

## PLANNING

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**TO:** Council  
**DATE:** September 13, 2022 **DIVISIONS:** 3 & 4  
**FILE:** 1011-501 **APPLICATION:** N/A  
**SUBJECT:** Request for Decision: Bears paw Area Structure Plan Review

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A Terms of Reference for the Bears paw Area Structure Plan (ASP) review project was approved by Council on January 8, 2019. Two rounds of public engagement were undertaken in 2019, including open houses and coffee chat sessions, to seek resident feedback on setting the vision and priorities for the Bears paw community. Due to competing priorities in Administration's workplan, the ASP review project was delayed significantly.

On January 25, 2022, Administration sought direction on continuation of the project due to the impending decision on the Regional Growth Plan (RGP). In response, Council passed the following motion:

*“THAT the Bears paw ASP review be placed on hold until Council has determined its strategic direction on growth within the County, and until a decision has been rendered by the Minister of Municipal Affairs on approval of the draft Regional Growth Plan.”*

Further direction was given by Council at that meeting for Administration to present a report to Council within two months of the Minister's decision that assesses the impacts of the RGP on the Bears paw ASP review project.

Administration has assessed the Bears paw ASP review project against the Growth Plan policies. Previous input from the Bears paw community emphasized the desire for limited development and maintenance of a country residential lifestyle. It is anticipated that the draft land use scenarios to be presented in the next stages of the ASP process will therefore focus on continuing the existing development forms seen currently in the community. The Growth Plan supports this approach in allowing the Rural and Country Cluster placetype outside of Preferred Growth Areas at maximum densities of 1.2 units per hectare (0.5 units per acre). If commercial areas are pursued in any future Bears paw ASP, the Rural Employment Area placetype would provide opportunities for local business areas, subject to locational criteria being met. Administration considers that the anticipated low density development form within the community would be supported by the RGP.

With respect to staff resource availability and the overall Planning department's workplan, Administration is progressing three other ASP projects to public hearings within the next few months as these are at an advanced stage of completion and are part of Council's strategic priorities. Council may also direct that the Municipal Development Plan project be commenced at the start of 2023. Due to these competing priorities, Administration is recommending that the Bears paw ASP review project be placed on a further hold until May 2023. Once the Conrich, Janet, and Springbank ASP projects are presented to Council at public hearings, it is expected that Bears paw would become the primary focus on the 2023 planning projects workplan.

### ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends placing the Bears paw Area Structure Plan review project on hold in accordance with Option #1.

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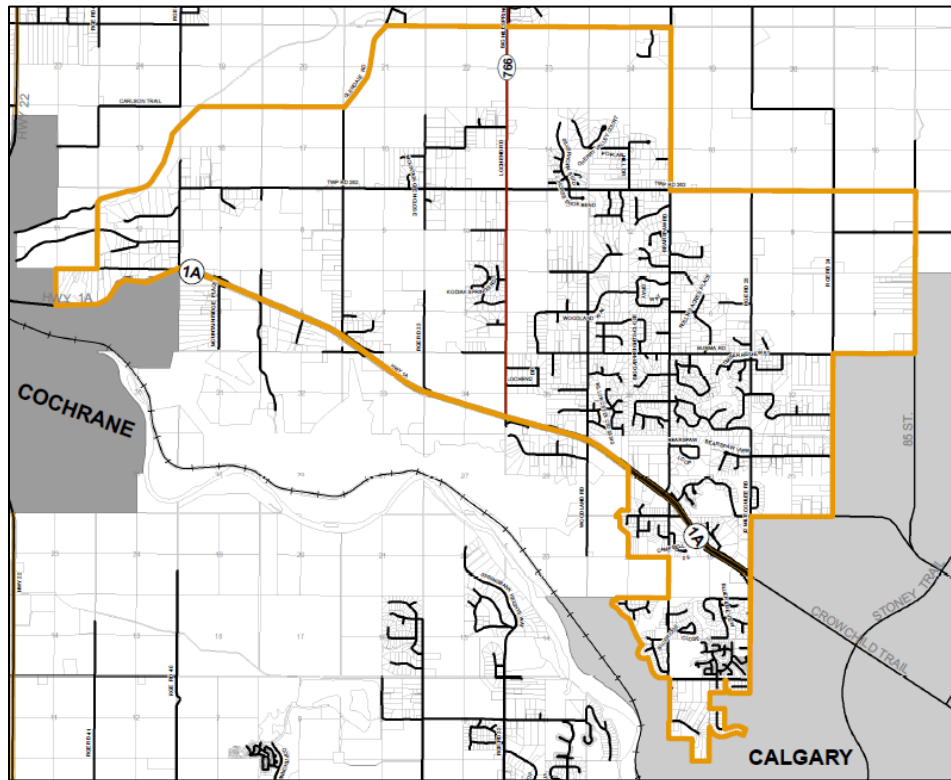
#### Administration Resources

