

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE

Issue

An update on planning and development activity for 2024 is provided as information.

Motion Proposed by Administration

That the 2024 Planning and Development Activity Update report be received as information.

Report, Analysis and Financial Implications

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a comprehensive update on the Planning & Urban Design Team's (PUD) progress towards facilitating the goals and outcomes of Okotoks' Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and in consideration of the Town's Strategic Plan and its priorities to responsibly managing growth, supporting a strong local economy, enhancing culture and community health, demonstrating environmental leadership and fostering organizational excellence.

As an initial report to Council and in expectation of quarterly updates going forwards, this report provides a baseline for continuous reporting towards strategic priorities and outcomes and the facilitation of MDP targets, using 2024 as the base year.

Core and Strategic Services

In 2024 PUD is organized to deliver core and strategic services by a team of four registered professional planners (RPPs) with an experienced team lead, one planning technician and two administrators. Core and strategic services are provided in consistency with the MDP's adaptive management philosophy, where land use plans are developed, implemented, reviewed, and updated regularly in response to changing and evolving factors that affect the long-term sustainable growth and development for Okotoks. This includes monitoring of legislative changes, higher level planning requirements, and socio-economic patterns that influence the planning response of the Town of Okotoks. The planning hierarchy enables continuous refinement of growth and development requirements from the conceptual level area planning through to detailed site planning as part of development permit applications and compliance monitoring.

Core services include the development and review of both Developer-led and Town-led Area Structure and Neighbourhood Area Structure Plans (ASPs; NASPs) which create the local planning framework for new communities in consistency with the MDP and establish utility and infrastructure servicing networks, open space planning including school sites and recreational needs, transportation and connectivity, and respond to demographic forecasts and housing diversity and other factors that support a complete community, e.g. consideration of local employment opportunities. In 2024 PUD has implemented financial impact reviews, which assist in shaping the community.

Core services furthermore include the stewardship of regulatory instruments that shape the Town of Okotoks, i.e. the Land Use Bylaw 17-21 (LUB), which divides the Town into land use districts and provides development standards to regulate the development within districts, including describing the expected mix of uses, provisions for height and massing supported by expected urban design outcomes. Development proposals must demonstrate consistency with the LBU by applying for development and subdivision permits.

Strategic services include projects or initiatives those that specifically seek to further the Town's strategic priorities, including the Growth Strategy or the Downtown Area Development Plan (ARP). In 2024, the strategic focus in PUD also included the critical review of internal and external processes and their impacts on both customer experience, expectations and needs as well as reducing administrative complexities, which will also positively impact employee well-being.

Closely aligned with PUD services are the Town's Community and Social Development (CSD) initiatives and the Land and Leasing work program. With foundations built in 2024, 2025 will be a pivotal year for aligning land use planning with social development goals in Okotoks. Integrating the efforts of both PUD and CSD will lead to more holistic and sustainable community planning, where physical infrastructure and land use policies actively support social well-being. The completion of the Social Development Framework, Social Needs Assessments, and Social Strategy by early 2025 as well as the 2024 Housing Needs Assessment will provide valuable insights into community needs, shaping how the Town addresses housing, social services, and overall quality of life. Similarly, the Town's new Land and Leasing position and work program inventories and oversees Town-owned land use and identifies corporate land needs. Land management plays an important role in facilitating the Town's operational needs, and identifies, based on a suite of criteria, where operational needs may be most effectively placed. A detailed report on 2024 Land and Leasing activities and land management will be provided to Council.

2024 MDP Review, ASPs, NASPs, ARPs and the Growth Strategy (Long-range planning)

Long-range planning is policy-based to guide future development in Okotoks in accordance with the vision and goals of the MDP, drawing on the Town's suite of master plans which set out the utility and infrastructure requirements within a planning area to adequately service future residential or non-residential communities. In 2024, PUD with cross-functional collaboration reviewed, provided recommendations on, and progressed for Council consideration and adoption the North Okotoks ASP, the Ridgemont NASP, the North Point Area Structure, and the Downtown ARP, and commenced the review of the MDP.

MDP

The MDP is required to demonstrate consistency with the CMR Growth Plan. The work to facilitate this commenced in the third quarter of 2024 and must be completed by August 2025.

