

REGIONAL PLANNING

A Co-operative Leadership Approach



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY
Cultivating Communities

February 12, 2015

Rocky View County understands rural challenges, impacts and opportunities.

Rocky View County understands urban challenges, impacts and opportunities.

Rocky View County Council strategically governs to manage both.

The County's professional staff are always ready to assist Alberta Municipal Affairs and our municipal neighbours today and into the future.



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY
Cultivating Communities

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REGIONAL PLANNING

Rocky View County's Co-operative Leadership Approach

Rocky View County is Alberta's ninth largest municipality, and features residential areas, important ranch and farm lands, and multiple hamlets including one with the population of a large town (5,000). The County works co-operatively with its seven urban municipalities, five rural municipalities, and two first nation communities to ensure Southern Alberta remains one of the very best places to live, work, learn, and grow.

Regional planning to address growth takes many forms. Rocky View County has actively addressed growth pressure through co-operative engagement and the use of statutory tools provided for in the Municipal Government Act.

The County is proud of its successful, proactive, good neighbour approach to regional planning and services, which has directly supported the unparalleled growth of the Calgary region. Our work includes:

1. A TRUE REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

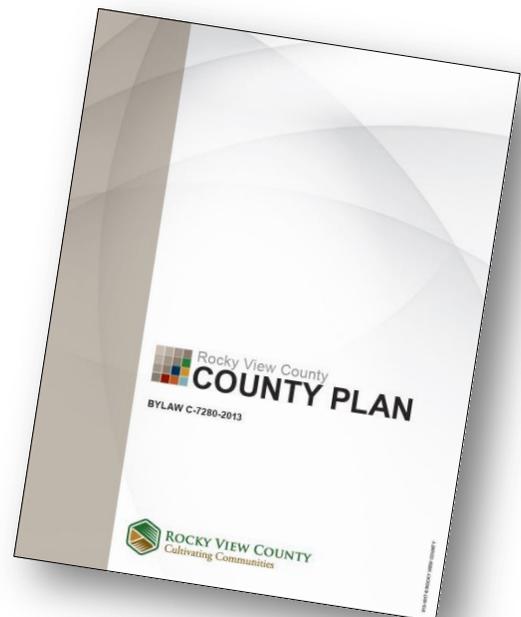
Under the authority of the Municipal Government Act, Rocky View County adopted its municipal development plan, the *County Plan*, in October of 2013. The plan provides for responsible and directed growth to identified areas within the County, while acknowledging and supporting the development of our urban neighbours. The *County Plan* includes:

A. Vision and Principles

Growth and Fiscal Sustainability: Rocky View County will direct new growth to designated development areas, and in doing so it will remain fiscally responsible.

Partnerships: Rocky View County will maintain a strong web of partnerships to help extend the range of services it provides to its residents.

- The County will develop and strengthen partnerships with communities, stakeholders, and neighbouring municipalities.



B. Growth Management

The County has committed to accepting its historical proportion of regional population growth, which equates to 20,000 new residents by 2026.

