes decision-making objectives and policies regarding future land use, infrastructure, municipal services, environmental stewardship, and other aspects related to growth.

In Alberta, every municipality is required to adopt an MDP under the *Municipal Government Act*. The MDP is a County-wide plan and provides direction and guidance to lower-level policy documents, such as area structure plans, conceptual schemes, and the *Land Use Bylaw*.

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On December 13, 2022, Council approved the MDP Review project Terms of Reference and provided direction to conduct a full rewrite of the *County Plan* (current MDP). The reasons for starting the project were twofold:

1. The Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) approved the Regional Growth Plan and required all CMRB member municipalities to update their MDPs to align with this new legislation by August 15, 2025.
2. The *County Plan* was approaching 10 years since being adopted on October 1, 2013 (Bylaw C-7280-2013), and the County had significant growth and associated infrastructure demands.

In March 2025, the Regional Growth Plan was rescinded effective April 30, 2025, along with the requirement for CMRB member municipalities to conform with the Regional Growth Plan. Notwithstanding the changing legislative requirements, a comprehensive update to the *County Plan* was considered timely, and the MDP Review project remained a priority for the County.

MDP Review Project Schedule & Deliverables

The project consisted of four phases with key deliverables for each phase:

- *Phase 1 – Initiation & Planning (Q4 2022 – Q3 2023)*
 - ☒ Background Report
 - ☒ Council Workshop
- *Phase 2 – Draft Plan & Engagement (Q4 2023 – Q2 2025)*
 - ☒ Stage 1 Engagement Summary Report
 - ☒ Stage 2 Engagement Summary Report
 - ☒ Draft MDP
 - ☒ Stage 3 Engagement Summary Report
- *Phase 3 – Council Approvals (Q3 2025)*
 - ☒ Final Draft MDP
 - ☐ Public Hearing and Approval
- *Phase 4 – Plan Adoption & Actions (Q3 2025 – Q4 2025)*
 - ☐ Workplan to update subordinate plans, policies, and actions

The project has concluded Phase 2 – Draft Plan & Engagement and has transitioned into Phase 3 – Council Approvals.

ANALYSIS

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is organized into four parts, with 22 policy sections, and two appendices. Below is a summary of key policy areas in the MDP.

Vision and Goals

The MDP sets a long-term vision for the County that is supported by a set of five goals. Each goal is further linked to a set of outcomes, which will be monitored through performance indicators and reported upon to ensure the MDP goals are being achieved over time.

Vision Statement:

Rocky View County is home to diverse communities offering a range of rural lifestyles and opportunities for residents, farmers, and businesses at every stage of life.

Goals:

- Goal 1: Focused Growth and Effective Services
- Goal 2: Celebrate the County's Diverse Communities and Lifestyles

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- Goal 3: Support Agriculture
- Goal 4: Maintain Healthy Land and Water
- Goal 5: Grow our Business Community

Distinct Areas

The introduction of Distinct Areas shifts the County away from a broad County-wide approach to planning, and towards a local planning focus that is responsive to local contexts and celebrates the unique identity and character of its communities. By identifying Distinct Areas in the County, the vision, values, and priorities of each community can be reflected in the built form and appropriate land uses. Distinct Area Profiles have been created for each distinct community and agricultural area of the County and must be considered when amending relevant lower-level plans, such as an area structure plan. Distinct Area Profiles were developed and validated with local communities throughout all three stages of engagement.

Managing Growth

The MDP's Managing Growth section directs growth and development to approved area structure plan areas with demonstrated (or potential) capacity to effectively service this growth. This approach ensures the County can achieve the long-term vision and goals set forth in the MDP. While the MDP directs growth and development to specific locations in the County (Map 3 of Attachment A), local land use, infrastructure planning, and the associated technical studies will continue to be done at the area structure plan level.

The MDP considered existing/approved area structure plans when identifying Growth Hamlets, Employment Areas, Country Residential Communities, Hamlets, and Business Hubs. The community types identified in the MDP align to the existing community vision and plan set out in the respective area structure plans.

The OMNI Area Structure Plan has been identified as a Growth Hamlet as this considers the future intent of the area structure plan as a mixed-use master plan community, as stated in the approved OMNI Area Structure Plan Terms of Reference (TOR #1014-381).

Building Communities

In Part 2: Building Communities, the MDP provides high-level objectives and policies that guide the form and function of the identified growth areas and established communities. The policies of this section shall be used in conjunction with the Managing Growth and County-Wide Policies of the MDP.

