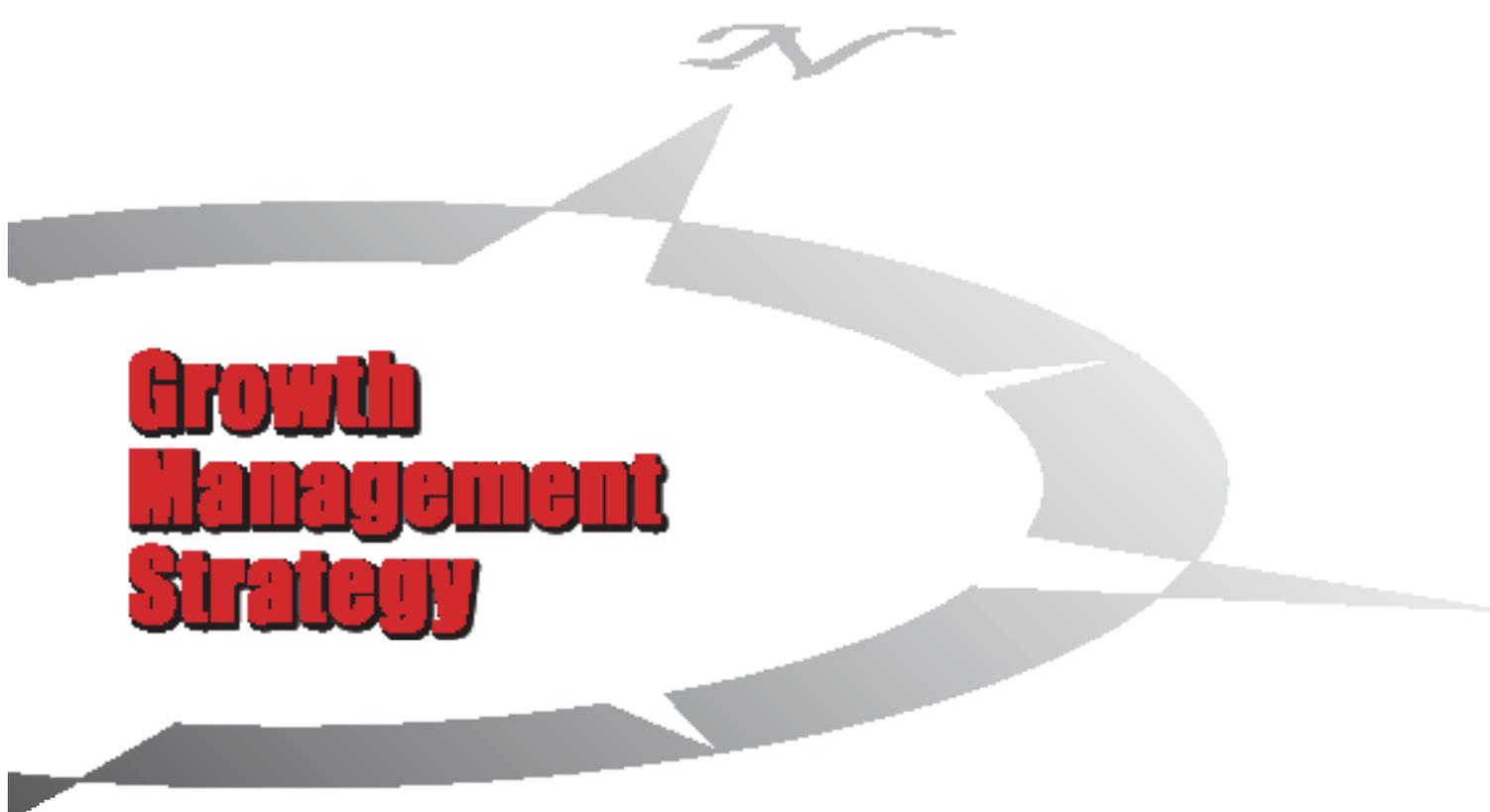




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**Growth
Management
Strategy**



RECOGNITION

Thank you to the following groups and individuals who were essential to the development of Rocky View's Growth Management Strategy:

Rocky View residents and other stakeholders

Team ISL:

- ISL Engineering and Land Services
- Lovatt Planning Consultants
- Nichols Applied Management
- Co-Design Group

The Growth Management Strategy Working Committee, as follows:

- Councillor Earl Solberg, Chair
- Councillor Greg Boehlke
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- Councillor Paul McLean
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Situated in a strategic location and with many unique opportunities to offer its residents, Rocky View is an attractive municipality for population growth in the Province of Alberta. This growth can enhance and diversify Rocky View's communities, but should not occur at the expense of the municipality's natural resources, agricultural land, and historical character. The objective of the Growth Management Strategy is to establish a long-term vision for Rocky View that best accommodates anticipated growth in the municipality.

Rocky View 2060 proposes a land-use vision for Rocky View that is based on principles of sustainability, Smart Growth, and triple-bottom-line decision-making. It evolved from key values identified by existing residents during the initial visioning process, which included a workshop, open houses, and a public survey. Beyond this, a number of technical background studies provided input on how to most efficiently service a growing population and provide sound infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner.

To ensure Rocky View's long-term vision is aligned with provincial and regional growth plans, the Growth Management Strategy takes into account relevant planning frameworks, such as the Calgary Regional Partnership's regional plan and the Provincial Land-Use Framework. The Growth Management Strategy also complements new planning tools in Rocky View and considers cohesion with the growth patterns of neighbouring municipalities. The final result is a proactive and visionary document that cultivates vibrant and complete communities where businesses can thrive and residents can live, work, and play.

One important outcome of the Growth Management Strategy is the improved definition of future development areas. For example, various communities in Rocky View are identified as potential areas for sustainable and desirable growth. With a diversity of residential and business opportunities, the Growth Management Strategy Map visually classifies distinct growth areas, such as growth nodes, community cores, rural communities, business corridors, and agriculture.

By defining where development will occur, and what kinds of development are desirable in different areas, Rocky View can achieve its residents' 50-year vision for their community: agricultural land will be preserved, the local character of each community will be maintained, and Rocky View will become known for its commitment to sustainable development and for offering residents a unique and cherished quality of life.



ROCKY VIEW TODAY

A large and strategic part of the greater Calgary region, Rocky View borders various growing urban centers, including Calgary, Airdrie, Cochrane, and Chestermere. Two major highway corridors bisect the municipality, and it accommodates an important share of the region's industrial and commercial base. Rocky View plays a major role in the preservation and protection of the region's rural character, open spaces, natural landscapes, and vistas.