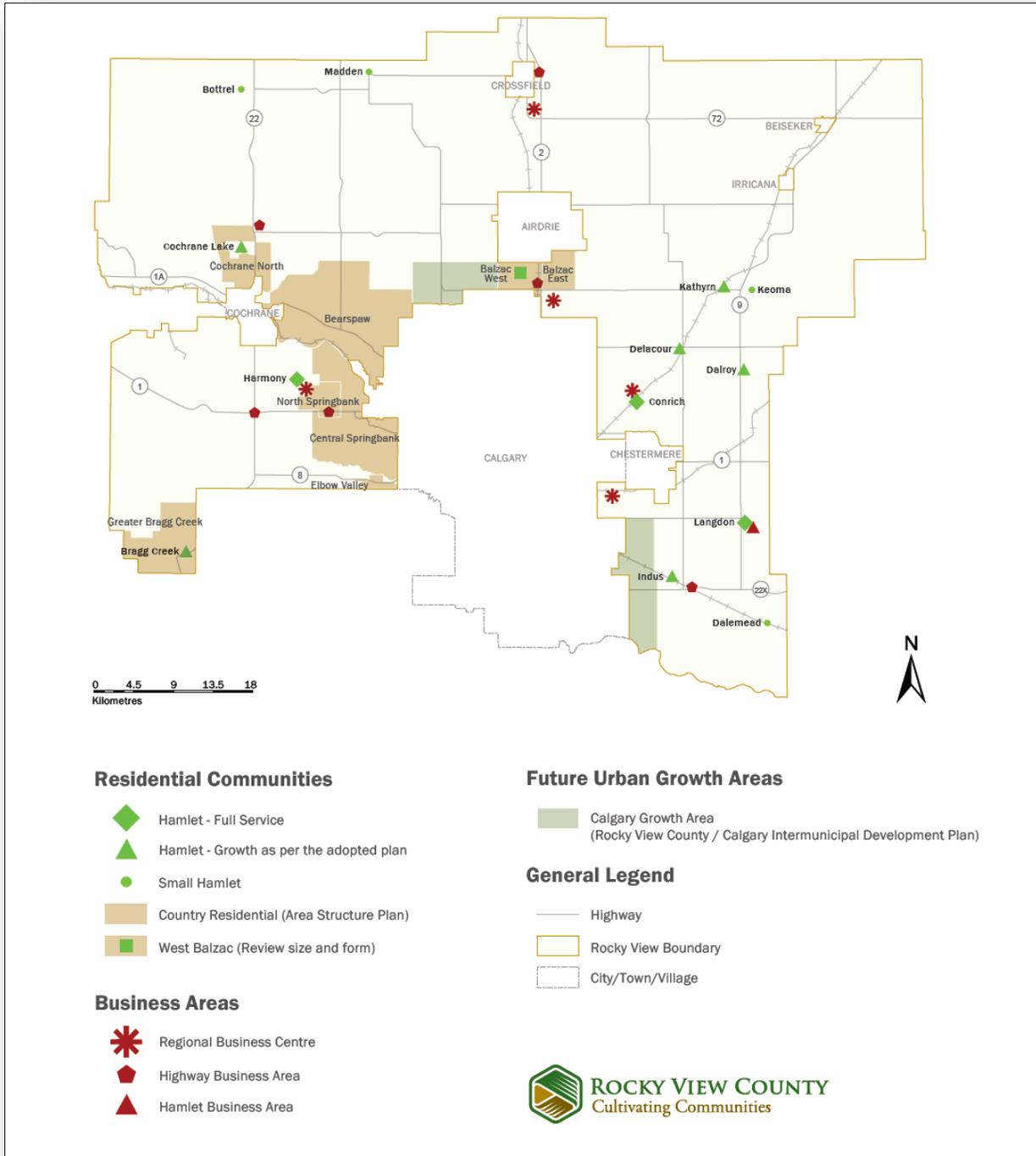
Managing Growth (the map on the following page) identifies the County's residential and business growth areas, most of which are not captured in the Calgary Metropolitan Plan.

Key points include:

- Mapping and acknowledging Calgary's urban growth areas that lie with the County, which accounts for 8935 hectares (22,080 acres). These already-confirmed areas were subsequently brought forward into the Calgary Metropolitan Plan.
- Directing development to existing development areas.
- Not allowing for new growth areas until existing areas are in-filled.
- Where appropriate, direct new multi-lot residential development to the Towns of Crossfield and Irricana, and the Village of Beiseker.
- Direct high-density forms of residential development to adjacent urban municipalities (Calgary, Cochrane, Airdrie, and Chestermere).



Managing Growth



C. Intergovernmental Relationships

The *County Plan* recognizes the importance of regional cooperation and has a dedicated section to intergovernmental relationships. Section goals include:

- Positive and open relationships with neighbouring municipalities and First Nations.
- Effective communications between adjacent municipal councils and administrations.
- Extend the range of facilities and services available to residents through partnerships with adjacent neighbours and other levels of government

A true regional growth plan is an integration of the various municipalities' Municipal Development Plans and Inter-municipal Development Plans within the region. This provides the best picture of regional growth, as opposed to the limited scope of the Calgary Metropolitan Plan.

