

LEGISLATIVE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

TO:	Council	
DATE:	September 13, 2022	DIVISION: All
FILE:	N/A	APPLICATION: N/A
SUBJECT:	CMRB Growth and Servicing Plan Update	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On August 15, 2022, Ministerial Order MSD:064/22 came into effect, which approves the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board’s (CMRB) Regional Evaluation Framework, Growth Plan, and Servicing Plan, with minor revisions. This report will provide an overview of the Growth and Servicing Plans and outline next steps to request Council direction on the County’s future approach to relations with regional partners and the CMRB.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends approval in accordance with Option #1.

BACKGROUND:

The CMRB was established by the Government of Alberta in January 2018, with mandatory participation by member municipalities. The eight current members of the CMRB are Airdrie, Calgary, Chestermere, Cochrane, Foothills County, High River, Okotoks, and Rocky View County. Under the CMRB Regulation, the Board was mandated to create a regional Growth Plan, Servicing Plan, and Regional Evaluation Framework, intended to assess compliance with the regional Growth Plan.

From January 2018 to June 2021, member municipalities drafted the CMRB Growth Plan, Servicing Plan and Regional Evaluation Framework and submitted them for Ministerial approval. Throughout the process, the County actively participated and advocated for changes that would benefit residents and businesses. The County consistently expressed concerns that restrictions on rural opportunity and red tape would harm rural economic development. On May 21, 2021, the draft Plans were passed by the CMRB, with Foothills County, Rocky View County, and Wheatland County voting in opposition.

On July 11, 2022, the Minister of Municipal Affairs issued Ministerial Order MSD:064/22, which approved the CMRB Growth Plan, Servicing Plan, and Regional Evaluation Framework with minor revisions, effective as of August 15, 2022.

DISCUSSION:

Growth Plan Overview

The Growth Plan is a statutory plan governing development in the Calgary Metropolitan Region, and falls above Municipal Development Plans in the planning hierarchy. It is focused on accommodating the next one million people and 600,000 jobs and identifies population and job forecasts for each municipality. Rocky View County is forecasted to have 71,439 people by 2053, and to create an additional 69,010 jobs by 2048. The projected employment growth for the County is 13.9% of the total regional forecast, which exceeds that of every other member except for Calgary.

Location of Development in the Region

The Growth Plan directs new residential and employment growth in the region to Preferred Growth Areas. All Urban Municipalities are identified as Preferred Growth Areas. In the Counties, Preferred

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Growth areas are identified in Joint Planning Areas and Hamlet Growth Areas (Attachment A); growth must be directed to these specific areas and is limited in all other parts of the County. As identified in the Regional Plan, Rocky View County can have residential and employment growth in the following areas:

- Three Hamlet Growth Areas - Bragg Creek, Harmony, and Langdon.
- Two Joint Planning Areas (JPAs):
 - JPA 1 - north Calgary, south Airdrie, and Rocky View County: east and west Balzac.
 - JPA 2 - east Calgary, portions of Chestermere, and Rocky View County: Conrich, Omni, and Janet.
 - JPAs are intended to be guided by Context Studies, which are to be prepared jointly by the three parties in the JPA. They are intended to address shared servicing opportunities, transit and transportation, cost/benefit sharing, and sequencing of land use.
 - Existing Area Structure Plans (ASPs) can continue in a JPA, regardless of status of the Context Study. For Rocky View County, most of the JPA areas already have existing ASPs: Balzac West, Balzac East, Omni, Conrich, and Janet.
- Existing Area Structure Plans – if not identified as a Preferred Growth Area, existing plans can continue as currently adopted. However, if they are amended, ASPs must conform to the Growth Plan, which provides limited opportunities if they are not Preferred Growth Areas. This impacts the following plans in Rocky View County: Central Springbank, North Springbank, Cochrane North, Bearspaw, Glenbow Ranch, Dalroy, Delacour, Indus, and North Central Industrial.

There are policies within the plan that allow the County to propose additional employment areas, Hamlet Growth Areas, and Joint Planning Areas, but these must meet specific criteria and be approved by the Board. The Growth Plan requires municipalities to update their Municipal Development Plans to align with the Growth Plan within 3 years of approval by the Minister.

Types of Development

In addition to directing growth to specific areas, another key feature of the plan is identifying which forms of growth, or placetypes, are desired. A placetype generally describes, at a regional scale, the land uses and density of a certain type of development. The seven placetypes in the region are:

1. Infill and Redevelopment;
2. Masterplan Communities;
3. Mixed-Use / Transit Oriented Development;
4. Residential Communities;
5. Employment Areas;
6. Rural Employment Areas; and
7. Rural and Country Cluster Communities.

The Growth Plan outlines minimum and/or maximum densities for each placetype. The first three placetypes are “Preferred Placetypes”; the majority of new residential growth in the region should conform to one of these preferred placetypes. The Growth Plan provides some flexibility to each municipality to determine the appropriate mix of placetypes in a given area. Generally, the placetypes encourage higher densities, mixed use, and consideration of transit.

With the exception of the Rural and Country Cluster placetype, the Growth Plan restricts preferred placetypes in the Counties to Preferred Growth Areas, which are JPAs, and Growth Hamlets. Only the Rural and Country Cluster placetype can be used in other areas of the County. Employment Areas, unless already identified in an existing ASP, must be located in JPAs and Growth Hamlets. The Minister introduced a seventh placetype, Rural Employment Areas, which allows for employment areas outside of Preferred Growth Areas, with the condition that they cannot be located within 2 km of an urban municipality, JPA or other rural employment area. Rural Employment Areas must be planned through an ASP and meet certain other conditions, as defined in the Growth Plan.