In terms of land-use, Rocky View is a predominantly rural jurisdiction, as agriculture accounts for greater than 90 per cent of the municipality's land base. Not surprisingly, Rocky View's economic base and settlement patterns have historically been based on the agricultural sector.

Today, Rocky View continues to rely on its agricultural heritage, but has placed increased importance on natural resource development and an expanding role in regional industrial and commercial development with the aim of diversifying its tax base. From a settlement perspective, a portion of Rocky View's population continues to reside on farmsteads and in small hamlet communities. However, recent growth trends indicate that residential growth is increasing in small holdings and acreage developments, as well as in more urbanized growth centers. Population growth has accompanied these evolving settlement trends, as Rocky View's population surpassed 34,000 in 2006.

Rocky View's residential and business growth is strongly linked to regional growth. Two-thirds of local residents are employed outside of the municipality, mostly in the City of Calgary. However, population growth within Rocky View averages 3.5 per cent annually, a rate higher than the Calgary region.

The substantial business expansion occurring in Rocky View's Janet and Balzac areas, and to a lesser degree near the Springbank Airport, is notably oriented to the regional marketplace. The long-term prospects for continued growth in the Calgary region, combined with the many natural amenities and locational attributes in Rocky View, suggest that the municipality will face increasing growth and development opportunities and challenges over the coming decades.

THE RATIONALE FOR A GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Since the turn of the millennium, and evolving over the course of several years, Rocky View has experienced significant growth pressures throughout many areas of the municipality. For example, development proposals incurred municipal obligations for local services and infrastructure, posing significant cumulative impacts for the overall municipality.

Rocky View initiated in 2007 the preparation of its municipal Growth Management Strategy, *Rocky View 2060*. The purpose and intent of the project was to develop a plan that incorporated integrated, high-level and longer-term strategies for managing the municipality's growth over the next 50 years. It was designed to respond to existing and new development pressures and proposals, and provide a framework to direct where and how development would be most desirable for the good of the community. Therefore, Rocky View's Growth Management Strategy is designed to create a long-term vision of the municipality by using a proactive rather than reactive approach to development.

Concurrently, the entire Calgary region and the province as a whole were also experiencing unprecedented economic and population growth. As a result, a number of municipal, regional, and provincial planning initiatives were undertaken, each with significant potential implications on Rocky View. Therefore, it is important that Rocky View align its own planning practices with these initiatives.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Sustainable Development – Rocky View is committed to promoting growth that is socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable, thereby improving the lifestyles of existing communities, while securing the needs of future generations. Rocky View’s Growth Management Strategy will enable the municipality to continue to offer the exceptional quality of life its residents enjoy today.

Rocky View’s Communities – The residents of Rocky View currently enjoy an excellent quality of life within the diverse communities they choose to call home. However, the municipality’s resources are finite, and maintaining the development status quo no longer assures a similar quality of life in the future. A high level of engagement, awareness, and interest by Rocky View residents has signaled that there are fundamental expectations about how development is managed in the municipality.

During the Growth Management Strategy process, members of the Rocky View community proposed a vision of the municipality. It was concluded that Council and Administration must consider the full impact of each development on the landscape, on the social infrastructure of the affected communities, and on the municipality’s economic stature to achieve this vision. Furthermore, growth in all areas of the municipality should be balanced and aim to achieve a live-work-play environment for local residents.

Infrastructure Requirements – A major factor in achieving sustainable development is determining how and where municipal infrastructure should be built. Historically, Rocky View has been a rural municipality; however, development is increasingly being proposed for higher density and more compact communities that require more amenities and increased infrastructure needs. This growth pressure has seen Rocky View transition from a rural to a metro-rural community within a high growth metropolitan area.

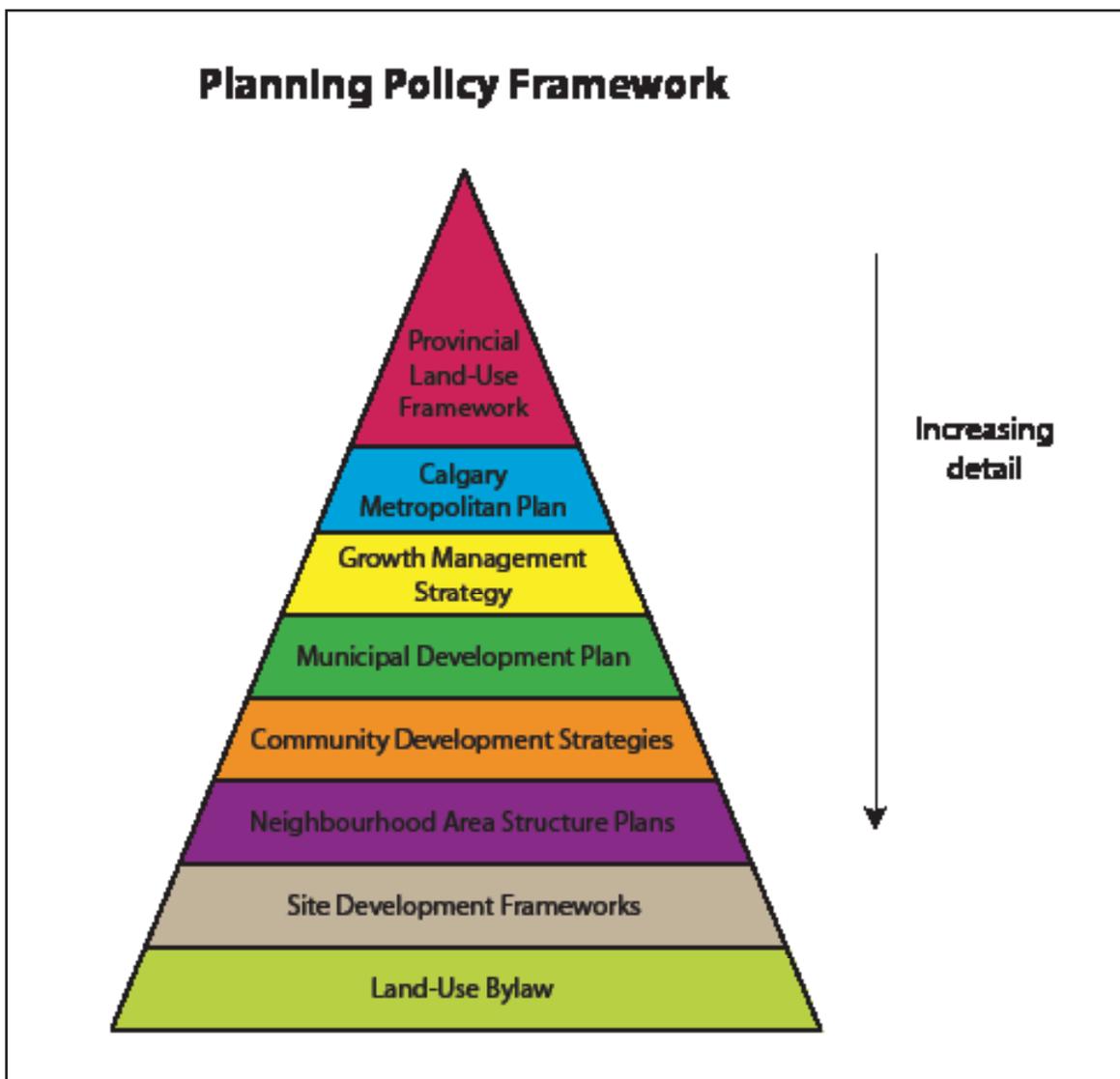
Specific concerns include the quality and quantity of potable water, which is an increasingly scarce resource and has its own management needs. Wastewater needs to be treated reliably and safely, with the correct placement and capacity of the wastewater lines to service existing and future Rocky View communities. The Growth Management Strategy aims to recognize existing infrastructure capacities, and to plan growth around this existing and anticipated infrastructure.