2. PROMOTING SUCCESSFUL JOINT PLANNING

A. Inter-municipal Development Plans

Under the authority of the Municipal Government Act, Inter-municipal Development Plans (IDPs) provide for co-operation and collaboration on matters of mutual interest, and provide the tools to manage and plan for growth on inter-municipal boundaries.

Rocky View County has four tremendously valuable IDPs with the:

- Cities of Calgary and Airdrie
- Towns of Cochrane and Crossfield
- City of Chestermere (draft)

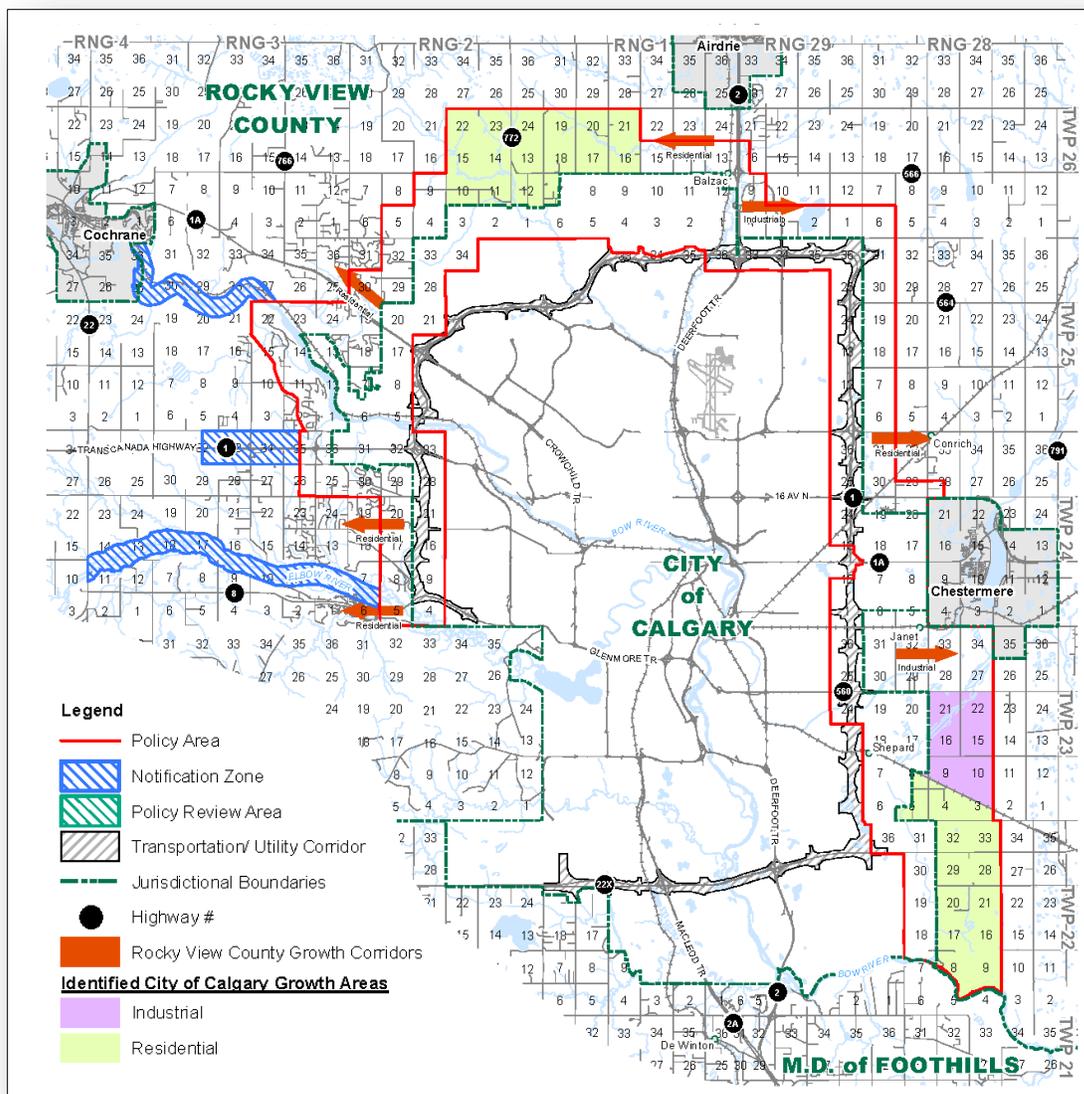
These new IDPs (Calgary and Chestermere) acknowledge urban growth requirements and direction through maps and policy to protect these areas for future urban development.

