

Area Structure Plan

# **CONRICH – FUTURE POLICY AREA**

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## **Background Report**



**ROCKY VIEW COUNTY**  
Cultivating Communities



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## 1.0 Context

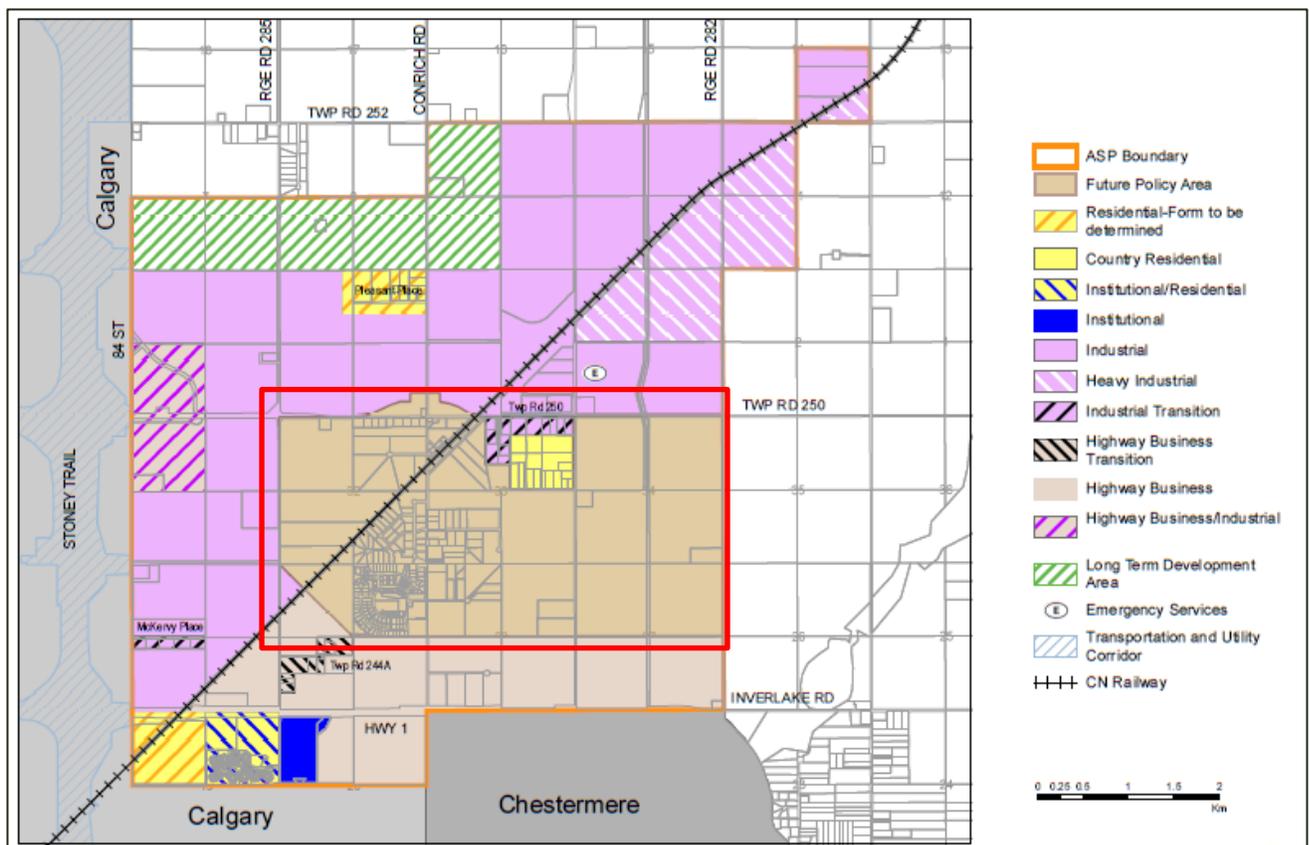
Located within the southeast quadrant of the County, the Conrich community predominately contains a mix of residential, industrial and agricultural uses. It is located approximately three kilometres north of the city of Chestermere and three kilometres east of the city of Calgary. In 2018, the estimated population of Conrich 2,066 residents. This includes:

- 21 residents in the hamlet;
- 1225 in residential area (surrounding the hamlet);
- 626 in the Prince of Peace development; and
- 194 in the remaining area.

The hamlet is intended to be developed as a full service community which generally contains a population that ranges from 5,000 to 10,000 residents.

The Conrich Area Structure Plan (ASP) was adopted in 2015, which includes a centrally located Future Policy Area (FPA) that is approximately ± 1,100 hectares (± 2,717 acres) in size, as shown on Map 1 – Land Use Strategy. This background report focuses specifically on the FPA in Conrich. The Conrich ASP underwent amendments as a result of changes made by Council through the Public Hearing process and subsequent mediation which ultimately resulted in the creating of the FPA.