Municipal Partnerships – Rocky View maintains an array of close inter-municipal relationships with the 15 neighbours with which it shares borders. The municipality borders the City of Calgary on three sides and contains six urban municipalities, which all continue to grow together within the region. Recently there have been annexation agreements between Rocky View and some of its urban neighbours to accommodate the growth needs of these municipalities.

The Growth Management Strategy aims to define where Rocky View’s 50-year growth needs will be met to allow for more definitive and predictable growth patterns. This will allow Rocky View to cooperatively partner with its neighbours to ensure beneficial relationships between all parties, and work towards sustainable development for the entire region.

A PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL LAND-USE PLANNING PERSPECTIVE

It is important to consider growth and development decisions in Rocky View with a greater provincial and regional context. Currently, the Province of Alberta is instituting a Land-Use Framework, which provides overall provincial guidance and direction to land-use decisions. As well, the Calgary Regional Partnership guides a regional land-use vision and coordination amongst municipalities within the Calgary metropolitan area.



Provincial Land-Use Framework – The Provincial Land-Use Framework ushers in a new era of stewardship for Alberta’s air, land, water and wildlife.” Through policy direction and guidelines, it provides enhanced provincial leadership on land-use issues. The Land-Use Framework maintains local decision-making authority by municipalities; however, in the future these decisions will have to be consistent with regional plans. The Land-Use Framework requires that Smart Growth principles be used to promote efficient use of land, and thereby reduce the footprint of human activities on the landscape.

Following this direction, municipalities must control and balance the impacts of development on the environment, while meeting local communities’ economic and social needs. As it relates to Rocky View, the Provincial Land-Use Framework directs coordination amongst regional neighbours in the South Saskatchewan River Basin. Through this provincial directive, the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP) is creating a regional land-use plan to address landscape settlement patterns and regional infrastructure challenges amongst the participating municipalities.

Calgary Metropolitan Plan– The Calgary Regional Partnership was established in 1999 to improve regional coordination and cooperation between its members. Rocky View is one of the 17 member municipalities which coordinate regional growth patterns, transportation systems, municipal servicing, social infrastructure, and environmental considerations. By taking a collective approach, it is easier to see the full range of challenges and opportunities faced by the region, there is a better chance to address these challenges and reach the region’s full potential.

The CRP is preparing a regional plan (the Calgary Metropolitan Plan) that will consider where 1.6 million new residents are expected to be sustainably living in the region over the coming decades. The regional plan proposes integrated regional systems, including regionally connected nodes and corridors for transportation, and water and wastewater servicing. The Growth Management Strategy aligns with the regional plan and provides critical input into the CRP process.

The success of Rocky View’s Growth Management Strategy is partially measured by its ability to align and coordinate with provincial and regional planning frameworks. These planning processes are under development and provide a wider perspective for Rocky View’s municipal planning process.

A GUIDE TO MUNICIPAL LAND USE

The Growth Management Strategy establishes the foundation and direction for more detailed municipal statutory plans and decisions regarding land-use and development. The Growth Management Strategy is a tool to assist Council in making sound land-use and development decisions regarding community sustainability, resource management, and the environment. It also considers broader global trends that emphasize the reduction in size of the development footprint, and embraces a more environmentally, fiscally, and socially sustainable future.

The Growth Management Strategy will serve as a guiding document for Rocky View to evaluate future development proposals. Rocky View's planning policy framework will implement the directions established by the Growth Management Strategy through a process that will achieve a coherent vision for each local development area. It will not be possible to evaluate major development proposals prior to comprehensive planning for local areas. The following planning policy documents will be used to further implement the details of the Growth Management Strategy:

- **Municipal Development Plan:** a statutory document to provide specific policy direction for managing future growth in the context of the Growth Management Strategy.
- **Community Development Strategy:** to define, at a general level, the settlement pattern and infrastructure system in a defined area.
- **Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan:** to describe the types of activities, the pattern in which they are arranged, the performance expected of them, and the major servicing system components necessary in support of development.
- **Site Development Framework:** to illustrate the boundaries of the land uses and alignments of the servicing system components.
- **Land-Use Bylaw:** a statutory document to apply provisions that regulate subdivision and development.

DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

The Growth Management Strategy process was conducted by a team of consultants, Team ISL, with the support and direction of a working committee involving Council representatives and senior municipal administrative staff. Beginning in the spring of 2007 and lasting through 2008, the consultants focused on the review and analysis of relevant information and data, gathering input through a community visioning process and surveys of community residents and businesses.

This input established the principles and laid the foundation upon which the Growth Management Strategy was developed. Smart Growth principles were also incorporated into the growth management process, and the consultants prepared background reports in support of the project development, including planning, servicing, financial, and economic studies. These background analyses and reports provided the foundation to identify growth options, taking into consideration the overarching principles and direction from the provincial and regional plans. Periodic reviews of progress and interim findings were shared with Rocky View's Council.

The Values of Rocky View Residents

One of the first stages in developing the Growth Management Strategy was to gather community insights and establish community values. This information created a foundation for moving forward with the process. The responses from a Community Visioning Workshop and Public Open House, residents survey, as well as a business stakeholders forum and survey, showed a desire to preserve the nature of the land from urban sprawl and to strengthen the viability of farms and businesses in Rocky View.

Through this community engagement, the following values were established:

- Maintain and develop a sense of strong community.
- Limit development sprawl and cluster development in designated areas.
- Preserve prime agricultural and grazing farms, and promote local food production.
- Protect the ecological integrity of the municipality and preserve the natural landscape.
- Work towards sustainable development, conserving water resources and utilizing green energy strategies.