Growth Areas and Land Transfer Objectives

Excerpts from the Rocky View County-Calgary IDP show the County’s leadership in regional planning and growth using existing statutory mechanisms:

1. Recognize growth corridors/areas for both municipalities (shown below).
2. Identify lands for possible future annexation from Rocky View County to the City of Calgary.

Calgary-Rocky View County IDP Growth Corridors



B. Proactively Accommodating Regional Growth

Assigning Land to Municipal Neighbours

Rocky View County has been an innovator in numerous urban annexations, assigning more land to accommodate real growth for Calgary, Airdrie, Cochrane, Chestermere, and Crossfield than any other jurisdiction in the province.

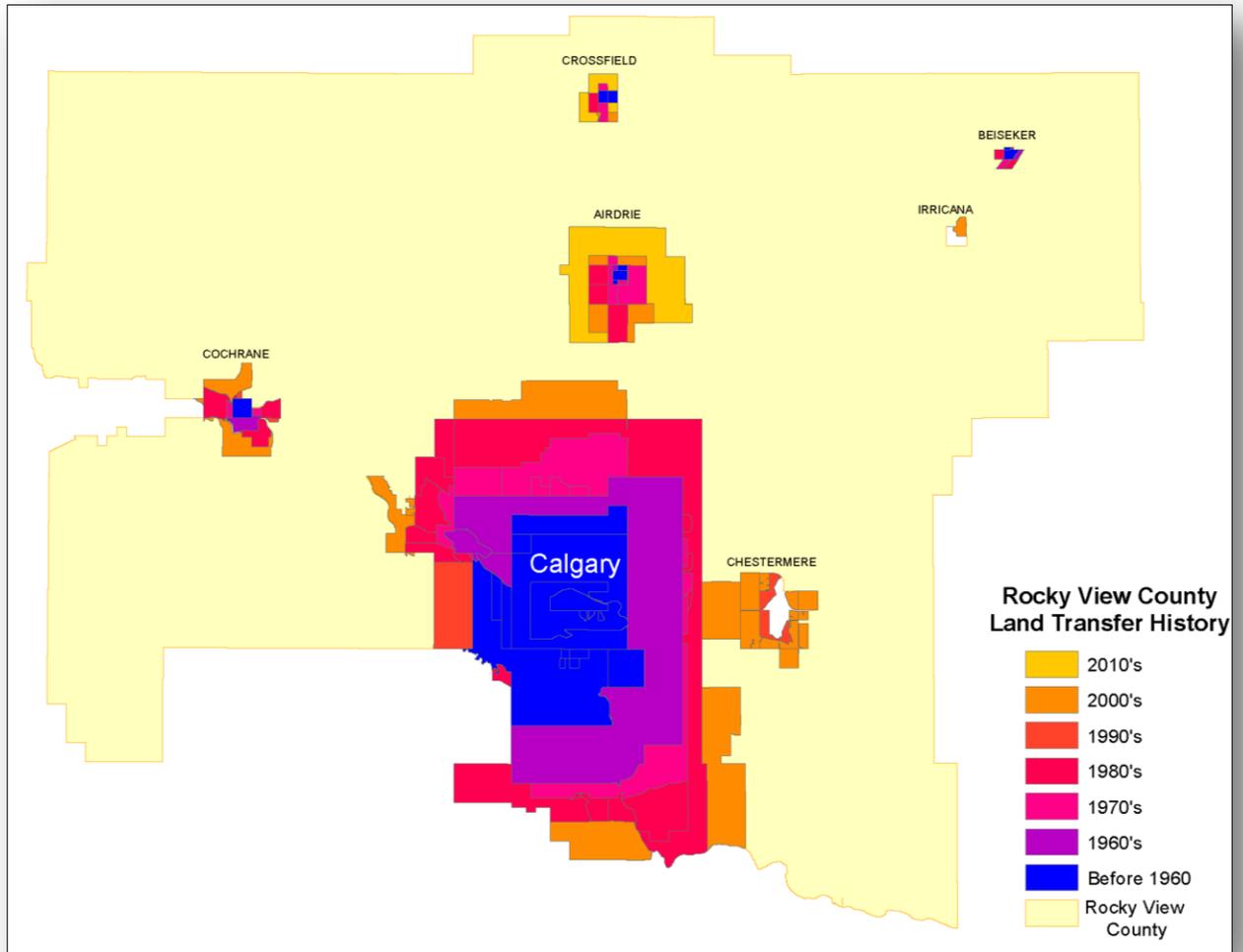
The map on the following page shows the growth of urban municipalities since the formation of the County in 1955:

- Over the last 10 years the County has provided 22,369 hectares (55,276 ac) of land to urban municipalities or 7.5 times the size of the Town of Cochrane
- The County's Municipal Development Plan (the *County Plan*) identifies and protects a further 8935 hectares (22,080 ac) of land for future urban development by the City of Calgary.
- The County respects urban municipalities need for at least a 30 year land supply. On March 22, 2012 Rocky View County assigned 5115 hectares (12,640 ac) of land to the City of Airdrie. The land provides the City of with a 50 year land supply.

Rocky View County trusts that these municipalities will carefully steward this agriculture land supply and efficiently develop it according to the principles of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan.

The land bank provided by Rocky View County can supply regional growth for up to 50 years, if planned and managed wisely by Calgary and other municipalities.

Land Transfer History



3. A LEADER IN COLLABORATION AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

A. Inter-Municipal Co-operation

Recognizing the demands of regional growth the County has built strong partnerships with adjacent municipalities that:

- keep open lines of communication;
- contribute to community building; and
- allow adjacent municipalities to increase their level of service.

B. Inter-Municipal Committees

Rocky View County developed these committees to engage nine of our adjacent municipalities. Inter-Municipal Committees meet on a scheduled basis to exchange information and provide a forum for communication with our neighbours. The County anticipates holding up to 22 IMC meetings in 2015.

4. SUPPORTING REGIONAL INITIATIVES AND SERVICES

Rocky View County has led and participated in multiple regional planning and service initiatives that show the success of co-operative, consultative, and collaborative voluntary planning.

A. Economic Development

Rocky View County's award-winning Economic Development department takes a regional approach to ensuring the economic success of the area. The County is proud of our dynamic partnership with communities and industries throughout the region. We work in partnership to ensure continued, sustainable prosperity in Rocky View County and in our adjacent municipalities.

B. Protecting the Region's Environment

Rocky View County has taken an active role in implementing the Province's *Water for Life Strategy*, thereby protecting the region's water supply and contributing to healthy ecosystems. Support for the Strategy is found in the environmental goals of the *County Plan*, and Council's Wetland and Riparian Policies. The County supports and participates in six watershed groups including the Bow River Basin Council and the Red Deer Watershed Alliance.

A significant legislated action the County has undertaken is the incorporation of Riparian Setbacks in the County's Land use Bylaw. These development restrictions are based on the Provinces Stepping Back from the Water Guidelines.

C. Contributing to the Responsible Development of Regional Infrastructure

The County participates in numerous regional planning and service projects on a voluntary basis. Recent examples include:

Water

- Financial contributions and governance participation in the Kneehill and Mountain View Water Services Commission.
- Improvements to the efficiency of the Western Irrigation District's distribution systems through a co-operative partnership and water sharing.
- With the assistance of the Province, the resolution of historical private sewage disposal problems in the Hamlet of Bragg Creek. This project will result in significant improvements to downstream water quality for Red Wood Meadows, the Tsuu T'ina Nation, and the City of Calgary.
- Responsible assessment of a proposed Area Structure Plan adjacent to the Elbow River and subsequent refusal because of the substantive impacts of the river's water quality and downstream users (Calgary).

Transportation

- Development of regional transportation models that include technical inputs from Calgary, Chestermere, Cochrane, and Alberta Transportation. The models are used to plan and prioritize County network improvements that advance the regional transportation system.
- Collaboration with the City of Calgary and Alberta Transportation of joint road maintenance projects.
- Recognition of provincial infrastructure costs, resulting in the collection of levies for the building of provincial interchanges that benefit the entire province, the County, Chestermere, and Calgary.