**Map 1 – Land Use Strategy**





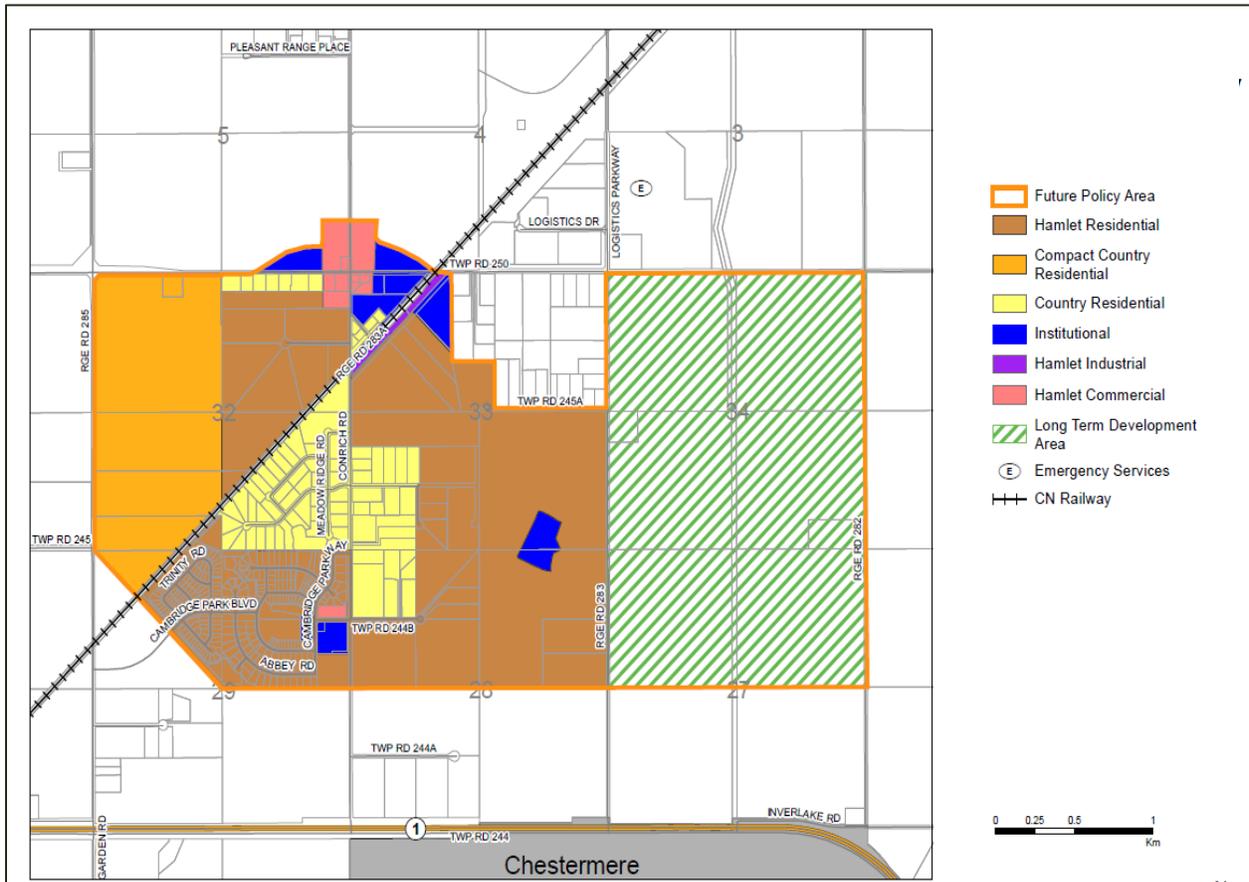
## Conrich ASP

The [Conrich ASP](#) was adopted in December 2015. The ASP was originally brought for Council consideration on May 12, 2015. The Plan provides a comprehensive planning and technical framework for a development area identified as a Full Service Hamlet and Regional Business Centre. The Plan seeks to ensure the integration of residential and business uses in a manner that provides for appropriate transition of land uses, compatibility, and mitigates the impacts of development.

The draft Conrich ASP presented to Council included a land use strategy and corresponding policy framework to guide development in the hamlet core (see Map 2). However, in adopting the final ASP it was decided not to proceed with this land use strategy and, instead, the final ASP designated the hamlet core as a FPA.

The withdrawn land use strategy included the hamlet core, compact country residential areas, traditional country residential areas, institutional development, hamlet commercial, and a portion on the eastern boundary identified as long-term development. One of the main constraints that had to be accounted for with the development of a land use strategy is developing in proximity to the Canadian National Rail line which bisects the Conrich area.

**Map 2 – Original FPA Land Use Strategy**





The final ASP adopted by Council outlines a policy framework and action items to guide the development of the FPA. Section 7 of the ASP has the objective of only allowing for agricultural development until the hamlet core, community core, residential areas, and land uses are identified for the FPA. Subsequent policies do not allow for the approval of local plans, redesignation, or subdivision applications within the FPA until amendments to the Conrich ASP are complete. Section 10 of the ASP envisions the hamlet commercial area forming part of the community core established through the FPA review. Lastly, Section 16 of the ASP requires the FPA review to consider potential future school sites. Actions to facilitate the review of the FPA identified in Section 27 of the Conrich ASP include:

- Developing a terms of reference to direct the review of the FPA; and
- Consider the adoption of a new hamlet of Conrich boundary.

After the Conrich ASP was granted Final Reading by County Council, appeals by adjacent municipalities were filed.

### **Intermunicipal Matters**

The Public Hearing for the Conrich ASP was originally scheduled for January, 2015. Prior to this hearing, both the City of Calgary and City of Chestermere requested a delay in proceedings so further discussion on their respective concerns could occur. Intermunicipal concerns included impacts on Calgary's major road infrastructure including the Stoney Trail flyovers and the widening of the bridge over Stoney Trail at McKnight Boulevard. The City of Chestermere originally had concerns regarding the justification for a large commercial area that would be in competition with commercial areas in Chestermere.

On January 6, 2016, after the County had adopted the Conrich ASP, the City of Calgary filed an appeal with the Municipal Government Board (MGB). After both municipalities entered into interest-based mediation, amendments to the Conrich ASP were undertaken resulting in:

- Changes to gateway areas along Highway 1;
- New transportation policies to address city concerns outlined above; and
- Additional policies/action items strengthening the link between the Conrich ASP and the Rocky View County/City of Calgary Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP).

