

Area Structure Plan  
**BEARSPAW**

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## **Phase 1 – Background Report**

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## 1.0 Context

Located within the northwest quadrant of the County, the Bearspaw community contains a mix of residential, agricultural and limited commercial and institutional uses. It is generally defined as the area between the town of Cochrane and the city of Calgary, north of the Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park and the Bow River, and south of Township Roads 262 and 264. Between 2006 and 2018, the population of Bearspaw increased by approximately 34% from 4,803 to 6,442.

The area of the ASP is shown on Figure 1 appended to this report. The ASP provides a framework for land use and development within the plan area.

### **Bearspaw ASP**

The Bearspaw ASP (BASP) was adopted in January 1994, originally encompassing approximately 34,000 acres. However, due to subsequent adoption of the Glenbow Ranch ASP, the area now covers approximately 25,000 acres. Located between two urban areas, and featuring a number of major transportation routes, the ASP was adopted in order to accommodate development pressure in the region. Highway 766 bisects the plan area, and Highway 1A crosses the southern portion of the plan area. The geography of the area is characterized by rolling hills, the Big Hill coulee, Bow River escarpment, wetlands and some woodland areas.

The BASP provides a framework for balancing a county residential community, agricultural opportunities, and a limited area for rural commercial uses along Highway 1A. The objectives of the BASP are to:

- 1) To establish a future land use scenario for the Plan Area that, in concert with sound land use planning principles, will provide a future reference for the achievement of an efficient development pattern, while balancing and protecting the character of the Bearspaw community;
- 2) To guide growth and change within the Plan Area through the implementation of sound land use planning policies;
- 3) To facilitate the review and evaluation of the feasibility and appropriateness of any redesignation, subdivision and / or development proposal within the Plan Area in accordance with an established framework of policies;
- 4) To achieve the goals and objectives of the General Municipal Plan through the implementation of sound land use planning policies;
- 5) To protect, conserve and / or enhance the unique natural features of the Plan Area by requiring proposals for redesignation, subdivision and / or development to consider these features and implement measures that will avoid or mitigate any resulting potentially negative impacts;
- 6) To facilitate the provision of essential community services in accordance with the needs of current and future development within the Plan Area; and,
- 7) To preserve the archaeological, historical and / or cultural heritage within the Plan Area.

Bearspaw has seen an average of 58 homes built per year since its adoption. There are currently 2,213 dwellings within the Plan area, and a potential for a total of 7,411. At the current rate of development, it will take approximately 89 years for the plan area to build out, resulting in a population of approximately 22,233 residents. The area contains 12 approved conceptual schemes, the majority of which are largely built out. Further potential for growth remains within the Watermark Conceptual Scheme, with 285 additional lots, and the Silverhorn Conceptual Scheme with 54 potential lots.

The Bearspaw ASP allows for country residential development (two and four acre parcels) and has been subject to two subsequent reviews, the Bearspaw Community Development Strategy (2010), and the Glenbow Ranch Area Structure Plan (adopted 2017). Although the Bearspaw Community Development Strategy (2010) was never approved, the project indicated the need to review the existing ASP.

## 2.0 Project Scope

On January 8, 2019, Rocky View County adopted Terms of Reference to guide a review of the Bearspaw ASP. Under the Terms of Reference the project area shall be confined to the existing ASP boundary and shall not include any lands outside the ASP, such as the Glenbow Ranch Area Structure Plan lands. However, the final planning area determined by this review will be based on the following considerations:

- Community and stakeholders input.
- Intermunicipal input.
- Baseline technical studies.
- Growth projections.
- Direction and intent of higher order documents, such as the Interim Growth Plan and County Plan.
- Compatibility and integration with the surrounding area.
- Market demand.
- Benefit to the communities.
- Fiscal impact to the County.

The review will also address whether the ASP area should be divided into separate plans to address any area-specific considerations.