Dominic Kazmierczak, Planning

## BACKGROUND:

The Bears paw ASP is approximately 10,117 hectares (25,000 acres) in size. The ASP boundaries extend west to the town of Cochrane, east to the city of Calgary, south to the Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park, and north to Township Roads 262 and 264.

The purpose of the review of the existing Bears paw ASP, adopted in January 1994, is to address any changes in development aspirations in the community and to ensure consistency with other statutory planning documents. Additionally, Section 9.2 of the Bears paw ASP states the County should undertake regular reviews of the Plan to verify that Plan objectives and policies are current, effective, and consistent with other statutory plans.



## DISCUSSION:

The Bears paw 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 3.1.10.3 of the RGP does specify that existing ASPs outside of Preferred Growth Areas cannot increase overall projected population in the plan area. However, 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 Bears paw currently.

The existing Bears paw ASP also supports a local Rural Commercial Area immediately east of the intersection of Bears paw Road and Highway 1A. However, consolidation or expansion of this commercial area may be considered a policy conflict under the RGP as Rural Employment Areas have locational criteria guiding them as confirmed under Policy 3.1.6.2:

*“Rural Employment Areas have no locational criteria, but the development shall not be located within two kilometres of an Urban Municipality or Joint Planning Area, or within two kilometres of another Rural Employment Area, unless supported by the Board.”*



Although this Policy is highly contradictory, the requirement for Rural Employment Areas to be more than two kilometres away from an Urban Municipality would affect the existing ASP's Rural Commercial Area. It is noted that Policy 3.1.6.2 does allow exemptions to the locational criteria if support is given by the Board, but it is expected that requesting such an exemption would be a highly unpredictable process. In preparing a new draft Bearspaw ASP, consideration should therefore be given to whether any desired Rural Commercial Area should be designated further away from the municipal boundary to ensure compliance with the RGP.

Notwithstanding the impacts of the RGP on the Bearspaw ASP review process, Administration is proposing a pause to this project due to resource constraints. Administration currently does not have the resources to continue with the ASP project, as staff are assigned to completing the Janet, Conrich, and Springbank ASPs, together with other projects and operations.

Council may determine that it wishes to continue with preparing the draft Plan alongside the other ASPs being developed. In this case, Council would need to provide resources to either support additional staff within the Planning department, or to retain a consultant to complete the project.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

Separate to budgeted amounts to account for technical reports, Administration carried forward a budget of \$100,000 to 2022 to complete the remaining Planning activities relating to the project. This is expected to be sufficient if Administration is to continue to complete the remaining portions of the project. However, if Council is minded to direct continuation of the ASP project and completion by external consultants, Administration expects that a budget adjustment would be required to accommodate increased costs.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

Council's Strategic Plan supports responsible growth and the implementation of a vision for growth through a clear planning framework. Similarly, a strategic objective is to guide the County's growth pattern in an orderly and economically sound manner that aligns with regional planning. Community sentiment broadly supports a low growth, rural residential scenario, which is aligned with the Growth Plan and its supported placetypes. The anticipated future direction of the ASP review project is therefore in alignment with the Strategic Plan.

### **OPTIONS:**

- Option #1:     Motion 1            THAT the Bearspaw Area Structure Plan project be placed on hold to accommodate staff resource availability and other Council planning project priorities;
- Motion 2            THAT Administration be directed to present a report with an update on these items, together with a request for direction on continuation of the ASP project, no later than May 2023.
- Option #2:     THAT Administration be directed to prepare an update to the Bearspaw Area Structure Plan review project Terms of Reference and an associated budget adjustment to Council no later than December 13, 2022. The revised Terms of Reference shall include sections to guide:
- revised project timelines and phases;
  - proposed public engagement and stakeholder communication plans;
  - consultant and Administration roles; and
  - any required revisions to the scope or deliverables of the project.
- Option #3:     THAT alternative 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’: Bearspaw ASP Review Terms of Reference.