The City of Chestermere had filed a separate appeal claiming detriment with respect to transportation, storm water, and the Highway 1 gateway. Interest-based mediation was not undertaken, and a subsequent MGB Hearing was required to address concerns raised by the City. In May, 2017, the MGB issued Board Order 019/17, determining that there is no detriment to Chestermere and that the Conrich ASP is consistent with the County's Municipal Development Plan, which contains sufficient intermunicipal planning policies for Rocky View and Chestermere to coordinate planning activities.

Intermunicipal engagement to ensure that the development of the FPA in Conrich addresses the concerns of municipal neighbours is a critical component of the project. A separate Intermunicipal Engagement Plan has been developed to ensure open communication, identify opportunities for coordination, and ensure adherence to applicable Intermunicipal Development Plans.



## 2.0 Project Scope

On November 27, 2018, Rocky View County Council adopted a Terms of Reference (TOR) to guide a review of the Future Policy Area (FPA) for the Conrich ASP. The TOR directed the FPA review to prepare a comprehensive land use strategy and determine the extent of hamlet expansion and applicable land use policy. It is not anticipated that all of the land within the FPA will form part of the hamlet, and other land uses will be considered in accordance with the Conrich ASP. The study area encompasses approximately ± 1,100 hectares (± 2,717 acres) and includes the hamlet core, residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and agricultural uses.

The following factors have a significant influence in the FPA review:

- Community and stakeholder input;
- Intermunicipal participation;
- Baseline technical studies;
- Growth projections;
- Fiscal impact to the County;
- Benefit to the community;
- Compatibility and integration with the surrounding area;
- Market demand; and
- Direction and intent of higher level policies (e.g. Interim Growth Plan, County Plan etc.)

Working with affected stakeholders and being mindful of the above noted factors, the County will prepare amendments to the Conrich ASP in the form of land use maps and applicable policies for the FPA. Policy revisions and additions will be prepared to confirm the community's vision for Conrich, align the Conrich ASP with higher-level policy documents, implement a cohesive land use strategy for the FPA as a full-service hamlet, and to update technical policies as applicable. The amendments will seek to achieve a number of goals including:

- Plan the hamlet as a distinct and attractive community;
- Develop based on sound growth projections and servicing capabilities;
- Achieve a logical extension of growth patterns including vehicular and pedestrian transportation infrastructure;
- Demonstrate sensitivity for critical environmental and natural features;
- Explore infill opportunities and diversify housing options;
- Demonstrate fiscal accountability;
- Undertake effective consultation with affected stakeholder; and
- Align the amendments with applicable planning documents.

## 3.0 Planning Policy Framework

A number of important statutory plans have will have a significant influence on developing the appropriate policy framework for Future Policy Area (FPA) as outlined below.

### Interim Growth Plan

The Interim Growth Plan (IGP) identifies the different types of development that are subject to the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) review and approval. The Interim Regional



Evaluation Framework (IREF) provides the CMRB with the authority to evaluate and approve new statutory plans or amendments to existing plans. The hamlet of Conrich is considered a settlement area under the IGP. Settlement Areas are:

*All lands located within the limits of planned areas in cities, towns, villages, hamlets, and other unincorporated urban communities. Settlement areas do not include county residential areas.*

The IGP indicates that intensification and infill development of settlement areas shall be planned and developed in a contiguous pattern to:

- Achieve an efficient use of land;
- Achieve higher density development in central core areas;
- Accommodate residential and / or mixed-use development at a higher density than currently exists;
- Provide for a mix of uses including community services and facilities, where appropriate; and
- Make efficient and cost-effective use of existing and planned infrastructure through agreements with service providers.

As part of the engagement strategy, a pre-application meeting to discuss the development of the FPA with the CMRB will be undertaken. Section 4.1(c) of the IREF requires all amendments to ASPs which propose employment areas and/or 50 or more new dwelling units to be referred to the CMRB. The CMRB will review the amendments to determine if they are consistent with the Principles, Objectives and Policies of the IGP. Ensuring alignment with the IREF will be a critical component to ensuring the success of the project.

## **County Plan (Bylaw C-7280-2013)**

Adopted in October 2013, The County Plan is the County's principal statutory plan. It provides strategic growth direction, overall guidance for land use planning, and service delivery policy. It also provides specific policy guidance for matters not covered by the adopted ASPs.

The County Plan directs residential growth to existing hamlets and country residential areas within the County, such as Conrich. Map 1 identifies Conrich as a full-service hamlet and a regional business center. The County Plan provides the framework to develop the FPA in a method which strengthens communities, is sensitive to the needs of residents, and is orderly and efficient.

### *Intermunicipal Relationships*

Establishing working relationships with municipal neighbours is entrenched through the policies of the County Plan. Policy 27.2 of the County Plan outlines provisions for Administrative co-ordination which will form the basis to intermunicipal engagement with the City of Chestermere. Rocky View County and the City of Chestermere do not have an adopted Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP), however there is an identified area for which the County provides notification to the city with respect to planning and development applications in Conrich. Rocky View and the City of Calgary have an adopted Intermunicipal Development Plan to guide cooperation and collaboration between the county and city on cross boundary matters.



## **Rocky View County/City of Calgary Intermunicipal Development Plan (Bylaw C-7078-2011)**

The current Rocky View County/City of Calgary IDP was adopted by the County in October 2012, and sets out a framework for development within identified areas of the County. A significant portion of the FPA falls within this IDP. There are two sections of land on the eastern boundary of the FPA that do not fall within the IDP area.

