

Town of High River and Foothills County Joint Planning Area 4 Context Study Engagement Plan

Background

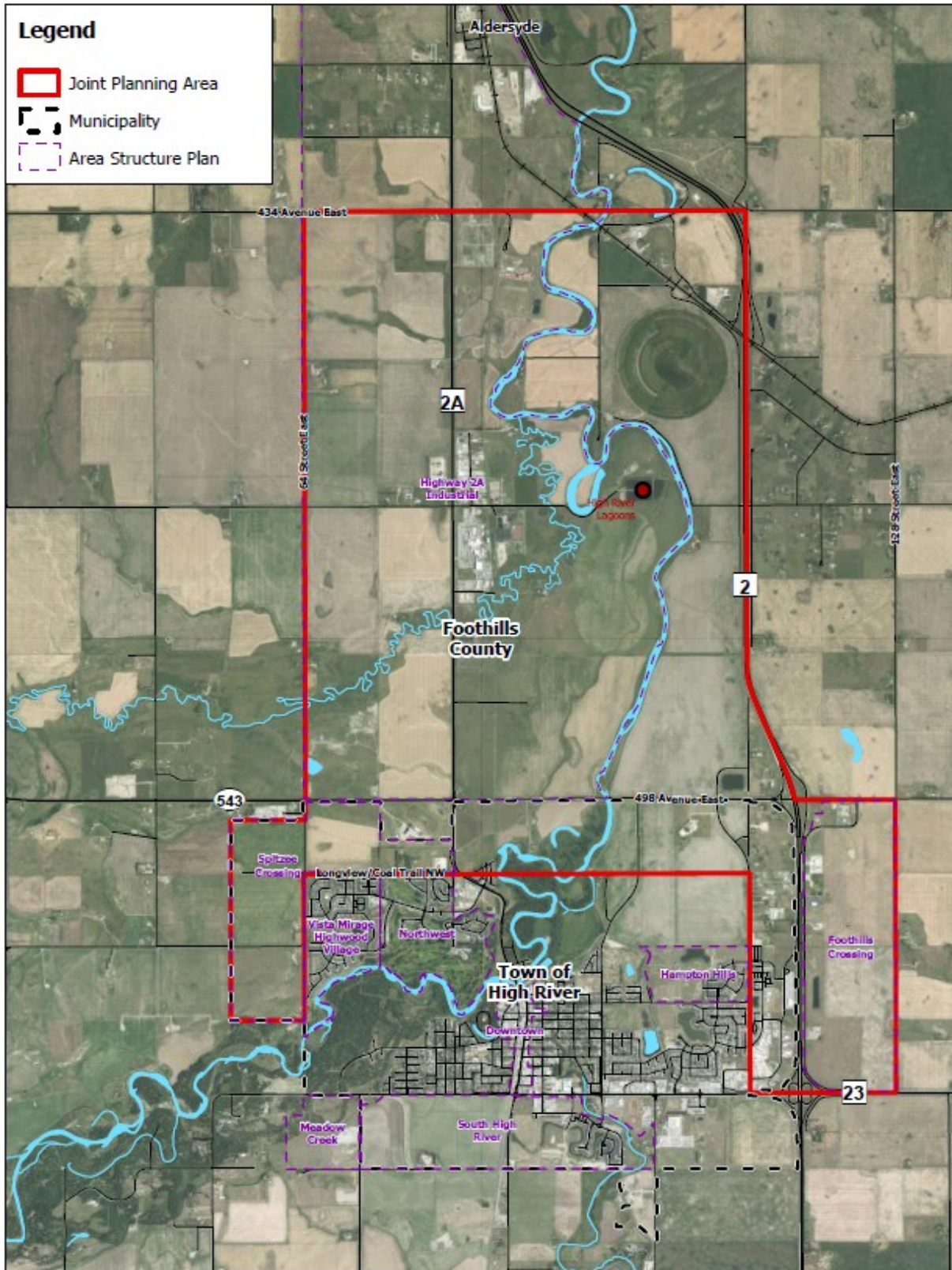
The Town of High River and Foothills County are connected both geographically and socially and the two municipalities have a long history of collaboration in planning and service delivery. Both municipalities are members of the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB). The CMRB developed and approved a Growth Plan (GP) (August, 2022) which requires that the Town and County work together to produce a Context Study for Joint Planning Area 4 (JPA 4).

