



AGENDA ITEM

PLANNING SERVICES

LONG RANGE PLANNING PROGRAM: 2022-2024

November 10, 2021

BACKGROUND

Since 2007, Lacombe County has updated or developed ten Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDP) with neighbouring municipalities, nine Area Structure Plans (ASP) and two recreation plans. To illustrate how much work has been done since 2007 on the development of the Long Range Planning Program, approximately 21% of Lacombe County is covered by either an ASP or IDP.

Since the general completion of all the work required for IDP's as part of the updated *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*, the County has scaled back the number of plans being developed or reviewed each year. Staff continue to monitor the Long Range Planning Program to ensure plans are being reviewed in a timely fashion and are identified on the program to give the public a snapshot of when plans in their area will be developed over the next few years.

2021 LONG RANGE PLANNING PROGRAM

For 2021, Lacombe County dialed back the Long Range Planning Program and only focused on plans that were required or needed to be updated with the changes to the MGA. As such, the County placed their efforts in 2021 on getting the *Sylvan Lake IDP* and *Buffalo Lake IDP* adopted. Fortunately, after approximately three years of working on the *Sylvan Lake IDP* and being the Project Manager it was adopted by Lacombe County and all partnering municipalities. Similarly the *Buffalo Lake IDP* was adopted in early 2021 by Lacombe County and the member municipalities after working on this plan for almost two years.

Staff also initiated the update of the *South of Highway 11 Area Multi-Lot Country Residential Outline Plan*. Most of the background work is underway, but with the fall election and the restrictions placed on public meetings due to Covid a decision was made by Council to delay public consultation on the update to the plan until 2022.

ANALYSIS

Council decided in 2019 to take a step back from the intense pace placed on the Long Range Planning Program over the previous few years. Staff and Council were concerned that there was some public participation fatigue since the previous few years involved a lot of demands on their time to provide input and feedback. Essentially it had been nonstop public meetings starting with the 2017 *Municipal Development Plan* and *Land Use Bylaw* review and then continuing on with all the IDPs and ASPs.

2020 and 2021 brought some additional challenges with the restrictions on holding public meetings needed to garner public input on plans. Staff have been looking at new ways to undertake appropriate public consultation that is effective in light of the restrictions. It is hoped that in 2022 a hybrid of in person and digital public consultation can be used to create meaningful and effective public engagement on the plans.

An additional challenge to increasing the scope of the Long Range Planning Program is the increased work load in the Planning Services Department with many new development projects being considered and old projects gaining new life. Capacity to undertake more than one or two plans a year is limited as day to day work requirements take precedence. If additional plans are required to be undertaken above what can be accommodated by staff, they might have to be contracted out to a consultant to ensure they are given appropriate resources needed to get completed. A good example of that is the *Sylvan Lake IDP*, the amount of work that went into managing the project was been pretty significant, especially with the adaptation to a different way of public engagement to coincide with capacity limits. If Planning Services also had to undertake all the work being done by the consultant, the plan would have taken significantly longer to complete and be a substantial drain on our internal resources.

For 2022, staff will continue with the review and update the *South of Highway 11 Area Multi-Lot Country Residential Outline Plan*. This is Lacombe County's oldest plan as it was originally developed in 2001. In 2010 the County updated part of this plan and separated out the lands from Joffre Bridge to Haynes. The *Highway 11 (Joffre Bridge to Haynes) ASP* was created to provide more direction on residential development in the area to reflect some of the new policies and Districts that were newly created from the 2007 *Municipal Development Plan* and *Land Use Bylaw* review. As a result, the original *South of Highway 11 Area Multi-Lot Country Residential Outline Plan* still overlaps some of the lands identified in the updated ASP. Even though the ASP takes precedence, this could confuse the public if interest in the area ever comes to fruition. As a result, staff feel this should be addressed before it becomes an issue.

In 2022, staff also propose to undertake an update to the *Highway 2 West Area Structure Plan*. This ASP was originally developed in 2012 and has seen a fair amount of growth in the past several years. In addition, servicing is available now in both nodes, which wasn't

there at the time the ASP was developed. Several policy sections need to be updated to reflect this as well as recognize the growth that has taken place since 2012. The plan also needs some policy updates resulting from the changes to the *Municipal Development Plan*.

In 2023, staff are proposing to update the *Lacombe Blackfalds Rural Fringe ASP* which is currently our second oldest plan. This ASP was developed in 2008 for the lands south and east of Blackfalds along the Blindman River and Red Deer River and east of Range Road 27-0 south of Lacombe to the Red Deer River. This plan has never been updated and will also need some policy updates resulting from the changes to the *Municipal Development Plan*

The final priority is the *Parks and Open Space Master Plan*, which staff are proposing to be initiated in 2024. This plan has been pushed back by a year from its' previous scheduled date of 2023. Staff also want to ensure that it is given the time and resources needed to complete it appropriately. Staff can also evaluate in the future where Planning Services is for capacity as this plan would be a significant undertaking if done internally.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff are proposing to continue with the scaled-down Long Range Planning Program as attached. As noted, this will reduce the number of plans to approximately one per year to address some of the County's needs. We would ask that Council review the proposed program to ensure that it reflects your priorities.

Subject to any further adjustments that Council may wish to make to the Long Range Planning Program, staff would ask that Council pass a resolution adopting the 2022-2024 Long Range Planning Program.

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REVIEWED BY: Tim Timmons, County Manager