The project will seek to review and, where necessary, revise the objectives for the Plan area. In considering a vision for the community, the County will promote a balance between residential and non-residential land uses, and will investigate various land use scenarios for Bearspaw, based on public input and the findings of technical studies.

The new ASP is required to align with higher-level policy documents and technical standards that have been established since adoption of the current ASP.

## 3.0 Planning Policy Framework

A number of important statutory plans have been adopted since establishment of the Bears paw ASP. A description of the key documents is provided below.

### South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

The Bears paw ASP review will be guided by the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP), adopted by the Province in September 2014. Several SSRP policies and objectives are relevant to the review, including a specific policy on the efficient use of land, which provides six principles for reducing the footprint of development. Objectives are also provided in relation to building sustainable communities, together with associated water, agricultural and environmental considerations.

### Interim Growth Plan

The Bears paw ASP review will be impacted by the adoption of the Interim Growth Plan (IGP) by the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) in October 2018. The IGP identifies different types of development that are subject to the CMRB review and approval. Under the IGP, Bears paw is considered a ‘country residential development area:’

- (1) *Country Residential* means a rural settlement form in which the land use is mainly residential and characterized by dispersed, low-density development with lot sizes generally 1 acre or greater. Country residential areas may include a variety of lot sizes, while maintaining a rural character, incorporating landscape considerations in their design, and offering passive and active recreational and cultural opportunities. Country residential households are often responsible for providing on-site water and private sewage systems.

The IGP indicates that country residential development areas shall be planned and developed in accordance with IGP policies covering flood prone areas and regional corridors. The objectives of this plan are to work toward long-term sustainable growth in the region. By planning for long-term population and employment growth, it promotes the efficient and cost-effective use of land and infrastructure, promotes water conservation, protection of source water quality, and aims to create strong and sustainable communities.

### County Plan

Adopted in October 2013, the County Plan is the County’s Municipal Development Plan. It provides a policy framework on strategic growth, land use planning, and service delivery. It also provides specific policy guidance for matters not covered by the adopted ASP.

The County Plan directs residential growth to existing hamlets and country residential areas within the County, such as Bears paw. It also designates the existing rural commercial area along Highway 1A as a highway business area. Sections 10.5 and 10.6 provide direction and relevant considerations for review of existing ASPs.



## **Rocky View County / City of Calgary Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP)**

The RVC / Calgary IDP was adopted in October 2012, and provides a framework for development within identified areas of interest to both municipalities. Section 4 of the IDP identifies six geographical areas of interest to both municipalities, where increased collaboration should be undertaken. Lands in Bears paw have not been identified as a Key Focus Area; however, the Bears paw ASP identifies lands along the city of Calgary boundary as Urban. In accordance with the IDP, the Bears paw ASP review will aim to ensure a coordinated and cooperative approach to planning between the County and city of Calgary including preparation of an intermunicipal engagement plan to guide engagement.

## **Town of Cochrane / M.D. of Rocky View No. 44 Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP)**

The RVC / Cochrane IDP was adopted in June 2001, and sets out a framework for development within identified areas of interest to both municipalities.

The plan provides objectives and policy direction for areas not included within a statutory plan, and identifies the need to address the potential for future urban expansion. When reviewing any statutory plan within the IDP area, both municipalities are to consult and cooperate. The intent is to ensure the compatibility and potential integration of proposals with future urban development to ensure future urban expansion will not be prejudiced.

In accordance with the IDP, the Bears paw ASP review will aim to ensure a coordinated and cooperative approach to planning between the County and Town of Cochrane including preparation of an intermunicipal engagement plan to guide engagement.

## **4.0 Project Work Plan**

The Bears paw ASP review is split into four phases, as noted in Figure 1. Phase 1 of the review is centred on preparing the necessary project planning and technical documents, and establishing a strategy for stakeholder engagement. A description of the general tasks to be completed in each phase is outlined below.



