

## PLANNING

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**TO:** Council

**DATE:** September 13, 2022 **DIVISIONS:** All

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

**SUBJECT:** Calgary Metropolitan Region Growth Plan: Planning Assessment

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Further to the update report on the Calgary Metropolitan Region Growth Plan set out in Item F-6, this report summarises the Growth Plan's impacts on the County's overall growth strategy and on the development of individual community planning documents.

There are two principal ways in which the Growth Plan affects how the County guides growth within its boundaries. Firstly, it provides direction on what information is required to be included within member municipalities' municipal development plans, community planning documents (area structure plans), and context studies to ensure that matters such as transportation, servicing, and flood risk are appropriately addressed. Secondly, it determines where and what type of development is supported across the County by establishing Preferred Growth Areas and Preferred Placetypes.

Approval of the Growth Plan will require adjustment of the Planning department's project workplan, and is expected to cause a delay in existing project timelines and increased resource requirements. Items F-8 to F-15 are providing updates and requesting direction on the development of the County's planning documents, including a review of the County's Municipal Development Plan and several community area structure plans.

In receiving these ensuing reports, Council may wish to consider how it wishes to prioritize and support these projects according to community interests, strategic and fiscal priorities, alignment with the regional and planning policy framework, and implementation challenges.

### ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends approval in accordance with Option #1.

### DISCUSSION:

#### Growth Plan: Planning Overview

##### Municipal Development Plans

Section 632 of the Municipal Government Act provides direction on what items municipalities must address within any adopted municipal development plan. However, the Regional Growth Plan now also sets out a wide range of additional matters for municipal development plans to cover in order to be supported. These items include:

- addressing impacts on agricultural lands and how agricultural business will be supported (Policies 3.1.1.3 and 3.2.3.1);
- defining all hamlet growth area boundaries (Policy 3.1.8.4);
- creating map overlays, tables and other information that demonstrate alignment between municipal growth areas and the Growth Plan's Preferred Growth Areas, and any adopted Context Study (Policy 3.1.11.2);
- identifying employment needs for the municipality for the next 15 years and how employment lands will accommodate these needs (Policy 3.2.1.1)

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#### Administration Resources

Dominic Kazmierczak, Planning



## ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

- providing mapping, definitions and policies for Environmentally Sensitive Areas (Policies 3.3.2.2 and 3.3.2.3);
- committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption and providing policies to mitigate risks due to climate change (Policy 3.3.3.1);
- identifying regional transportation and transit corridors and demonstrating how land use will optimize these corridors (Policy 3.5.1.1); and
- identifying and minimizing risk to energy and utility corridors (Policy 3.5.2.1).

The Growth Plan requires that within three years of its approval, municipalities must update their MDP to incorporate these items and ensure alignment with the Growth Plan (Policy 3.1.11.1).

### Preferred Growth Areas

The map set out in Attachment 'A' to this report highlights how the County's existing and proposed growth areas align with the Regional Growth Plan Preferred Growth Areas; County growth and development generally falls into the following broad categories:

- Existing area structure plans (ASPs) outside Preferred Growth Areas
- Rural and Country Cluster Development
- Rural Employment Areas
- Hamlet Growth Areas
- Joint Planning Areas

### Existing ASPs outside Preferred Growth Areas

The County has a number of ASPs that are outside of a Preferred Growth Area in the Growth Plan, but were adopted prior to the Growth Plan coming into force; these ASPs remain in full effect, being able to build-out in accordance with the densities and built form that they currently support. Such areas include the country residential communities of Springbank, Bearspaw, and Cochrane North, and several smaller hamlets such as Indus, Dalroy and Delacour.

The Growth Plan (Policy 3.1.10.3) prevents the County from seeking to increase the population within these ASPs or from supporting higher density placetypes. This severely limits the County's potential to move these existing communities towards a more sustainable mix of housing forms and a greater balance of residential and business uses.