According to the CMRB GP, the Context Study must be complete within three years of the approval of the GP (August, 2025) and should address the coordination of land use and servicing for a large area that comprises lands in both the Town and the County that is referred to as JPA 4.

JPA 4 includes lands within the north and east areas of the Town of High River, as well as lands within Foothills County that are directly east of Hwy 2 as well as an area north of High River along the Hwy 2A corridor, as shown in Figure 1 – JPA 4 Context Study Area. Some of the land is already planned under current Area Structure Plans and some of the land is currently unplanned.

Through the process of developing the Context Study the two municipalities may determine that the boundaries of the study area should be adjusted. If changes to the boundary occur, it will be articulated in the final Context Study document. Once the Context Study has been approved by the CMRB, amendments to the Growth Plan maps and local Municipal Development Plans may be required.

Figure 1 JPA 4 Context Study Area



Engagement Commitment

The Town and County are committed to engaging with landowners, residents, businesses, and other key interested parties when making decisions that have the potential to impact them. The JPA 4 Context Study will address the coordination of future land use and servicing for the area.

The Engagement Plan has been designed in accordance with Foothills County's Public Participation Policy and the Town of High River's Community Engagement Policy.

Goals for Engagement:

- providing accurate and timely information to the public,
- identifying and establishing relationships with area interested parties,
- gathering information from interested parties that will assist with setting priorities for the project,
- checking in with interested parties at key decision points in the development of the Context Study,
- obtaining feedback on proposed designs and concepts,
- providing the IMC and ultimately both Councils with an accurate record of the feedback received to assist with decision making relative to the Context Study, and
- reporting back to interested parties and the public on the results of engagement activities and how the information gathered was utilized in decision-making.

Levels of Public Participation

The project team agreed that the different levels of public engagement that will be utilized for this project will be based on the levels of engagement described in Foothills County's Public Participation Policy. These were developed in consideration of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)'s Spectrum of Public Participation. Different levels of public participation will be needed for different interested parties within the project depending on their role. The levels that will be employed in this project will be described as follows:

- Inform & Educate – to provide accurate and objective information in a timely manner
- Refine – There are opportunities to provide feedback on what is proposed that may potentially result in refinements to the proposal.
- Collaborate – to partner with interested parties early in the project to contribute to identifying goals and objectives and then later to provide opportunities for input into policy or design.

Identified Interested Parties & Level of Engagement

External Interested Parties:

- Landowners in study area – Inform & Educate/Refine/Collaborate
- Landowners directly adjacent to the study area – Inform & Educate/Refine
- Government Agencies and Utility Providers – Inform & Educate/Refine
 - AltaLink, Fortis, Atco, Telus, Shaw, Bell, Foothills Fibre, etc.
 - Provincial Government Ministries and agencies (Transportation and Economic Corridors, Environment and Protected Areas, Health, Arts Culture and Status of Women, Alberta Energy Regulator, Alberta Utilities Commission)
 - National Resources Conservation Board (NRCB)
 - Canada Post
 - Royal Canadian Mounted Police
 - CMRB – Inform (final approval)
- Indigenous groups – Inform
- Watershed Groups – Inform & Educate/Refine
 - Bow River Basin Council, Highwood Management Plan Public Advisory Committee

- Public (residents and business owners of High River and Foothills County) Inform & Educate/Refine (Phase 2 and 3 only)
- Media – Inform & Educate (Phase 2 and 3 only)

Internal Interested Parties:

- Town & County Councils – Inform & Educate/Collaborate (approval)
- CAOs – Inform & Educate/Collaborate (approval)
- IMC – Inform & Educate/Collaborate (approval)
- Internal Divisions of both municipalities – Inform & Educate/Collaborate
 - E.g. Fire, Engineering, Operations, etc.