Smart Growth

Rocky View promotes policy development that utilizes Smart Growth principles as a foundation to guide development. Smart Growth promotes enhanced quality of life and efficient use of land to preserve the natural environment, resulting in healthy, sustainable communities that are fiscally responsible. In effect, Smart Growth is a new term for an old concept – common sense growth management. Smart Growth encompasses the following principles:

- Residential neighbourhoods created in close proximity to commercial and business development to promote a vibrant live, work, and play community.
- A mix of uses in a community resulting in housing and transportation choices, employment opportunities, and a strong property tax base.
- Pedestrian-friendly communities where healthy options to walk or cycle are convenient and attractive to residents.
- Develop in harmony with natural systems to respect, maintain, and restore the ecological functioning of the environment.
- Utilize green building strategies.
- Create a variety of housing options to provide affordable and attractive choices for all residents of a community.
- Respect and enhance the unique character of communities; strong local identities are signs of healthy places to live.
- Engagement of community members to ensure that growth responds to local needs and makes the community a better place.

The incorporation of these principles in the Growth Management Strategy will result in a holistic growth approach that balances public interests with private innovation, while promoting long-term sustainability to meet the needs of future generations.

Growth Management Strategy Themes

The values of Rocky View residents and the best practice principles established by Smart Growth provided the foundation for defining a preferred Growth Management Strategy for the municipality. These values and principles were integrated with various municipal background reports, best practice research, and consultations with local residents. Consideration was also given to the directions coming from the provincial and regional plans.

Several priority themes emerged to guide the development of the Growth Management Strategy, as follows:

- Preserving the rural character of the municipality and fostering a sense of local community.
- Recognizing and embracing the diversity of communities in Rocky View.
- Protecting open spaces and the natural landscape, promoting water conservation and other environmental management practices, and supporting agricultural land conservation.
- Building compact, vibrant, and complete communities with safe and walkable village centers, a diversity of housing choice, and mobility options.
- Improving the quality of community services, facilities, and infrastructure.
- Placing development where infrastructure exists and is anticipated.
- Encouraging business development that will provide jobs and strengthen the financial sustainability of the municipality.
- Strengthening cooperative relationships with Rocky View's regional neighbours.

These themes are consistent with the use of the "triple bottom line" approach used to evaluate the growth options available to Rocky View. The three central dimensions of sustainability (social, environmental, and economic) are increasingly accepted and adopted as best practice in assessing growth management.

TRIPLE-BOTTOM-LINE APPROACH

SOCIAL	ENVIRONMENTAL	ECONOMIC
Preserving local character	Maintaining air quality	Fiscal sustainability
Improving access to/quality of services	Reducing noise	Developing economically viable communities
Increasing access to jobs	Protecting water resources	Improving efficiency in infrastructure use and service delivery
Supporting attractive/ vibrant communities	Improving wastewater treatment/ disposal	Strengthening the agricultural sector
Protecting open spaces	Conserving energy	Increasing commercial and industrial development
Providing housing options	Promoting waste reduction, reuse, and recycling	
Supporting regional relationships	Encouraging environmental management and land conservation	
Local recreational opportunities		

Growth Management Strategy Growth Options

During the process of developing the Growth Management Strategy, three growth options were prepared that represented a range of potential development models based on community values, current development commitments, the municipality's attributes and growth opportunities, and realistic extensions of current settlements and their land-use patterns. The level, form, and location of new residential and business development will be affected by a wide range of factors. These include socioeconomic and market considerations; provincial, regional, intermunicipal, and local plans, policies, and agreements; the provision and quality of infrastructure and services; and local taxation and financing policies.

Option 1: This option reflected Rocky View's traditional growth pattern, with expected residential development focused predominantly in the form of new country residential, accommodated as infill and densification within existing country residential Area Structure Plan areas, combined with some limited expansion of urban-style housing. Under this option, industrial and commercial growth, largely driven by regional factors, would be expected to occur mainly in the Balzac, Janet, and Springbank areas, and along key highway corridors.

Option 2: This moderate intensity growth scenario, involving a mixed rural-urban scenario, would accommodate additional residential growth in designated urban villages and other higher density growth nodes. Key development factors in this scenario included access to potable water supplies, proximity to the regional services, and access to provincial highways. Rocky View would continue to accommodate new regionally-oriented industrial and commercial development and would also support some increased commercial development.

Option 3: This option envisioned a high growth scenario whereby Rocky View would accommodate much more urban-style development than contemplated under the first two options. Rocky View would consider proposals for additional residential development in various parts of the municipality and would assume a supportive role in providing water and sewer services to new growth areas, where feasible and economical. This option implied that Rocky View would accommodate, through wider locational and housing choice, a larger share of regional population growth. Business growth in the municipality would be further bolstered by the increased population growth.

These growth options were subsequently refined, and expressed geographically and spatially. This refinement process took into account the development values of the municipality as well as the values and principles established by the community visioning and business forum sessions at the initiation of the Growth Management process.

Technical background considerations involved inter-related planning, economic, infrastructure, environmental, and financial considerations, including a parallel process involving the preparation of the municipality's Economic Development Study. The process also considered the unfolding directions derived from the Provincial Land-Use Framework and the Calgary Regional Partnership's regional plan. Accordingly, a final growth option was settled upon for subsequent refinement and spatial expression, as shown on the Growth Management Strategy Map.

ROCKY VIEW 2060: GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The land-use vision portrayed in the Growth Management Strategy supports substantial nodal growth and a targeted development footprint associated with increased residential and business development in focused areas throughout the municipality. However, Rocky View's overall land base will remain predominantly rural and recent fragmentation and speculative pressures on agricultural land will be diminished through the improved definition of future development areas.

Rocky View will offer a much wider range of housing types and locational choice than it does today. The municipality is expected to account for approximately 6 per cent of total population growth in the region, and 20 per cent of the growth outside the City of Calgary. The Growth Management Strategy envisages a number of vibrant and growing communities in the municipality that offer a live-work-play balance and a high quality of services and amenities. The municipality will continue to accommodate country residential housing, largely of an infill nature within planned areas. However, higher densities of traditional rural housing and more urbanized housing forms will moderate impacts on Rocky View's development footprint, and reduce the conversion of undeveloped lands.

The Growth Management Strategy anticipates significant expansion of Rocky View's business community, with the development of large, thriving industrial and commercial parks, especially in the Balzac, Janet, Springbank and Crossfield areas. With a goal of diversifying the tax base, expanded highway commercial development is expected in nodes along strategic highway corridors. A growing commercial presence, focused on local retail and service businesses, will occur in identified growth nodes and community cores. Rocky View's competitive attributes will attract a greater share of regional business activity and employment. Rocky View has the opportunity to host a number of major industrial clusters, including aerospace industries, transportation and distribution services, environmental businesses, and the agri-food and animal health industries. The realization of the municipality's substantial business opportunities will be enhanced through strong regional and intermunicipal collaboration on economic development.