Map 2 in the IDP identifies the portion of the FPA as the Highway 1 East Corridor. Section 4 of the IDP establishes this as a Key Focus Area that is an important entranceway for both municipalities, as well as a key highway corridor for the Province. Of significant interest for this area is interface planning and coordination of land use policy, along with substantial collaboration of transportation planning. This is in effort to ensure contiguous development across the intermunicipal boundary. Adhering to the IDP policies of the Highway 1 East Corridor when establishing the land use strategy and transportation policies will be of specific interest to ensuring the success of the FPA.

### **South Saskatchewan Regional Plan**

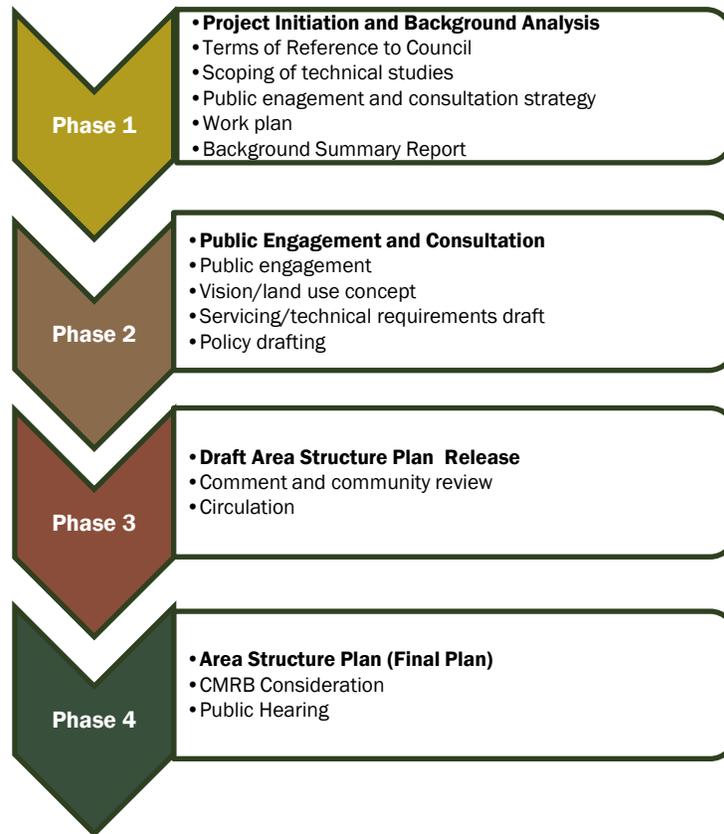
It is important to note planning for the FPA review will also be guided by the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP), adopted by the Province in September, 2014. Several SSRP policies and objectives are relevant to the review, including a specific policy on the efficient use of land, which provides 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.

## **4.0 Project Work Plan**

The Conrich Future Policy Area (FPA) review is split into four phases, as noted in Figure 1. We are currently completing Phase 1 of the review, which is centred on preparing the necessary planning and technical documents, together with forming a strategy for stakeholder engagement. We are transitioning into Phase 2, focused on engagement and establishing a vision and land use strategy for the FPA along with preliminary policy drafting. A description of the general tasks to be completed in each phase is outlined on Page A-7 in Figure 1.



**Figure 1 - Project Phasing**



### **Phase 1 (February – April 2019)**

This Phase has primarily focused on project setup and initiation including preparation of engagement material, scoping of technical studies (based on original Conrich ASP), background research, and constraints identification.

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

- An engagement and intermunicipal engagement strategy has been prepared;
- Identifying constraints and reaching out to affected stakeholders (i.e. CNR, adjacent municipalities); and
- Meeting with interested landowners in the Plan area.

### **Phase 2 (April 2019 – June 2019)**

The intention of this phase is public engagement and preliminary policy drafting. The key components early on in this phase include a pre-application meeting with the CMRB; intermunicipal engagement; meeting with the divisional councillor; and hosting of an open house. Once these items are completed, based on initial feedback, the County will begin preparing a draft for the FPA including the establishment of an appropriate land use strategy



and corresponding policies. Towards the later portion of this phase, the technical requirements based on the land use strategy will be refined.

### **Phase 3 (July – November 2019)**

The County is scheduling summer/fall for the public release of the draft plan; this will be followed by a further round of stakeholder (both affected residents and municipal neighbour) engagement. The draft will be amended appropriately according to feedback received.

### **Phase 4 (December 2019 – January 2020)**

The final phase of the project will be to present the amended Conrich ASP with provisions for developing the FPA to Council and subsequently the CMRB for consideration. The CMRB review would occur after Second Reading has been granted to the amended ASP. The Public Hearing for Council consideration is anticipated to be in December 2019 / January 2020.

## **5.0 Technical Considerations**

This section provides a summary of the technical considerations which will guide the review of the Future Policy Area (FPA) and notes the technical studies that were undertaken for the Conrich ASP.

### **Storm Water**

Conrich is located within the Shepard Regional Drainage Basin which empties into the Bow River. Over time, the north to south movement of storm water has been impeded by buildings, roadways, and irrigation canals. Intensified development requires the identification and construction of a regional conveyance and treatment system involving multi-jurisdictional partners. The Conrich ASP examined two possible regional storm water conveyance and treatment systems:

- Cooperative Storm Water Management Initiative (CSMI), which takes water east and north to the Red Deer River drainage basin; and
- Shepard Regional Drainage Plan, which takes water south to the Bow River.

Both options are contemplated through the corresponding policy framework in the Conrich ASP. While a least preferred option, an interim drainage solution entails on-site zero discharge couple with on-site treatment. The existing development context generally consists of rural storm water management practices, incorporating culverts, ditches, and natural conveyance systems. The development of the FPA will utilize previous storm water analysis.