**Table 1 - Project Phasing**

### **Phase 1 (February to June 2019)**

This Phase is primarily focused on conducting the necessary preliminary technical reviews that will guide development of the new ASP; these studies are described in further detail in Section 5.0.

In addition to this background report, the County is undertaking further steps in Phase 1 to prepare stakeholders for the engagement process:

- The Rocky View County webpage ([www.rockyview.ca/BearspawASP](http://www.rockyview.ca/BearspawASP)) provides updates and information on the project, together with links to some of the technical documents completed so far.
- An Open House will be held at the RockPointe Church on the evening of June 6, 2019 to introduce the project team, provide an overview on the process and to gather input on the future of Bearspaw.

## **Phase 2 (June to September 2019)**

This Phase aims to gain public and other stakeholder input on the ASP review. Two engagement events are planned, which will be open to all stakeholders. The first event will look at setting the broad direction for the ASP by establishing the potential vision and objectives for the Bears paw area. The second event will look at specific land use and servicing options for the Plan area, with the County seeking feedback on land use scenarios for the community.

Following public engagement, the County will draft the new ASP over the fall / winter of 2019.

## **Phase 3 (September 2019 to March 2020)**

The County is scheduling winter 2020 for the release of the draft ASP document. A further round of community and stakeholder engagements will follow to review the draft in detail. The ASP will be amended appropriately according to the feedback received.

## **Phase 4 (March to September 2020)**

The final phase of the project will be to present the final ASP document for review, prior to proposed adoption by Council. A draft plan is expected to be released in the spring of 2020 followed by a public hearing, CMRB review and adopted in the fall.

# **5.0 Technical Considerations**

This section provides a summary of the technical considerations, which will guide the ASP review and notes the technical studies that have been undertaken so far.

## **Stormwater**

The study area is drained by tributaries of the Bow River, Big Hill Creek, and West Nose Creek. The plan area is generally divided by drainage to the Bow River and to West Nose Creek. This divide generally follows Highway 1A for the west portion of the plan area and is located north of Highway 1A for the east plan area. Each of the major watercourses listed above are divided into sub-watersheds for further study. Both the Bow River and Nose Creek are important watercourses and protection of these two important natural water courses is imperative for the sustainable growth of Bears paw and the region. Drainage to the Bow River is upstream of the Bears paw Reservoir, which is a source of potable water for the city of Calgary.

Bears paw is primarily developed with country residential acreages, consisting of rural stormwater management strategies including ditches, culverts, swales and stormwater ponds. In the last decade, area development was guided by the Bears paw-Glenbow Master Drainage Plan (Worley

**Action Item:** To review the existing Bears paw-Glendale Master Drainage Plan to determine if updates are required to reflect revised land use scenarios.

## Potable Water

Water servicing to existing homes and approved developments is provided by a combination of individual wells, water co-ops and private water utilities. Regional water servicing is not currently provided in the Bears paw area. A large portion of the plan area is served by the Rocky View Water Co-op. Other co-ops exist that service smaller areas (individual developments or a combination of developments). Outside the study area, formal water distribution infrastructure exists immediately to the west within the Town of Cochrane and to the east within the city of Calgary.

During review of the Bears paw Community Development Strategy in 2010, studies were completed that examined the existing water servicing options in Bears paw and recommended that an updated Water Master Plan be undertaken for the area.

**Action Item:** To develop a Potable Water Network Plan based on the proposed land use strategy for the area.

## Waste Water

Waste water servicing in Bears paw is primarily by individual Private Sewage Treatment Systems (PSTS). There is currently no regional waste water servicing in Bears paw.

For new development, County Policy 449 “Requirements for Waste Water Treatment Systems” provides direction on the level of treatment system required for any new development in the County, whether that be a Regional Wastewater Treatment System, Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System or Private Sewage Treatment System. The Policy outlines that the County does not support the use of any type of PSTS for lot sizes less than 1.98 acres.