The Growth Hamlets (Bragg Creek, Langdon, and Harmony) will be encouraged to have higher densities, starting at a minimum of five units per acre. As they are considered Preferred Growth Areas, these hamlets could have Employment Areas.

Servicing Plan Overview

As per the CMRB Regulation, the Regional Growth Plan must be supported by a Servicing Plan and a Regional Evaluation Framework (REF).

The Servicing Plan outlines how the planning and coordination of regional servicing will support the implementation of the Growth Plan. The Servicing Plan identifies servicing priorities, and mandates cooperation through working groups and evidence-based decision-making to achieve regional servicing efficiencies in the future.

The Servicing Plan identifies five areas, each with priorities, and each with actions necessary to achieve completion of the priorities. These five priority areas include:

1. Transportation and Transit;
2. Long-Term Water Strategy;
3. Water and Wastewater Servicing;
4. Stormwater Management; and
5. Recreation.

The primary function of the Servicing Plan is to identify future work necessary to fully implement the Growth Plan. It is a 'plan to plan' and will result in additional work commitments, especially with respect to the Joint Planning Areas.

Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) Overview

The purpose of the REF is to:

- (i) provide criteria to determine which new or amended statutory plans are to be submitted to the CMRB for approval;
- (ii) outline procedures for submission of plans; and
- (iii) provide direction on how the CMRB Administration and Board Members will review and approve statutory plans to ensure they are consistent with the Regional Growth Plan.

The REF is based on the policies of the Growth Plan.

Ministerial Revisions

The Minister made the following revisions to the Growth Plan and Regional Evaluation Framework:

- Addition of the Rural Employment Areas placetype, as described above.

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- Allow small scale employment areas without Board approval
 - Inside a Preferred Growth Area, employment areas less than 150 acres and proposing less than 20 lots
 - Outside a Preferred Growth Area, employment areas less than 75 acres and proposing less than 10 lots – while these areas would not require Board approval, they would require that an ASP be completed
- Allow small residential areas without Board approval
 - Inside a Preferred Growth Area, residential or mixed-use development proposing less than 200 dwelling units
 - Outside a Preferred Growth Area, residential or mixed-use development proposing less than 80 dwelling units

For clarity, developments must still comply with the policies of the Growth Plan but are not required to be submitted to the Board for approval if they fall under these thresholds.

ANALYSIS:

The changes to the Growth Plan approved by the Minister represent changes around the margin, with most of the Plan being approved as drafted. Overall, the increased flexibility around small employment areas and small residential areas is less prescriptive than the proposed CMRB Growth Plan and is beneficial for the County. Analysis of the overall impacts on the County and on individual County ASPs will be provided by Planning as part of Item F-5. The County will be required to update the Municipal Development Plan to conform with the Growth Plan, within three years.

The Growth and Servicing Plans outline at least seven future projects that will be required to implement the regional vision (Attachment 'B'). Projects that will require County involvement include:

- JPA Context Study 1 – targeted completion August 2025;
- JPA Context Study 2 – targeted completion August 2025;
- Regional Water Roadmap / Strategy – targeted completion June 2026;
- Regional Transportation and Transit Master Plan – targeted completion January 2026;
- Regional Economic Development – first stage targeted completion 2023, with potential for future work;
- Indigenous Relations Project – first stage targeted completion 2023, with potential for future work; and
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas Project – targeted completion March 2024.

Work has begun on some of these projects, including the approval of project charters for economic development, Indigenous relations, and environmentally sensitive areas projects, with further approvals of project charters for the water strategy and regional transportation projects forthcoming. The CMRB may decide to pursue additional regional initiatives in the future.

NEXT STEPS

The number, scale, and scope of future regional initiatives will require significant County resources for the County to effectively participate:

- Active participation by County Administration may mitigate potential risks associated with CMRB initiatives and may allow the County to leverage regional resources to accomplish County goals.
- Active County participation will require significant Administrative participation and budget for technical studies from various departments as necessary.



- Resource requirements and potential benefits/risks associated with each individual CMRB initiative will be presented to Council as part of an overall regional strategy in the coming months.

There is a significant amount of work required for member municipalities to implement the CMRB Growth and Servicing Plans. These initiatives, on top of regular participation in CMRB Board and Committee meetings, will require significant County resources. The County will need to consider how to allocate scarce resources to effectively participate in regional initiatives.

As a result, over the coming months, Administration will hold workshops and closed sessions with Council to provide information and recommendations to allow Council to provide strategic direction to Administration and the County’s CMRB representatives on CMRB participation. Administration will be seeking Council direction on prioritization of individual projects, adequate resourcing for each (staff and budget), and the County’s overall approach to regional partners/initiatives. Administration anticipates two or three touchpoints with Council over the next several months.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

There are no budget implications at this time.

OPTIONS:

Option #1 THAT the update on the CMRB Growth and Servicing Plans, and next steps be received for information.

Option #2 THAT alternative direction be provided.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurrence,

“Amy Zaluski”

“Dorian Wandzura”

Director,
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BM/jb

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment ‘A’: Growth Plan Maps

Attachment ‘B’: CMRB 5-Year Workplan

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