As part of the review of the Conrich ASP, a Master Drainage Plan (MDP) was prepared by MPE Engineering Ltd. The MDP study area covers approximately 4,100 hectares (10,131 acres) of land within the Shepard sub-basin. The topography of the area is relatively flat with few defined drainage courses. Given the impact low density residential development has on downstream wetlands and riparian areas, establishing objectives to protect wetlands, riparian areas and water quality for downstream users are important considerations of the MDP. Some of the key recommendations that will help evaluate storm water considerations for the FPA include:

- Low impact development (LID) practices and wet ponds/constructed wetlands with detention storage sized to restrict discharges to account for downstream constraints;



**CONRICH – FUTURE POLICY AREA**

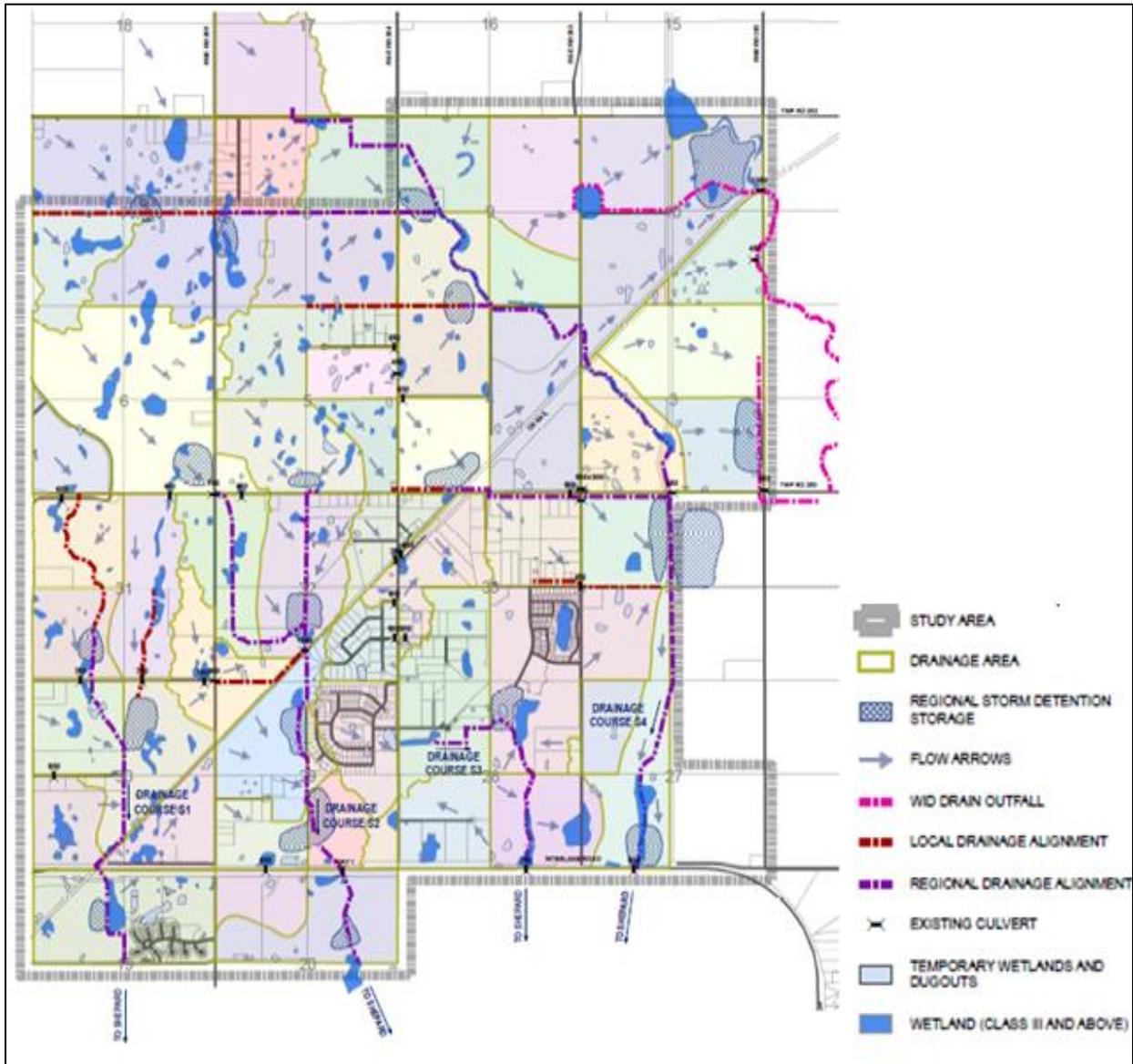
- Strategies to ensure post development runoff volumes are reduced below pre-development runoff volumes;
- Strategic positioning of development to not impact the hydraulic regime of existing wetlands and watercourses; and
- Field verification of existing downstream constraints and capacity restrictions for development applications.

The MDP also identifies further strategies for small infill developments that may apply to the development of the FPA that require a general demonstration of negligible impacts to downstream users, wetlands, and riparian areas. Figure 2 shows the existing drainage network in Conrich as per the MDP.

**Action Item:** To update the existing Master Drainage Plan for Conrich based on the CSMI solution accounting for the land use strategy for the Future Policy Area.



**Map 3: Existing Catchment Areas in Conrich**





## **Potable Water**

Traditionally, development in Conrich has relied on stand-alone water supply systems including groundwater wells. With the development of the Balzac East Regional Business Centre to the north of Conrich and the CN Rail facility, piped utilities to support development are available in the Conrich area. It is the expectation that new development connects to these utility servicing systems.