Notwithstanding some exceptions, such as the Springbank Airport Employment Area, only Rural and Country Cluster Development and Rural Employment Areas are explicitly supported as suitable placetypes in these communities. These placetypes are discussed below.

### Rural and Country Cluster Development

With the exception of not being supported within Preferred Growth Areas, Rural and Country Cluster Development can be located anywhere within the County under the Growth Plan. This residential placetype allows densities of up to 1.2 units per hectare (0.5 units per acre), equivalent to two-acre lots. This encourages the proliferation of dispersed inefficient residential subdivisions that would have significant adverse impacts on preservation of agricultural lands and cost-effective provision of servicing. This form of development outside of existing ASPs appears to conflict with the broader intent of the Regional Growth Plan, and the County's existing MDP (County Plan) does not support this dispersed development pattern.

The placetype does also support the clustering of country residential development with associated provision of open space. This could have been an opportunity to improve the efficiency of land use within existing country residential areas such as Springbank or Cochrane North, but the density of 1.2 units per hectare (0.5 units per acre) allowed for with the country cluster placetype ensures that the placetype is unworkable and will not be implemented by developers in the County. The maximum allowable density and cap of 80 units per development is not sufficient to make the delivery of piped



water and wastewater servicing economically feasible, or to encourage developers to move away from traditional country residential forms. The ambiguous rationale for capping cluster developments to 80 units also appears to discourage the connection of cluster developments and prevents the integration of open space to facilitate green corridors for recreational and wildlife uses.

Rural and Country Cluster residential subdivisions of less than 80 acres in size do not need to be referred to the CMRB and there is no requirement to prepare an ASP to support this development form, regardless of size or number of units.

#### Rural Employment Areas and Employment Areas

Rural Employment Areas are intended to facilitate lower intensity commercial and industrial uses that are suited to larger lot sizes and/or accommodate the travelling public. Examples might include local commercial areas servicing a rural population, transportation services, or outdoor storage. They cannot be located within a Preferred Growth Area, nor can they be located within 2.00 kilometres (1.25 miles) of an urban municipality or within 2.00 kilometres (1.25 miles) of another Rural Employment Area, unless it is supported by CMRB (Policy 3.1.6.2). Although the Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) that accompanies the Growth Plan notes that Rural Employment Areas do not have to be referred to the CMRB if they are less than 75 acres in size, they do have to be planned through an Area Structure Plan. These areas can exceed 75 acres with referral to the CMRB and they can be expanded subject to demonstration of diminishing land supply within the existing Employment Area.

The Rural Employment Area placetype could be used to support some of the County's existing and planned High Business Areas such as the Crossfield Service Centre, Highway 22/Highway 567 uses, and Highway 22/Highway 1 services. It could also support local business uses within existing country residential ASPs, such as development along Range Road 33 in Springbank or along Highway 1A in Bears paw.

Aside from Rural Employment Areas, there is unclear support for Employment Areas of a greater scale in the Growth Plan. Policy 3.1.7.1 states that Employment Areas should not be located outside of Preferred Growth Areas, but then Policy 3.1.3.4 states that Employment Areas may be considered outside of Preferred Growth Areas if criteria is met around demonstrating locational need, availability of efficient servicing and transportation connections, and collaboration with adjacent municipalities. There is specific reference to the Springbank Airport Employment Area as an employment area outside of a Preferred Growth Area that may be supported subject to criteria (Policies 3.1.3.5 and 3.1.3.6).

Finally, it is noted in the Growth Plan that resource extraction, energy development, agri-business, and home-based business have no locational criteria (Policy 3.1.7.1).

