

ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Proposed Bragg Creek Fireguard

Summary of feedback received through public information sessions, written submissions, and community group meetings.

October 2026

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Rocky View County, in partnership with Alberta Forestry and Parks (Alberta Wildfire) and the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA), is exploring a proposed community fireguard west of Bragg Creek to help reduce wildfire risk, improve community safety, and support emergency response efforts.

The proposed 450-hectare fireguard would be located on provincial Crown land west of the community. Community fireguards are strategically planned areas where vegetation and other wildfire fuels are reduced to help slow wildfire spread and create safer conditions for firefighters to protect nearby homes, residents, and critical infrastructure.

Information & Engagement

Rocky View County introduced the proposed fireguard project to the community through a dedicated webpage and two public information sessions. These opportunities provided available project information and gave residents, nearby landowners, and community organizations an opportunity to ask questions and share early project feedback.

Community input was sought to identify local considerations, better understand potential impacts related to the proposed alignment, recreational routes, access, and construction activities, and help inform future planning should the project receive approval and proceed.

Engagement activities included:

- Two public information sessions in September, one for nearby residents and one for the broader community.
- Invitations sent to approximately 190 property owners within two kilometres of the proposed fireguard, including 33 hand-delivered invitations to adjacent residents.
- A dedicated project webpage and supporting information materials.
- Supporting communications, including roadside signage, social media posts, and a Safe & Sound message.

Participation included:

- 156 attendees across two public information sessions.
- 94 completed surveys.
- Eight letters and written submissions.
- Two community group meetings with a total of six participants.

WHAT WE HEARD

Most respondents supported the efforts to reduce wildfire risk in the Bragg Creek area but were less supportive of the proposed fireguard as currently presented. Many questioned whether the location, design, and scale were appropriate and suggested considering alternative options. Concerns were also raised about the potential environmental and community impacts.

Respondents frequently requested additional information, greater transparency, and ongoing opportunities for engagement. While a small number of participants clearly supported or opposed the proposed fireguard in its current form, most requested more information, more time to review the proposal, design changes, and ongoing opportunities to provide input.

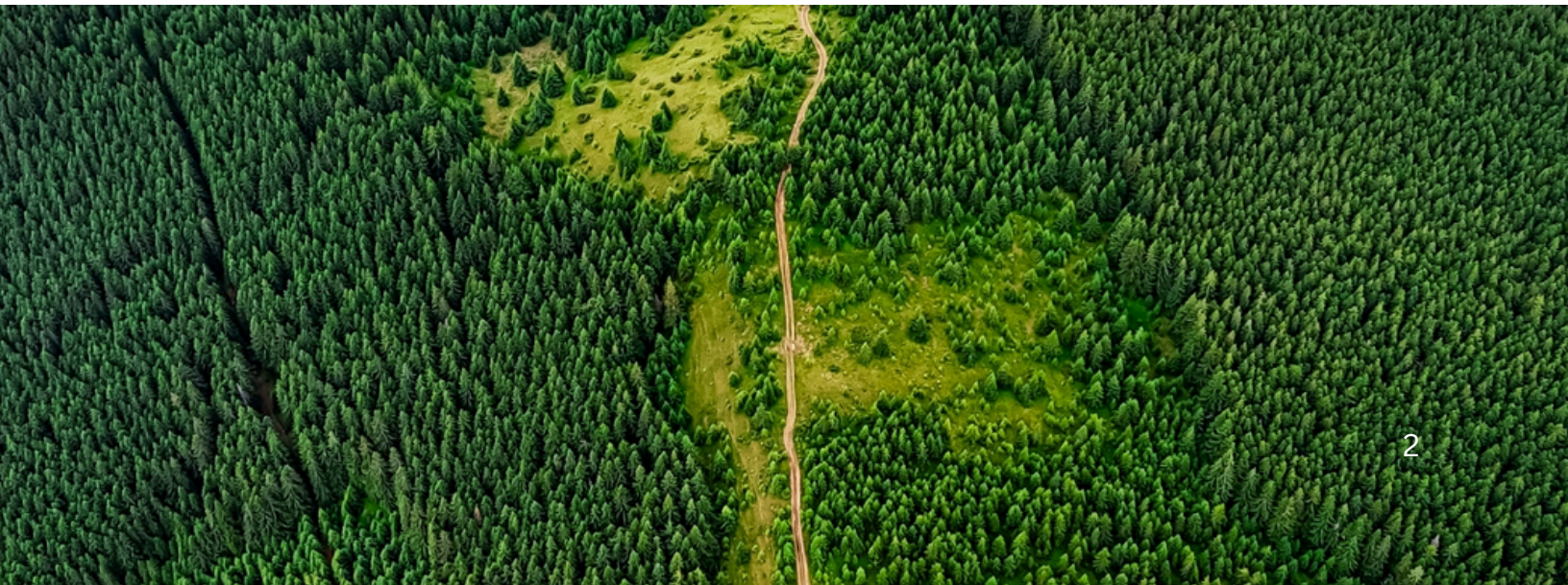
How feedback was analyzed:
Feedback from surveys, open house discussions, letters, emails, and meetings was reviewed and grouped into common themes. The summary below is based on the 94 completed surveys.

Many respondents commented on more than one topic, so responses may be included under multiple themes.

Top Themes

Location and Design: Questions about design, location, and treatment approach. **80%**

More Information and Engagement: Desire for a clearer rationale, more information about the project, and ongoing engagement opportunities. **65%**



LOCATION & DESIGN

Across comments, residents generally acknowledged the importance of wildfire risk reduction. Of the feedback received, 80% of respondents shared feedback on where the fireguard is located, how much forest would be removed, and whether the design could be modified to better protect homes while reducing impacts to privacy, recreation, wildlife habitat, scenic values, and adjacent properties. The following summarizes the main themes related to the proposed location and design of the fireguard, starting with those mentioned most often by participants.