Two maps are included as part of the Growth Management Strategy. The Growth Management Strategy Map (Figure 1) illustrates the land-use strategy that will assist Rocky View in achieving its vision looking 50 years into the future. This map describes where the municipality wants to focus its attention on developing communities and business/commercial development. Growth management is designed to limit sprawl, create livable communities, conserve agricultural land, promote Rocky View's character, and protect open spaces and the natural landscape. Supported by federal and provincial legislation, the Growth Management Strategy will support the recommendations of: local watershed management studies; provincial legislation to protect environmentally sensitive areas and waterbodies; and the Provincial Land-Use Framework. It contains features that provide a variety of living environments for Rocky View residents, as well as locations to develop businesses to foster a strong local and regional economy.

The Municipal Partners Map (Figure 2) describes the intermunicipal aspect within Rocky View's Growth Management Strategy. As of April 2009, the Municipal Partners Map displays the proposed Town of Crossfield annexation area, as well as identified growth corridors for the City of Calgary identified under the 2007 annexation agreement, and the Town of Irricana growth study. Discussions are ongoing with Rocky View's other urban neighbours, including the Town of Cochrane and the City of Airdrie, to determine how the municipalities can work cooperatively to accommodate urban growth.



Growth Management Strategy Map - Growth Nodes

A growth node is an urban-style community where a combination of land uses will be designed to create vibrant and livable development centers. Growth nodes will be the focus of population in Rocky View, and also the focus of community amenity features to ensure the development of high quality character developments. By limiting the number of growth nodes in the municipality, populations are more concentrated, communities become complete, and improved infrastructure efficiencies can be realized.

Smart Growth principles will be applied that minimize ecological impacts, support pedestrian-friendly developments, and foster a sense of community. Furthermore, development proposals that propose green building initiatives will be supported over traditional style building structures.

Rocky View will encourage each growth node to build-out to a population of 10,000. This is the minimum population required to create a live-work-play environment and develop support services such as indoor swimming pools and arenas, as well as some form of local and regional public transit.

The overall design of each growth node will support a village center, and the public realm will be critical to the design of the village. Innovative transportation systems that focus on the multi-modal transport of residents will be a pre-requisite for development. Because a diversity of housing options will be encouraged, Rocky View expects that a variety of residential densities will be planned in each node. Furthermore, as the communities grow, a wider array and higher order of commercial and retail services and local industrial opportunity will be supported locally.

The municipality supports development that focuses populations within these growth nodes. Among the five recognized growth nodes, there are defining characteristics unique to each community. For example, each growth node has a unique ecological landscape and a defining social fabric that allows it to stand apart from other communities. Therefore, the Growth Management Strategy recognizes that each growth node may require a more comprehensive planning process prior to large-scale development taking place. For example, an appropriate process for development of a growth node within a pre-existing hamlet would be a new Hamlet Plan for that community.

The Growth Management Strategy Map promotes five growth nodes throughout Rocky View. They are centered on existing or developing communities, as follows:

Hamlet of Langdon – An existing residential hamlet containing significant population. The current infrastructure and community services can act as a foundation for expanding the community.

Hamlet of Conrich – A community strategically located immediately east of the City of Calgary. Conrich is the focus of a number of existing development proposals that will be consolidated through a Community Development Strategy.

Hamlet of Balzac (East and West) – Balzac acts as a bridge between two large urban neighbours, the City of Calgary and the City of Airdrie. The hamlet currently supports some business development along the Queen Elizabeth II Highway. This growth node will serve a significant regional function and will be part of a regional transit system.

Hamlet of Cochrane Lake – A developing hamlet that will be expanded to take advantage of significant natural features in the western region of Rocky View. A proposed Hamlet Plan envisions the community developing into a compact urban village.

Harmony – A comprehensively planned community designed to be a live-work-play environment for local residents. When completed, Harmony will act as an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable community.

The corridor southwest of Calgary along Highway 8 warrants further analysis to explore opportunities for a potential growth area. Factors such as the feasibility of providing municipal services and hard infrastructure, as well as soft infrastructure such as public transit, need to be explored. An analysis that considers environmental, social, and economic implications to development will be implemented at this location.

Growth Management Strategy Map - Community Cores

The intent of having community cores in Rocky View is that they will encompass a village-style center with multiple land uses, and be supported by surrounding residential development. The scale and scope of these community cores is to permit a smaller and less intense growth area, but continue to be a local focus for community services and amenities. Community cores will support local commercial and neighbourhood activities such as schools, community halls, and seniors' facilities, and will provide support services to the surrounding rural areas. Rocky View will encourage each community core to build out to a population of 5,000. Community cores will extend from existing areas that have developed over time in response to the needs of rural residents.

Community cores are recognized at the following locations:

- Hamlet of Bragg Creek;
- Springbank;
- Bearspaw;
- Delacour; and
- Kathryn.

Within the context of existing country residential communities in Bearspaw and Springbank, the Growth Management Strategy supports the development of a Community Core in each of these neighbourhoods. Due to local development factors such as the opportunities and constraints of transportation networks, infrastructure servicing, and community visioning, the exact location of the Community Cores in Bearspaw and Springbank are to be determined within specific Community Development Strategies. The Growth Management Strategy supports live-work-play communities where residents can enjoy diversity and a high quality of life within their own neighbourhood.

Growth Management Strategy Map - Existing Rural Communities

Existing communities located in rural areas have historically played an important role in the development of Rocky View. It is critical to recognize these communities because they have historically served as local activity centers and invited essential social interaction. Together with some residential development, each of these communities has traditionally supported business and commercial uses that fit the scale and scope of the rural environment.

These rural communities will continue to foster the nucleus for limited residential growth, and some business and commercial development that responds to local market conditions. Development proposals must recognize and be sensitive to the rural character and social fabric of each community, and use the triple bottom line approach to assess whether development is appropriate.

Rocky View's existing rural communities are:

- Indus;
- Dalmead;
- Dalroy;
- Elbow Valley;
- Bearspaw;
- Keoma;
- Madden; and
- Bottrel.

Growth Management Strategy Map - Country Residential Communities

Traditionally, a significant portion of residential development in Rocky View has been in the form of country residential development. These communities have developed a strong social fabric that is important to Rocky View's rural character. However, traditional country residential development requires large tracts of undeveloped land to continue across the landscape.