More recently, such as Silverhorn and Indigo Hills proposed decentralized waste water treatment facilities with sub surface disposal of the treated effluent. The community of Watermark is served by a waste water treatment plant with an outfall to the Bow River.

The Bears paw Community Development Strategy studies that were undertaken in 2010 examined the existing wastewater servicing options in Bears paw and recommended that an updated Wastewater Master Plan be undertaken for the area.

**Action Item:** To develop a Wastewater Servicing Plan to identify servicing options that may be available for existing and future development.

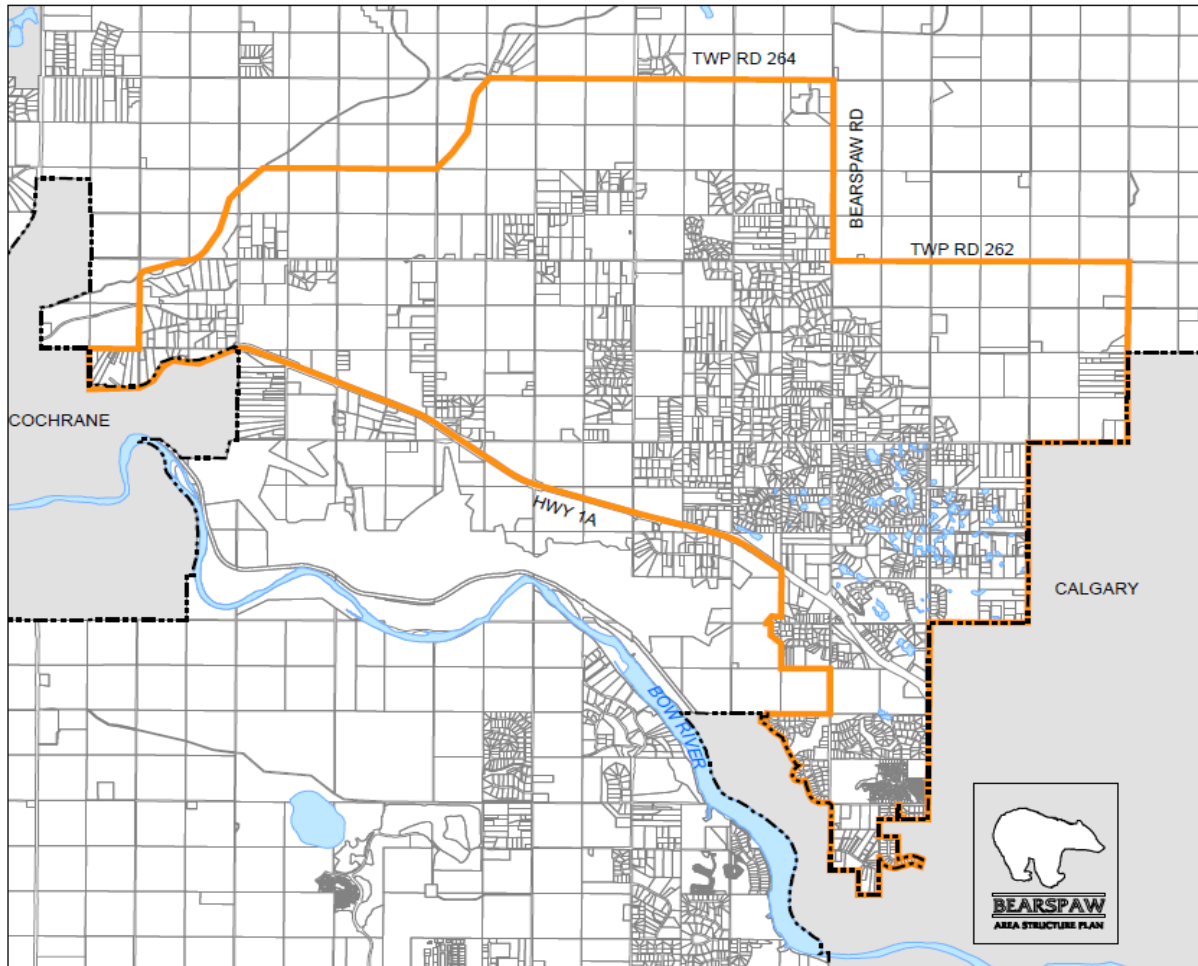
## Transportation

A major transportation corridor, Highway 1A, bisects the Bearspaw area from east to west. In addition to Highway 1A, the other main roadways within Bearspaw include Highway 766 (Lochend Road), 12 Mile Coulee Road and Range Road 30 (Bearspaw Road).

Future plans within the city of Calgary, Town of Cochrane and Glenbow Ranch Area Structure Plan are important considerations for the Bearspaw area. Alberta Transportation will be a key stakeholder throughout the review process. A secondary east / west connection to convey traffic through the plan area will be an important consideration.



**Action Item:** To prepare a new Network Analysis which focuses on the Study Area to identify current and planned transportation infrastructure requirements under both Provincial and County jurisdiction to determine future transportation needs and opportunities.

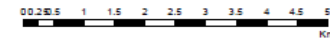
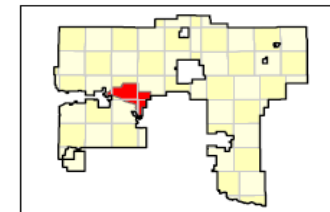
**APPENDIX A: ASP AREA MAP**



This map is conceptual in nature. No measurements or area calculations should be taken from this map.

Figure 1:  
 Plan Area  
 Location