Stormwater

- Leadership in the development of the Co-operative Stormwater Management Initiative. This regional partnership (Rocky View County, Calgary, Chestermere, Strathmore, Wheatland, Western Irrigation District, Alberta Environment, and Ducks Unlimited) is looking at innovative methods to collectively address the regional treatment and disposal of stormwater.
- Rocky View County, Calgary, Chestermere, the Western Irrigation District, and other stakeholders collaborated on the development of the Shepard Regional Drainage Plan.

Solid Waste

The County partnered financially with seven municipalities to provide solid waste disposal and recycling services to the region. In addition, Rocky View County participates and collaborates in the Calgary and Region Waste Reduction Partnership, which addresses regional issues such as landfill bans, compost site opportunities, agricultural plastic initiatives, and glass recycling opportunities.

D. Family and Community Support Services

Over the last 10 years the County has distributed \$8.3 million of funding. These grants support both County residents and our municipal neighbours. Inter-municipal programs and services include:

- Airdrie Boys and Girls Club
- Airdrie and District Victim Services
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Calgary and Area
- Boys and Girls Club of Cochrane and Area
- Chestermere Community Services Family and Community Support Services
- Cochrane and Area Victim Services Society
- Cochrane Family and Community Support Services
- Crossfield Day Camp
- Town of Irricana Community Services

E. Recreation Facilities

Since 2007, the County has provided recreation and cultural funding (operating and capital) to over 60 regional community organizations, totalling \$17 million dollars. The County also works collaboratively with six other municipalities to provide financial assistance for support programs and infrastructure within the neighbouring municipalities. Funding provides a range of services, from a quilting program for seniors to assisting with the expansion of a multi-purpose recreation facility. As part of this funding the County makes direct contributions to the operations of the following regional recreation centres:

- Chestermere Recreation Centre
- Genesis Place (Airdrie)
- Spray Lake Sawmills Family Sports Centre (Cochrane)

F. Emergency Services

The County has mutual aid and reciprocal agreements for fire services with Airdrie, Cochrane, Chestermere, Crossfield, Redwood Meadows, and Beiseker. This arrangement collectively saves the region millions of dollars by ensuring the elimination of unnecessary overlap in fire service protection.

G. Regional Transit

Rocky View County contributes \$217,000 annually to the Rocky View Regional Handi-Bus. This is a shared-ride service available to residents for medical appointments and basic services such as grocery shopping or banking. Destinations for service include Chestermere, Airdrie, Cochrane, and Calgary.

H. Libraries

Since 2009, Rocky View County has contributed \$2.6 million to the libraries of Cochrane, Chestermere, Airdrie, Beiseker, Crossfield, and Irricana; and the Marigold Library System. The Marigold Library System is a co-operative regional network of libraries offering public library service to residents of south-central Alberta.



5. SUMMARY

Rocky View County's past actions demonstrate a fundamental commitment to good governance. This can be achieved by all Alberta municipalities within the framework of the statutory provisions of the existing Municipal Government Act, through respect for local government autonomy and a good neighbor approach.

Rocky View County Council is accountable, effective, and efficient as a decision-making authority. This is particularly evident in our efforts to support and accommodate appropriate and sustainable growth throughout the region.

In conclusion, Rocky View County offers the Premier of Alberta and Minister of Municipal Affairs the following advice and feedback:

- The current approach to regional planning is working.
- It is not appropriate or necessary to legislate the Calgary Metropolitan Plan in any form.

- We encourage the Province to implement the changes Rocky View County recommended through the Municipal Government Act consultations to support communities in addressing growth demands.
- The City Charter currently being contemplated may provide additional assistance to the City of Calgary in meeting its planning and revenue challenges, providing it is not detrimental to other municipalities.

- Taxpayer support for the Calgary Regional Partnership is costly and an unnecessary duplication of the intended and specified role of local government.
- In this fiscal environment, Municipal Affairs is in a position to contribute real and meaningful savings to the provincial budget by eliminating ongoing funding to the Calgary Regional Partnership.



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

Municipal Building
911 – 32 Avenue NE
Calgary, AB, T2E 6X6

www.rockyview.ca