The water system in Conrich entails a transmission line and reservoir from the East Balzac water treatment plant. This system was constructed by Rocky View County and funded by CN. CN's costs will be recovered through a cost recovery scheme that requires benefitting lands to contribute proportionately to the construction costs. Construction of any subsequent local distribution system will be undertaken by benefitting developers. Once the water system is operational, it will be managed by the County on an ongoing basis.

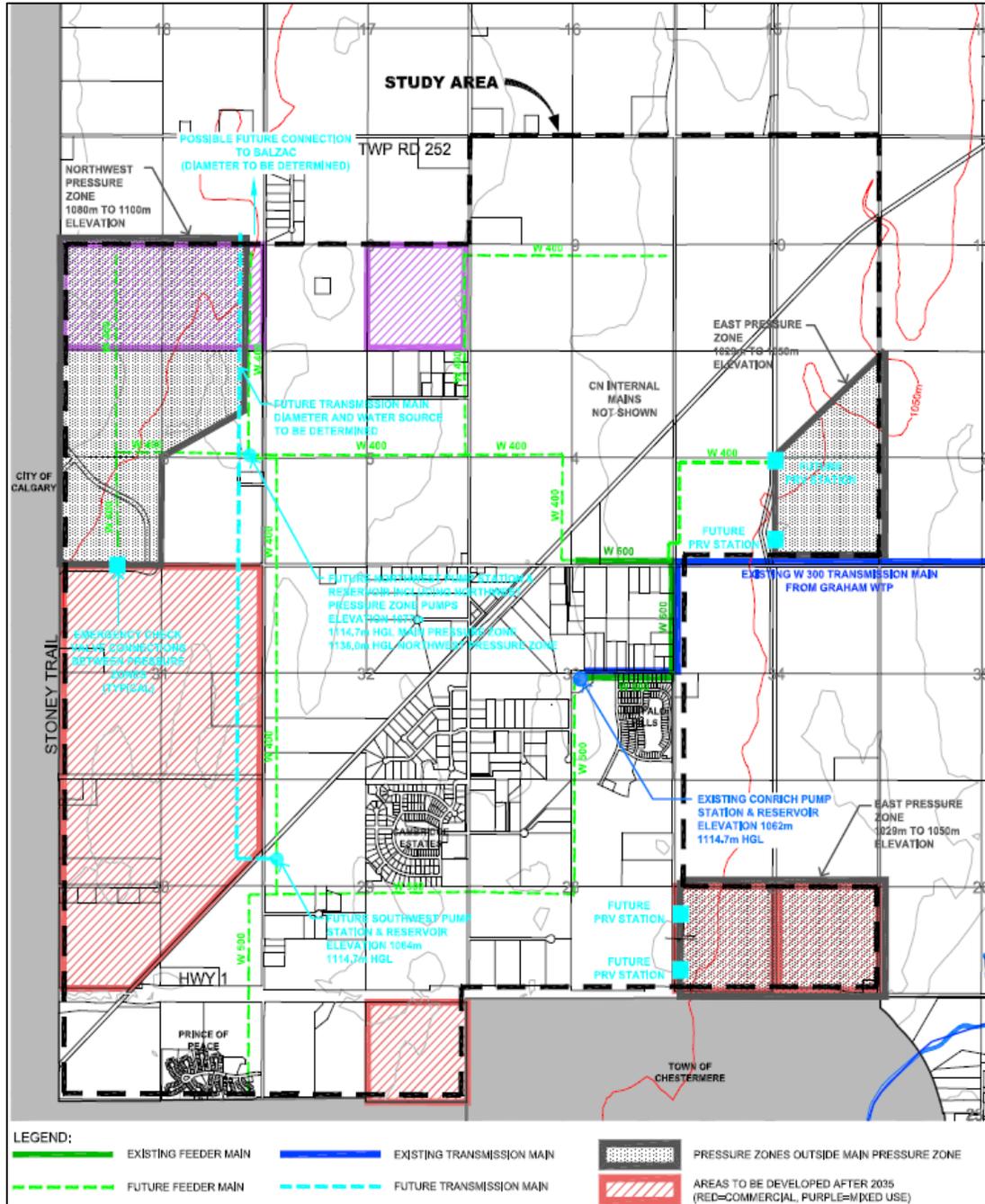
MPE Engineering Ltd. prepared the Conrich Potable Water Network Plan to facilitate servicing in the Conrich area. The study identifies the infrastructure required to support servicing and recommends the following:

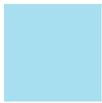
- A network of water mains ranging in diameter from 250 mm to 600 mm;
- Two reservoir and pump stations with a combined storage of 24,000 m<sup>3</sup> and 1,000kW (1,500 hp) pump capacity;
- Three pressure zones; and
- Estimated costs to develop an appropriate cost recovery structure.

Development in the FPA will use and expand on the previous technical analysis provided for the water supply system. Figure 3 shows the existing and proposed future feeder mains based on the technical studies undertaken for the Conrich ASP.

**Action Item:** To update the existing Potable Water Network Plan based on the proposed land use strategy for the Future Policy Area.