-  ASP Area
-  Rocky View Boundary



## **APPENDIX B: FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **Rocky View County Bearspaw ASP Webpage**

[www.rockyview.ca / BearspawASP](http://www.rockyview.ca/BearspawASP)

### **South Saskatchewan Regional Plan**

[www.landuse.alberta.ca / LandUse%20Documents / South%20Saskatchewan%20Regional%20Plan\\_2014-07.pdf](http://www.landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/South%20Saskatchewan%20Regional%20Plan_2014-07.pdf)

### **Interim Growth Plan**

[www.calgarymetroregion.ca /](http://www.calgarymetroregion.ca/)

### **Rocky View County Plan**

[www.rockyview.ca / BuildingPlanning / PlanningDocuments / CountyPlan.aspx](http://www.rockyview.ca/BuildingPlanning/PlanningDocuments/CountyPlan.aspx)

### **RVC / City of Calgary IDP**

[www.rockyview.ca / Portals / 0 / Files / BuildingPlanning / Planning / IDP / IDP-Calgary-RockyView.pdf](http://www.rockyview.ca/Portals/0/Files/BuildingPlanning/Planning/IDP/IDP-Calgary-RockyView.pdf)

### **RVC / Town of Cochrane IDP**

[www.rockyview.ca / Portals / 0 / Files / BuildingPlanning / Planning / IDP / IDP-Cochrane-RockyView.pdf](http://www.rockyview.ca/Portals/0/Files/BuildingPlanning/Planning/IDP/IDP-Cochrane-RockyView.pdf)

### **Government of Alberta's Efficient Use of Land Implementation Tools Compendium**

[www.landuse.alberta.ca / LandUse%20Documents / LUF%20EUL%20Implementation%20Tools%20Compendium%20\\_2014-07.pdf](http://www.landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/LUF%20EUL%20Implementation%20Tools%20Compendium%20_2014-07.pdf)

### **Rocky View County Plans Overview**

[www.rockyview.ca / Portals / 0 / Files / BuildingPlanning / Planning / RVC-Planning-Overview.pdf](http://www.rockyview.ca/Portals/0/Files/BuildingPlanning/Planning/RVC-Planning-Overview.pdf)