North Okotoks ASP

The North Okotoks ASP added planning to include the eastern Wedderburn quarter section, considering existing goals and policies, including the provisions of the Wedderburn Outline Plan to create the new comprehensive plan area. Regenerative policies require stormwater reuse and LID measures, while a 'blended' density target of 10upa was achieved, given the outline plan area has been actively developing.

Ridgemont NASP

The Ridgemont NASP refined the policies and land use pattern and function of the overarching Trilogy Plains ASP for the western quarter section. This NASP emphasizes innovative community design through a centralized open space corridor and regenerative stormwater management and reuse requirements. The Ridgemont NASP requires development to the MDP's density target of 12upa.

North Point ASP

The North Point ASP has proceeded to second reading and is currently under CMRB view. Upon adoption, it will create an employment area supported by ancillary uses, including a regional recreational area. This ASP was developed internally to provide a land use pattern that would enable economic development opportunity for Okotoks within an area of largely fragmented landownership. The land use concept is aligned with recommendations of the Town's Commercial and Industrial Growth Study (2021) and supports priority sectors defined through Okotoks forthcoming Economic Development Strategy, including advanced manufacturing and agri-industrial opportunities. It is expected that the vision for the plan area will support the Town's identity as a leader in sustainable initiatives, offer a degree of differentiation for Okotoks and further Town's strong local economy, responsibly manage growth, and diversify the Town's tax base.

Downtown ARP

In 2024, PUD, in collaboration with the Development Engineering, Communication and Economic Development Teams, has significantly progressed the Downtown ARP, as required by the MDP. While providing for capital works including utilities replacement and streetscape revitalization, the Downtown ARP will provide a statutory consolidation of several previous downtown planning initiatives, bringing into alignment many existing while sometimes conflicting policies for the downtown. The cross-functional team has engaged extensively with local businesses and downtown residents to prepare for construction phases and facilitate mitigation of potential operational impacts where possible, while internal engagement included early consideration for delivering Town events and their temporary relocation. A second public open house is scheduled for late October/early November 2024, and first reading of the ARP is expected in early 2025.

Growth Strategy

The Town's Growth Strategy seeks to spatially align expected growth with servicing opportunities, capital budgets and expected operating costs, and as the project proceeds refine tactics to further social and environmental equity. While some start-up challenges were experienced, the Growth Strategy is now proceeding well with the development of baseline

reports through to the end of 2024. These reports will serve as inputs into scenario evaluation in 2025 based on testing the combined impacts of population growth at varied rates, servicing availability or opportunities and costs, and several other requirements to adequately provide for a growing community while maintaining Okotoks' character and identity. This involves the use of a growth model which considers Town geographies and development types, known financial expenses and revenues, variable growth rates and demographic trends and is supported by a Population and Employment Forecast, a Land Suitability Study, and an updated Servicing Brief. The expected outcome will be a spatial growth sequences, while parameters such as residential and non-residential land use balances, unit and population density, and housing need will assess the expected land absorption over time. Refined growth principles and criteria, including affordability, will recommend growth management by growth rates. This in turn is expected to shape the Town's discussions with stakeholders around expanding planned land supply in consideration of the Town's capital and operating cost impacts.

2024 Bylaw Stewardship, Redesignations, Subdivision and Development Applications (Current Planning)

Land Use Bylaw

The Land Use Bylaw (LUB) is a regulatory instrument for site-specific development. Implementation of the LUB has identified several amendment needs. In 2024, this included an initial omnibus amendment, which clarified several use categories and provided administrative corrections, which have already shown positive improvements in the consideration of recent development permits or pre-application inquiries. Several land use designation inconsistencies were identified and are currently being addressed.

Redesignations

In terms of the planning hierarchy, land use redesignations follow the adoption of an NASP. They must be consistent with the direction in NASP and create the zoning or land use district based on which subdivision and development occurs. As extensive community engagement occurs with the development of overarching ASPs and again through NASPs, community engagement for redesignations is limited to intermunicipal referrals and notice posting (newspaper and Town website) of the public hearing. At each planning stage, further cross-functional technical reviews are undertaken to ready the lands for future subdivision and development permitting, which follows redesignation. Redesignations have no physical impact and cannot be 'conditioned', however they set in motion the ability to subdivide lands and apply for development permits, which are conditioned in accordance with NASP policy and development standards contained in the LUB. To date in 2024, PUD progressed 7 applications for redesignations.