The values and principles established during the Growth Management Strategy process, as well as Calgary Regional Partnership draft polices and the principles outlined in the Provincial Land-Use Framework, demonstrate a move away from traditional country residential development and towards more clustered development with a smaller landscape footprint. Therefore, to enable the conservation of agricultural lands and to limit the sprawl of traditional country residential developments, no new traditional country residential policy areas will be considered in Rocky View. Conservation design principles will be required in new country residential subdivision proposals to ensure a smaller development footprint while safeguarding Rocky View's social and ecological features.

Municipal policy will be developed to describe a list of country residential design criteria to meet certain conservation and sustainability conditions. For example, a proposed cluster of country residential parcels should have existing access to paved roads, have minimal effect on environmentally sensitive lands, and be suitably located next to landscape features to promote a strong sense of community.

Traditional country residential communities exist in Bragg Creek, Elbow Valley, Bearspaw, North and Central Springbank, and Sharp Hills/Butte Hills in East Balzac. These communities will continue to evolve and develop with direction from Community Development Strategies. These strategies will foster conservation values and principles, and will identify lands that are suitable for country residential infill, agricultural conservation, open space networks, and ecological protection.

Growth Management Strategy Map - Business Nodes

Business nodes will be thriving industrial and commercial centers in which Rocky View will collaborate with the private sector to attract and support business development. These major business nodes will function as regional employment centers, and provide an assessment balance to other forms of development in the municipality. They will help support the municipality's fiscal sustainability by diversifying the tax base, and ensure a secure economic foundation for Rocky View. In conjunction with growth proposals, Rocky View will support infrastructure projects that will bring in appropriate servicing requirements for each identified business node.

Each business node described on the Growth Management Strategy Map emanates from existing areas of commercial and industrial development, and include the following:

- **Janet business node:** Located southeast of Calgary, this node contains much of Rocky View's existing business development, benefiting from excellent road and rail access, land cost competitiveness, and the synergistic benefits of established and expanding complementary industries. The Growth Management Strategy recognizes the significant potential in this area for further light industrial and medium industrial expansion.
- **East Balzac node:** This node is strategically located between the City of Calgary and the City of Airdrie, and adjacent to the Queen Elizabeth II Highway. The current and planned availability of water and sewer services, combined with superb transport accessibility and visibility, will foster relatively high valued and intensive development in the Balzac area. The area is strategically located to serve as the initial and core magnet for further commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development in the municipality. The Balzac node is likely to provide the strongest focus of new high-valued business development in Rocky View.
- **Conrich-West node:** Located adjacent to major sour gas infrastructure, as well as the northeast ring road which surrounds the City of Calgary, this node is well located to link to the provincial highway system and could be supported by municipal and regional infrastructure.
- **Springbank Airport node:** Strategically located to service airport-related commercial growth, this business node will complement a business campus proposed as part of the urban village at Harmony.
- **Crossfield south node:** Located within the Queen Elizabeth II and Highway 2A corridors, this corridor has excellent access to existing highway interchanges and rail lines. Furthermore, the benefit of having land cost competitiveness raises the potential for business expansion in this area.

Growth Management Strategy Map - Major Business Corridors

One of Rocky View's advantages in attracting growth is that it has several provincially significant highway corridors located within its jurisdiction. The location of these corridors at the gateway to Rocky View's urban neighbours presents an opportunity for growth that fits in with the surrounding landscape and is sensitive to the rural-urban interface with Rocky View's neighbours. Protecting these corridors for development opportunities in Rocky View is essential, and will support Rocky View's goal of balancing growth throughout the municipality and diversifying the tax base. Development along these corridors is intended to be non-contiguous and nodal in design, and focused around interchanges and highway access points. The Major Business Corridors offer significant locational advantages, including high visibility, access to regional and provincial markets, proximity to the Calgary International and Springbank Airports, access to labour, and the presence of a number of expanding enterprises.

The Growth Management Strategy Map recognizes Major Business Corridor nodal development in the following locations:

- Queen Elizabeth II Highway north of the City of Airdrie;
- Highway 1 west of the City of Calgary;
- Highway 1 east of the City of Calgary; and
- Highway 1 east of the Town of Chestermere.

Growth Management Strategy Map - Minor Business Corridors

Along with the Major Business Corridors, the Growth Management Strategy also recognizes the opportunity to develop some minor business corridors that are regionally significant and located along provincial highways and intersections. Business development will be scaled to fit the local character and traffic volume of the intersecting highways. Nodal development of a non-contiguous design will be supported as development along these minor business corridors proceeds. The Growth Management Strategy recognizes the following Minor Business Corridors:

- Highway 560 (extension of Glenmore Trail) east from Janet to Langdon;
- The intersection of Highways 22X and 791 near Indus;
- The intersection of Highways 22 and 567, northeast of Cochrane Lake;
- The intersection of Highways 1 and 22, with a focus on the east side of the intersection; and
- Highway 1A extending southeast of the Bearspaw Community Core.

Growth Management Strategy Map - Agriculture

Rural communities will continue to be the underlying fabric of Rocky View's agricultural and ranching heritage. Working farms and ranches are vital to the social and economic integrity of Rocky View, are representative of Rocky View's history, and make a fundamental contribution to residents' quality of life.

Farmers and ranchers are stewards of the land, and work to maintain green infrastructure and natural landscapes. By discouraging traditional country residential development, and concentrating growth in complete communities and along recognized transportation corridors, agricultural and ranching activities will be encouraged throughout the municipality. Under the Growth Management Strategy, lands not recognized as growth areas will retain their agricultural land-use priority.

To sustain the natural infrastructure required for agricultural activities, the municipality will endeavor to protect significant environmental features and watersheds. Furthermore, the first-parcel-out policy will continue to be supported in rural areas, as farmers and ranchers should retain the ability to manage their properties in an environmental, social, and fiscally responsible manner.

Municipal Partners Map

Over the years, Rocky View has transferred lands through a number of annexations to the urban municipalities within its boundaries, thus enabling those communities to meet their long-term residential, industrial, and other growth needs. The Municipal Partners Map identifies lands to be transferred to one of Rocky View's neighbours, namely Crossfield, through a pending annexation agreement. Under the agreement negotiated with Rocky View, Crossfield will annex lands sufficient to accommodate its long-term growth.

The Municipal Partners Map also shows future growth corridors for the City of Calgary that were negotiated as part of an annexation agreement approved by the Province of Alberta in 2007. In addition, Rocky View is currently collaborating with the Town of Cochrane on a joint planning area.

IMPLEMENTATION

The development of Rocky View's Growth Management Strategy was based on a number of background studies related to planning, economic, servicing, and financial considerations, including a parallel process involving the preparation of the municipality's Economic Development Study.