The MDP categorizes these plan areas into the following community types:



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Agriculture

The agriculture policies were developed in collaboration with the County's Agriculture Master Plan (AMP) project, taking direction from the draft AMP and feedback received through the project's public engagement process, which specifically targeted agricultural operators and producers in the County.

The MDP has introduced policies that balance flexibility for agricultural operators with the need to protect productive agricultural lands and limit fragmentation. All areas of the County that are not identified as a growth area, established community, or business hub, are considered part of the County's agricultural areas. As these areas are not planned through an area structure plan, the MDP provides policy guidance to planning and development applications on agricultural lands.

The MDP proposes three major policy changes that affect how agricultural lands are expected to subdivide and develop. These policies are included in the following subsections of Section 11.0 Agriculture:

- First Farmstead Out;
- Second Farmstead Out; and
- Diversified Agricultural Operation.

The MDP has listed an Action Item to review the agricultural policies within two years of the plan's approval, to ensure the desired outcomes are being achieved.

Environment

The Environment policies have expanded the County's definition of Environmental Areas to include wildlife habitat and corridors that facilitate large mammal movement in the County. These areas were identified through a study completed by Miistakis Institute and are indicated on Map 4: Natural Systems. The MDP does not preclude development from occurring in Environmental Areas but has strengthened policy language around the planning requirements to minimize negative impacts to these areas. The MDP recognizes all development shall align with environmental legislation and policy enacted by the Government of Alberta.

Natural Resources and Energy Development

The Natural Resource and Energy Development policies provide guidance to direct industrial scale solar projects to appropriate areas of the County and away from productive agricultural lands, considering the Municipal Land Use Suitability Tool (MLUST) approved by Council.

The MDP has carried forward the existing *County Plan* policies regarding aggregate extraction, including the requirements for aggregate extraction master site development plans approved through the planning process. The MDP will be updated to reflect policy changes implemented through the Aggregate Resource Plan (ARP) project, if necessary.

Implementation and Monitoring

Implementation and monitoring of the MDP is supported by a set of action items and performance indicators that translate the MDP's vision and policies into practical steps over time. Progress will be tracked through an annual report presented to Council, which will summarize completed actions, monitor key performance indicators, and highlight emerging priorities. This approach ensures that implementation of the MDP remains transparent, accountable, and responsive to the County's evolving needs.

Action items are specific projects or programs that help to further the MDP's goals and desired outcomes. Council will have the opportunity to prioritize, resource, and allocate budget to those projects or programs they deem appropriate. Action items that require County resources and/or budget will be brought to Council with a Terms of Reference for approval.

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COMMUNICATIONS / ENGAGEMENT

Rocky View County has provided public notice of the proposed amendments in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*.

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) engagement has been an iterative process, allowing each stage to build upon previous stages. Throughout the engagement process, overall sentiment has been positive and offered constructive feedback that supports the development of the MDP.

Previous Engagement (2019-2020)

In January 2019, the County started a project to update the *County Plan*, which included three rounds of public engagement between 2019-2020. While the project did not result in an approved MDP, findings from engagement provided insight into the shifting priorities of County residents and other stakeholders.

Public Engagement (2023-2025)

The MDP Review Project included three stages of engagement:

- Stage 1 (Nov. 2023 – Feb. 2024):
 - Validated engagement findings from 2019-2020, and refined the community vision, values, and priorities previously identified.
 - Introduced the concept of Distinct Area Profiles and received initial input.
- Stage 2 (Jun. 2024 – Aug. 2024):
 - Validated Distinct Area Profiles for each of the identified communities.
 - Sought feedback on agricultural subdivision, various types of agricultural and business hubs, and County-wide policies.
- Stage 3 (May 2025 – Jun. 2025):
 - Released the draft MDP for public review and feedback.
 - Circulated the draft MDP to adjacent municipalities, relevant agencies, and interested parties.

Stage 3 Engagement

Stage 3 engagement included the release of the draft MDP document, allowing residents and interested parties the opportunity to review the document in full, engage directly with the project team, and provide detailed comments on the draft policies of the MDP.

The Stage 3 Engagement Summary Report is provided as Attachment B. The report highlights significant revisions made to the draft Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and addresses concerns raised by residents and interested parties across several key policy areas. Stage 3 Engagement results indicate that 55% to 66% of survey respondents support the proposed approach in various sections of the MDP, while only 11% to 25% oppose it.