Subdivision and Development Permit Applications

Over the course of 2024 and to date, PUD with cross-functional support, has received, and reviewed 5 subdivision applications and 79 development permit applications. Some applications remain in progress, or, where approved, are awaiting the completion of approval conditions by the applicant. Decisions to approve may be conditioned, including requiring

infrastructure upgrades or extensions as per detailed designs, which must conform to the land use pattern and servicing strategies set out at the ASP/NASP stage. Securities are payable in accordance with a Development Agreement. While the Town's Land Use Districts create some flexibility for the development type that may be built, it is the responsibility of the development industry to phase and design development to facilitate area density requirements as approved through ASPs and NASPs over the course of time. PUD manages build-out statistics to monitor build out.

Attachment 1 provides detailed status and progress updates of 2024 Applications.

2024 Intermunicipal and Regional Planning

Intermunicipal and Regional Planning involves coordination, collaboration, and consultation with Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) and Foothills County. In 2024, PUD supported the CMRB to advance the goals and objectives of the Growth Plan. This involved regular attendance at land use and transit/transportation work group meetings, reviews and provision of input on updates to the Regional Evaluation Framework (REF), CMR workshops (e.g. integration of Growth Plan place-types), and review of REF applications circulated to the Town. Intermunicipal planning with Foothills County saw frequent engagement and consultation as part of the intermunicipal referral process of all types of applications within the Intermunicipal Development Plan boundaries. This included the reciprocal referral of ASPs and land use amendments. In terms of priority growth area reviews, the Town and Foothills County progressed the JPA3 framework with further discussions at the Intermunicipal Committee meeting in October.

2024 Process Improvements and Organizational Excellence

Business Licensing

Starting in 2023 and through 2024, the need to adapt application processes became apparent, and work plans were created to facilitate several initiatives. Most recently, PUD presented alternative approaches to business licensing, with proposed amendments to the Business License Bylaw being brought to Council in November 2024, and, subject to adoption, the transition to a more customer-centric and less complex licensing system. PUD is working closely with process stakeholders, including Building Services, Fire, Economic Development, Corporate Analytics, IT and Communications to adjust systems, information and messages and facilitate training. Our external business partners will receive information following Council's Business License Bylaw decisions.

Planning and Compliance Reviews

A similar approach is currently underway for various planning processes including development permitting and compliance reviews, improvements to cross-functional processing, communications, and identifying and implementing opportunities for simplification while considering an appropriate balance of liabilities and responsibilities. Process improvements of this kind support the Town's corporate priority of organizational excellence through our customer-focus lens, removes of administrative complexity and supports employee well-being.

Summarized Q4 2024 and 2025 Outlook:

Through to the end of 2024, several of the above discussed projects and initiatives will proceed and take shape, with completion in 2025. The following is expected:

- Downtown ARP and capital works public open house in late October/early November 2024; first reading expected in early 2025.
- Proposed Business License Bylaw amendment before Council on November 12, 2024
- The Ridgemont NASP proceeds to first reading with the public hearing tentatively scheduled for November 25, 2024.
- Update report on Land and Leasing to Council in December 2024.
- Completion of growth strategy baseline reports to commence scenario evaluation in January 2025.
- Process revisions and implementation of a new business licensing approach subject to Council's adoption of a revised Business Licensing Bylaw in November 2024.
- In 2025 PUD will deliver further process and communications improvements focusing primarily on high volume core services, commencing with compliance reviews.
- In 2025, the MDP will be reviewed for alignment with the Growth Plan.
- 2025 will see greater alignment of land use planning with social development goals in Okotoks to achieve more holistic and sustainable community planning, where physical infrastructure and land use policies actively support social well-being.

Strategic Plan Goals

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Responsibly Managed Growth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrated Environmental Leadership
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strong Local Economy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Culture & Community Health
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Organizational Excellence		

Equity/Diversity/Inclusivity Impacts and Strategy

Discussed within the body of this report.

Environmental Impacts

Discussed within the body of this report.

Community Engagement Strategy

Discussed within the body of this report.

Alternatives for Consideration

n/a

CAO Comments

This is a monitoring report to highlight activity in the planning and development areas. This is the first report of its kind and feedback is welcome.

Attachment(s)

1. 2024 Q3 PUD Development Summary

Prepared by:

Lauren Gagatsek, Planner and
Chris Sargent, Community Planning Manager
Community Growth & Identity
September 25, 2024