Engagement Phases

Engagement activities will be planned out in four (4) distinct phases. Landowners within and adjacent to the plan area & identified interested parties will be engaged in Phases 1-3 while the public will be invited to participate in Phase 2 and Phase 3. Phase 4 will consist of reporting back on final results and closing out the project. Either or both municipalities may decide to hold a non-statutory public meeting prior to approving the Context Study, which would be considered an additional phase of engagement.

Phase 1

Landowner/Adjacent Landowner/Interested Parties Engagement (Inform & Educate/Collaborate)

Engagement Activities

- Create and launch project webpages for both municipalities. Include mapping, background information, (including project purpose and requirements under the GP information about what a JPA is and how it impacts land use), timelines, next steps, and contact information.
- Compose and mail letters to all landowners within and adjacent to JPA 4 and to identified interested parties to inform them about the project and invite them to participate in a survey to provide input. Let them know that they may also request an individual meeting if that is their preference.

Notification

- Direct mail landowners and adjacent landowners
- Direct mail or email identified interested parties

Key Message Points – Phase 1

- Identify the JPA4 area and discuss potential amendments to the boundary
- Explain the purpose of the project.
- Explain what has already been determined and cannot be influenced by the engagement (i.e. the content of CMRB GP) and what we are seeking feedback on.
- Explain options for participation (current and future)
- Explain how feedback will be used
- Include FAQs regarding CMRB GP on website (as some may not be fully aware)
- Commitment to meaningful engagement, transparency, and accountability.

Finalizing Phase 1 Engagement

- Prepare engagement summary
- Report to IMC / Councils
- Post engagement summary on project pages
- Update FAQs on website to address questions that may have come through the engagement

Phase 2

Landowner, Adjacent Landowner, Interested Parties, and Public Engagement (Inform & Educate/Refine)

Engagement Activities

- Update the project webpages as required.
- Organize a joint public open house to inform about project and gather feedback (may provide an on-line option or just in-person).
- Create a survey that would be available at the open house and after the open house for those who were unable to attend.
- Post information boards from the open house on the website following the event.

Notification

- Direct mail landowners and adjacent landowners
- Direct mail or email identified interested parties
- Municipal website news/events pages
- Municipal social media platforms
- Newspaper advertising
- Digital signage

Key Message Points – Phase 2

- Explain purpose of the project.
- Identify the JPA4 area and discuss potential changes to the boundary
- Explain what has already been determined and cannot be influenced by the engagement (i.e. content of CMRB GP) and what can be influenced.
- Provide information on the results of Phase 1 Engagement
- Describe draft vision for the plan area and objectives for the Context Study project
- Request feedback on draft vision and objectives
- Request participants identify issues of importance in the plan area
- Explain how Feedback will be used
- Include FAQs of CMRB GP (as some may not be fully aware)
- Commitment to meaningful engagement, transparency, and accountability.

Finalizing Phase 2 Engagement

- Create a What We heard Report based on the information collected.
- Report to IMC / Councils
- Post What we heard report on project webpages
- Update the project webpages including how the feedback collected has influenced the project and anticipated next steps
- Update FAQs on website to address questions that came out of engagement activities

Phase 3

Landowner, Adjacent Landowner, Interested Party and Public Engagement (Inform & Educate/Refine)

Engagement Activities

- Update the project webpages as required.
- Organize an online engagement survey regarding the draft Context Study
- Advertise the online engagement survey. Ensure that all landowners and interested parties are notified.
- Explain next steps.

Notification

- Direct mail landowners and adjacent landowners
- Direct mail or email identified interested parties
- Municipal website news/events pages
- Municipal social media platforms

Key Message Points – Phase 3

- Share draft context study
- Ask for input, but explain what has already been determined (content of CMRB GP) and what can still be influenced.
- Explain next steps.

Finalizing Phase 3 Engagement

- Create a What We heard Report based on the information collected.
- Report to IMC / Councils
- Post What We Heard report on project webpages
- Post information on how the feedback influenced the project
- Update the project webpages including next steps.

Phase 4

Project Close-out

Landowner, Adjacent Landowner, Interested Parties and Public Engagement (Inform & Educate)

- Thank everyone for their input and feedback.
- Finalize the Context Study.
- Update the project webpages as required.

Project Schedule

