

BYLAW 32-24 RIDGEMONT NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA STRUCTURE PLAN**Purpose**

The purpose of Bylaw 32-24 is to adopt the Ridgemont Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan to facilitate phased urban development of approximately +/- 63.82 ha (157.71 acres) of a primarily residential community with a commercial centre in northeast Okotoks.

Readings

This Bylaw is ready for first reading only. A public hearing is required prior to consideration of second reading.

Report, Analysis and Financial ImplicationsBackground

The Town utilizes two (2) types of statutory planning documents to guide future development. An Area Structure Plan (ASP) provides a broad-based high level planning framework to guide new community development on approximately two to five (2 to 5) quarter sections of greenfield land. The subsequent level is the Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (NASP) which encompasses approximately one (1) quarter section (+/- 64.7 ha or 160.0 acres) of land within an approved ASP. The application before Council for first reading is the NASP for one quarter-section of land that falls within the Trilogy Plains ASP, adopted by Council in June 2023. The applicant has submitted the first phase of land use application to be considered concurrently with this NASP application.

As noted, this application falls within the Trilogy Plains ASP. The Trilogy Plains encompasses two quarter-sections of land directly north of the existing built-out Crystal Green neighbourhood / Crystal Ridge Golf Course and the Air Ranch neighbourhood / Airport. The east quarter-section of the Trilogy Plains ASP is planned for a future residential community and the lands that the Ridgemont NASP is applicable too.

Application

Following adoption of the high-level ASP, Lamont Land (the developer), in concert with B&A Studios as their planning consultant, initiated working with the Town on the NASP. This process began with the creation of a Project Charter which outlined specific requirements for this NASP in alignment with the Municipal Development Plan (MDP), ASP and ASP/NASP Terms of Reference Guidelines. It includes information on required technical studies, timelines, a planned approach for public engagement, other matters pertinent to the processing and drafting of a comprehensive planning document that is reflective of provincial legislation, higher-level municipal plans, neighbour and landowner input, and the community's higher-level strategic and growth-related goals.

Location and Site Context

The subject NASP is directly north of the Crystal Green neighbourhood and the Crystal Ridge Golf Course. It is bordered by 32nd Street to the west, 338th Avenue to the north and the eastern, undeveloped agricultural section of the Trilogy Plains ASP to the east. It is currently on the developed edge of the Town of Okotoks with the community of Wedderburn building out to its west and no statutory approved plans in place directly to the north. The North Point ASP is northeast of the subject plan area in close proximity.

Within the Ridgemont NASP Area, there are two existing institutional uses: St. James Catholic Church and a high school (Holy Trinity Academy). There is also an existing country residential parcel with a house on it. These three uses are all located adjacent to 32nd Street on the eastern edge of the Plan Area. In the northeast corner of the Plan Area, there is an existing RV storage facility. The lands are currently cultivated agricultural lands designated Agricultural & Land Holdings (ALH) District.

Although the developer has submitted a concurrent land use application for first reading, that application (if it receives first reading), will not be able to proceed past second reading until sufficient water capacity is available and allocated to the phase in alignment with the Town's Water Verification Policy.

Land Use Concept Overview

The proposed Ridgemont NASP will encompass a complete community known as "Ridgemont" within its boundaries. This will include a mix of residential lands across the Plan Area that average 12 Units Per Acre (UPA).

The residential community will have multiple access points to adjacent arterial roadways and a general grid-like configuration. There will be two (2) connection points east-west across the Ridgemont quarter-section to the eastern quarter-section within the Trilogy Plains ASP to ensure the community is well integrated with both adjacent neighbourhoods as well as internally. Although the eastern-quarter section (not a part of this NASP) is planned for employment uses, the connection will provide strong connectivity while incorporating traffic calming methods to ensure there is minimal non-residential "cut-through" traffic. Running east-west at an angle through the centre of the community is a central park feature that connects to the nautilus stormwater pond and open park space that is located on the southern edge of the Plan Area. This central park creates a defining sense of place and identity for the community while also providing for strong multi-modal transportation connections and close proximity to recreational amenities for all residents.

In the northwest corner of the Plan Area is the "neighbourhood hub". This approximate 3.76 ha (9.29 acres) of commercial area will provide a mix of local retail, dining and service needs to the community of Ridgemont and other area neighbourhoods. Strategically located at the intersection of 338th and 32nd Street, it will be well-located for all of Okotoks as well as inter-connected through a multi-modal street network within the Ridgemont community.

Housing types are mixed throughout the Ridgemont NASP to ensure a higher-density community that is appealing for a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, demographics, ages and life stages. They will include single-detached homes, duplexes, townhomes as well as condominiums and rental apartments. This plan includes a new innovative housing type to Okotoks known as “park-fronting homes”. These are common in parts of Calgary and neighbourhoods globally. The basic premise of park-fronting homes is that the homes directly front onto a park space with their vehicular access solely in the rear. Therefore, they provide a strong urban edge to the central park, a safe environment for children to play in front of the homes with access maintained at the rear.