Together, these documents provide the foundation for Rocky View to realize its strategic direction. The Growth Management Strategy's implementation will involve several key considerations including community services, fiscal sustainability, economic development, open spaces, and land-use planning.

Community Services

As Rocky View prepares to assume an increasing share of the regional population, and to effectively manage the development of growth nodes and communities, the municipality will face greater responsibilities for the provision of new services that include fire protection, solid waste collection, recreation and cultural services, public transit, and family support services. Some of the questions the municipality will face relate to appropriate population service thresholds, service levels, effective delivery models, and financing and cost recovery policies. To enable this planning to take place, it is recommended that a community amenities review be undertaken.

Fiscal Sustainability

The Growth Management Strategy incorporates a balanced mix of residential and business growth that will provide the basis for Rocky View's continued fiscal sustainability. At the same time, the Growth Management Strategy anticipates the expected growth of a number of communities, each with needs for infrastructure and local services. It is incumbent on Rocky View to ensure that the associated capital and operational funding requirements are managed equitably and prudently. In this context, it is recommended that the municipality formally review and define its policies associated with developer/landowner/municipality capital provision and cost recovery responsibility. Clarification of an operational costs funding model is also recommended.

Land-Use Planning

Provincially mandated implementation tools for municipal land-use planning are the Municipal Development Plan and Land-Use Bylaw. The Municipal Development Plan is a statutory document that articulates the manner and character of development, and the circumstances under which subdivision and development may occur. It will further articulate the concepts and philosophies of the Growth Management Strategy in a clear and measurable land-use policy. The Land-Use Bylaw is a prescriptive regulation controlling individual property development. Updated revisions of these documents are to be completed to reflect the intent of the Growth Management Strategy.

In addition to the Municipal Development Plan and Land-Use Bylaw, Rocky View utilizes a hierarchy of planning instruments including Community Development Strategies, Neighborhood Area Structure Plans, and Site Development Frameworks. This policy framework is community- and site-specific, and minimizes uncertainty in the development process. Each of these planning instruments uses public consultation as an integral component of the planning process, and residents will have further opportunity to contribute to the planning of their communities. The undertaking of these policy documents in specified areas of the municipality will enable the further detailed implementation of the Growth Management Strategy.

Economic Development

The importance to Rocky View of continued success in economic development has been highlighted within the Economic Development Study. The study identifies several specific implementation initiatives that will support the municipality's economic development efforts in the near term, as follows:

- Improvements to the internal resourcing and organization of Rocky View's economic development function.
- The initiation of regional collaboration, investigation, and promotional development, in particular for industry sectors.
- A review of communication approaches and materials in support of economic development.
- Targeted initiatives to strengthen environmental leadership at the municipal level and to attract green businesses.
- The ongoing development and use of recommended economic development performance measures.

Open Spaces

Rocky View recognizes the critical importance of open spaces to the ecological integrity of the municipality, as well as to the health and well-being of its residents. Ecologically important areas can include lands preserved with their native species, wildlife corridors, naturally occurring waterbodies, their floodplains, and escarpments. With respect to development occurring adjacent to significant natural features, the municipality will continue to minimize the impact of development and assess these impacts on a case-by-case basis.

Rocky View's open spaces include areas of the municipality that are publicly owned and accessible. These spaces include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Waterbodies, including rivers, lakes, wetlands, their riparian areas and all other waterbodies;
- Major wildlife corridors;
- Areas designated by the Province as Environmentally Significant;
- Provincial Parks, Recreation Areas, and other protected areas; and
- Municipal and Environmental Reserve Lands.

Provincial and municipal environmental regulations will add important open spaces to the existing inventory of provincial and municipal parks and reserves, and could provide the basis for an integrated open space system. Watershed management plans will continue to provide direction regarding areas warranting protection of specific open spaces, or setting limits to the type and intensity of adjacent development. In order to fully achieve these objectives, it is recommended that an Open Space Master Plan be prepared.

C O N C L U S I O N

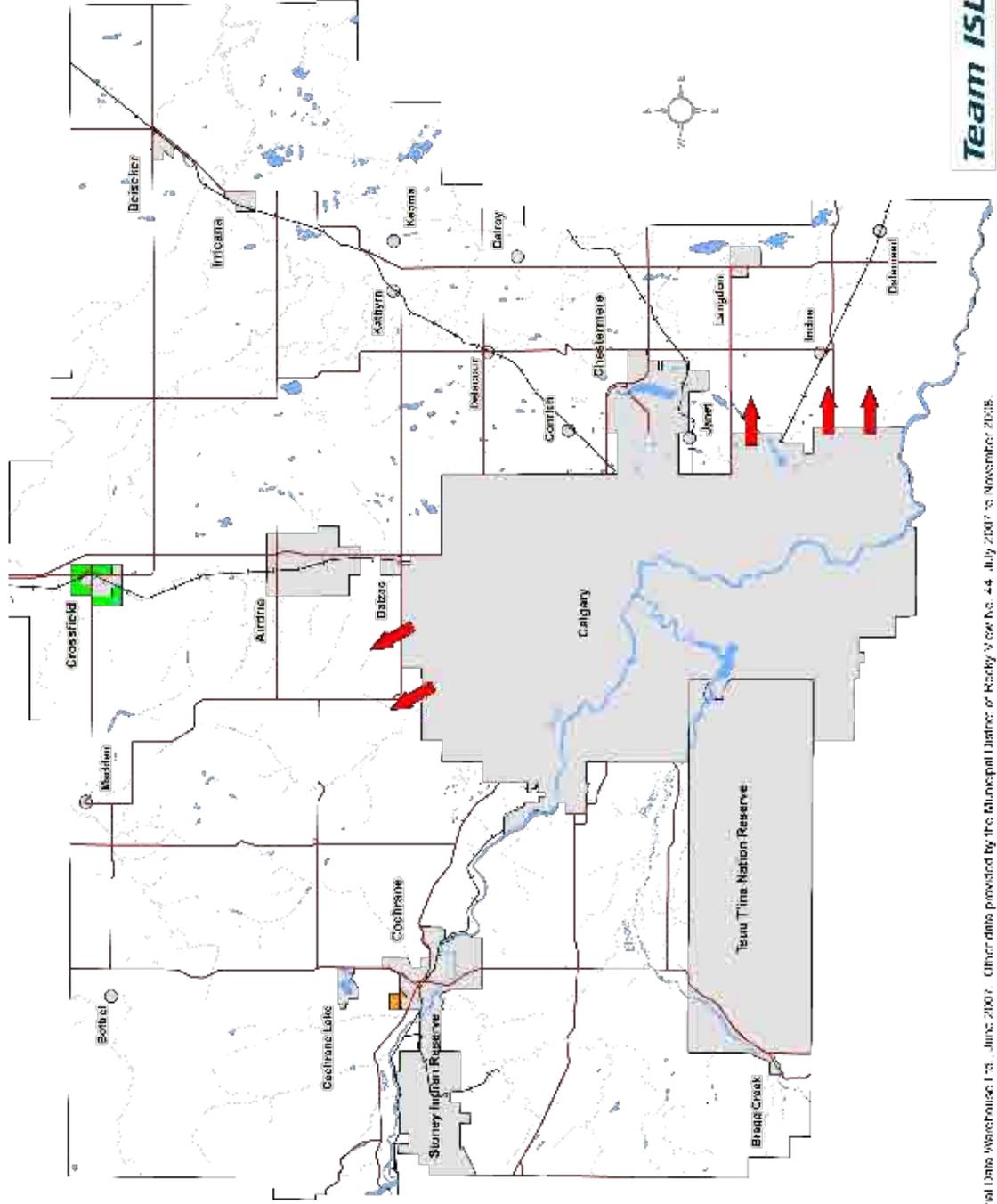
The Growth Management Strategy is a proactive and visionary document that will shape future growth in Rocky View. Through improved definition of growth areas, the Growth Management Strategy directs Rocky View to achieve its residents' vision of their community by 2060.

