



## PLANNING

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**TO:** Council

**DATE:** July 26, 2022 **DIVISION:** 1 and 2

**FILE:** N/A **APPLICATION:** N/A

**SUBJECT:** Request for Direction: Springbank Off-Stream Reservoir Draft Land Use Plan

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Following an extended regulatory approval process for the Springbank Off-Stream Reservoir (SR1) from 2018 to 2021, construction operations for the project commenced in February 2022. Although Alberta Transportation continues to lead the planning and construction process, Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) will be responsible for management and operation of the project infrastructure, and management of the associated Crown land.

As part of determining how the SR1 lands will be managed in future, AEP is currently developing a Land Use Plan to guide what uses, secondary to the principal flood mitigation use, are considered acceptable on the reservoir lands. Two advisory committees have been established to provide recommendations on appropriate land uses for the project area, one of which is a First Nations advisory committee, and the other is a joint committee attended by key stakeholders including landowners, community groups and municipalities. A list of stakeholders invited to participate in the Joint Land Use Advisory Committee is set out in Attachment 'A' and representatives from the Springbank Planning Association have also been in attendance. County staff have participated in all three of the Committee meetings held so far to observe and provide input.

The Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, a document summarizing the guiding principles for the Land Use Plan, and an overall engagement timeline are set out in Attachments 'B' 'C' and 'D' for Council's reference. AEP expects to release the draft SR1 Land Use Plan in fall 2022 for public and stakeholder feedback before finalizing the Plan in early 2023.

Representatives from AEP provided an overview of the SR1 Land Use Plan project to the County's Public Presentation Committee on June 29, 2022, and subsequent to this, on July 12, 2022, Council directed Administration to prepare this report on how the County can best establish a position on the Land Use Plan.

There has been significant concern from the Springbank community over the SR1 project, and there are important issues and opportunities that may arise from long-term operation of the reservoir and associated Crown land. Consequently, it is considered appropriate for the County to undertake a thorough policy and technical review of the Land Use Plan and to provide resulting feedback to AEP in a coordinated manner. Although AEP will be undertaking its own public engagement on the draft Land Use Plan, in accordance with Option #1, Administration also considers that there would be benefits in seeking and collating specific feedback from local stakeholders to reinforce County and community interests in the project alongside other members sitting on the Advisory Committees.

### ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends that the County provides input on the draft SR1 Land Use Plan directly to Alberta Environment and Parks based on an internal administrative review of the Plan and feedback from the wider Springbank community in accordance with Option #1.

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### Administration Resources

Dominic Kazmierczak, Planning

**ASSESSMENT:**

In establishing a position on the draft SR1 Land Use Plan, it is recommended that Administration be directed to undertake a cross-departmental review of the Plan. This would allow the County to identify any statutory or non-statutory plans, policies, bylaws, and standards that may affect support for any secondary land uses within the project area. For example, the County's Active Transportation Plan: South County identifies a pathway along Springbank Road through the project area, and this affirms the noted community interest in potentially encouraging recreational access to and within the reservoir. An internal review would be used to support formal feedback on the draft Plan later this year and continued input through the Joint Advisory Committee.

In considering whether to direct Administration to undertake community engagement on the draft Land Use Plan, it is noted that this could conflict with AEP's own engagement processes and potentially cause confusion for landowners and residents in Springbank due to overlapping engagement timelines and methods. If this is a concern, Option #2 of this report would direct Administration to instead simply promote AEP's public engagement process, rather than operating separate County-led engagement. However, it is suggested that careful messaging through County communication could promote awareness of the AEP's timelines and background on the project, while also noting that the County is developing its own position on the Plan through community input. Option #1 of this report would ensure that the County takes a pro-active approach in asserting resident and landowner interests and balancing these interests against existing County policies and plans.

It is currently unknown how AEP will notify the Springbank community of the draft Plan and associated engagement opportunities, but a County-led campaign, with mailouts to all Springbank residents and known community groups, would ensure full transparency and potentially increased public involvement in the project.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

Depending on the scope of any engagement activities, the Planning department does have budget allotted to costs associated with intergovernmental planning projects. Therefore, a budget adjustment is not expected to be required to accommodate community engagement activities.

**COMMUNICATIONS PLAN:**

If Council directs Administration to undertake further engagement with affected landowners, residents, and community groups, Administration would expect to utilize a range of notification methods including mailouts to the Springbank community, use of Safe and Sound notifications, and publication of materials on the County website. Feedback would likely be collected principally through online surveys and written representations. Council may wish to direct Administration further on any specific engagement approach or method it deems necessary, over and above the proposed options presented in this staff report.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

An objective of Council's Strategic Plan is to enhance transparency and communication; this includes allowing people to easily find information on matters affecting the County and building trust with residents through transparency on day-to-day operations. Council may wish to consider this objective in determining the County's role in providing appropriate representation of County residents' opinions on the SR1 Land Use Plan project.

**OPTIONS:****Internal Administration Review and County-led Engagement**

- Option #1:
- Motion 1 THAT in addition to continued participation in the Joint Land Use Advisory Committee, Administration be directed to undertake a full internal review of the draft SR1 Land Use Plan when released, and to provide the County's feedback directly to Alberta Environment and Parks.
- Motion 2 THAT Administration be directed to invite feedback from local landowners, residents, and community groups on the draft SR1 Land Use Plan through an online survey and written representations, and to collate this feedback to provide an overall County and community position to Alberta Environment and Parks. Notification of the County's engagement shall be through a mailout to the wider Springbank area and through other digital communication channels.

**Internal Administration Review and no County-led Engagement**

- Option #2:
- Motion 1 THAT in addition to continued participation in the Joint Land Use Advisory Committee, Administration be directed to undertake a full internal review of the draft SR1 Land Use Plan when released, and to provide the County's feedback directly to Alberta Environment and Parks.
- Motion 2 THAT Administration be directed to promote Alberta Environment and Park's (AEP) public engagement process on the draft SR1 draft Land Use Plan through various notification methods. Administration shall not undertake any public engagement to collect feedback separate to AEP's engagement process.

Option #3: THAT alternative direction be provided.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurrence,

"Brock Beach"

"Dorian Wandzura"

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Acting Executive Director  
Community Development Services

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Chief Administrative Officer

DK/rp

**ATTACHMENTS:**

ATTACHMENT 'A': Joint Land Use Advisory Committee Invited Participants  
 ATTACHMENT 'B': SR1 Land Use Plan Joint Advisory Committee Terms of Reference  
 ATTACHMENT 'C': SR1 Land Use Plan Guiding Principles document  
 ATTACHMENT 'D': SR1 Land Use Plan Engagement Timelines