**Map 4: Conrich ASP Water Servicing Plan**





## **Wastewater**

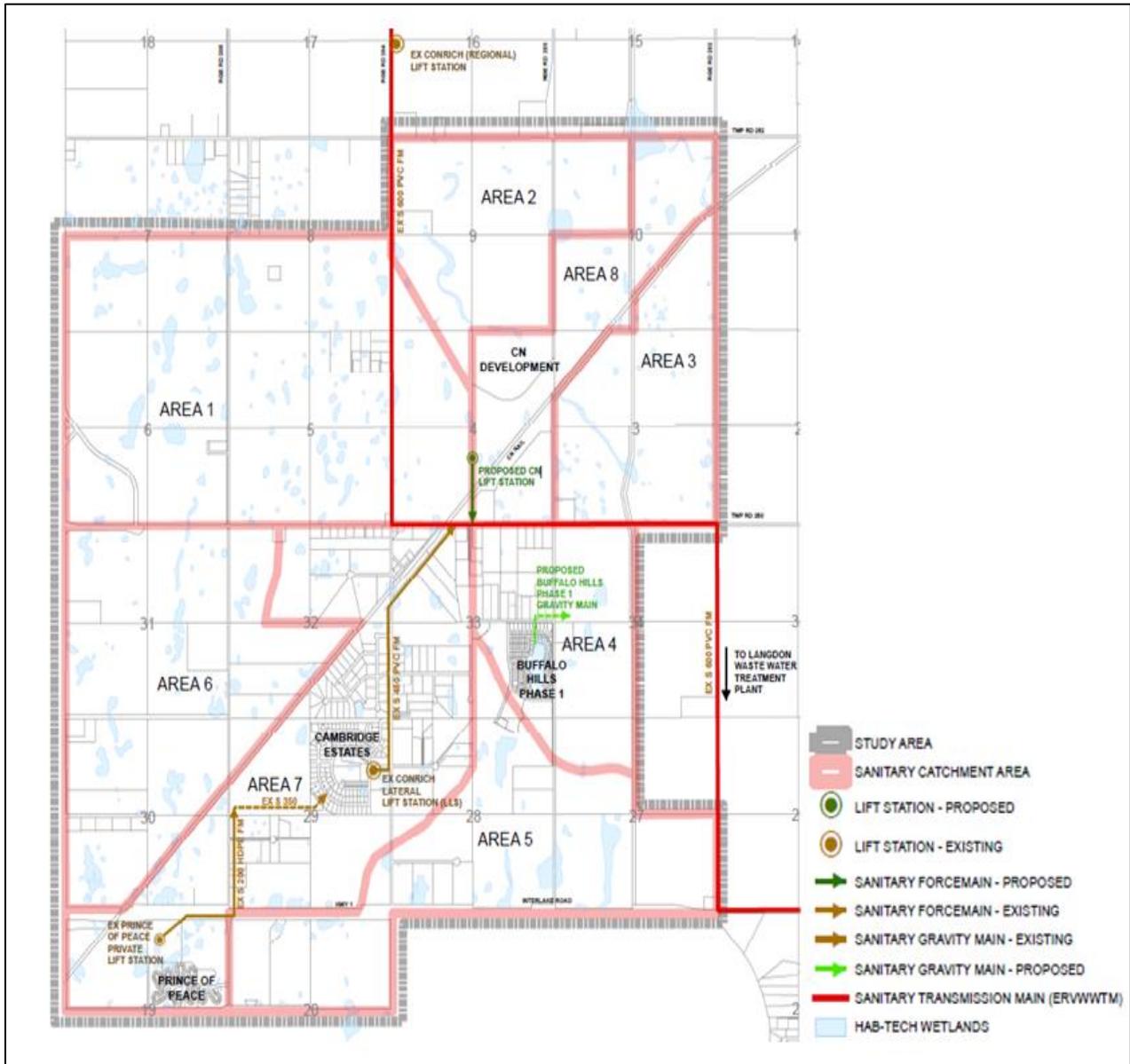
Development within Conrich has historically relied upon on-site servicing solutions such as septic fields and tanks. As part of the servicing evaluation for the Conrich ASP, MPE Engineering Ltd. prepared the Conrich Wastewater Servicing Plan. The study analyzes the existing East Rocky View Wastewater Transmission Line which conveys wastewater flows from Balzac to the Langdon Wastewater Treatment Plant. The study identifies tying into the transmission line as the optimal method of providing wastewater servicing for the Conrich area. To implement this strategy, appropriate infrastructure is required and the conclusions of the report recommend:

- A series of gravity mains to convey wastewater to lateral lift stations in order to tie into the transmission line;
- At full build-out (Year 2060), the Plan area will require an additional six lift stations with force mains;
- Area residents currently on septic field systems should be connected to the regional system once available;
- Areas with existing wastewater infrastructure are proposed to be the initial area of focus followed by areas with committed developments;
- An assessment of infiltration and inflow into the existing system to extend capacity of the existing infrastructure; and
- As lift stations connect to the transmission line, an assessment of the entire line should be completed to ensure there are no negative impacts as a result of the additional connections.

The FPA development framework will align with the Conrich ASP policies for wastewater servicing and support the objective of utilizing the existing transmission line. Figure 4 shows the servicing strategy proposed for the existing ASP.

**Action Item:** To update the Conrich Wastewater Servicing Plan and examine possible water conservation strategies within the Future Policy Area to establish accurate wastewater demands.