Overall, the land use concept for Ridgemont represents a complete community composition with the neighbourhood hub, unique park spaces and a range of residential housing options. Both school divisions were consulted at the Trilogy Plains ASP stage and once again circulated through the Ridgemont NASP regarding potential future school needs. There were none identified as needed within this Plan Area over the medium to long term given existing school sites proposed in the immediately adjacent North Okotoks ASP area.

Street Naming

Draft Ridgemont Street Naming has been reviewed by Administration against the Town’s Naming of Roadways, Parks, Neighbourhoods and Facilities and has been found to be generally in alignment with this policy. The street names incorporate both the community name of Ridgemont as well as trees or natural elements that can be considered as part of the region. The street suffixes were reviewed for appropriateness against their proposed street location and the policy and found to be generally in alignment with the policy as well.

Regional Considerations and Legislation

The *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* prescribes minimum requirements for the content of an ASP (s. 633) and the process for preparing one (s. 636). The proposed Ridgemont NASP fully addresses the content requirements, including development phasing provisions, a detailed land use concept, population density, the location of transportation routes, and public utilities.

The Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) Growth Plan guides land use, growth and infrastructure planning in the Calgary Region. The Ridgemont NASP aligns with the policies of the Growth Plan as it will facilitate the development of a complete community that optimizes the use of existing infrastructure, preserves and enhances an important natural feature and meets the density provisions of the plan. As the Ridgemont NASP falls within the previously approved Trilogy Plains ASP which went through the Regional Evaluation Framework (REF) referral process with the CMRB, this plan will not be required to receive approval from the Growth Board.

The plan does not fall within the intermunicipal circulation area of the Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) and was thus not circulated to Foothills County for comment.

Municipal Development Plan (MDP)

The Ridgemont NASP has been reviewed to ensure it is in alignment with the MDP. The land use concept, policies and overall land use mix and design are oriented towards achieving the MDP's goals of a vibrant, mixed-use community that is well-connected to the rest of Okotoks with a variety of recreational, social, economic, and housing opportunities for residents. The design ensures strong connectivity through a variety of modal transportation options and policies that will require a variety of housing types throughout the Plan Area. In addition, it builds on the sustainability objectives of the MDP through creating a well-connected, multi-modal community aiming to reduce carbon emissions. Specifically, innovations regarding stormwater management, low impact development and the increased densities will assist the Town in achieving sustainability objectives and supporting future transit in this area.

Trilogy Plains Area Structure Plan

The Ridgemont NASP was reviewed against the higher-level Trilogy Plains ASP. The land use concept, policies and infrastructure planning align with this higher-level document. It furthers the general policies and ideas in the ASP and refines them into specific and detailed policies at a level appropriate for this stage of planning. The commercial and residential areas align with the locations set out in the ASP. The transportation network also fits within this higher-level framework. Overall, the NASP meets the policies and objectives of the ASP.

Water Allocation Policy

Development of the lands will be subject to the Water Allocation Policy, which limits the land use redesignation, subdivision and development approval process based on the availability of licenced water supply. The provisions under the Policy and the associated Administrative Clarifications will guide when and how much development can be approved at any one time. Timing of the completion of the regional water solution will also have impacts on future development of Ridgemont.

Strategic Plan Goals

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

Community Engagement Strategy

A public participation process was put in place by the applicant in accordance with the Town's requirements for NASPs and furthermore in consultation with Administration. The strategy included information materials mailed out to property owners in proximity to the Plan Area and two (2) separate public participation events. Formal notification of plan preparation as per Section 636(1) of the MGA was also undertaken when the application was first submitted.

- On September 27, 2023 (pre-submission), 49 people attended a virtual open house. Common themes of transportation, challenges with 32nd Street and water, climate and environmental policies emerged from this virtual open house.

- Following receipt of a complete application in December 2023, Administration commenced formal notification of government agencies, school divisions, utility companies, plan area and adjacent landowners as per the requirements of the *MGA* for statutory plan preparation [Section 636(1)]. Formal written responses were received with no major concerns and were provided to the applicant. All comments were addressed through the NASP review.
- On June 5, 2024 an in-person engagement event was held at St. James Church to share a draft of the plan, collect feedback and answer questions. A total of 67 people attended this open house. A full "What we Heard" Report from this event is attached to this report.

Of the comments received during the public engagement process, one of the main themes was transportation and concerns overall additional growth and impacts on water. Densities and proposed housing types, park amenities and future commercial and institutional uses that might be included in the Plan Area were also noted.

A Public Hearing is tentatively scheduled for November 25, 2024. The Public Hearing will be advertised in the *Okotoks Western Wheel*, on the Town website, and by direct mail to adjacent landowners in accordance with the requirements of the *MGA* [Section 606].

CAO Comments

I recommend first reading to commence the public notification and hearing process required by the *Municipal Government Act*.

Attachment(s)

1. Draft Bylaw 32-24 Ridgemont Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan
2. Draft Ridgemont Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan
3. Draft Ridgemont Street Naming
4. September 27, 2023 What We Heard Report – Virtual Open House
5. June 5, 2024 What We Heard Report – Open House

Prepared by:
Colton Nickel
Planner
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