Reduce the Extent of Clear Cutting

Many respondents felt **the proposed design relied too heavily on clear-cutting and preferred a more targeted approach** focused on thinning, removing deadfall, preserving deciduous trees, and retaining existing windbreaks. While opinions varied on the exact treatment method, there was broad interest in minimizing vegetation removal where possible.

Suggestions included:

- Preference for thinning rather than extensive clearing.
- Preserve deciduous trees, aspen, and poplar stands.
- Retain natural windbreaks and visual screening.
- Focus on removal of deadfall and ladder fuels.
- Reduce impacts on wildlife habitat, recreation areas, wetlands, and forest character.

Representative comments:

"We very much support a fire-smarting approach, but not a clear-cutting approach where not necessary."

"Leave the aspen areas intact as much as possible."



Placement & Size

The most frequently raised location and design concern was the placement of the proposed fireguard, with requests to **relocate the fireguard away from homes and increase the buffer size.**

Suggestions included:

- Move treatment areas away from residential properties.
- Increase no-treatment or tree-buffer zones (often 60m-150m suggested).
- Use existing cut blocks, natural barriers, or alternative locations.
- Reduce impacts on privacy, views, wind protection, property values, and adjacent landowners.
- Avoid placing intensive treatments directly beside homes.

Representative comments:

"Why is it so close to the houses? Can they increase the thinning buffer size around the houses?

"Delete area directly adjacent to properties."



MORE INFORMATION & ENGAGEMENT

Many respondents (65%) wanted more information about the proposed fireguard, including purpose, supporting research, and relationship with other forestry activities. Participants also emphasized the importance of meaningful engagement, ongoing conversations, and regular project updates. The following summarizes the main themes related to information and engagement, starting with those mentioned most often by participants.

More Information and Evidence About the Proposal

Many participants felt there was not enough information and detailed maps to fully understand or assess the proposed fireguard. They requested clearer explanations about why the project is being proposed, the science and modelling behind it, how effective it is expected to be, and how it connects to other forestry activities occurring in the area.

“Where is the data to show how much safer our community will be?”

"The plan needs to include the proposed logging being carried out."

What does the modelling show? How would the Modelling compare this plan to targeted thinning and controlled burns?

Project Governance Questions

Many participants requested more clarity about the role of FRIAA, and other project partners. Some questioned potential conflicts of interest and wanted clearer information about funding, decision-making, and how project recommendations are being guided by community safety and wildfire risk reduction goals.

“What is the cost-benefit analysis behind this project?”

Desire for Ongoing Dialogue

Some respondents wanted more opportunities to ask questions, discuss alternatives, and understand how their feedback would influence future decisions. Many requested additional open houses, presentations, workshops, and project updates as planning moves forward.

“Please don't let this be the last engagement opportunity. Let us know how feedback changes plans, that our voices are heard.”

OTHER THEMES OF NOTE

Participants highlighted the importance of emergency access and evacuation planning as well as the potential effects on the environment, wildlife, and recreational areas. Concerns were raised about privacy, security, and the potential impact on the quiet character of the area. Participants wanted to understand how recreational access and trail quality would be affected during and after project implementation, as well as how treated areas would be restored and maintained over time.

Resident Letters & Written Submissions

A total of eight written submissions were received. Correspondence largely reinforced survey feedback related to the fireguard's location and design and need for improved information and ongoing engagement. Many submissions questioned the scale and effectiveness of the proposed fireguard, including the extent of fuel removal, the need for buffers near residential properties, and consideration for alternative approaches.

Written submissions requested more information and detailed maps, additional time to review materials, greater transparency around decision-making, and more structured opportunities to ask questions and provide input (e.g., a presentation and Q&A format).

Correspondence also raised concerns about emergency preparedness, environmental impacts, long-term restoration, and whether the proposed fireguard is the most effective approach to reducing wildfire risk. Many requested more information about the rationale, science, and alternatives considered in developing the proposal.

Representative comments:

"What specific wildfire risk is the project intended to address?"

"What science, modelling or professional assessment has determined that the proposed areas need to be cleared to this extent?"



Community Group Feedback

The project team met with local community organizations to gather input on the proposed Fireguard. Feedback generally supported wildfire risk reduction efforts while emphasizing the need to protect ski trails and winter recreation. Participants highlighted concerns about trail erosion and drainage changes resulting from tree removal and stressed the importance of preserving and repairing trails where needed. They also requested coordination with other forestry activities, minimal impacts from haul roads and trail crossings, and continued collaboration on trail protection, signage, and communication with trail users.

Community groups also raised questions about the project's effectiveness and combined impacts with other forestry activities. They encouraged the County to slow down the planning process, provide more information and share environmental assessments before decisions are made. Other suggestions included considering how natural features could help reduce wildfire risk, increasing public education to prevent human-caused fires, placing greater emphasis on FireSmart measures and protecting homes, and reviewing emergency evacuation routes.



WHAT
HAPPENS NEXT

The full report, including operational plan and future maintenance of the Fireguard will be presented to Council for consideration on **November 10, 2026**. If approved, construction is anticipated to begin in winter 2026 to help reduce wildfire risk before the 2027 wildfire season.

How to view council hearing: https://www.rockyview.ca/government/council/meetings-and-hearings

Project page for more information/updates: https://www.rockyview.ca/safety-and-enforcement/fire-services/proposed-bragg-creek-community-fireguard

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who participated.