By concentrating development into focus areas, Rocky View will mitigate the fragmentation of agricultural land, preserve its valued open spaces and environmental assets, establish vibrant and thriving commercial centers, and will ensure development in Rocky View is environmentally, socially, and fiscally sustainable. Furthermore, by defining what form of development will occur in different areas, Rocky View maintains the local character and historical roots of each community. The Growth Management Strategy will be a guiding document to evaluate future land-use planning policy and maintain consistency with these community goals.

Rocky View 2060 is the manifestation of local principles and values in its municipal planning framework. It is a strategy for Rocky View to consistently achieve the ideals of its residents, including the preservation of rural landscapes and small town ambiance. This innovative document will align Rocky View's policies with the regional and provincial planning frameworks, and will ensure Rocky View is a leader in guiding sustainable growth that balances urban and rural development and truly reflects local needs and desires.



FIGURE 2 - Municipal Partners Map



This map is conceptual, not to scale and for illustrative purposes only.

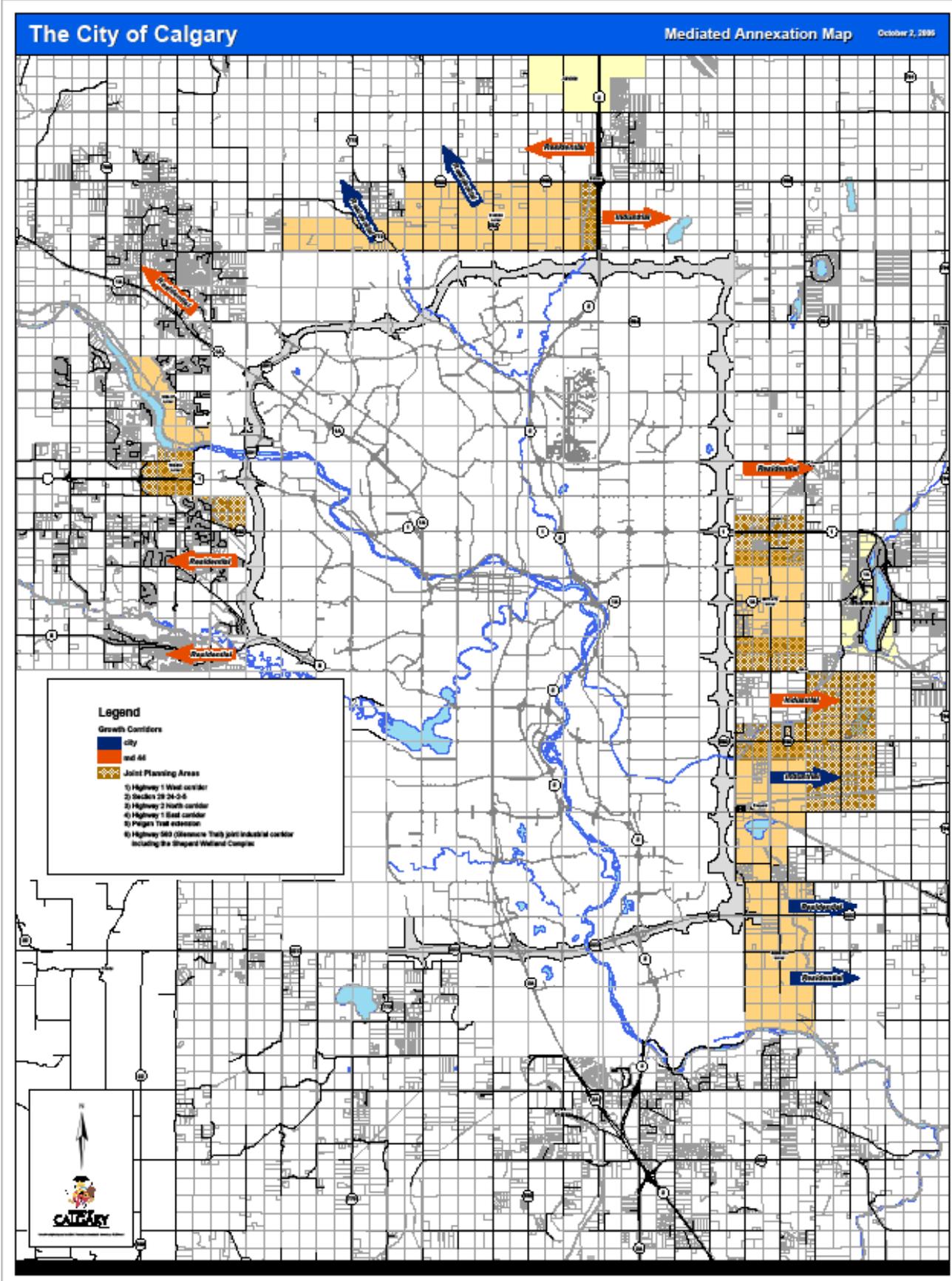
Legend

- Crossfield Annexation Agreement
- Calgary Growth Corridor
- Cochrane/Rocky View Joint Planning Area

Prepared April 16, 2009.

Base mapping compiled from the: Hovvins Geo-Administrative Digital Base, Special Data Warehouse 1.3 - June 2007. Other data provided by the Municipal District of Rocky View No. 44 - July 2007 to November 2008.

APPENDIX 1 - CITY OF CALGARY MEDIATED ANNEXATION MAP





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