#### Hamlet Growth Areas

The Growth Plan supports Hamlet Growth Areas as Preferred Growth Areas that feature lower density mixed-use developments and Employment Areas. The Plan supports three of the County's existing hamlets under Hamlet Growth Areas, these being Bragg Creek, Harmony, and Langdon (Policy 3.1.8.1). Density minimums and development composition are established for Hamlet Growth Areas with the minimum density for some placetypes being 3.5 units per acre, and in others, 6 units per acre. With required placetype ratios, this gives an average per Hamlet Growth Area of 5 units per acre. Although, this would provide for an increase in existing densities for all three identified hamlets, amendments would be required to existing approved ASPs or conceptual schemes to provide for this.

Future expansion of the Hamlet Growth Area would be considered against specified criteria including market interest, limited remaining land supply, and the availability of servicing, but there are no limitations on the size of an expansion area proposed onto an existing Hamlet Growth Area (Policy 3.1.8.6).



Conversely, if the County were to propose a new Hamlet Growth Area, the initial hamlet is capped at 260 hectares (640 acres) in size and has to meet other criteria including demonstrating market demand, sufficient separation from adjacent urban municipalities, access to major transportation networks, and appropriate servicing (Policy 3.1.8.5).

### Joint Planning Areas

The Growth Plan notes that Joint Planning Areas (JPAs) have been identified to provide the opportunity for collaboration between municipalities in high growth areas. The two JPAs located in the County will each require collaboration between three municipalities, with the County partnering with Calgary and Airdrie for JPA1, and Calgary and Chestermere for JPA2. As Preferred Growth Areas, the composition and minimum densities are established for JPAs in the Growth Plan. While there is no maximum to the densities allowed within JPAs and a range of placetypes are encouraged, including Transit-Oriented Development, as well as Mixed-use and Master Plan Communities, the minimum average density that can be provided within a JPA is 7.25 units per acre.

The JPAs cover lands within the County that have largely already either been fully planned, or are in the process of being planned through ongoing ASP amendments. However, the County is required to prepare a non-statutory background report called a Context Study, which will inform future ASPs and lower-level statutory and non-statutory plans and amendments. The Context Studies are required to be completed within three years of approval of the Growth Plan, while terms of reference to guide the studies are required to be completed by party municipalites within six months of the approval (Policy 3.1.9.5 and 3.1.9.6).

The Context Studies will cover opportunities relating to shared services, servicing connections, transportation matters, and environmental considerations; it will also focus on ensuring that land use planning is aligned for the area and that there is an overall vision for the JPA (Policy 3.1.9.7). Administration has commenced preliminary discussions on completion of the terms of reference and the first intermunicipal meetings are scheduled for late-September 2022.

### **Planning Projects Workplan**

The Growth Plan will have an impact on the Planning department's workplan both by requiring existing staff resources to spend additional time on regional planning work, and by shifting priorities on the MDP and several ASPs according to the new requirements of the Growth Plan. In addition to the projects listed below, for which Administration is providing updates or requesting Council's direction in reports F-8 to F-15, Planning staff are also working on the County's Land Use Inventory and fiscal models. The inventory and models will be an important part of the evidence base to guide the future preparation and monitoring of the MDP and ASPs. Ongoing projects that are being brought forward to Council for consideration include:

#### Council update and proceed to public hearing

- Janet ASP Long-term Development Area
- Conrich ASP Future Policy Area
- Springbank ASPs review

#### Request for Council direction

- New Municipal Development Plan
- Bragg Creek ASP Hamlet Expansion Strategy
- Bearspaw ASP review
- Glenmore Trail ASP
- Elbow View ASP



**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no budget considerations associated with this report, but future budget adjustments may be required subject to Council's direction on individual projects falling within the Planning department's workplan.

**OPTIONS:**

Option #1: THAT the Planning assessment of the Calgary Metropolitan Region Growth Plan be received for information.

Option #2: THAT alternate direction be provided.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurrence,

"Brock Beach"

"Dorian Wandzura"

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Acting Executive Director  
Community Services

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Chief Administrative Officer

DK/rp

**ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT 'A': Regional Growth Plan Impacts on Existing and Planned ASPs.