General revisions to the draft MDP addressed several concerns, including:

- Overall clarity and legibility of the MDP maps;
- Strengthening of policy language where appropriate;
- Policy amendments that clarify implementation of the MDP's desired outcomes; and
- Revision to definitions to ensure common understanding and clear direction of associated policies.

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Intermunicipal and Agency Circulation

The draft MDP was circulated to the County's Intermunicipal partners and relevant agencies, and comments received are available as Attachment C. Responses were positive and there were generally no concerns.

Public Submissions

Prior to the deadline for public submissions, four submissions were received, which highlighted concerns or recommendations for revision. The letters noted concerns with policies that direct country residential design, protection of agricultural lands, business hubs, future industrial lands, and interim uses. There were also concerns with the project's engagement with the Bearspaw First Nation regarding their partnership with Durum Capital for future development in the Springbank area.

No letters were received in support or opposition of the MDP prior to the deadline for public submissions.

IMPLICATIONS

The *County Plan* was adopted 12 years ago with the last update occurring in 2023. The County has experienced significant growth and a changing regional context over this time. To ensure the County continues to grow and develop in a thoughtful and strategic manner, an update to the *County Plan* is required.

Financial

There are no financial implications.

Other Implications

Community Engagement

The community has been formally engaged six times since 2019 regarding an update to the *County Plan* through approval of a new MDP. The level of engagement has been significant, and the feedback thoughtfully represents a vision for the County over the next 20 years. The MDP captures the community vision and aligns objectives, policies, and an implementation strategy to achieve this vision.

Regional

With the CMRB's requirement for member municipalities to update their respective MDPs only being recently repealed, several municipalities in the region have approved a new MDP in recent months. The County would benefit from an updated MDP that captures the County's strategic priorities and role in the region.

Intermunicipal

With Ministerial Order MSD:025/25, all former CMRB member municipalities are required to update their Intermunicipal Development Plans and Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks to ensure regional coordination. These plans and agreements are required to be approved by November 30, 2027. Having an updated MDP in place prior to the start of these projects is advantageous to the County and would ensure the County's strategic objectives are aligned across the County and the region.

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STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Key Performance Indicators			Strategic Alignment
Effective Service Delivery	SD4: Services are continually assessed for improvements in cost efficiency, effectiveness, and customer experience	SD4.1: Services that are assessed annually for innovation opportunities and have demonstrable efficiency improvements	The MDP's approach to managing growth is directly tied to the County's ability to provide effective service delivery that is efficient and cost effective.
Financial Prosperity	FP1: Successfully planning and managing tax revenues between residential and non-residential landowners	FP1.1: Residential/Non-Residential Assessment Split Ratio as set out in the Assessment Diversification Policy	The MDP supports development that achieves the tax split ratio outlined in Policy C-197 <i>Assessment Base Diversification Policy</i> .
Thoughtful Growth	TG1: Clearly defining land use policies and objectives for the County –including types, growth rates, locations, and servicing strategies	TG1.1: Complete new Municipal Development Plan (MDP) in alignment with the Regional Growth Plan within legislated timelines	Directing growth and development into areas that are well connected, efficiently serviced, and contextually suitable contributes to the County's long-term vision. The CMRB Regional Growth Plan has been rescinded.
Thoughtful Growth	TG2: Defined land use policies and objectives are being met and communicated	TG2.1: Land use approvals that are supported/aligned with the Regional Growth Plan & MDP	The MDP considered existing/approved area structure plans and other lower-level planning documents. The CMRB Regional Growth Plan has been rescinded.

ALTERNATE DIRECTION

Alternate Direction 1

THAT Council refers Bylaw C-8653-2025 to Administration to allow Council to submit proposed amendments to the draft bylaw.

AND THAT Council directs Administration to return with Bylaw C-8653-2025, and Council's proposed amendments, for consideration no later than September 2025.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Bylaw C-8653-2025 Municipal Development Plan
Attachment B: Stage 3 Engagement Summary Report
Attachment C: Intermunicipal and Agency Responses
Attachment D: Public Submissions

APPROVALS

Manager:	Devin LaFleche, Manager, Regional Planning
Executive Director/Director:	Amy Zaluski, Director, Intergovernmental and Regional Services
Chief Administrative Officer:	Reegan McCullough, Chief Administrative Officer