**Map 5: Conrich ASP Wastewater Servicing Plan**





## Transportation

A major transportation corridor, the Trans-Canada Highway (Highway 1), runs to the south of the FPA in the east west direction. Existing development approvals in the Conrich area have resulted in upgrades to the transportation network. These upgrades specifically enhance pre-determined haul routes to and from the CN Logistics Park as well as traffic flows resulting from an increase in population to and from Highway 1. As part of the development of the Conrich ASP, D.A. Watt Consulting prepared the Conrich Area Network Study. Key recommendations from the analysis to accommodate the anticipated 2035 land use scenario traffic volumes include:

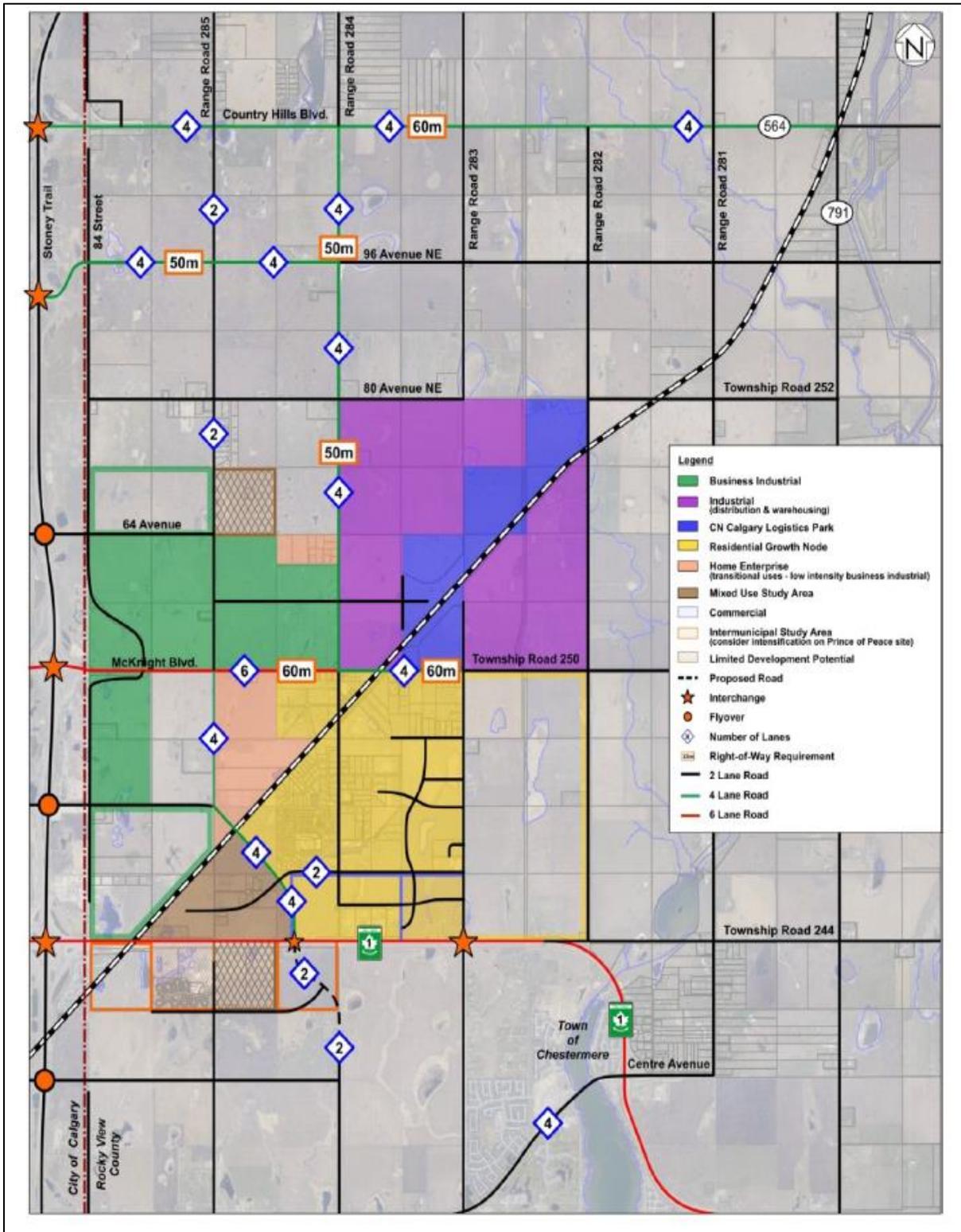
- McKnight Boulevard from the interchange at Stoney Trail to Range Road 284 from a 2 lane road to a 6 lane road;
- The extension of McKnight Boulevard from Range Road 284 to Range Road 283 from a 2 lane to 4 lane road;
- Range Road 284 from a 2 lane road to a 4 lane road between McKnight Boulevard and Country Hills Boulevard;
- Range Road 285 from a 2 lane road to a 4 lane road between Highway 1 and McKnight Boulevard; and
- 96 avenue from the interchange of Stoney Trail to Ranch Road 284 from a 2 lane road to a 4 lane road.

As development in the FPA proceeds, additional right-of-way may be required to facilitate improvements, and the timing of the improvements will be linked with the progression of the land development. Periodic reviews of the network will confirm that network improvements are introduced in a timely manner. Figure 5 shows the results of the transportation model undertaken for the Conrich ASP.

Aside from necessary road upgrades, an important transportation component for the project is the Canadian National Rail (CNR) line which bisects the FPA area. Historical development in the Conrich area has taken advantage of the proximity of the rail line to support industrial development. The rail line today includes numerous road crossing which provide a challenge to the safe and efficient movement of local traffic that will be accounted for when planning for the FPA.

**Action Item:** To prepare a new Network Analysis which focuses on the Future Policy Area that accounts for the development approved since the original, with significant emphasis on impacts to regional infrastructure.

**Map 6: Conrich ASP Network Analysis**





## **APPENDIX A: FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **Rocky View County Conrich Area Structure Plan**

<https://www.rockyview.ca/Portals/0/Files/BuildingPlanning/Planning/ASP/ASP-Conrich.pdf>

### **Rocky View County Plan**

<http://www.rockyview.ca/BuildingPlanning/PlanningDocuments/CountyPlan.aspx>

### **South Saskatchewan Regional Plan**

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

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

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

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

<http://www.rockyview.ca/Portals/0/Files/BuildingPlanning/Planning/RVC-Planning-Overview.pdf>